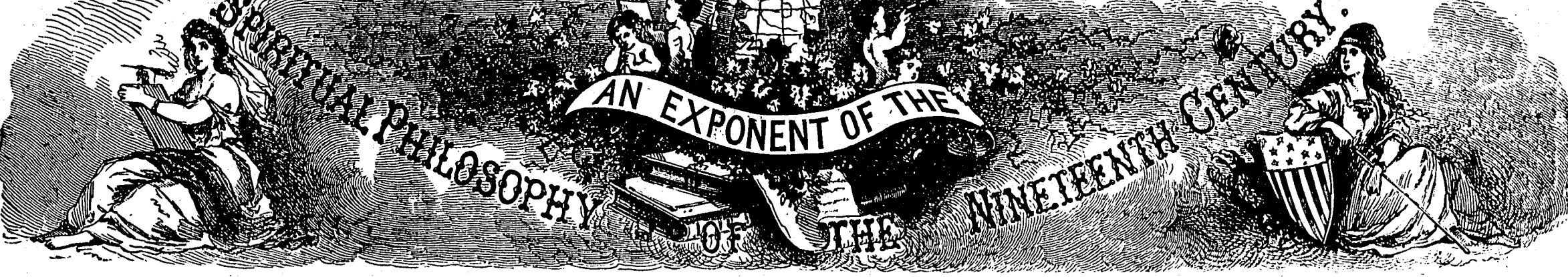


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Original Essay.

MAN'S FORWARD MARCH; REGINA VS. SLADE; "E PUR SI MUOVE."

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

Passing events call to mind those of history, and challenge comparisons, favorable or the reverse, as to actors and actions—deeds done and the doers. Just now, in the matter of the prosecution of the case named at the head of this article, before an English magistrate in Bow street, London, the civilized world is brought face to face with such an event. Viewed independently of cases similar, in some of their characteristics, of which the past has left its record, this prosecution and the final judgment of the court must evolve varied and conflicting emotions in the mind of every reflective individual who knows, and therefore accepts, the fundamental truths of Spiritualism. As regards the victim of this latest manifestation of scientific and theological intolerance, there will be the deepest sympathy for his undeserved sufferings, mingled with unalloyed admiration for the patience, meekness, magnanimity and general noble bearing he has manifested under the heavy hand of persecution. With this there will be burning indignation and disgust toward the petty magistrate who, in the name of Reason, Law and Justice, has, by his rulings and decisions, so outraged each; so befouled his official robes that in coming years Shakespeare's ideal Justices, Dogberry and Shallow, will stand out, in contrast with him, as glowing lights of juridical propriety and philosophy. At the same time there will be a feeling of humiliation and shame that such an exhibition of superstitious ignorance and prejudice is proved a present possibility, in a land claiming to stand foremost for independent thought, knowledge and toleration. As an isolated case, it tells only too sad a tale of the continued power of hoary Bigotry over a people who boast of having long since broken its chains.

Considered by itself one cannot fail to notice, and contrast, also, certain characteristic exhibitions of the chief *dramatis personæ*; notably the flippant yet stupid remarks of Justice Flowers, and his almost supercilious manner toward counsel for defendant during the trial. The positive, pompous, pettifogging language and conduct of the opposite attorney, and the self-exalted, pharisaical manner and assurance of the two prosecuting (persecuting?) witnesses, make (or at least certainly will make in the light of the calmer "by-and-by") an unenviable showing, in contrast with the dignified, unpretentious demeanor of the accused, both in and out of court.

Nor there, nor anywhere, does any one detect aught of the bluster, boast, conceit or pretense of the trickster or sleight-of-hand showman, in either word or deed of Dr. Slade. Simply denying all prevarication, he quietly awaited the issue with all the coolness and resignation of conscious integrity. Indeed, in order to get accurate measurement of the height, depth, length and breadth of the outrage perpetrated under cover of law, it is only necessary to read the letter written by the Doctor to Mr. Burns, in the height of this persecution—a letter so frank, gentle and childlike, yet displaying, withal, such dignity, manliness, charitableness, and love of all human kind, that it would do honor to the heart of any philanthropist or Christian missionary who ever labored and suffered for the good of his race. Of course, the pursuers of Dr. Slade, and opponents of Spiritualism generally, will only mock at this letter, and stoutly assert that in penning its touching allusions and humane professions he was only "playing a part," just as in other days certain learned, wise and pious ones (in their own eyes) pronounced the professions of a more exalted personage hypocritical, and mocked at his agonies on the cross, even while He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

But, mortifying as may be the fact that such a prosecution could be, and could thus terminate, in a civilized country, in this year of grace, one need not go far back with the comparisons it suggests, to learn that it is no more an index of the present way of bigotry and intolerance, than it is a *milestone* marking humanity's progress toward untrammelled inquiry and perfect toleration; and he will soon be ready to exclaim, as

did Galileo, rising from the bended knees upon which a like superstition had bade him do penance and deny the truth, "E pur si muove"—"it (the earth) moves for all that!"

By such comparisons as have been and are suggested, and only thus, may we arrive at the proper estimate and real significance of this singular affair; and, in making such, it is not wholly inappropriate to use this very case of Galileo, though others, occurring a little earlier or considerably later, will more palpably demonstrate what would have been the fate of Dr. Slade had he then, instead of now, lived and been put upon trial for the acts of which he stands accused. Galileo managed to escape with his life; other instances, "more in point," as lawyers say, show that no such leniency could have been anticipated, or hoped for, by such an offender as Dr. Slade. For him the sentence of the court would have been the well known formula of the Inquisition—so tender, yet so terrible—"Let him be punished as mercifully as may be, without the shedding of his blood;" which meant burning at the stake!

Thus these instances most strikingly declare and deplete the forward march of the race. Let it not be objected that the examples selected are hoary. Time is but eternity made present. It ever was, ever must be. Therefore the very longest period that can be limited by years is comparatively but a moment. Two, three or four centuries are less significant still.

Only two hundred and forty-three years carry us back to the noted trial of Galileo. We behold him, in the presence of the officials whose voice is law, both in science and religion, on his bended knees, clothed in sackcloth, with his hands upon the Gospels, compelled, at the beek of Christianity and the popular learning of the period, to confess—yea, swear to a LIE! What is his crime? He has dared to investigate—think—speak for himself. He has boldly opened hitherto sealed pages of Nature's book, and revealed in their revelations! Having greatly improved, possibly invented his telescope, he points it skyward and sweeps the firmament. Lo! stars unnumbered, before unknown and unsuspected, burst upon his enraptured vision!

He turns upon his own moon. Hills and vales are interspersed over its face, and mountain peaks relatively loftier than any of earth pierce its skies! Bringing his instrument to bear upon the plane of Jupiter, behold! our moon is not alone of her kind, but four others, in solemn, silent, eternal rounds attend upon this monarch planet of our system!

Imagine his ecstatic emotions as these wonders of the heavens repay his determined search! He cannot but proclaim such results. Moreover, as he reflects upon the motions of his newly-discovered worlds, as well as those of the primaries, he sees that the geocentric theory, though sanctioned both by the schools and the church, is baseless; and he openly espouses the Copernican system. This is the sum of his offending; but it is enough. The church pronounces his theory blasphemous; the astronomers of the old school charge him with falsehood! History does not relate that they made this charge in the terse, gentlemanly (?) language of Dr. Donkin to Mr. Slade. They had not progressed to the polish of this "M. B. of Oxford"; but it does give us some glimpses of their blind bigotry that may explain their severity.* Thus, we are informed, "some exclaimed against the impety of scooping out valleys from the fair face of the moon; some attempted to explain away the satellites of Jupiter, as mere appearances, caused by reflected light; while a professor at Padua urged that as there were only seven metals, (?) seven days in the week, and seven apertures in a man's head, so there could be but seven planets!" "Even when forced to admit the visibility of the satellites through the telescope, he reasoned that being invisible to the naked eye they were useless, and consequently did not exist!"

According to the history, as remembered, other scientists and ecclesiastics were more consistent, though perhaps not less obstinate, than the Padua Professor, and from first to last stoutly refused to look through the telescope at all. Such evidence was unworthy of the least consideration, and they would have none of it, thus establishing a most pointed precedent for the guidance of the Bowstreet Magistrate in Slade's case, which, it seems, he religiously followed, by firmly refusing in advance to hear any evidence tending to show the verity of Slade's asseverations! "What! suffer proof to be made that the alleged manifestations in this fellow's presence are realities, occurring in perfect accord with eternal, though newly discovered law!" "No such frivolity before me!" says this modern justice, and gravely thrusts his thumbs in his ears, just as those, his prototypes, in the confidence of their perfect wisdom, shut their eyes to the revelations of the telescope!

To return briefly to Galileo: The clergy thundered from the pulpit against both his telescopic discoveries and his theories. One of them, designing, it may be, to be particularly caustic, took for his text the words, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking up into heaven?" So far as known, this sermon does not survive; but undoubtedly at the close of it, in the opinion of the preacher, if he had not utterly demolished the telescope and its owner, he had at least proved the one to be a *necromancer*, and the other an implement of the Devil!

What the clergy chiefly decried was, "the great wickedness of sending our world spinning through space"; in other words, Galileo's advocacy of the heliocentric theory. This was arrant heresy, the rankest blasphemy! "Did not Scripture plainly teach that the earth, in the centre of the universe, stood still, while sun, moon and stars wheeled daily round it, with ceaseless motion, save when some Joshua commanded a halt?" It was this denial of the accepted dogma of the Church, this advocacy in its stead of the system which shortly after became and has since been the accepted theory of the civilized world, which Galileo was required so humbly to forswear, thus saving his life, at the same time satisfying his conscience, as is said, by uttering, in an under tone, as he rose from his knees, the sentiment already quoted.

Should it occur to any that there would seem to be in Galileo's conduct some "paltering in a double sense," perhaps such may properly be reminded that undoubtedly he, remembered the tragic fate of Giordano Bruno, just thirty-three years before, or during the youthful years of his own life. Bruno's offence was almost literally the same. "He advocated the Copernican system, and taught that space was infinite, filled with luminous and opaque worlds, many of them inhabited." For these heresies, the Christian Church pursued him with relentless fury; but with him there was no such word as "recant," although he apparently made great efforts to spare the Church the guilt of his blood. Thus he was driven and fled successively to Switzerland, England, France and Germany, on account of his scientific opinions. Finally, as if desperate, he returned to Italy. There he was immediately thrown into prison, where for six lonely years he was permitted to see neither book, paper nor friend. Still proving true to his convictions, he was then turned over to the Inquisition, and after two additional years of imprisonment, was tried, convicted and sentenced in the usual form, "to be punished as mercifully as possible, without the shedding of his blood!" Full well he knew that these mocking words meant that he should be burned alive; but he received the sentence not only without quailing, but, says the history, "he remarked to his Judges, 'Perhaps it is with greater fear that you pass this sentence upon me, than I receive it.' " "He was burnt at Rome on the 16th of February, 1600," and, adds the history, "his tormentors, jocosely observed, as the flames shut him out forever from view, that he had gone to the imaginary worlds he had so wickedly feigned."

With the atrocious fate of Bruno vividly in mind, and especially in view of the many indications which Galileo could and doubtless did observe, that the day of the final triumph of his views was sure, and but a little way in the future, it is not very extraordinary that he, in his old age, took counsel of discretion and made the confession which alone saved his tottering limbs and silvery locks from the flames. But whatever may be thought of Galileo's conduct, this martyrdom of Bruno, (which but for his humiliation the former would have shared after him,) showing how mercilessly both Church and State—then usually one power—dealt with heresies and heretics, abundantly proves what would have been the fate of any one then put upon trial, accused of the acts and pretences now charged against Dr. Slade. Then, as now, the tribunal would have "felt bound to give him the extreme limit of the law"; but then that extreme limit would have been death by *fagot* or *gibbet*, and not, as now, brief imprisonment and bodily toll. Thus does it appear how significantly this Bowstreet trial stands as a milestone marking marvelous human progress.

Indeed, in the days of Bruno, and even a century later, cases were not lacking, but numerous, strikingly similar to this of Dr. Slade save in their horrible bloody endings. Only a cursory review of the history of sorcery or witchcraft during those times will illustrate this. Meantime what of Dr. Slade? Kind friends have come to his aid, and by becoming his sureties, have removed his cause to a higher court, where perchance wiser authorities will expound the law. Is justice sure there? Remembering that he is to be tried in a country where an Established Church is more powerful than its Queen, and where the Christian religion is declared to be a part of the law of the land,* are there no reasonable grounds for apprehension? A voice seems to say, "Watch and pray, but, above all, WATCH!" CHAS. CASE.

Washington, D. C.

*See Blackstone, Book IV., chapter IV., p. 50, and cases there cited. Of course if genuine Christian principles, as taught by Christ, and only such, were declared to be parts of the law of the realm, it would be matter of congratulation instead of apprehension. But it is the Christian religion, as understood by Protestant Orthodoxy, that is made law, and that religion is scarcely yet well rested from its horrid labors in burning and hanging witches.

Our belief is not so much volition as has been supposed; we view the same things from entirely different standpoints; hence we [Spiritualists] cannot expect unity of belief, for the obvious reason that each looks at things with their own, not with other people's eyes. We make this assertion, that Spiritualists agree upon more cardinal principles than do the hundreds of sects who claim the Bible as the basis of their belief. We go further, and say that churches in our country do not believe the creeds to which they have subscribed by uniting with the various denominations.—Rev. Samuel Watson in American Spiritual Magazine for January.

In France, England and America tabernacles are not forbidden, but in Saxony (Valais) it is. A private party, assembled in a hotel for their own amusement, were waited upon by the Commissary of Police and three gendarmes; the former notified them, "This is forbidden, because it disturbs people's minds and causes disturbance in families; besides, those who do these things are all a parcel of idiots. If you continue turning tables you will be condemned to three years' imprisonment, or at any rate expelled from this country."

Spiritual Jottings.

Matters in California.—The Philadelphia Conference.—Organization.—Dr. J. E. Bruce.—Jesus, the Spiritual Leader of Men.—Religious Culture.—Letter from India.—Mrs. Britten's Ghost-Land.—The Decline of Universalism.—A Clergyman's Despair.—Success in Life—Away to Foreign Lands.

BY J. M. FREEMAN.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

If my comfort is consulted in Heaven, Christmas and Fourth of July will be entirely dispensed with. The confusion, horn tootings, fire-crackers, explosions, cannon-thunderings, and hoodlum riotings, all vex and sorely try my Christian patience. But Christmas is past—and 1877 is upon us. Let the dead of the old year bury its dead; while *we*, the living, should turn over each a new leaf in the "book of life," keeping it clean and white unto the end.

It is now nearly two months since I reached California, and I have seen neither a drop of rain, nor a cloudy day. The fields are green, and the yards full of flowers. The country charms me.

Petaluma.

This flourishing California city, some three hours ride by steamer and railway from San Francisco, sits like a beautiful gem, rimmed around by ever-green hills. Invited here to visit, and deliver a parlor-lecture, I was the guest of Col. C. P. Hatch and lady. Entering the residence of this family of excellent Spiritualists, I passed beneath an arch of cedars. The garden was rich in roses and other flowers. Under the eaves of the house there hung inviting clusters of grapes; and on the apple-trees were large and delicious apples. The Colonel owns the only iron foundry in the place. Mrs. Hatch is a superior healing medium.

CITY MEDIUMS.—MRS. ADA H. FOYE.

Though receiving the cards of Dr. Matthews, Mrs. French, Mrs. Breed, Mrs. Hindee, Mrs. Jeffreys, and many others, I have found no time to attend séances, except those given to the public by Mrs. Ada H. Foye in Charter Oak Hall. These are truly wonderful. The controlling intelligence, so far as I have observed, never fall of giving tests. Her séances are held in the light, facing large audiences. The telegraphic rappings can be heard very distinctly through the entire hall. A committee holds and opens the ballots when the communicating spirit is present. Names and messages are written out through her hand backwards and rapidly. Hearing spirit-voices clairaudiently, she speaks them, giving wonderful tests. The public and private séances of this lady, while encouraging believers and confounding skeptics, convert scores of skeptics. She should visit England and Russia.

The medium or mediums that have had their trials in the Criminal Court, have gained, at least so far, moral victories. "They have appealed to the Higher Court. Evidently the law requiring mediums to pay license for practicing their mediumistic gifts is unconstitutional.

Mrs. H. F. M. Brown, recently lecturing to fine audiences in Santa Barbara, is on a flying visit to San Francisco. Dean Clarke is speaking, so the papers say, with great success in Sacramento City.

GHOST-LAND.

Through the kindness of Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten, I am just in receipt of this volume from a European author—a volume treating of the mysteries and marvels of Occultism, and of that measurably hidden world of spirits and their influences. I shall reserve the reading of this book till I ship for Australia and India. It cannot fail of being deeply interesting. By the way, many are the encomiums that I have heard pronounced upon Mrs. Britten's recent article in your paper, entitled, "Who's to Blame?" Many Spiritualists are just waking up to a consciousness of their past blunders. Never a truth perished. A sound, rational and religious Spiritualism is destined in the end to wear the victor's crown.

THE PHILADELPHIA CONFERENCE.

Is the testimony against it all in? If so, may I speak? The human body, so full of life and vitality, is a striking symbol of organization, while a putrid corpse aptly illustrates non-organization and death! It is painful to see persons taking the corpse-side of this question. Spiritualist editors generally, if not all, favor organization. It was the primal purpose of the Philadelphia meeting, to take initiatory steps looking to a national organization in the future—that's all!

On general principles the matter may be thus summed up: rioters, mobs, Ishmaelites, tramps, and egotistic irrepresibles violently oppose organization; but the family relation, the school district, the library enterprise, the Masonic fraternity, the collegiate institution, the village corporation, and the National Government, protecting life and property, all testify to the utility and necessity of organization. Since July I have organized six Spiritualist societies, and aided Dr. Watson and others in organizing the Tennessee State Association of Spiritualists. To talk organization is something; but to organize—to do substantial work in this direction, is infinitely better. The worker wins.

DR. J. E. BRUCE, THE TERRORIST.

More than a score of years have come and gone since I first clasped this gentleman's hand. At this time he was too liberal for the liberal (?) denomination that utilized his talents. The sect could not hold him; the shell—the Universalist shell—was too small. Meeting him, Dr. Watson,

and other progressive souls, in Philadelphia, the opinion was broached that the time had come to more thoroughly vitalize the life of Spiritualists, and, measurably, if possible, cement them into one broad, national fellowship. But merely how this movement frightened the most valiant in our ranks! The offending passage was this: "Jesus, the spiritual leader of men."

One of our writers, criticising this sentence, says, "Jesus of Nazareth is not nor never was the 'spiritual leader of men.' Mohammed has twice the number of followers, and Buddha three times as many." Such blunders excite sorrow rather than smiles. The German Schleier's late statistics make this estimate touching the world's religions: Mahometans, 96,000,000; Roman Catholics, 139,000,000; Greek Church, 62,000,000; Protestants, 60,000,000; Buddhists, 170,000,000.

But what was meant by the phrase, "The spiritual leader of men"? Let Dr. Bruce be his own commentator. Listen:

"In those who have discovered a capacity for scientific knowledge we recognize the natural leaders of men; so in the other class of great geniuses, who have founded religions, and exhibited capacities for religious things, we recognize the spiritual leaders of men; and of these, judging them by their fruits, and trying them by the civilizations which have followed in the wake of their lives, we place Jesus Christ at the head of them all."

Summed up, it was meant to be said at the Philadelphia Conference that "among the spiritual leaders of men, Jesus Christ was the superior!" But each of course must judge for himself.

When Jesus said, "I am the vine and ye are the branches," he did not mean that he was a Palestinian grape-vine, and the apostles bending branches and clusters of juicy grapes. So when this growing class of Spiritualists speak of the "leadership of Jesus Christ," they do not mean the avoidpious, the physical body, the mere personality of the Nazarene; but they rather consider Jesus Christ the personal symbol of that divine truth, that divine love, that *Christ-principle*, which as naturally enlightens, sanctifies, and saves as the sun shining upon makes flowers bloom and golden harvests wave.

I STILL HOPE.

Hope to live long enough on earth to see all Spiritualist writers, lecturers and exhorters discriminate between theology and religion; between fatalism and optimism; Darwinism and evolution; sectarian and Christian; preexistence and re-incarnation; between the spirit-world and the celestial heavens; between a moral creed and a "free moral agent," and between a creed that cramps and a platform that enunciates and elucidates great principles.

THE "NEW MOVEMENT." KIMS.

While those assembled at Philadelphia said emphatically—"We seek after all knowledge, scientific, moral and spiritual! While we study the truth and dare maintain it, our immediate objects are to organize local societies upon a financial and religious basis; to cultivate love and charity, and to become mutual helps in uniting our scattered forces." And while they further said we unanimously vote to call ourselves "The National Conference of Spiritualists," there are those who persist in calling that body "The Christian Spiritualists of America," who, met to "get up a new sect," &c. I believe in the new birth—believe that the badly born should be born again; born more truthfully!

THE "NEW DEPARTURE."

It meant departure from death, and stolid indifference to life and spiritual activity; from frothy words to generous deeds; from demolition to judicious construction; from irreligious scoffing to religious aspiration and culture; from curiosity-seeking to practical righteousness; and from suspicious and slanders to the practice of those nobler virtues that dignify and adorn humanity. A departure from old, worn-out methods; from useless memories; from thread-bare issues; from old feuds, old grievances, old disputations, and the dry, plague-stricken fields of thought, into the sublime principles and heavenly practices of the Harmonical Philosophy! Will such a departure as this be apt to harm any one?

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE SPIRIT.

It is as natural for inspirations to touch and gild the life-lines of the unselfish, as for jewels to glitter along the stony paths of the interstellar spaces. But, though inspired, the best, the most royal-souled, sigh for more completeness, more wisdom, more love. There are seasons in my life—hours of aspiration, when the loves of the angels baptize me into an ecstasy akin to that known among the martyrs and the white-robed in paradise. Those souls are happiest that love most; that love purely; that love unselfishly; that love all! This I denominate the love-fellowship of the spirit. And those who have come into this clear, pure atmosphere, can look through idiosyncrasies, through diverse opinions and opposing methods, finding the character, the manhood, the angel that is to be. There is in the world too little appreciation of noble endeavor, if that endeavor chances to be made among those who conscientiously differ in their opinions from us. Bigotry is just as unwarrantable in a "Liberalist" as a Romanist, and superstition is just as hideous in a Spiritualist as in a sectarian. The coming Saviours must be constructionists; builders of better things; fraternal lovers of the races; brothers of the humanities; Jesus was termed our "elder brother." Greeds soften and melt away under the influence of love. "By this," said Jesus, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another."

NECESSITY OF RELIGIOUS CULTURE.

The savages of the stone age were more superstitious than religious. It is impossible to write

or vote religion out of the human soul; for down deep in the divine depths of every cultured personality there is a sense of the Infinite—a consciousness of the immortality that links humanity to the very heart of God.

Spiritualists need more religion—not sectarian theology—but religion, "pure and undefiled." If men's heads, like animals', were flat upon the top, religion would be to them a meaningless term. Man, more than a brute, is an aspirational and worshipful being. And while intellectual truth satisfies the reasoning faculties, it does not feed the spiritual affections. A geological lecture would be badly out of place upon a funeral occasion. Religion, derived from two Latin words, means to bind anew—to bind fast—or otherwise to spiritually attract the soul to the principles of truth and justice, love and holiness.

The following golden sentences appeared editorially in a late number of the Banner of Light: "There is a deep sense of the necessity of the true-life-giving principle in every heart. It is religion that can bring that activity into man's nature. Let us keep in view the fact that religion must needs take and keep the lead in the history of the world devoted to the good or evil of spiritual truth, but alas! these days are gone. What the fiery sword of the bigoted Mogul Emperor, Aurangzeb, could not compass, English policy and English civilization are fast achieving. With the decay and death of our Brahminical nationalities our nation is becoming servile imitators of mammoth worshiping England. The famous Professor Fay, left here a few months since. We anxiously await your second advent into our country; for it can but once more revive the long-lost Spiritualism in a nation once glorious; but now alas! fallen and down-trodden. Do not delay your coming. The books you left among us when here before have proved as seed sown on anxious soil."

How true that "knowledge leads nowhere of itself," and equally true that knowledge is not the world's Saviour! Often the most knowing are the most wicked men. A few months ago there were in Auburn State Prison over forty graduates of colleges. Did their knowledge save them? Is not wisdom better than knowledge? And is not Christ better than a knowledge? The over-achieving Christ—the Christ-principle—is the world's Redeemer.

WHAT A BRAHMIN WRITES ME.

Before me lies a letter, in which Mr. Mitra, of Calcutta, India, says: "Our Shastras—religious books—abound in spiritual manifestations, and our Rishis—saints—were but so many clairvoyants. Never was a nation in the history of the world devoted to the good or evil of spiritual truth, but alas! these days are gone. What the fiery sword of the bigoted Mogul Emperor, Aurangzeb, could not compass, English policy and English civilization are fast achieving. With the decay and death of our Brahminical nationalities our nation is becoming servile imitators of mammoth worshiping England. The famous Professor Fay, left here a few months since. We anxiously await your second advent into our country; for it can but once more revive the long-lost Spiritualism in a nation once glorious; but now alas! fallen and down-trodden. Do not delay your coming. The books you left among us when here before have proved as seed sown on anxious soil."

THE DECLINE OF UNIVERSALISM.

Though John Murray was inspirational, and the potter that built the Universalist church in New Jersey a hundred years ago mediumistic, at the present time Universalists are more sectarian, more bitter toward Spiritualists than the Methodists, or the other evangelical denominations. Drs. Miner of Boston, and Brooks of Philadelphia, want Congress to "put God in the Constitution." Is it strange, then, that there are less Universalist churches, and less ministers in Boston and in other localities now than twenty-five years ago? Something like a quarter of a century since, I was frequently traveling through the boundaries of the Cayuga and other Associations in Central New York. Then all the churches were occupied, and the societies flourishing. Rev. J. M. Austin edited the Christian Advocate, and the Rev. J. H. Harter, now a Spiritualist, was the general agent. About this time occurred the famous "Austin and Holmes debate." Of the Rev. J. M. Austin, who frequently vents his spite at Spiritualism, the Rev. J. H. Harter is prepared to speak. The Rev. David Holmes's wife died in the Auburn "Home of the Friendless." The Rev. Richmond Fisk preached in Auburn; was then President of the Universalist College in Canton; then a pastor in Grand Rapids, Mich., and then a fulfillment of Bro. Harter's prophecy. In Auburn, N. Y., the Universalist church drags. In Binghamton, the church was burned, and has not been rebuilt. In Upper Lake, the Universalist church stands vacant; in Cortlandville, vacant; in Homer, vacant; Fabius, vacant; Howlett Hill, vacant; Mottsville, vacant; Scipio, vacant; Geneva, vacant; Farmersville, vacant; Genoa, vacant; McLean, vacant, or occupied by the Spiritualists; and so in other portions of the State of New York, and in other localities West. In this glorious Pacific State they have but one society of any account, and that meets in a hall. When the Universalist sect adopted a creed, snubbing its Britains, Connors, Smiths, Barretts, and other progressive souls, it took a death-blow from which it has never recovered. The philosophy of their theology has progressed considerably since Ballou and Whittemore's time. Only a few of their ministers now preach that men tumble into glory through the grave; or that

Outstrip his Lord, and get to heaven first."

A UNIVERSALIST MINISTER'S DESPAIR.

When in Binghamton, N. Y., last autumn, I met not only the Rev. William Delong, one of my old co-workers in the Abrahamian faith, but the Rev. E. E. Guild, one of the best men and soundest thinkers in the Universalist denomination. Bro. Guild said while conversing with Bro. J. H. Harter in my presence—"I have no knowledge of any future existence." Bro. Harter pressing him pointedly, asked: "Well, have you any belief in a future life?" "I have no belief, no opinion about it," replied the Rev. Mr. Guild. The confession was so frank and manly that I penned it down, then and there.

The apostle Paul, an inspirational, speaking and writing medium, says: "God will have all men to be saved and come unto a knowledge of the truth." Mark the phrase—"A knowledge of the truth." He would not have them come to a hope of the truth, to a belief of the truth; but to a knowledge of it. And this is just what Universalists have not done! They walk by faith, and stumble while they walk. If they would investigate Spiritualism under favorable conditions, they would soon come to a "knowledge of the truth" of a future existence, and the progressive restoration of all humanity. But as they now stand, they constitute, as touching a knowledge of a future existence, a denomination of know-nothings! On the Pacific Coast they have one society, worshipping in a hall. Dr. Miner's visit, as a regulator, did no good. Popery is not popular in America.

THE CHARTER OAK HALL.

The society of Spiritualists here assembling each Sunday, is organized according to law. Mrs. Matthews, a most excellent and energetic lady, is the president. The Lyceum is prosperous. My lecture-engagement has been exceedingly pleasant, no discord, not a jar! With many of the old substantial Spiritualists, I have been in the hall during the past two months, Universalist

and Methodist clergymen, the editors of the Musical Review, the Figaro and the Golden Dawn, the Hon. Mr. O'Sullivan, formerly our American Minister to Portugal, and others noted for culture and erudition.

My city stopping-place in the Griffith family, brought about by spirit-direction, has been a most fortunate one. It is a home of quietness, confidence and harmony. Mrs. Griffith holds a Life-diploma from the California State Board of Education. And while Principal, at the present time, of one of the city public schools, she finds time to write for the press, act as secretary for two or three reform societies, manage her stocks, and supervise the affairs of her household. Believing that every woman should be self-sustaining, she does not willingly and everlastingly talk about "woman's rights," but takes her rights, and resolutely conquers every obstacle. Such incarnations of energy and self-sacrifice reveal the glory of womanhood.

A RETROSPECT.

Casting a retrospective glance over the past twenty years, with its shadows and sunshine, its partial defeats and grand victories, I feel that upon the whole I've been blessed beyond all blessing. Life with me, in its best sense, has been a complete success. There have been just enough thorns to give me a relish for the roses. For every sob, I've heard a score of songs, and for every frown, I've seen a thousand smiles. Saying nothing here of the artistic aid received from Mrs. Peabody, nothing of Government positions, nothing of my connection with learned societies in this and foreign lands, my solid work has been in public lectures, journalism and book-making. This latter field is widening. My work increases.

Of falsifiers, sneaks and scoundrels, I've nothing to say. They die away into forgetfulness, gorged with the filth they have fed upon. Sincerely pitying them, I pass on. The noblest souls of earth (Socrates and Jesus, Swedenborg and Wesley, too trusting, too believing,) have warned serpents into life. These, seeking to sting their benefactors, stung themselves to death. Such is God's retributive justice!

Wiser from past observations, my intuitions were never so clear, my inspirations never so uplifting, my health never so robust. This latter I ascribe to the watchful care of guardian angels and to careful obedience to the physical and moral laws of my being, the one giving me vigorous health, the other a clean conscience.

My trust in God, my faith in the saving power of Christ, my admiration of the Harmonical Philosophy, my knowledge of spirit-ministries, my efforts to aid the really needy, my charity for the unfortunate, and my love for universal humanity—all deepen as I near the silent valley of the dead.

Patience! do I wait for the angels that know me to kiss down the lids over my eyes, and whisper, "Pass through the pearl-gate"—the gate of life—into the golden gardens of immortality. And then let none say, "He is dead!" but, rather, "He has left a world too doubtful, too cold, too selfish, for the happier Isles of the Blest."

San Francisco, Cal., Dec. 30th, 1876.

Free Thought.

IS SPIRITUALISM A RELIGION?

BY W. E. JAMIESON.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

Brother J. M. Peabody is anxious to give our Spiritualism a "religious bias." He thinks mediums would escape fines and imprisonment if they would make Spiritualism their religion. I do not think there is anything to prevent all Spiritualists, who choose to do so, organizing themselves into a religious body. Let them organize by all means. It is strictly in accordance with the right of private judgment. Brother Peabody, I believe, would not favor an organization of Spiritualists as a religious body if they did not sincerely believe Spiritualism to be a religion, although the advice of the San Francisco lawyer might imply this, and thus do injustice to Dr. Peabody.

If Spiritualists are religionists, it does appear a little strange that they have not organized as such. But we are not alone in this. Many "new Spiritualists" generally are solving the necessity of these things—of giving Spiritualism a religious basis.

It appears to me that it will be useless to whip Spiritualists into religious traces because of the dangers which threaten them. I know hundreds who would not join a religious body to escape either physical or mental tortures. They could not do so conscientiously. They would as soon think of joining an Orthodox Christian Church. Must they be "fined and imprisoned" because they are atheistic, infidel or anti-Christian Spiritualists? Who would punish them? Religionists!

When we remember the sad scenes of which history tells of the fines, imprisonments and tortures which religionists have visited upon non-religionists and anti-religionists—we cannot feel much surprise, after all, why so large a percentage of Spiritualists have been reluctant to organize themselves into a religious body. Those of them who did, a few years ago, have, for the most part, and are now especially lecturing and writing against Spiritualism's being burdened with the nightmare of religion. The very fact that men and women can be fined and imprisoned in countries where religion is most prevalent, where even the so-called "free" form of religion is the predominant opinion, Christianity, a system whose cognomen is so beautiful, in the judgment of some of our friends, that it has been seriously proposed to prefix it to naked Spiritualism as an adornment to unadorned beauty—is a powerful argument against its adoption. If Spiritualists can escape "fines and imprisonments" as plain Spiritualists, as men and women, as citizens of the American Republic, they will, I opine, soon to accept peace by the adoption of any title that will render them less obnoxious to their enemies. Hypatia, the glorious woman-scientist of the fifth century, might have saved her life had she consented to accept the Christian name. If, with the "History of the Conflict between Religion and Science," so grandly and faithfully depicted by our eminent American chemist, John W. Draper, there are any Spiritualists who wish to organize themselves into a religious association, that is their right. If Spiritualists generally see the necessity of such a Christian-Spiritual or Spiritual-Christian, or Spiritual-religious or Religious-Spiritual Church, will be the largest in America.

We who remain outside, because we are not religious, must continue to be targets for the saints' artillery.

In America, where there is no Church-and-State union, nobody ought to be "fined" or "imprisoned" by religionists; the only way under heaven "left them to escape from which, being to re-turn-religionists themselves!"

"YOU'RE THE COACHMAN FOR ME!"

The late attempt to switch Spiritualism off upon the side-track of Christianity reminds me of a little story: An English nobleman—the narrative runs—wished to engage a first-class coachman. In response to his advertisement there was a crowd of applicants.

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GENTLEMEN—"How near can you drive my coach and four in safety to yonder precipice?"

COACHMAN—"Within a foot!"

G.—"You will hardly answer."

CROWD WAITING OUTSIDE—"What did he say?"

G.—"I told him I could drive four-in-hand within a foot of the precipice, but that is not good enough driving for his lordship."

SECOND COACHMAN—"I can drive your lordship, at the crack of the whip, within six inches."

G.—"Must do better than that!"

CROWD—"Has he hired you?"

SECOND C.—"I offered break-neck speed within an inch, but that does not satisfy him."

THIRD C.—"I drive within a hair's breadth!"

The fourth applicant was an Irishman (of course), who assured the lord that he would "keep as far away from the precipice as he could," upon which the cautious gentleman joyfully exclaimed, "You're the coachman for me!"

Some of our brethren to make it appear that Spiritualism and Christianity are so near alike that no one could tell them apart. My labors have been largely to show that they are as wide apart as the poles. I am in favor of keeping Spiritualism as far from Christianity as possible.

If our Christianized Spiritual friends will re-peruse the earlier writings of A. J. Davis, they will find that the "Pongheepie Seer" prophesied of this crisis in Modern Spiritualism with more definiteness than Jewish oracles predicted Israel's woes. Bro. Davis also gave timely warning to the Spiritualists of America to beware of the churches. I could give a summary of Davis's prophecies that would consternate the thousands of Spiritualists who regularly doze in Orthodox pews. They have gone back to feed on Orthodox husks, on the pretence that prominent advocates of Spiritualism have befouled this beautiful temple of the angels; as if the stables of Christianity, dating from the manger of the year One to the present, could be so easily befouled.

Your editorial on the New Movement and its New Departure is full of good points, and expresses the sentiments of nearly all the Spiritualists I have met in the West. As you remark, "We have shown the effort to be abortive."

Macquay, Minn.

THE PHILADELPHIA CONVENTION.

To the Editor of the Banner of Light:

In your issue of Dec. 23d you devote two columns to what you are pleased to term "The New Movement and its New Departure." I do not feel disposed to enter into any controversy with anyone in regard to the action taken by the Philadelphia Convention. I think our time and strength can be better spent against our united enemies, than warring among ourselves. But to remain silent when I see such erroneous constructions put upon our action as has been done, would manifest an indifference incompatible with what I owe to those with whom I was associated on that occasion. If that Movement be a "dead letter," as you said sometime since, which was quoted by the Religio-Philosophical Journal, and now reproduced by you in your copy from that paper in its reply to my short explanation, why waste so much ammunition upon friends while your enemies assail you on every hand? You say, "As proof that we are not alone in the idea that the prime point in the new enterprise was the forming of a sect, read the following extracts from an editorial of the Religio-Philosophical Journal of November 18th, wherein Bro. S. S. Jones replies to a letter from Rev. Samuel Watson, President of the Philadelphia Convention: 'Now it seems to me if you had quoted from my letter as well as from Bro. Jones's reply to it, your readers would have understood the matter better. Or if you had published the "Platform," "Statement of Aims" and "Declaration of Principles," which are not half so long as the quotations you make, your readers would have been better prepared to form a correct opinion of the action taken by the Convention, and of the intrinsic merits of all this, as I think, useless waste of time and labor.'

"That editorial which you copy, says that we 'have simply culled the spirit of the Winchester creed' and 'have not even branched off from the Universalist Church.' Having never seen that creed, I am not prepared to say anything in regard to it; but I am prepared to say that we did not adopt any creed whatever. The members of that Convention were as averse to creeds as the editors of these papers. I remember well that the report of the committee of nine appointed to prepare the 'Platform' and 'Declaration of Principles,' but that the Convention was so averse to creeds that a motion was made, I think by a lady from Washington, to strike out the word 'Christian,' and insert 'all,' which was unanimously adopted. That your readers may see all that was done, I copy from the official report the following:

"The afternoon session was opened with prayer by the President, Dr. Watson. Minutes of the morning session read and approved. Declaration of Principles being called reported the following statement, which, after being freely and critically discussed, was, with some slight verbal alterations, unanimously adopted:

PLATFORM.

Whereas, We, Spiritualists of America, in Conference assembled, do hereby declare that we are united in our faith, in our moral duties, and in our sacred obligations, conscious of a future existence made more clear and tangible by the revelations of the spiritual world; and that the genius of true Spiritualism, with its convincing demonstrations of immortality, is in consonance with the teachings of Jesus Christ, as recorded in the New Testament, and feeling the necessity of organizing ourselves into a religious body, we do hereby, on the one hand, and on the other from all creeds that tend to enslave and fetter the human soul, hold that the time has come for a new effort and action.

STATEMENT OF AIMS.

While we seek after all knowledge, scientific, moral and spiritual, we do hereby declare that we are united in our faith, in our moral duties, and in our sacred obligations, conscious of a future existence made more clear and tangible by the revelations of the spiritual world; and that the genius of true Spiritualism, with its convincing demonstrations of immortality, is in consonance with the teachings of Jesus Christ, as recorded in the New Testament, and feeling the necessity of organizing ourselves into a religious body, we do hereby, on the one hand, and on the other from all creeds that tend to enslave and fetter the human soul, hold that the time has come for a new effort and action.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES.

We recognize in Jesus of Nazareth the spiritual leader of men, and accept his teachings of love to God and love to man as constituting the one ground of growth and development, and the only and sufficient basis of human society.

We ask our friends to look this minute through; we did there, and have since, and yet we fail to discover any creed. Nor can we see that "it language has any meaning. It was clearly set forth in the Declaration of Principles, and it is in the form, and upon the basis of Christ as the spiritual leader, was to them the panacea for every ill known to the spiritual dispensation."

Here we state in our "Platform" that "the genius of true Spiritualism, with its convincing demonstrations of immortality, is in consonance with the teachings and spiritual marvels of Jesus Christ as recorded in the New Testament." Does any one question this?

In the Declaration of Principles occurs the assertion that we recognize in Jesus of Nazareth the spiritual leader of men, and accept his two great affirmations of love to God and love to man as constituting the one ground of growth—

"If that be treason," said one, on an important occasion, "make the most of it." If to love God and fellow man, which Jesus said is the fulfilling the whole law, be a creed, then set me down as one who advocates a creed. And it is about all the creed I have ever advocated, and the one that was contemplated by the Convention.

In regard to the name, here is the record of the minutes:

"Considerable discussion was had respecting the name of the New Movement. But a hearty and unanimous agreement was reached that this was a question which ought to be referred to the settlement of the Delegate Convention next year. And it was voted that this body for the present use the provisional title of 'The National Conference of Spiritualists.'"

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