

What is Assertion and What Demonstration?—April Fool Day Science—How to Correct the Erring.

BY EDWIN D. RABBITS, D. M.

My friend Coleman has favored the RELIGIO-PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNAL with another article concerning materialistic and spiritual science.

It is somewhat of a delicate point for me to meet Mr. Coleman in speaking of the comparative value of Mrs. King's Principles of Nature and my own Principles of Light and Color. I have not the least idea of speaking of the comparative merit as the spiritual philosophy is ever paramount with him.

It, however, does not prove the law of unity, nor the law of attraction, nor the law of analogy, or of graduation, or of any other law which should be set forth to show the framework of universe.

Mr. Coleman pronounces the article in the Chicago Times, from which I quoted briefly, "a boar, an April-fool joke." A friend sent me a slight paper with an elaborate account of a new and wonderful microscope by means of which molecules and even atoms were supposed to become visible.

Mr. Coleman says that the article was published on the 1st of April, and did not refer to its contents from its being "partially confirmed" by my theories. Mr. Coleman would have it, as I did to show the absurdity of its angular shape atoms and to announce what might be an interesting discovery.

In the JOURNAL of July 26th, an American medium writing to Mr. Coleman, speaks about the "twaddle about charity, brotherly love, etc., thrown at people who were conscientiously combating the errors of every kind that have been put forth in the name of Spiritualism."

Clinton Place, New York.

Am I a Spiritualist?

BY DR. C. D. GRIMES.

A little criticism now and then will benefit the best of men.

Because it will set all who really desire the truth to searching deeper to fortify their opinions, and lead to a larger capacity and ability to judge of truth.

I find the error, and I cast it out To find the truth and live it.

Knowledge is the true savior of the world—the true Christ of the ages. It is the bread coming down from heaven.

Therefore Jesus said, "Whosoever eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him;" that is, when one imprints a truth, and it is appropriated (eaten) by another, they have the same remaining, and the same truth remains in each.

Man could better understand the sayings of Jesus, were it not that their perceptions are so material, for the farther we get from the material into the spiritual, the more we will value not only the Old and New Testament, but all bibles.

I think Brother Kiddle will find that it was in my view of Jesus, called the Christ, that Dr. Peabody said "Christ was the incarnation of Spiritualism."

It is true, as Robert Dale Owen said, that "Spiritualism and Christianity are identical in essence" for both in their aims and tendencies are to elevate and unfold humanity out of darkness, materiality and error.

Primitive Christianity and Spiritualism are identical, as claimed by Dr. Crowell, because they have their origin from the same facts—intercommunion and revelation; yet the Christian claims that truth came directly from God to man, and therefore is plenary; while the Spiritualist claims that, although coming from God, it came through many intermediate links of exalted and progressive beings, and that like the rivulet it is fractured with the soil through which it came; therefore neither perfect, absolute or final.

In this connection I wish to return my sincere thanks to Professor Buchanan, for the very able, and so far as science and its assistance to religion are concerned, truthful address upon his "Four Aspects of Religion." I don't know when I have read an address from which I received so much strength as from this; for I felt that my moral backbone was newly and thoroughly splinted and braced from all parts of the universe.

"The Christian religion is, therefore, rightly understood, the creedless religion of universal unity, which I present as the religion of science, that every good man is bound to adopt, and having adopted it, to uphold and diffuse it among his neighbors.

Why, brother, what do you want of the term "Christian" if you adopt it you must adopt its family relations; not only the "pitching" business, but the dead Christ of theology; the immaculate conception, atonement, miracle working, etc. Without these it will not be Christian, and with them, it has been around and around ever and over the world, again and again, backed by more Christian money than Spiritualists are worth.

I am much elated with the idea, that you was a divest Jesus of all false and supernatural garments of mundane origin, and send him around clothed in the natural and the true, cut and trimmed to order of the great architect of all.

It is claimed that the word, Christ, signified the anointed, but if this were so, Moses and Aaron and all others who were anointed would have been Christs and Gods in one sense, each an omnipotent ruler of the universe.

If to be a Christian is to believe in the miraculous, supernatural and false, I cannot walk with you, and therefore there will be "the sword of Jesus" antagonizing—doing its work.

Again I ask, what do you want of the word, "Christian" The word Spiritual expressing a higher and better life to be obtained to-day, to-morrow, and forever, express all, and that ought to satisfy us.

The second address upon the same subject is characterized by the same unwarranted use of the words Jesus, Jesus Christ, Christ, and Christianity; the same inviting us to become Christians, and then horrifying us with Christians, the same kind of Buchanan against Buchanan.

From God to that which he writes with his own hand. How can we admire—be attached or bound to what we don't know? How can we know unless by investigation or revelation? The "implantation" is but an infinitesimal bond, arising from the relation that one thing sustains to the other. But, Brother, with all these faults, I like the "ring of the metal," after all. God speed your effort for good. St. Joseph, Mich.

Letters from the Tropics.

NUMBER FOUR.

To the Editor of the Religio-Philosophical Journal:

It has been previously mentioned that we have two churches—a Roman Catholic and a Protestant. At the former, services are held occasionally, upon some particular festival or saint's day, but no regular priest is stationed here. The latter is presided over at present by a Methodist, who is trying the best he can to heal the spiritual infirmities of his sable, inconstant, and by no means devout flock.

The cross of the New Testament thus in time became the conspicuous religious emblem among all the pagan hordes, wherever the bloody banner of Castile was borne, from Mexico to Patagonia—the cross of Christ, modified by circumstances.

To return, however, to our starting point, it may be mentioned that the Protestant Church at this place, now about fifteen years old, was the first one established in the United States of Colombia.

Love, Wisdom, Liberty.

THE ONEIDA COMMUNITY.

John H. Noyes's Message on the Abandonment of Complex Marriages.

From the American Socialist (Official Organ.) I hardly need remind the Community that we have always claimed freedom of conscience to change our social practices, and have repeatedly offered to abandon the offensive part of our system of communism if so required by public opinion.

I That we give up the practice of complex marriages, not as renouncing belief in the principles and prospective finality of that institution, but in deference to the public sentiment which is evidently rising against it.

2. That we place ourselves, not on the platform of the Shakers, on the one hand, nor of the world, on the other, but on Paul's platform, which allows marriage, but prefers celibacy.

3. We shall have our daily evening meetings, and all of our present means of moral and spiritual improvement.

4. We shall have our daily evening meetings, and all of our present means of moral and spiritual improvement.

5. We shall have a common children's department, as now.

6. We shall have our daily evening meetings, and all of our present means of moral and spiritual improvement.

7. We shall have our daily evening meetings, and all of our present means of moral and spiritual improvement.

HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY.

Love, Wisdom, Liberty.

Some of the sheets upon which are written the letters of Andrew Jackson Davis, have on them the above heading. Does he mean that "love, wisdom and liberty" constitute the Harmonial Philosophy? Is not liberty the result of the possession and enjoyment of love and wisdom?

Mr. Davis is not yet appreciated by the world at large; his first publication, "Nature's Divine Revelations," stands pre-eminent. It contains all that is valuable in philosophy, religion and metaphysics.

Without any intention to exaggerate, Mr. D. is the most advanced thinker of this or any other age. In after years his writings will be regarded with as much reverence as the "sacred books" of the present day.

As an author he is free from all egotism, and certainly no one can truthfully charge him with plagiarism. Placidity is a prominent feature of his writings, at the same time there is a dignified boldness and independence which is admired by all intelligent men.

Philadelphia, Pa.

He is not a man who doth not delight to make some returns thither whence he hath found great kindness.—Barra.

Religio-Philosophical Journal

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

Terms of Subscription, Strictly in Advance. One copy, one year, \$3.00. Club of five subscribers, \$10.00.

LOCATION: 22 and 24 LaSalle St., Northwest corner of LaSalle and Washington Sts.

CHICAGO, ILL., SEPTEMBER 13, 1879.

Professor Wundt on Spiritualism.

Wilhelm Wundt is Professor of Philosophy at Leipzig; Hermann Ulrich is Professor of Philosophy at Halle. The latter was associated for many years with Fichte, recently deceased, in the editorship of the leading philosophical journal of Germany.

In the Popular Science Monthly for September, there is a translation of an "open letter," lately addressed to Ulrich by Professor Wundt, in which the latter writes: "You sustain precisely the same relation to all the so-called manifestations which I sustain to a great part of them; your knowledge is based upon the reports of credible witnesses.

It is to this challenge that Wundt replies, he having witnessed a few of the Slade phenomena under conditions not the most propitious. He confesses he cannot "express a conjecture" as to how these phenomena were produced.

We have not time at present to take up all the fallacies and weaknesses in Wundt's argument. These may be inferred fairly from the conclusion at which he arrives, and which would do more credit to a Jesuit than to a philosopher.

Impalpable to our coarse, external senses, overcomes the law of gravitation, rises superior to it, while what it does is as much within the province of natural law as are the freaks of electricity.

What Professor Wundt has to say of the "unworthy conceptions of the condition of the spirit after death, which these phenomena awaken," merely exposes the confusion of his own ideas, and the very limited acquaintance which he has with the great subject he presumes to handle.

As for the objection that it is "most pernicious" to suppose that those "chosen instruments of Providence," the mediums, "men of most ordinary intellectual and spiritual endowment," should be "the bearers of supernatural powers," we hardly think it will impart very elevated notions of the wisdom of Professor Wundt.

But here, too, Professor Wundt shows the very superficial character of his acquaintance with Spiritualism. Mediumship depends neither on the moral nor the intellectual character of the subject, like somnambulism it is quite independent of any mental or religious endowment.

We shall return to the letter of Professor Wundt as soon as we have the leisure. Meanwhile we counsel him to look a little into the subject of Spiritualism, before he again assumes to pronounce oracularly upon its scientific claims.

"The Abyss is Bridged."

In a conversation with that sound and experienced Spiritualist, Giles B. Stebbins, he happened to mention among his phenomenal experiences that of independent slate-writing on Dec. 18th, 1878. Mrs. Simpson was the medium.

There was the sound of writing on the slate, then a rap signifying that it was finished; and drawing forth the slate, Mr. Stebbins found written the following message, and appended to it the name of his deceased uncle, Calvin Stebbins, once of Wylbraham, Mass.:

"To Giles B. Stebbins:—I find no hell or baby's skulls, as we used to talk of; I find over here common sense and justice; each man makes his own destiny. God has not destined any one to heaven or hell. Ah! Giles, the abyss is bridged, and we are fortifying the arches under this bridge, daily, daily."

Now it is certain that no human being conceivably wrote this message. It transcends the capacity and whole mental style of the medium. That Mr. Stebbins himself wrote it through the unconscious exercise of some latent psychical faculty, having the power of externalizing itself from the body and of operating on matter, is an admissible theory, but a much more improbable and irreconcilable one than that which the phenomenon justifies in its whole character and affirmative statement, namely, the theory that it came from the veritable spirit of Calvin Stebbins, whose name was signed to it.

Mr. G. B. Stebbins recognizes the characteristics of the style; especially in the emphatic repetition of the word daily at the close.

How do the opponents of the existence and activity of deceased human beings as spirits explain a case like this? They cannot explain it. They can offer us theories far more difficult than the spiritual one to accept; but that is all that they can do. A message amply characteristic of the writer, and intrinsically worthy of him; and produced by no visible human agency, under conditions and circumstances where fraud was impossible, may be rationally accepted as coming from a living intelligence, and

in a case like this from the one it purports to come from.

"The abyss is bridged," writes this earnest and intelligent spirit; "and we are fortifying the arches under this bridge, daily-daily." We have proofs of this declaration in the present onward progress of Spiritualism all over the world—in spite of all the opposing influences arrayed against it.

Psychographic Writing.

The Alliance says: "It only remains for the Religio-Philosophical Journal to admit that psychographic writing is always automatic or apparently inconscious, the action of the sensitive's own psychical complex, to stand on precisely the ground that the Alliance occupies."

Our neighbor overlooks the fact that we do not understand by psychographic writing anything produced by the medium's own human act. By psychographic (or, more properly, pneumatographic) writing, we mean such as is actually and independently produced externally to any human organism, or any conceivable mechanism or chemical trick.

Baron Guldenstubbé used to place a blank piece of paper in a locked box, and get intelligible writing on it; and he declared that he exerted no medial power. In hundreds of cases the phenomenon was tested before honorable investigators. It has been conclusively proved in America, England, Germany and Russia, through the mediumship of Slade and others.

The San Francisco Sunday Chronicle of a recent date says that Mrs. E. W. Lennett, now at 817 Bush street in that city, is a remarkable medium for independent slate writing. It tells us that a skeptic recently took to her a covered double slate, joined by hinges; put on one of the inside surfaces with his own hand, a bit of slate pencil, folded the slates together, and held them with both hands.

This phenomenon of independent writing has been absolutely and conclusively proved in thousands of cases, where fraud or deception was impossible. The only explanation of it which that preposterous dunces and bragart, Dr. G. M. Beard, one of the "world's seven experts," can offer, is that the witnesses are psychologized, or untruthful or incompetent; which, to those who know the number and character of the witnesses, is simply a fool's bluff,—an imbecile evasion.

We take it as a compliment, though the Alliance seems to mean it as a sarcasm, when it says of the JOURNAL: "It is the fairest and most childlike antagonist that we ever happened to meet."

And why ought it not to be both fair and child-like in its admissions where its single object is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth? It is not to see who is the more cunning of fence, or the more fluent in banter, that we call upon our neighbor to launch out his "bill of particulars." It is simply because if he has any argument or fact opposed to Spiritualism, with which we are not already acquainted, we would like to have it, and would esteem it a favor on his part if he would proclaim it. Thus far he has given nothing that is not as common as a barber's chair, and as easily sat down upon.

To Those Who Cry "Peace," When There is No Peace.

The introduction of every great revolutionary truth into the world has been necessarily attended with developments aggressive and antagonistic. The large majority of men are apathetic unless aroused by the controversial spirit which enlists their sympathies on one side or another.

Those persons who with the best intentions plead for harmony, and shrink from earnest discussion, should learn that it is only from the collision of minds that truth can be evolved. Perfect harmony means, in our finite state, perfect apathy. Minds are in different stages of culture and illumination, and they must of necessity take different views, more or less advanced, of any great truth. If there is to be progress,

advancement,—there must be antagonistic criticism; and skepticism must have a free voice. And while there is fearless discussion, there must be the broadest tolerance, and the most prompt and genial charity.

When it is considered what an immense advantage we have in our supersensual facts—in phenomena that prove incontestably an intelligent force which we are justified in calling spiritual,—the importance of truth of a sincere and judicious skepticism in eliciting discussion, eliminating errors, and awakening Spiritualists to a sense of the magnitude of the great truth of which they are the depositories, becomes apparent.

Spit Communications.

In regard to supposed spirit-writings, Professor Wundt remarks: "Intellectually, the soul falls into a condition which, so far as we can conclude from the character of the writings upon slates, can only be described as lamentable.

Some of them display a wisdom and a style, which possibly even Professor Wundt could not improve upon. Not infrequently they give an assurance of identity which removes all doubt on the subject from the recipient's mind. Now and then they are so far above the powers and the knowledge of the medium as to make the proof of their being independent productions very convincing. To say that without exception, "they are absolutely without sense," is to say what is absolutely untrue.

The objections of Herr Wundt remind us of those that used to be made to the pneumatological experience of his countryman, Kerner. He was ridiculed just as our critic would ridicule now the sayings and the writings of spirits; and here is what Kerner replied to his assailants:

"It is difficult for the so-called intellectual to believe in spirits that do not show themselves spiritual. According to them every man after his death, should arrive at the intellectual eminence of a Hegel. But now come spirits, trifling and foolish, and spirits like those who caused the distress of Provost. In such spirits it is impossible for the learned and intellectual to believe; and such apparitions are to them only the product of a sick fancy."

We commend Kerner's remarks to the attention of Herr Wundt. They were written long before modern Spiritualism broke out in America, but they deal with the same objections that are raised to the present phenomena. The important question is not whether the communications are silly, but whether they were produced under conditions justifying a belief in their spiritual origin.

Prompt Reports.

Secretaries of meetings and all agents who take subscriptions for this paper, should send in their reports, names of subscribers and remittances, with dispatch. In some cases several weeks elapse, much to the annoyance of subscribers, before returns are made to this office.

Which is the Better Spiritualist?

Which is the better Spiritualist—the man who having an accurate knowledge of certain phenomena, fearlessly discusses all difficulties and objections, rules out all that is doubtful, and repudiates all that is tricky, come from what source it may,—or the man who nervously objects to all kinds of testing, lest he should be shaken in some part of his faith, and who swallows everything lest he should have to reject something that he has held on to as precious?

The man who estimates spirit agency aright, should, after once convincing himself of the wonderful fact, be anxious to put it before the world in such a form, and hedged round by such conditions, that sincere, liberal, and unpreoccupied minds will be profoundly impressed by the credentials with which it presents itself.

The man who is certain of the genuineness of the phenomena, will be quick to meet all objections, and will not get more than you ever expected. The dons of science must seek in a humble, child-like spirit before they can get satisfaction. "They must do as we have done."

The man, so secure in his knowledge of Spiritualism that he fears no "exposures," is ready to meet all objections, and would rather be certain of the objectivity of simple independent movement than have experience of a hundred doubtful materializations, is surely a safer guide in the search after truth in Spiritualism than the man who wants us to accept his own intuitions as the sufficient warranty for the genuineness of the phenomena.

It is to this challenge that Wundt replies, he having witnessed a few of the Slade phenomena under conditions not the most propitious. He confesses he cannot "express a conjecture" as to how these phenomena were produced. He believes, however, that they were "well-managed feats of jugglery." On this assumption, since he is excluded from denying that a real, objective phenomenon is a thing for scientific investigation,—he bases his whole argument for the unscientific character of the phenomena.

Scientific Fact.

In his attempt to prove that science is something that shifts, like "shifting sands," our critic of the Chicago Times remarks:—"Science now esteems its ignorance in the first half of the 19th century no more highly than its ignorance and inhumanity in the latter half of the 17th; how shall it in the 20th look upon its vaunted knowledge of to-day? Not as medicine exceptional among the sciences. They all are experimental. They must always be so. The geologist of to-day laughs very heartily at his brother who was firmly convinced that the world was only 6,000 years old."

The best medical authorities do not regard medicine as strictly speaking "a science." To a very limited extent, scientific certainty may have been arrived at; but in the use of drugs, with very few exceptions, medicine is purely experimental; it is not scientific. For this writer to say that "all sciences are experimental" is merely equivalent to saying that they are not yet sciences. Since geology has become a science only within the present century, it would be a very puerile exhibition of hilarity for the geologist of the present to laugh at his brother of a hundred years ago for believing that the world is not so old as geology proves it to be.

Change of Front.

Some three weeks since a culmination of differences occurred in the office of the Independent Age at Alliance, Ohio, and Rev. B. C. Flower was summarily deposed from his editorial charge. The moral tone of the paper had for some time been rapidly declining. We noticed tendencies some months since which we felt certain would lead to serious trouble and a lowering of the tone of the paper.

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