

The Postum.

For the Religio-Philosophical Journal.

The Future Life. What Evidence have we of it.

A Discourse by Mrs. Cora V. Daniels, Delivered at Harmonial Hall, Washington, D. C. Before the First Society of Progressive Spiritualists, Dec. 6th, 1868.

(Photographically reported by S. Barrows.)

INVOCATION.

O, Thou Infinite spirit, we lay our offerings of praise upon the shrine of thy love, that all our thoughts may be of truth, that our souls may be attuned to thy harmony...

This morning it was announced that on the occasion of this evening's discourse, the audience would have the opportunity of selecting a subject.

The following subject proposed by a gentleman in the audience was put to vote and adopted: "The Future Life—What Evidence have we of it?"

Theodore Parker once said before his congregation in Boston that the consciousness, that the sentiments of immortality, the hope of it, the idea of it, must proceed from innate consciousness.

Intellectual arguments are as sought, and physical evidence falls to the ground. You cannot by any possibility receive evidence of things that are in themselves positive affirmatives.

There are a class of subjects in the universe of which there is one that is like a mathematical proposition. It may be elucidated, elaborated, expounded in its parts, made clear and apparent; but it must prove itself.

There is no thinker, no scientific man of this day but that believes in the eternity of mind, for mind is life. The only question to be decided with that class of minds is the identity of the individual mind, the "you" and the "me" in that future state, and the various stages of that existence.

Now to make this clear, we state as a proposition which cannot be successfully contradicted that no individual, thinking, ever doubted absolutely, wholly, in toto, a change of existence of mind, but all liberal thinking minds have doubted and continued to doubt the alleged form of that future existence, and it is upon this, and not upon the proposition of immortality itself that the discussion always ensues.

Now, in one word, we can decide the question of immortality. Matter is a compound and yet it is alleged by science that the primate substances of matter, the actual primates themselves are not destructible, no matter what changes occur, or through how many ages they may have existed, that there is absolutely no destructibility to ultimate atoms; hence, that matter itself is eternal.

Now, whatever mind is composed of, as these learned gentlemen do not pretend to decide, whether it is a sublimated condition of matter, whether it is the result of organization, whether it is a function, as the outgrowth of matter, or whatever subtle theory fascinates them by its delusion, it must be proved to them that if sublimated or refined, it highly perfected or organized, the substance of which mind is composed must be immortal.

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that it is not composed of any other substance or thing; it is not the result of matter; that it cannot be combined, destroyed, created, produced, or in any way affected by the change of matter except in its manifestations.

With this proposition, we commence our argument concerning the future state. For mind you, if mind is the result of any combination of the physical body, the product of organization, when that organization ceases, the mind also must cease. If it can be shown that organization produces in any instance mind, instead of mind producing organization, that instant the plea for immortality ceases.

Then we begin with the starting point that the first proof of the future state rests with the proof of this state. You all have evidence of your existence here, and it is not simply the evidence of the senses. Were every sense closed; were you blind, deaf and devoid of taste and smell, if it were possible to conceive of a human being thus constituted, still would the spirit, the mind strive in some manner to give evidence of its being.

But before falling back upon this we will state other arguments not a priori but a posteriori, which are in favor of the future existence of the soul.

First: the testimony of the senses and this must of necessity be predicated upon actual sight, hearing or other occult evidence. Now, when we state that except through material agency, no material human being has ever seen, heard, felt or in any way perceived the spirit, we do not refer to the perception of the mind, but we mean physically. For instance, that your physical sight is not accustomed to, you can it discover the existence of a thought in the atmosphere, while the brain more active and readily attuned, can sometimes perceive a thought before it is uttered.

because science to day has reduced these things to absolute knowledge, and you know that they are controlled by laws, by the general mind of the universe. But when decided, distinct positive evidence has taken place, you know that it must have been given by decided, distinct and positive mind. There are only two sources whence human intelligence, capable of being understood by human beings, can proceed.

The legends of the Indians, the Zend-Avesta, the Koran of the Mahometans, the various books of the East Indians revealing their communication with the spirit Vishnu, and the power and perpetuation of the divine life, all give a series of manifestations called physical, tangible, and upon these are predicated their religion. The Hebrew record is entirely predicated upon the account. Its religion is upon various supernatural (so called) manifestations, whereby a spirit or spirits (so called) communicated distinct, absolute, and decidedly human thoughts to the leaders, Ramesses and Moses.

Then we have the traditions from the aboriginal nations of the surface of the globe, whether the Sandwich, or the Feejee Islander, the remote Japanese or your own North American Indians, to show a simultaneous corresponding idea prevalent through all the world at the same periods of time concerning the future state.

If you reject the testimony of past ages, of historians, of biblicans, of Christians, of Hebrews, of Indians, Persians, Japanese and North American Indians, then you must believe the testimony of your own people; educated in your own way, subject to the same methods of thought that you have been subject to, and equally capable of belief with yourself, and that is this: That there is in the world to-day, a class of manifestations called spiritual, by which it is shown that intangible insensuous objects manifest intelligence, consciousness, senses, identity, and this is uniformly, absolutely without any control, voluntary or involuntary, of persons that are still in the body.

These manifestations, however, may not suffice since the spirit can only be reached through spiritual phases and forms of evidence. Hence come the intellectual evidences that this same chair or table, or perhaps, the child's hand or a person's hand is automatical to write, that a slate and pencil are placed under the table and words and sentences thereon written and signed in the name of a person that has lived in this world; that every where uniformly and without preconcerted action, these manifestations claim to be the work of departed spirits; that every where uniformly and without preconcerted action, and almost simultaneously, they claim to have lived in this world, and now have an identity. They give for their proofs of identity, their name, place of residence, who were their friends, what their occupation was, how long they have been dead. Their methods of thought are embodied, their manner, form of expression and finally in the intellectual phases of the control of the human mind by the other something, it comes to an entire and palpable evidence of their personality.

along the various religious believers of every age, and without this proof that corroboration would not exist. This is the proof that comes to the senses. It is positive, undeniable, absolute, that things move without human contact, that the manifest human intelligence, that they claim to be human identified beings.

Again, this intelligence communicating now, and the intelligence visiting. Jesus, and John upon the isle of Patmos, and the apostles and the sycens of old, claimed to be a departed spirit.

Now this is an affirmative proposition and unless it can be disproven, it remains a fact until it can be shown that a discourse, a communication, an utterance, a manifestation does not proceed from a given source when it claims to, there is no room for doubt or question.

In the vast recesses of the earth, nature's storehouse is filled with everything that is demanded for human comfort or progress. Beds of coal, layers of iron, veins of gold and silver, islands of precious gems, vast seas of oleaginous fluids are stored away by the great hand of nature for human use, whenever an age or epoch in human history has required them.

science, commerce and national progress that two continents should be thus bound together, if it was important that the power of steam should be made the great burden bearer of the world; if it was important that the magic fluids and forces of nature should light simultaneously large cities, then can it be possible that the Great Conservative Power of the universe—the Divine Benediction—the Great Power that has laid in store all these wonderful treasures for human use, has left one question, one longing, one desire, more important than all, unsatisfied, unanswered?

"To make this plan complete, this geometric ratio certain, there must be another star yonder, beyond the reach of our telescopic range of vision."

"Somewhere in all this range of spiritual truth, there must be a means of communication between the two worlds. The gateway of death must be unbarred and there will be discovered a mental telescope, whereby we can see the fixed star of immortality gleaming and know that it is there."

Greatest and best of all, and divinest evidences, is that which comes to the human spirit in its hours of exaltation, in its moments of intuition, and inspiration, when it is brought directly in contact with the upper world. There is no questioning, no setting aside, no pushing away. The senses may cry deception, the intellect may say it is false, but the spirit, calm in the majesty of its own intuition and certainty, rests upon the mountain top of truth and says: "We know whereof we testify." It is not blind faith, it is not fictitious logic. It is the certainty of absolute knowledge, that causes every human spirit to shrink away from error, darkness, oppression and bigotry.

Such, in brief, and only in brief, are the evidences to be adduced of the future of the soul. Of them all, and of their various bearings, we have not time in one brief hour, to discourse upon.

No atom fades. The sea girt shore
Filled with its waves of drifted sand,
Seems singing on forevermore,
And bows its white locks on the strand.
But every grain is counted there,
And every atom hath its place;
God knows in his all-potent care,
Each grain of sand, his life can trace.

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