







Religio-Philosophical Journal

JOHN C. BUNDY, Editor. J. R. FRANCIS, Associate Editor.

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Unreliability of Form Manifestations.

That spirits have the power to take on other semblances and forms than those proper to them in the earth-life, is, if we accept the evidence offered, now more than probable; our phenomena are in strict harmony with the theory.

That genuine materialized forms, presenting themselves as Christ, the Virgin Mary, Washington, etc., have really appeared at certain seances, is believed by many intelligent investigators; but that those forms really represented the individuals named, is no more worthy of credence than the wild assertion of some pretentious spirit in the old Hebrew days that he was the Supreme Being.

The apparition claiming to be Christ gives no rational proof whatever of identity. The impression produced is merely a stage effect, heightened by sympathy with the awestruck sentiments of some too confiding spectators.

The Lord said unto me: "The prophets prophesy lies in my name. I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, nor spoke to them. They prophesy to you a false vision and divination, and a thing of which you have no knowledge, and say, 'Behold, the word of the Lord.'"

That spirits of well known friends and relatives have not unfrequently appeared, and given satisfactory proof of identity to persons qualified to estimate those proofs aright, seems to be quite well settled.

The whole history of pneumatology is a history of the dangers attending a too ready credulity given to spirits, whether manifesting themselves subjectively or objectively. In the present wave of infatuation and approach from the Spirit-world, we must save ourselves and others from these dangers that have attended similar periods of intercommunication heretofore.

Mr. A. Boxwell, of London, England, has been lecturing in favor of cremation. He claims that there is nothing in the Bible against the practice. He condemns burial grounds as sources of disease.

Answers to Questions.

A. C. Doane, of Rockford, Mich., writes: In the JOURNAL of May 10th I see the notice of Mrs. Roberts who shot T. B. Weber. Mrs. R. was said to be a somnambulist. Now what I want to say is this: I want your opinion in regard to unconscious mediumship.

The medium should cultivate his sensitiveness, in such a manner as to make it a means of development and growth, instead of becoming, as is too often the case, a mere passive tool in the hands of his spirit controls.

I have a sister living in —, Ill., that has been subject to spirit power for two years. She is very much of a lady; is mother of four children, the eldest a cadet of West Point. I just mention this, to show it is not a condition of life that causes these annoyances.

This is a case of what is often termed obsession, for which there may be many causes. Active life, generous diet, and the assistance of a person with strong magnetism, are the proper remedies.

I have been reading your paper, and the proofs of Spiritualism, and would give anything to know that I was true. I had a near friend die some time ago, and they promised if Spiritualism was true they would send me a letter through some of the "spiritual papers."

There is a town in the State where we have met with several Spiritualists at different times and seasons, and we have often wondered that the Banner was not on sale at the periodical depot; and so on one occasion we decided to ask the news-dealer why he did not keep our paper?

Our unknown friend demands a good deal for a "six month's subscription," and the student of Spiritualism will by even a casual glance at these questions, see the absurdity of them. Spirits cannot be called, nor communications received for the asking.

He writes to Mr. Denmore, who is daily and hourly in communion with the angels, and yet he answers not! The spirit he would have write, may never have entered the sphere of the associate spirits who direct Mr. Denmore, or if so, may have found it impossible to influence him.

A short time ago Rev. Chauncey Giles, a Swedenborgian minister of wide reputation, was announced to deliver a lecture at the hall of the Young Men's Christian Association, Philadelphia.

Who can say there is not a growing spirit of liberality abroad, despite such occasional petty acts as the above on the part of the Y. M. C. A.

of liberality abroad, despite such occasional petty acts as the above on the part of the Y. M. C. A. Only last week we sat in a banquet room filled with many of the most illustrious men of the country, and saw there Rev. David Swing, Presbyterian, and Rev. Dr. Thomas, Methodist, both of whom seemed to fully enjoy the festivities of the occasion, and are all the better for having been there.

One Way to "Circulate the Documents!"

We are the last person in the world to object to any person's obtaining access to each and every order of the Spiritualist publications. We consider the books, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, tracts, etc., put forth in the name of Spiritualism to be, all of them in degree, adjuncts to the work now being prosecuted for the extension of a knowledge of the New Dispensation among the peoples of earth.

Dropping generalities and coming to definite terms, we desire to cite a case that has come under our personal observation, which will show what we mean, at least as it refers to the Banner of Light particularly.

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The above editorial from the last number of our Boston contemporary, is of vital importance to Spiritualists. At first blush it may appear to the unreflecting reader that the writer is actuated only by selfish personal motives, but a moment's consideration will dispel such an illusion.

The RELIGIO-PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNAL joins with its contemporary in the question: Where is the money to come from to support a first class paper if each subscriber loans his paper to a dozen families, thus enabling fifty people every week to read the paper free of cost?

We know of numerous instances where Spiritualists worth from twenty thousand to one hundred thousand dollars, send several miles to borrow the JOURNAL from a comparatively poor neighbor. This is all wrong; such people should not be encouraged in the practice.

There are very few Spiritualists who cannot raise the subscription price of a paper in the course of a year, and if all those who can and ought to pay will subscribe for that paper which suits them best, we shall be glad to send to the deserving poor free, and presume the Banner of Light would join in the undertaking.

Grant Receptions—Good Behavior.

For a week past from seventy-five to a hundred thousand persons have visited this city to take some part in the receptions, public and private, given to Gen. Grant. The cheering feature of the week has been the good behavior of the multitude.

spect, is a good test and evidence of the benefit of free institutions. So immense a gathering, so well self-restrained and behaved, would not be possible in any monarchy in the world. Help educate and uplift a free people and the next great crowd will have still less margin of vice and folly.

Fine Thinking Makes Fine Living.

Some persons have a good theory but fail to even approach to it in practice, others act up to what is good in a poorer theory and so are really the better. Beecher said once, when reproached by his orthodox brethren for exchanging pulpits with heretics, "They are good men. Some men do better work with a jackknife than others with a whole tool chest."

Spiritualists claim the best theory, the highest and richest ideal of life, and so ought to be the best people in the world; wise and brave, tender and true beyond all others. Is it so? On a broad scale the results of the spiritual movement on character and conduct have been good.

An English writer says: "Fine thinking makes fine living." Buddha said: "All that we are is the result of what we have thought." The great matter is a high and pure standard of life and habit of thought.

Sydney Dobell said: "I know of no difference of rule for living here and living hereafter; and I look upon life, therefore, as a glorious, a happy, an estimable thing."

A word of Mary Clemmer Ames is full of beauty and intuitive wisdom: "Thus it is the standard of every life which makes it what it is, noble or ignoble. A woman who has tolled her whole life away in an obscure kitchen may carry such an exalted ideal of life and character in her heart, blossoming into her daily example, that the homely place where she abides grows beautiful and she its evangel; while a man lifted to a high seat of public honor may so dottle it by himself that it seems forever lost to dignity or to lofty state."

A daily life, serene and high, self-poised and sweet and true, in the light of the supremacy of the spirit over the body, is the high standard of the spiritual thinker. Reach toward that and oftener shall we attain, here below, to those supreme moments of which Mary Clemmer Ames speaks:

"Along the dead level of unending effort we make our toilsome way, day by day, till we reach the last sleep and the forgetting. Only at rare intervals may we ascend the mountain-tops and feel the exhilarating elixir of the upper atmosphere electrify our being. Few and far between are the supreme moments of existence when we put outward circumstance and untoward condition under our feet, when we are equal to our finest possibilities, to our highest powers; when we command life and life cannot command us. Then we live!"

D. M. Bennett—Let Him Dwell Humbly Apart.

ANOTHER PROMINENT SPIRITUALIST SPEAKS.

Among the Israelites of old it was a crime for the leper to go abroad and not make known his malady. Still greater is the crime when the diseased man says: "I am cleaner than the righteous people." If he be smitten and imprisoned, and his leprosy becomes known, surely it is well to cry out: "Unclean! Unclean!" not from any ill-will to him, but that the people be warned and he may not go out to hide his chronic and contagious malady by telling of the diseases of others, but may go apart and live in private for the safety of the people and for his own good.

This covers the ground of your exposure of D. M. Bennett. I have had small faith in his moral courage or consistency for years, but knew nothing of the pitiful facts you bring out, yet am not surprised by them. I have seen the original letters and compared the hand-writing with other letters of Bennett's. There is no doubt they are his. You have copied them correctly, leaving out what was unfit to print.

I felt some regret that the pages of the JOURNAL should be stained by the letters, but I appreciate your courage in the step you have taken, and so the stain is transmuted into a shining mark of your wisdom. The warning is timely and needed. It is well for all that D. M. Bennett dwell in humble privacy, apart from the public gaze hereafter, and leave "a standard of morals

higher than the church," to cleaner hands.

It is a mark of wisdom, and not of a want of charity, to say that the morally weak and blind should not be at the front of reform. Put such in the lead and we all fall into the ditch together. Their leadership will earn the pitying contempt of all decent people of whatever creed, and will rob their followers of all moral and spiritual power.

Your task was not welcome or pleasant. All the more credit for doing it. Let us hope that no more such work may be needed, but that the JOURNAL can turn to its inspiring mission of spiritual culture, education in true reforms, and giving the beautiful facts of spirit presence and the divine philosophy and religious doing of duty toward which they point.

These personal matters are to be avoided so far as possible, but to be met when imperatively necessary.

John Knox, the brave Scotch reformer, said he called a spade a spade and a knave a knave, simply using plain language. So it is sometimes well to unmask pretense, and call a bad man by the right name, that a good cause may be kept clean. All such matters are but incidental side issues, to fill but a small share of time or thought, and when they are disposed of the main work can be better done.

Truly yours, G. B. STEBBINS. Chicago, Nov. 17th, 1879.

Grant in Chicago.

For a week our city has had on its gala dress; bunting, evergreen, flowers, and gay military trappings have met the eye at all points. On Wednesday of last week, it is estimated that over a quarter of million people thronged the streets on the route of the procession. We had the pleasure of meeting many old comrades whom we had not seen since we tramped through Dixie. The pleasure of again meeting and mingling in a social way with those whom we had learned to love and admire in the days that tried men's souls and showed of what stuff they were made, will long be cherished as a bright spot in our experience.

Laborers in the Spiritualistic Vineyard, and Other Items of Interest.

Lyman C. Howe is lecturing at Binghamton, N. Y. He is engaged at Cleveland, Ohio, during December.

Wm. Denton is lecturing in So. Manchester, Conn., at present. December 3rd, he commences a course of eight lectures in Talmadge Hall, Washington, D. C.

Mr. Geo. Colby, of Florida, formerly of Iowa, passed through the city last week en route to Iowa. Mr. Colby is a good medium and has a well deserved reputation for integrity and sobriety.

Dr. Alteo B. Stockham, of this city, has been giving a "series of conversations" to ladies alone, in different parts of the country, on this subject, "Why women are sick." She is a thorough student in her profession.

Mrs. Dr. Merrick, of Quincy, Illinois, has built a fine hall and dedicated it to the use of Spiritualism and Free-thought. A late number of the News of that city contains a poem dedicated to the donor, written by Miss Ida M. Merrill.

Mrs. Hollis-Billing is holding circles in London, and giving excellent satisfaction. At a late seance, Mrs. Maddougal Gregory was present for the first time. She bestowed upon her marked attention, congratulating her upon her return to London and improved health.

Mr. Giles B. Stebbins spent several days last week in Chicago. He is visiting the various cities in the west on important business unconnected with Spiritualism. Numerous friends learning of his presence, were clamorous for a lecture from him, but his engagements obliged him to defer it for the present.

Mr. M. E. Vandercook has been appointed to a position in the managers' office of the Grand Haven R. R., Allegan, Mich. Mr. V. will continue to fill Sunday engagements within one day's ride of Allegan. Those who wish to hear him sing, must make engagements during the winter, as he will retire from the field in April.

Capt. H. H. Brown spoke in Bartonville, Vt.; Sunday, Nov. 9th; Proctorsville, Nov. 11th and 12th; North Walpole, N. H., Nov. 14th. He speaks in Springfield, Mass., the last three Sundays of November, and can make a few more week day engagements this month. Engagements can be made in any section after December 1st. Address him at 625 Main street, Springfield, Mass.

Mrs. Watson, the widow of Dr. K. P. Watson who died of yellow fever at Memphis a year since, spent last Sunday with the editor's family, and has returned to Memphis. Mrs. Watson is known to the public as "Our Home Medium," so named by Dr. Samuel Watson in his magazine, for which Mrs. Watson's mediumship was used to great advantage during the publication of that valuable periodical.

"It has long been observed," says the Medium and Daybreak, "that controls are very successful in the presence of Mrs. Maddougal Gregory—another fact proving the assumption to be correct that sitters have much to do with the qualifications of mediums. In short, if all sitters were genuine Spiritualists in heart, intellect and effort, there would be nothing but satisfaction in spirit communion." Yes, that is true if it is added: if all mediums were pure and upright, and there were no evil disposed or tricky spirits to come back.







