



DAYBREAK.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE HISTORY, PHENOMENA, PHILOSOPHY, AND TEACHINGS OF

SPIRITUALISM.

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SPIRITUALISM 18 YEARS AGO.

MAN'S NATURAL POSITION IN RESPECT TO THEOLOGY, RELIGION, AND IMMORTALITY.

A PAPER READ BY J. BURNS AT THE FIRST CONVENTION OF PROGRESSIVE SPIRITUALISTS IN GREAT BRITAIN, HELD AT DARLINGTON, JULY 27, 1865.

The subjects of our discourse are as old as the mental history of the human race. The earliest legacy of our forefathers is their experience in theology and religion. In every age these have been the topics of thought and research, and the cause of much contention and bloodshed. Every nation or tribe has distinguished itself by the peculiar views of its members on these universal themes. Our land is studded with institutions for the perpetuation and diffusion of them, and their paid teachers absorb an incredible amount of the industry of the people. Notwithstanding these evidences, many affirm that neither theology, religion, nor immortality really exist: that the first is a wretched bugbear, keeping the human mind in abject slavery; the second, a mere arbitrary system of beliefs and ceremonies; and the latter, an indefinite myth and delusion. The incoherence, uncertainty, and vagueness surrounding these subjects, as popularly taught, have no doubt militated against their acceptance by many logical and powerful minds. Progress and investigation have been denied in this department of thought. Dogmatic authority has taken the place of reason and the teachings of nature derived from experience. The thoughts of the past alone have been consulted, whilst the great realities to which these topics refer, have been left uninterrogated. We mean to adopt a perfectly free and independent course on this occasion, and refer all our facts and arguments to the reason and experience of our auditors.

THEOLOGY DEFINED.

The subject, taken as a whole, may be divided into three self-evident and comprehensible parts. Theology may be termed a knowledge of the Causes or Sources of Life; Religion, the Conduct of Life; and Immortality, the ultimate Object or Destiny of Life. Theology is a knowledge of causes, and it ought to explain the origin, nature, and relations of all things, and the principles which regulate all manifestations of life and existence. In other words, there is only one science, and that is Theology; only one universal object of investigation, and that is Life.

Science has hitherto dealt mostly with external phenomena and transitory circumstances, but the human mind demands a disclosure of the arcana of causes, that operate eternally to the production of endless and diverse series of effects and phenomena.

As to a First Cause, the mind of man cannot conceive of anything as such, because we cannot conceive of a beginning. If causation and the medium, matter, through which it operates have been eternal, there is an ETERNAL cause, but no *first* cause.

The first cause and the last cause are one and the same; for if there was not an omnipotent and eternally omnipresent Cause ceaselessly operating, then Chaos would at once draw her sable mantle over the whole universe of formation, and there would be nothing to observe, and no one to observe it. A preceding effect cannot be the cause of a succeeding one. John's parents were not the cause of his existence—theirself being an effect—but an instrumentality by means of which the Eternal Cause again operated.

The universe is in every part alive, and has been living and thriving ever and ever. Everything in it is alive, and all members and portions of it are ceaselessly and industriously, hand in hand, with one aim and purpose, developing forms of life, life, life. There is no dead matter: all is animated with a great, intelligent, self-regulating soul; and we cannot imagine a time when this state of things did not exist,—when ideas from this interior, intelligent fountain were not being incarnated in forms and perpetuating an independent individual existence—types of the Great Original. Granting, then, this eternity of being to be a fact—that the illimitable, intelligent, vital, and divine vortex of all that forms, animates, and energises has flowed on for ever through matter, its external body or receptive principle—then we have an incessant series of vital forms, the result of the conjoined action of Father God, the positive or male principle, and Mother Nature, the receptive or female principle.

But though the human soul has been in course of organization and existence on worlds and spheres in central portions of the universe from all eternity, yet there must have been a time when the formation of man commenced in this recent portion of Nature's domains. Cosmogony and geology show that all minor forms existed before man, that forms of life could not exist without sufficient instrumentalities and conditions to produce them, and that man is the inevitable result of the Eternal Cause in its operations to individualise its inherent principles in material organizations. The Divine Soul or Life of the universe, inherent in our planet as a member of the body universal, could not at once manifest all its qualities and principles in forms of life. For countless ages its efforts were limited to simple motion. In course of time the association of atoms, secreted from the general mass under diverse circumstances, produced a variety of substances or products, partaking more or less of the general properties of the whole. It may be said that at first there was only one substance, and that destitute of properties; but the diversified forms of this substance, gradually produced, eliminated various properties

of matter, and hence a diversity of substances, which in turn were conditions for higher manifestations of the inherent life-principle. Thus elementary substances were gradually developed, producing a certain state of water, atmosphere, light, and heat; and from these conditions emanated the first forms of organized life. As these conditions improved, the products of life became more perfect, until animals endowed with complicated organisms and much intelligence prevailed. Every stage was a triumph, and each addition was a step towards humanity. No line can be drawn to show the place in the scale where the efforts of creative power culminated in the production of man. Races and countless generations of semi-human beings have existed and been swept away, with whom we could have no fraternal sympathy, but rather antagonism. Within the memory of history, many tribes have been blotted out, without any seeming cause; while mixtures and alliances of nations and tribes have produced higher and more vigorous types of humanity. The race is yet in an unfinished state of development; and types of men, now in the womb of the future, will realize possibilities of which, on our highest summit of thought, we cannot conceive. All things are as good as their conditions and circumstances will allow them to be.

Let man explain his own origin. He is called the microcosm—the little world, a type of the great harmonious universe. Observe the conditions that bring forth the diversified phenomena displayed in human life—Is the cause of them all not imbedded deep in the spiritual nature of man? To illustrate: The mammary and uterine apparatus was hidden in the bosom of the female since her first stage of fetal development, but it required time and circumstances to make that unborn infant a nursing mother, and thus manifest the power that lay hidden within the organism.

The little child lies unconsciously smiling on his mother's lap; in future years he becomes the poet, the maker of laws, the discoverer of principles, or the unfolders of our spiritual nature, and marks an era in the social life of the globe he inhabits. But were not all these possibilities in the child, yea, in the very germ from which he was produced, though the time had not then come for their manifestation? In like manner, the principles which are the cause of all forms and existences, have been in the nature of things from all eternity; and it will take an eternity of association, progression, and development for these inherent or divine principles to carry out their legitimate work of perfecting forms and individualities.

We now come to a definite idea respecting the nature and personality of God. We behold in him a person whose external figure Nature is, and whose soul is the origin and circulatory process whereby all forms are sustained and developed. The material and spiritual universe is therefore the only true revelation of God, and Reason is the great exponent of that divinely written book. The whole is constructed on principles of pure intelligence, and Reason is the only key to unlock the mystery and lead man to a knowledge of God.

We do not claim that the divine principles which emanate from the great positive Mind are equally represented in all nature. The inorganic world represents these principles in a low degree. In the vegetable creation we find active life added to what existed in the mineral. In the animal, we find sensation added to what existed in the plant, and, in the higher forms, intelligence also; but in the human soul all the principles and powers constituting the divine mind are individualized and represented. Hence, as the divine mind is eternal, so is its counterpart, the human mind. It seems to be the great object of the Universal Intelligence to individualize itself as often as possible, to labour unceasingly for the development of all matter into sentient, thinking, immortal beings.

It has been shown that in the nature and constitution of the human soul, the highest and fullest revelation of the divine mind is exhibited; therefore, to know God, we must become acquainted with man. It is a curious historical fact, that the God of all nations is a counterpart of their own state of mental growth; and when once we come to a true and scientific conception of the nature of man, we come to a sure and infallible means of determining the nature of God. In fact, a knowledge of nature, material and spiritual, is a knowledge of God; for it is only through this nature that God can be manifested or can exist.

A few practical observations may be deduced from this view of theology.

In the first place, the popular theological beliefs respecting God and his works, except in so far as the teachings of science are followed, are absurd nonsense. Things were not

created by an arbitrary act of divine will, but are a necessary consequence of the existence of this divine being. God, therefore, neither plans, condemns, revokes, nor justifies, as all His purposes were formed in the nature of His being from all eternity. It thus follows, that all things are in harmony with these purposes, being the result of them, and that there is no "devil," or contrary principle in the universe, but that all, divinely or absolutely speaking, is good; that God has at no time placed any arbitrary restrictions or injunction on man, or has revealed himself at any time in the special manner claimed by priests in their so-called sacred writings; that he neither judges, rewards, condemns, nor punishes; consequently, he knows no distinction between the good and the evil, the perfect and the imperfect, the clean and the unclean, the saint and the sinner; has no special love or hate, no crowns of gold nor lakes of brimstone. All things be they good or bad, just or unjust, bask for ever in the effulgent favour and paternal love of God. It is the most despicable ignorance to teach that God is at variance with men, or men at variance with God; that God is angry with them, punishes them for sin, or manifests to them favour or revenge. Mankind are doing exactly what they were intended to do, and could not do otherwise even if they would. It will be perceived that what is taught by the priests respecting the nature of God, and man's relations to him, is not only false and degrading to man, but ungrateful and blasphemous to the God on whose pretended service they fatten.

RELIGION DEFINED.

Religion is the conduct of life, the science of theology reduced to the art of living. Theology is of the intellect—is masculine; Religion is of the love principle—feminine. Knowledge goes before, with his lamp, and discovers the path; whilst Love, with her warm admonitions and aspirations, urges forward in the prosecution of it. Their twin influence in harmonious action is wisdom, and the religious life the result.

In this life and throughout eternity man is and will be surrounded with innumerable relationships, which it will be to his eternal advantage to properly maintain. He has also got a certain journey to pursue and object to achieve, which is the life-work assigned to him. In other words, man possesses a number of powers and faculties, each having a certain definite natural function; and the proper exercise of these, and their infinite development, constitute religion and duty. Man, therefore, serves God by serving himself, and helping his brother to do the same. What, then, is our guide in matters of religion? Why, theology, or a knowledge of man and everything else in the universe, as far as can be ascertained, and of the proper relations that should subsist between man and every thing and condition. The very elements exist religiously or irreligious, and it will be to man's safety and happiness to maintain a proper relation between one form of matter and another.

But man's knowledge is not perfect, nor is his organization harmonious; consequently, he neither knows what is right in all cases, nor has he the desire or power to achieve it. This accounts for man's present religious state. He commenced at the foot of the ladder of human existence. The Creative Power has been trying to make man from the time the atoms first congregated themselves into the prophecy of a future world which we now inhabit, and a perfect man has not yet been made. A lower form or manifestation of life preceded a higher, till organization became adapted to the unfolding of those principles which constitute the human mind. Some of these are only latent now, whilst others monopolize all life's power and energies. Religion, civilization, and other forms of mental action are, and have been at all times, in exact harmony with the development of the brain and physical temperaments. The base of the brain was developed first: man lived between his ears and behind his eyes; hence, to defend himself, provide for himself, and look out for gratifications and dangers, was all he did, or that could be expected of him. But the mental tree grew, in accordance with its inherent capabilities, and in course of time the social nature came into action; the perceptive brain collected and treasured up experiences; the constructive principle manipulated and applied; rude ornaments were the work of the lateral brain, and thus through many ages and successions of tribes, the steady growth of brain and refinement of texture prepared the way for the religious life, long before it was possible for such to exist. The same law holds good at the present day. Man's consciousness of things seen and unseen, and their infinite adaptations, is gradually increasing, and differs in every two individuals. There can be no harmony of action without

harmony of organization, and no happiness either; hence this view of man's religious position not only accounts for the diversities in the religious history of the human race, but offers the highest inducement to a well-regulated and progressive life, and visits with certain penalty every deviation from the normal rule of functional action. There is no vicarious atonement, no mysterious and special means of salvation. If you would improve your spiritual circumstances, you must adopt the means within the reach of all, of improving the conditions upon which a higher life depends. Our religion, then, is one of every-day life; its Argus-eyes penetrate deep into the motive and use of every act; it is the effort of the human mind to find out the will of God respecting all things, and the resolute and loving determination to live in accordance therewith.

The angel element in man comes through his coronal brain. When that is well represented, the moral and spiritual elements exist actively in the man, and he is capable of actions and experiences that constitute the religious life. Man is therefore naturally a moral, spiritual, and religious being; and instead of having fallen from that state, has all the time been approaching nearer to it. Blunders and shortcomings are a necessity in man's existence; it is through these that we by experience improve. Evil is comparative good, and the greatest good possible under the circumstances. Necessity is the parent of genius. Re-action of animal excess often turns the face of the soul towards repentance, and under the guidance of other faculties. Extremes gradually exhaust themselves, and religion consists in reducing to their proper limits all excesses and perversions, and giving those powers the lead that ensure progress and harmony.

True religion must, then, be the death-blow to existing rites and ceremonies. True religion is not a mystic rite, but a stern reality, based on science and regulated by intelligence. The human soul can be incarnated and successfully matured, even as the gardener improves his fruits and the farmer develops commendable qualities in his stock. The means of salvation and success are amply within the reach of man, if he had only the wisdom to apply them. This wisdom, and this application of it, constitute the only redeemer, and the only salvation that can shield the human race from the consequences of disobedience.

But Faith, it will be said, is an element of religion. True, and Hope, her sister, also, with Veneration as their chieftain and leader. These are the highest faculties of the mind; and when wedded to intelligence, and cultivated in harmony therewith, constitute the strongest intellect, and give the greatest harmony of life, certain progress, and permanent happiness. But look at the uncultivated and perverted action of this portion of the mind: how strongly it manifests itself throughout the whole human family, from the fetish worshipper to the fashionable church-goer. Without intelligence to direct these holy sentiments, their possessors are led to suppose that God desires worship in the form of personal attentions; that faith is a credulous belief in old cabalistic records and traditional stories, and that Hope must, in orthodox fashion, look out for a future inheritance replete with gold, gems and precious stones.

But in spite of man's perversions, the purpose of the Creator have been so far carried out, and this same moral brain has been instrumental in raising man hitherto. Even granting that it originates nothing, yet it gives us a consciousness of what exists. Veneration gives a consciousness of the sacred, the holy, and the superior in position and condition. Under the mellowing influence of this sentiment, the exercise of every function is sacred—all created for holy purposes, and every act is one of worship; the law of use governs the desires and passions, and a deathless aspiration exists for the sacred, holy, and pure; and the cry of the devout soul is, "Nearer, my God, to thee." Through this glorious faculty all men feel the universal fatherhood of God, and through it, the Almighty Parent leads all his children to Himself.

And faith is necessary too. The intellect explores the arcana of the future, and firmly lays hold of the eternal principles that satisfy the logical reason; but these are not proved by external evidences; hence, there is a moral eye, which from the faint glimmerings of partially developed truths, waits in trust for the result in the future. How beautiful are the adaptations of man to his spiritual condition, and what sublime causes for gratitude are found, the more deeply the mercies of Divine providence are investigated!

But what of prayer? It has been assumed by the religious world, that constant personal prayer is compatible with man's duty; but, from our remarks on theology, it will be perceived,

that to make any special effort on any one's behalf, so as to answer prayer, is incompatible with the nature of God. Man has got faculties which enable him to perform prayer after a thousand different fashions, chiefly dictated by his policy, cupidity, and selfishness; and, in some temperaments, by a pure desire and aspiration after supreme conditions. It cannot be denied that many minds get into the habit of prayer, and derive pleasure and benefit therefrom, for there is at all times pleasure in the exercise of a faculty; but experience, on this and other spheres, affirms that the highest exercise of the spiritual nature is in the thirsting aspiration for the better things of which it makes the possessor conscious, and a desire to use the right means to accomplish the end. It must be borne in mind that the ignorant and superstitious derive equal satisfaction, comparatively, from their rude and idolatrous worship, with their more cultivated brethren who use a more refined ceremonial; hence, the fact that there is a pleasure in it, is no argument as to its being a normal and ultimate act of the mind. But persons will come forward and declare that prayer has been answered. Yes, truly it has, and let us explain how. These glorious faculties are the "Jacob's ladder" upon which angels ascend and descend to the human soul, and it is through them that all inspirations are received, and communion carried on with the spiritual world and its inhabitants. The action of the spiritual brain is a telegraph message to the inner life, the same as the eyes send a quering glance towards the external world. In families of Spiritualists it is quite common for even the unexpressed questionings and desires of individuals to be answered by guardian spirits, through the medium present; and I believe that many noted individuals who have been engaged in benevolent works, and had their prayers answered in furtherance of their aims, were merely instrumentalities carrying out the schemes and purposes of higher intelligences; hence prayer, though directed to God, was a means of communication with them. This higher dome of the living temple of God in the human soul, is the greatest of all blessings vouchsafed by a loving parent to his children; and the greatest and grandest mission that could be inaugurated amongst men would be to make them conscious of the privileges they thus enjoy, and teach them to use the same aright. May we all as individuals often repair to this upper sanctuary, and ensure that mental harmony and influx of wisdom, which is essential to the spiritual growth and well-being of all; and, as a practical suggestion, there is no better method than the old one, of two or three meeting together in the name of truth, forming circles of love and wisdom,—recipients of blessings from the higher Brotherhoods.

We will dismiss the subject of Religion with a few controversial remarks. Religion is not a bribe, whereby to purchase God's favour, as artificial religionists seem to imply, but the legitimate exercise of man's powers for his own development. Man is naturally a religious being, and it is his nature to manifest it more and more. Hence, he is not a child of darkness, wrath, or of "the Devil," but of the Divine Father, and his upward struggles from the beginning prove his pedigree. Man may for a time be lost to his own interests, but, when he returns to himself and his own interests, he returns to God. God saves man through man, as each brother and sister is a missionary to the lower grades. Our joint capacity through eternity is that of student and teacher, quick to learn, apt to impart. Self-reliance, or the use of those powers within us, is duty to God and our highest service. Compared with God's simple and efficient method, the monstrous and impudent demands and postulates of priestcraft appear in all their hoary deformity. We need not dwell on a subject the details of which must be exceedingly annoying to our brothers who feed their souls on ashes from the altar of traditions and superstitions. Heaven speed the day when all such misdirected religious effort shall cease, and when humanity will be recognised as one great religious body, with a unity of aim and object, to the encouragement and education of all, and the exclusion of none.

IMMORTALITY, THE END OF EXISTENCE.

The third division of our subject leads us to a consideration of Man's Immortality. This we may term the end or destiny of existence.

There is a deep purpose running through the whole Creation—there is an object to be attained. During our consideration of the nature and sources of life, we arrived at the result, that as the human inmost is an epitome of eternal and self-existing principles, it is itself eternal and indestructible. Man is therefore, by nature, immortal, because herein consists the

object of his existence. The human soul is an organised structure acquired and developed during earth life, and this probationary term might not have been, if its fruits were to be ruthlessly squandered. Earth life may be compared to a period of gestation, and the transition to the spiritual life may be designated a birth into man's permanent, true, and normal state. It is to portray the conditions and realities of this sublime superstructure of human existence that Spiritualism is taught and fostered. Spiritualism is that greatest and most important branch of science which teaches us of man's eternal future. How many weary souls there are who would gladly know! How eager the mind is to comprehend these great and abiding truths, and how full of dark despair is many a radiant and intuitive soul, because of the shadow that ignorance and superstition have cast over this subject. To the mass of our countrymen it might be said, "O ye of little faith," why do ye distrust the purposes and finished work of the Creator? It is this living faith which the religious nature of man demands, and not a blind credence of historical incident and the dead phantoms of a buried past.

With a joyful faith, then, and overflowing gratitude, we assert that when the earthly tabernacle is no longer a healthy and fitting abode for the precious germ within, the event called "death" is God's kindest provision for man. We believe that the soul passes on to a solid, substantial, natural world. (Please bear in mind that the term *supernatural* is not in our vocabulary: so perfect, sublime, and holy are natural arrangements that they cannot be superseded.) The Summer-land of eternal human existence is, therefore, perfectly natural, and filled with natural, thinking, loving, acting, desiring, aspiring, kind, neighbourly, *real* men, women, and children. No miracle, no mystery. The soul feels at home at once, and comes in contact with objects that give exercise to its mental faculties. There is internal evidence in the nature of man to prove this. If man be immortal, all his parts and faculties must be. Though there may be considerable change in adaptation, man's faculties adapt him essentially to an objective state of existence, inasmuch as he must be eternally an object himself, or be nothing. Therefore, man's existence in the future state must be objective, corresponding with this. The great truth is—that God is God in the future even as now, and cannot contradict himself; man is man, and cannot be anything else; and God, man, and the material universe in all worlds, systems, and spheres, are parts and portions of the one great whole, animated by the same soul;—therefore, it follows that God's society, intellectual, moral, and physical arrangements will be analogous under all circumstances, and adapted to the nature of man. True, there will be a difference—there will be an improvement. The mind will have many objects of contemplation and purposes of action that are more in harmony with it, and which the spiritually-minded long for daily here.

But, you will ask, Will the good, bad, and indifferent enjoy equally and all alike? We answer, Do they enjoy equally and all alike here? Every creature in God's universe enjoys to the full extent of his capacity, and by enlarging that capacity he can enjoy wider, deeper, and higher. A holy and happy state, either in this sphere or the next, depends entirely on harmony of development and legitimacy of action of the inherent powers. These are the imps, devils, and angels of darkness that drive souls to misery. Each man's organic, parental, social, and educational circumstances regulate his present and mould his future, irrevocably beyond the anathemas and prayers of priests and moralists.

"But who will judge them to determine their state? Will not the 'righteous Judge' of holy fable arrest them in his fierce anger?" &c. No. Every man is his own infallible judge, and as he sows he must expect to reap. There is no condemnation, except in so far as man breaks his head against the sharp and inflexible edges of natural law. God's commandments cannot be "broken"; they only cut the hands of him who would misapply them. We have nothing to fear, either in earth or heaven, but our misapplication of those divine institutions that regulate and maintain order in all things. God does not require the services of a legion of devils, with a prime minister that far out-generals the Deity, to tempt poor human beings to commit blunders, so that they may know there is a right and wrong way. These black arts and devilish devices are the inventions of priests, who make a respectable competency by retailing indulgences, atonements, prayers, bread crumbs, drops of water, and sips of alcoholic beverages, administered with a peculiarity of countenance, voice, gesture, and dress, as antidotes to this supposed evil influence. Any intelligent mind who follows

out the line of investigation that has been presented above, will be ready to admit that all this is not only absurd and expensive, but also hurtful and degrading to both priests and people, as it keeps society in ignorance of the cause of the evils that afflict it, and their true remedy, and therefore it is a crime against divine truth and human happiness. This is a deep and settled conviction in the souls of progressive Spiritualists, and challenges their warmest effort for the spread of truth and real knowledge on man's nature and future. No good can come of believing lies and practising falsehoods, but the worst results and the keenest sufferings, which we daily see visited on those, whose moral faculties have been perverted by the dogmatisms of mythology.

As to life, enjoyments, and occupations in the Summer-land, these are determined by individual attractions. The intellect will survey nature, the aspirations will seek holiness, the affections society, and benevolence to do good; each and all according to the influence which these departments of mind have upon them as individuals. But notwithstanding the false allegations of commentators and divines, man's natural affinities are to do good and be good, to gain the highest acme of development, and aid his brothers and sisters in the same direction. This, therefore, is the only legitimate employment of the human soul. All others are merely means to the end of existence, whilst this is the end of that existence. It is in connection with this thought that we as Spiritualists base our distinctive teachings. We believe and know that the inhabitants from various globes, much more advanced than the inhabitants of ours, mingle in the innumerable societies of the Summer-land. Their whole aim is to develop man. This world receives a share of their services. No great reform manifests itself amongst men here, but has been discussed and projected from the missionary societies of the upper life. Some men are only instruments—unconscious instruments of the will and purpose of these high committees. Political, moral, religious, and scientific reforms are originated and aided by their influence and counsels. All of us are intended to take an individual and distinctive part in the history of our race. We, each and all, have a mission to mankind as well as to ourselves. This truth is lost sight of by the multitude; but let this great and normal thought take possession of a human soul, and he is at once *en rapport* with the missionary bodies above. His work of love will prosper in his hands far beyond his expectations, and a fountain of original design will spring up within him, that will add the purest pleasure to his existence, and be an occasion of surprise to himself.

The eyes of love watch over us by day and night. Many of us are conscious of the watchful attendance of these loving guardians. Many families have the advice and warning of these bright bands. This is the true and legitimate function of mediumship. Every human being will yet be a medium to receive influx from higher spheres, and it is a question in how far they are not so now. Mediumship is not for public display, except in so far as it can be of use. Its chief purpose is to derive individual spiritual development, from those exalted minds who vouchsafe instruction. In this light it is one of the most powerful elements of education, and enlarges the mind and exalts the feelings in a great degree.

Some one will be ready to ask if all spirits are thus good and humane. Our reason corroborates the statements of seers, that in the other world individuals are pretty much the same as they are here. The change called death does not transform people or alter their identity. "As the tree falls, it lies." The other life is a prolongation of this. There are vindictive spirits as there are vindictive men. Mediums and others who are susceptible to the approach of spirits are often assailed by rude and undeveloped ones, and sometimes suffer much. But these dark spirits can be reclaimed and improved. They have frequently been instructed by conversation at circles, and higher spirits act as missionaries to them. These low spirits are undergoing privations, equivalent to the "hell" of theologians and "punishment" of moralists. Their want of capacity for high enjoyments is a great source of their misery, and their inharmonious conditions are the result of unfavourable circumstances in earth life. There is a great incentive to a righteous life in the fact that no sin is forgiven, that the consequences of every act adhere eternally to the actor, and that all such are only remedied by a proper course of motive and action. The great gain is to endeavour to attain on earth purity of motive, truthfulness of life, and that manly humility that is thankful for further light and instruction.

It is generally understood that the spiritual manifestations are produced by spirits of a very low order, and that no spirit

can communicate if more than a degree above the plane of the medium; hence superior intelligences have to use mediums in the spirit world as we do here, to enable them to communicate. The messages usually received by undeveloped and bigotted circles are crude in thought, and narrow in conception, and by such circles are too often believed in with an absolute faith, and quoted as final authority, and even the Spiritualist papers sometimes outrage common sense by printing them. Relatives often give messages to their friends on earth: all good wishes, religious admonitions, and affectionate regards. The sphere of thought in which the various spirits exist is thus wonderfully represented. Several mediums may be in the same room, and give communications in merit wide apart as the poles. Progressive circles, where the love of truth and humanity finds an atmosphere, are visited by spirits of like nature, who aid them in their congenial efforts; whilst the blind and narrow sectarian finds confirmation in his vices by the teaching of his familiar spirits. Those who contend that truth is a matter of authority, find fault with Spiritualism because of the contradictions taught by the communications. But this shows their ignorance of the nature of truth and of the spirit world. Each spirit there, as here, defines truth according to his conception of it, and the great use of all teaching is to enable us to form an independent conception of our own, and not be led by authority. This will be a warning to all to judge for themselves, and not trust implicitly to the teaching, of spirits, further than they agree with experience and reason. Many give up a belief in church ceremonies to swallow each word of their favourite medium, than which nothing could be more reprehensible, or stamped as superstition. This also explains why men of so many different shades of thought are embraced by the comprehensive term of "Spiritualism"; but this term, as used here, it will be perceived, means very little; and much more is needed along with it, to make it avail much in human development. It has also been observed that believers in creeds and artificial forms of religion, are oftentimes deceived by spirits, and such individuals are always telling you confidentially how much they are troubled with bad and low spirits, and what fool's errands they send them on; but when the members of such circles get their minds opened up to the truths of nature these unpleasant results disappear. In fact, these ludicrous farces are oftentimes played by friendly spirits, to destroy the weak credulity which keeps the minds of their earth friends in bondage, and precludes all chance of progress.

We would like to speak of the conditions that induce mediumship, and of the mental developments that, phrenologically speaking, give a consciousness of spiritual existences. We have met with many individuals, not Spiritualists, who had the most certain consciousness of the spirit world and its inhabitants, and we have, at times, been able to tell them of it, from their temperament and the form of their head. We, therefore, hold, that intercourse with spiritual beings is a normal act, and natural function of the joint power of minds in this and the spirit world. We believe it to be a high function, the exercise of which, though yet in its infancy, is a great privilege. But though we attach great importance to Spiritualism as such, we believe that its advantages are a thousand times increased by the state of mind called "Progressive." We believe that man's state is eternally progressive; that each epoch in existence is a stage in a never-ending journey towards better things, in which every latent desire of the soul will be satisfied, and every power called into conscious exercise. There are radical minds, standstill minds, conservative minds, liberal minds, bigotted minds, enlightened minds, and advanced minds, and there are now and again in the world "PROGRESSIVE MINDS," and their number increases. This we consider to be the normal state of the human mind, and one that is in harmony with the purposes and destiny of his being. As Progressive Spiritualists, we incorporate two terms in our designation, and we attribute the preponderance of influence to the first term, as the leading feature in all minds who have blessed humanity with the riches of their labours; and the associate of heaven-born Spiritualism, which twain, by a beautiful philosophy, shall yet lead all mankind to see the truth.

The subject is not exhausted, but time will permit of no more being said. We have not spoken authoritatively, nor, perhaps, in all points, accurately, but we hope our remarks will lead to independent thought and investigation, and thus free the human mind from the thralldom of hereditary dogmas, on these most important of all themes, and place them on a firmer and more intelligible footing.

THE SPIRIT-MESSENGER.

THE CAREER OF A FRENCH PATRIOT.

A CONTROL BY "LEON GAMBETTA."

Recorded by A. T. T. P., July 21, 1883.

[The Medium, who in trance dictates these communications, is an uneducated working man.]

The Sensitive, in trance, said:—

If we can judge by the companions of a man, as to the class to which he belongs, like as a Highland chief is judged by his followers, or an Eastern potentate by the long tail formed by his attendants, then this one should be one of earth's worthiest sons. Were he not attired in modern dress, I should at once place him amongst the giants of old; his form towering above those who accompany him. The words of the ancient writer occur to me, that there is nothing comely in his face, nothing that fastidious beauty would desire. But, wait: there is the calmness of conviction. His hair flows on his shoulders. One eye seems to take in those few surrounding him at a glance, and to measure with unerring accuracy you and myself. The other eye seems glazed and fixed. A smile tender and loving wreathes his lips. He places his hand on my head, and breathes through it. His breath is like the cool summer breeze, refreshing, yet undisturbing.

Here the Sensitive went under control, and said:—

Good morning, Monsieur. Ah! wonderful day; the brightest consummation of soul hope; greater than all earthly successes: washing in the waters of Lethe, the memories of earth's most bitter sufferings. My earthly sufferings were bitter, and with a bitterness that only a born patriot can experience.

Leon Gambetta gives you greeting; a born republican; and for this moment he gives God thanks.

I heard with some spirit of amusement the personal description of me, given by the person whose place I now occupy. Neither was I surprised at the summing up as to my bronzed face, or at the comparison between my flowing locks and the cropped heads of the youth of these present days. "The calmness of conviction" was settled on my face; so ran his description. Yes, and the principle of this conviction was the love of Fatherland; a love imbibed at the mother's breast; a love which continued with me in the happy days of boyhood and throughout my student's career.

Here I shook hands with the medium, welcoming "Leon Gambetta." He continued:—

I do not wonder at your clasping hands with me. Your generous soul would have bounded at the hopes which were mine in those happy student days of honest work, and of patient earnest endeavour; for I aimed at distinguishing myself in the service of the country I loved so well. Then it was the fashion for the students to engage in debate, and to try their powers of eloquence, one against the other, in the private room of our favourite Cafe Procope. It was there that I first entered into public debate; filling up the time the early part of the day as an advocate, and also contributing articles to the principal journals on subjects literary and political. I became, in due course, a correspondent of a journal named "L'Europe," and was enabled (in fact, it being part of my duty) to attend the sittings of the Corps Legislatif. It was there that was born within me the conviction, that we were under the rule of a venal Empire, under a government, which was willing to barter away a nation's welfare rather than lose place.

The principal incident of my political successes and sufferings are matters of modern history. You will remember, dear sir, the Government courted the attack. You will remember, also, the immense gathering that wended its way on foot and in vehicles to the Cemetery of Montmartre, there to do honour to the representative of a downtrodden peasantry Bourdin, and you will also remember the arrest, that took place at this open defiance of the Imperial Government. My friend, De la Cluse, the Editor of the "Reveil," gave me the opportunity, on his arrest, of ventilating the crimes of the Empire and the wrongs of my countrymen. I said:—

"Who have you for a despot? One without honour or talent. Who, I ask, are grouped round him? Not patriots; not lovers of the people. You, the Master of France, our children will ask you what you have done during your seventeen years' experiences of absolute power? Where is their country's honour, entrusted to your keeping? Where is her treasure and her glory? You, who would support anarchy, and keep up accusations against patriotism; for sincere and loyal democrats are patriots in the truest sense of the word; they have no desire nor ambition beyond justice and liberty. Their claims rest on reason; your power on bayonets."

Then came that honoured day, when Paris elected me to a seat in the Legislature. Many looked with an ill-concealed cynicism, on the grim, ill-dressed, begrimed representative of what they were pleased to call "the drags of the populace," and they waited, ready to heap ridicule on the hideous one-eyed

monster. But scoffers were silent, as I took my place on the extreme left; and those who had promised to be the readiest with their jokes, looked, doubted, and were silent.

Then came the question of asking the consent of France to an empire already self-condemned, by tinkering up that which had brought nothing but woe and misery on France. No wonder that a true republican should laugh to scorn a power continually appealing to a people to ratify the position they had usurped; but the corruptive influence of the Napoleonic dynasty had borne its inevitable fruit, and they appealed in every quarter, and throughout every province of France, for that prerogative of manhood, universal suffrage. In every quarter and every province I raised my voice, and bid them turn their weakness into strength by uniting. I told them that democracy was weakness without discipline; that the sublimity and excellency of democratic principles required order and discipline to make them known. Those at the Palace were amazed and alarmed. Despite the words of warning of Mons. Thiers, that veteran statesman, they raised that suicidal crime, "au Berlin." They would rather enslave the French nation, and obliterate its standing amongst European powers, so that they might save the dynasty.

Driven back at every point, until the crowning misfortune was reached at the capitulation of Sedan, and the last of the Napoleons, with that nonchalance which is born of callousness, alone proceeded to a residence at Williamstown; leaving behind him ruin and devastation. A press despotically swayed had spoken of victory, until necessity compelled them to speak the bitter truth, that the army was captured; and France laid prostrate at the mercy of her foes.

Paris was excited, maddened, and alarmed. Jules Favre at once declared, that Louis Napoleon Buonaparte and his family had forfeited the power conferred on them. Not a voice was raised in their favour. He proposed a Council of Government and natural defence, and it followed, in due course, that the republic was proclaimed from the Hotel de Ville; my office being Minister of the Interior. I prayed that the spirit of her ancestors might strengthen the arms of France, and animate the souls of her sons. The victorious armies of Germany surrounded Paris. It was necessary that the provinces should stir themselves, that we might obtain honourable conditions. I passed the lines, that kept jealous watch around her city, watched prayerfully by my countrymen; and as I sailed over these lines, I was watched curiously by those who would have given a prince's ransom to stay my aerial flight.

An army demoralized, a city besieged, our trust was alone in the God of battles. I found the Provinces in despair. I instilled hope; until the treachery of Marshall Bazaine seemed the last straw on the camel's back, to carry out the misfortune that was visiting us. One hundred thousand of the sons of France, through the dishonour and treachery of their officers, were lost to France, and Metz, the wonder and admiration of all nations, was polluted by the occupation of an enemy. But I dared not be terror-stricken; I dared not to be despairing. Detested by the old loyalist Generals for my principles and my birth; with an empty treasury, a lamentable want of ammunition, no artillery-men or horses; yet I taught the Generals that they were but servants of the State. I raised an army that, to-day, could take the field against any army of the same number. But the fiat had gone forth: my beloved country was to be dismembered, despite of the blood and the money that the Provinces lavished so freely.

The expiation demanded by man, how different from that demanded by God! What could vivify the life and energy of dismembered France?—the mutilated lands of our France? Three millions of Alsations and Lorainians were divided by the German, and made subject to King William. Who can give provinces away? Can one man of an assembly? Can even an assembly itself? France belongs to every son of France; therefore none had a right to concede; none the right to force annexation.

Then came that dark age, or interval, when I thought that France's chivalry and heroism had passed away for ever; when France lay stunned and bruised on the ground; when a voice bid me "Rise, and raise France once more. Organization is wanted. Away with all that is unfair to the labourer and the peasant. Do not chain a man down to be a brewer of wood and a drawer of water, with no other hope, swayed about by clerical fears, victims of rumour and traditionary legends. Make men of them, and so shall you re-make France. The school-master must drill them, side by side with the drill-serjeant. Thus you will make a nation of patriots, and if you have to wait ten years or more until you regain that which a merciless foe has taken from you, the end will surely come. The need now is organization, or, I should rather say, re-organization. Raise this bulwark of Patriotism; be firm; be energetic and industrious, and your name will be carried along the tide of time, and honoured amongst men yet unborn."

I asked not from whence this voice came, whether from heaven or earth, or from what unseen source it came. It was to me a voice of heavenly counsel; chasing away despair and hopelessness. I began one of those acts which, by some men, are deemed to be the outcome of eccentricity, amounting to madness. I set myself in opposition to the Church of France, and when asking for this liberty for my countrymen, my words

formed a torrent of majestic language, that flowed impetuously onward. No time was given me to hesitate. My naturally tall figure and massive frame seemed larger still. An intense craving came on me, that I might reach the hearts and dispel the childish fears of my countrymen.

The voice further said:—"I would guard you against any utopia. There are a series of problems to be solved ere France can be saved. Universal labour, study, and association must lead to emancipation, and so long as there is an honest heart in France, do not fear. Re-constitute yourselves, people of France: know your own power."

"He is working too hard," they cried. The same was said of your Prime Minister during his Midlothian career. They said: "He will soon disappear, and death will also claim Mon. Thiers. His seventy-six years is a fair promise to us of a speedy departure." They said of me: "Surely he will not continue his orations throughout the Provinces on a subject which has no parallel in the history of nations." They were mistaken.

I told them:—"You are struggling for liberty; I give you advanced social ideas; it is for you to follow them out. There is a vast necessity for a wide-spread system which shall embrace the whole of France; one of secular education; that will not only separate Church from State, but I go further, and say that the Church should not have in their charge the training of your children. I would separate all schools from their influence,—and why? Because it is for a political existence for France, for which I am praying; for which I am labouring. I am not hostile to religion, for I love freedom of opinion under any form. But the clergy of France stand self-condemned; they have moulded and formed the child the better to seize on him when he becomes a man; so that their influence may reach the State. They have forfeited the dignity of their position. They are the servants of a Theocratic power; not the servants of the living God. Let the majestic truths of Science be taught to your children, and the soul will find its God. Liberty of conscience is a more direct road to God than a soul fettered and imprisoned. There is due to labour a place in the politics of a nation, for from it springs a nation's grandeur, and economical labour will make your nation a grand one once more. Every political advantage can only be derived from one source: working men of France, would you have your country resume her ancient glory?"

They called me the Commercial Traveller, howling out my ill-formed opinions through the country, like a common huckster. But I recognised but one head of France; one King, the Sovereign People. The land is being gradually given to the peasant, and the day of his serfdom has nearly ended. Liberty of conscience is walking on with rapid and gigantic strides. Democracy has proved itself. It loves order and adheres to justice. It was my mission to advocate republicanism. I tried to fulfil that mission. I tried to lead my countrymen on to freedom. They would have had me wait, ere I preached re-organization. I said: "What? Wait! after war with the after following of the horrors of communism. Wait! when minutes may be centuries in usefulness. I must not wait. I must teach France her great task."

I am receiving its reward, although I have passed from the scenes of earth-life. To-day it triumphs. Darkness has given place to light. Every elector in France recognises the value of his vote. The heart of France is still sound. There are modern schemes on which I intend to speak. There are still men of sterling qualities who are at the head of France to-day, and if I pass comments on their late decisions, it will be for the purpose of proving the interest and love I still feel for France.

Of course there are always two sides to every question; two forms of opinion to every soul's career. There were many who could not trace patriotism in any of my actions. They charged me with aiming at the Presidency, and despotic sovereignty. They said: "I would like to enjoy a seat myself in this high place; that my end was the possession of power; that I had triumphed, but that I was an unconstitutional king; that my policy was suicidal in respect to the natural division of classes. They urged that my democracy had nothing to do with the natural division, which industry and intellect make between men." I asked: "Must a democrat necessarily drink beer instead of wine, or must he smoke a pipe instead of a cigar? Cannot a bon vivant be a pure democrat? The contrary opinion is absurd."

Despite them all, I subdued their hatred. I soothed their anger, and turned aside their malignant feelings. I cleared away every obstacle, so that France might be benefitted. Those who had slandered me, and called me a self-interested braggart, came to the conviction that my soul lived only in my country; that if I was ambitious, it was only for its weal. They said: "When Alexander dies his officers must go back into oblivion." But it was not so. They, who were of my school, still rule public opinion, or, rather, lead it.

In respect to the one or two modern criticisms which I intended making, I shall refer to them in brief; for that power which was mine in the commencement is waning. I want to address you in regard to my views on constitutional rights, and on the position which the rejected member for Northampton occupies: for he stands high in my opinion; it is my con-

viction that he represents the giant intellect in this your country. That he has been wronged, all men will agree; that all men have agreed to give him a notoriety neither expected nor cared for. He fought for right; he fights now for justice. When I dwell on his position in every stage of his struggle, he has my heart-felt sympathy. If there is a division in the Liberal majority of your House, and if that division is a menace to strength and solidity, he is not the cause. It is the oppression which they are heaping on his head which has caused it. In the event of his anticipating violence, he appeals to the law, which every man considers sacred, and that the resolutions from the high prerogative of your Sovereign to the lowest subject in your realm, is liable to the right of decision which the law claims over every Court. But there is an attempt to extend Prerogative; and instead of one absolute Sovereign, to have hundreds of absolute KINGLETS.

This exclusion of the member for Northampton will have great results. They are working in this matter irrespective of consequences. In the words of your highest law officer: "Let us give permission for our servant to appear, and let him plead, that the violence, that the appellant fears, is in accordance with the order of the House, and that there is no jurisdiction over its privileges accorded to the highest Court of the realm." What is this but supreme and despotic prerogative? The people will demand; yes, the English people will demand to know whether the decision of the House is legal or illegal. This is all that the member for Northampton needs; it is all that he asks for. The trial is not of the prerogative of the House; not of the member for Northampton. It is the People of this Empire, versus the House of their Representatives. This question cannot be put on one side. The House dares not to shelve it. The law has within its keeping the liberty of its people, and no assembly dares to place itself above that law which protects them. They are the heirs of fathers of old, who placed a recreant and despotic Stuart on his trial, and claimed the life he had forfeited. The sons have the same energy, but an energy imbued with more strength and more endurance.

I find that those who attend you are bidding me not to exhaust that power, which is theirs by right of custom, and needed; else I had intended entering on the question of the difficulties that exist between my country and what your Government is pleased to call "their interest in the water-way of Egypt," and also to give my opinion on their letting slip the opportunity of gathering in those battles in the desert, —Tel-el-Kebir and Kassassin—those advantages which might then have been shared by the dual nation, but which are now claimed by your country, as a fair return for the men and money expended; advantages claimed, which, unfortunately, now break the charm that fifty years of peace have given, and may turn amicable friendship into bitter animosity. But to fairly give my views on these questions would take a power which is not mine now. Neither would a brief or casual opinion be fair to my views.—Au revoir. Good morning.

These opinions will appear in the next number.

WHAT IS GOD?

Abridged report of a discourse delivered by the guides of Mr. J. S. Schutt, on Sunday, July 29th, at the circle of Mr. R. Burrell, 109, Avenue Parade, Accrington.

This is a question which has occupied the attention of thoughtful men in all ages of the world. And why do men ask this question? It is because they are impelled by a power or a principle within. What is this indwelling power or principle inherited by humanity? It is a something which is ever prompting men to reach forth and grasp at the knowledge of the Unseen. All men feel inwardly compelled to bow to some superior power or influence.

In all ages, men have worshipped a something under different forms, symbols, and names, but which we call God. If they have been so ignorant as to have no conception of that which you recognise as the Supreme Power that governs the universe, they have made to themselves Gods. In fact, we make the statement, that humanity has made every God which they have worshipped.

You ask us a question—"What is God?" Ask the Hindoo, he will tell you that Brahma is God; ask the Red Man of the forest, he will tell you that the great Manitou is God; ask the Achantee, and he will tell you that his fetish is God.

These people have been honest, these Gods they have made for themselves, but the so-called Christians have not been so honest as these poor heathens: being too lazy to make their God they have chosen one manufactured by the ancient Jews.

What is the Brahma of the Hindoo? A being like themselves, only a superior kind of Hindoo. What is the Manitou of the Red Man? A superior kind of Indian, dwelling across the river of death in the happy hunting grounds, to which the soul of the savage is ever aspiring. What is this God of the Christians? A very complex kind of being; in form, a gigantic Jew, endowed with passions like unto themselves. They have taken him with all his imperfections, just as the god-makers of old have handed him down. A being who works to-day, and repents to-morrow; who first blesses, and then curses; who loves and hates; who builds up, and destroys; who says, "Thou shalt not kill," and yet orders wholesale massacre.

This monstrous Jew is animated by the vilest of passions, vowing vengeance on all his enemies, even though he commands you to love them.

Upon the altars of this God have been immolated the fairest of the race; upon the altars of this God have the strong men found their doom, and the bravest have been offered up to appease his wrath; youth and innocence have been sacrificed to glut his bloodthirsty propensities.

For proof of this we refer you to the pages of history, where you will find the progress of the so-called Church of God marked by rapine, bloodshed, devastation, and misery. What is the result? The sacred name of religion has become a by-word and a reproach, and, rather than accept a God like this, men will deny the existence of a Deity altogether.

We intend to show you that there is a God, whom, alas! few worship and adore, and one who never degrades humanity, or causes temptation to be placed in his way, or causes bloodshed upon the earth; but rather sends down those things that are needful and beneficial to his children, whom he instructs in wisdom, goodness, and knowledge.

We do not say there is no God, but we deny the existence of the Christian God. We strongly assert the existence of a Deity; one who has created all things that are. We know there is a God from the law of cause and effect. We see the effect when we look abroad on nature. When we raise our eyes to the heavenly bodies, we see what is his work; and knowing that they cannot form themselves, they must have had a creator, and that creator is God—an infinite spirit, who permeates all space. He is Omnipresent, Omniscient, and Omnipotent; this implies perfection; he is everywhere present, his knowledge is unbounded and his power infinite.

If the Christian should call you infidels, and your teaching that of infidelity, let them first prove the personality of their God. If he be as they assert, he is like man, having hands, ears, eyes, and passions, like yourselves; then he is confined to one place, and therefore is not an omnipotent God. God is unchangeable and therefore he is not like us in form. If you consult the Bible you find he is a very changeable being indeed. He, being a perfect spirit, the laws emanating from him are unchangeable. What then becomes of the doctrine of special providences? You have frequently been told that the laws of nature have been tampered with to benefit certain individuals in the dark ages. He who gave these laws to nature, changes them not, neither can it be proved that there has been a single deviation from the course ordered by him. The seasons as appointed by him follow each other in regular order. Spring is always followed by summer, summer by autumn, and autumn by winter. "While the earth remaineth seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease," saith the Lord.

The doctrine of special providence of the chosen few fails; and you may be led to ask us, "Do you mean to tell us that we have believed a gospel of lies?" We leave you to give the answer to your own question.

You have been taught that God is divided into a three-one God, that there are three Gods, and yet only one, that "the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God, and yet they are not three Gods, but one God." This is the doctrine of the Trinity, a doctrine which is contrary to reason and therefore false. But with us "There is but one God," the God of nature, words of inspiration are, "I am God, besides me there is none else," again "Thou shalt have none other Gods but me." Where is the Trinitarian doctrine in these words.

God is the author of our being, ever sending forth his power to benefit mankind, ever seeking to bless: his laws make a rich and bountiful provision for one and all of his children. His sun shines on the evil and the good. The earth produces her fruit for the first hand to gather, without respect or regard for anyone; all are partakers of his bounty and goodness; as a father loveth his children so God loveth every human being.

We have been endeavouring to present to you the perfect nature to which you owe that principle within you called conscience, prompting you to do those acts which ennoble man, and make you more like God: acts of mercy, love, forgiveness, charity to the poor, help to the needful, and every act which promotes the happiness of others. We preach nothing of Atheism, but we bring to you tidings of great joy, and direct you to reach forth to that which holds affinity to the first great cause, the author of our being, or God. "No man hath seen God at any time": we see but the evidence of His power and goodness, which may be observed in every blade of grass, in every flower of the field which charms the eye, in every waving branch of the trees, in the fields of golden corn, in the flocks of sheep that graze on the mountain's side, in the bright blue sky above us, and that bright orb of day that warms and gladdens the earth with his light and heat. Contemplate upon God and His noble and perfect work, and you will be lifted nearer to perfection. God is an infinite spirit dwelling in the universe, and the author of all.

What is God? God is love, and His love is manifested to you all. It is only by practical acts of kindness performed to each other, that the divine spirit can be developed amongst you. Then will God dwell on the earth, then will happiness dwell amongst you, and you will then feel that God is love, and that God is good.

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SEANCES AND MEETINGS DURING THE WEEK AT THE SPIRITUAL INSTITUTION, 15, SOUTHAMPTON ROW.

THURSDAY.—School of Spiritual Teachers at 8 o'clock.

Tuesday.—Mr. Towns, Clairvoyance, at 8 o'clock.

THE MEDIUM AND DAYBREAK.

FRIDAY AUGUST 3, 1883.

MY FIRST CONTRIBUTION TO SPIRITUAL LITERATURE.

By J. BURNS.

It is just eighteen years, this week, since I read my first writing on Spiritualism, at a convention held at Darlington. I had then been a spiritual worker for several years, and the Progressive Library had been in operation for over two years, and had become the recognised centre of spiritual work in this country. I was, at the time, travelling with Mr. L. N. Fowler, the Phrenologist, and to that science and other Anthropological subjects, including the works of A. J. Davis, I had given as much attention as a busy life would permit.

With Mr. Hodge, of Darlington, and others, I was a promoter of this convention. It was the first general assemblage of British Spiritualists, and the origin of a free platform in connection with the Movement. My chief burden in the matter was the loss of time and expense of attending; the production of this paper, and the compilation and editing of the Report, which, and that of the succeeding year, I printed, and for which I was never paid. These Convention Reports were the beginning of all my toil and troubles in connection with the Cause, and the forerunners of the MEDIUM, and all the work which has gathered around it. An Association of Progressive Spiritualists was formed, of which I was never a member. It ended in anarchy, leaving me to struggle on with the work, heavily saddled with the "liabilities" of printing. I have thus had considerable experience of "organization," Spiritualists, and spiritual work—a trinity not altogether in unity.

I had no time to prepare my paper; my duties as Mr. Fowler's secretary occupied me completely. One day the theme and its arrangement flashed into my mind, but only a few sentences were jotted down in a memorandum book when I went to Darlington to attend the Convention. On two mornings I got up, and, accompanied by a sympathetic lady, walked to the cemetery, where, sitting on a tombstone, I extended my little essay. It was a circle of two. I shall ever entertain a sacred regard for that gentle soul, who stood by me all through that convention; for then, as at other times, I found myself in a minority.

Being a young man, and of no position in the world, my contribution naturally found a place near the end of the proceedings. I was glad of this, as it gave me more time to complete my paper, but I could make no progress, as I was continually engaged taking notes of proceedings. When I stood up to decipher my scrawl, I had only got some two-thirds through the subject. When I came to the end of the writing, I kept on talking, and finished somehow. Afterwards I tried to recall the thoughts, but I have never been satisfied with the effort.

There was no time to polish up,—not even in preparing for press; for I did it all as I travelled from place to place,

absorbed with other duties. Yet that first Convention report still exists, to speak for itself and testify to the manner of its editing. Our motive in holding the Convention was not literary foppery or servility of expression, but outspoken truthfulness and honesty of purpose. We feared to offend no one, and only cared to please that Eye of the Supreme—Conscience. At least, I answer for myself.

In placing this first effort before the readers of the MEDIUM, I find little to alter. Some of the expressions are tentative and speculative; but I still feel inclined to stand by them. I may say that it is on these principles that I have worked for over twenty years, always in a minority; with the "liabilities" continually dropping on to me; and without pay or applause. Principles that contain so much backbone are not to be despised. And brain and muscle too: for out of these same principles have sprung the enlightening thought and active agency of the spiritual work in this and other lands, where the influence of this centre has reached. Not because they are my principles, but because they contain essentially those truths which are universal, and on the lines of which the great Spiritual Work is being carried on. "Every good and perfect gift cometh down from above."

I reproduce this essay, because not a few people have wasted their poor brains overhauling my conduct in the work of Spiritualism, industriously searching for incongruities. Now this does not at all hurt me, for it matters not, as far as I am concerned, what people think or say of me. But it is the "poor brains" that I am concerned about. Pity they cannot be applied to a better purpose. The Movement wants brains—brains properly applied. I refer to this first statement of my views to enable all to judge of the consistency that has marked the course of these eighteen years. There are views on the use of mediums, the motive of spiritual workers, the basis of action, as well as philosophical and theological considerations, which I would seriously refer to the kind attention of the reader. Since that time I have engaged in many experiments in spiritual polity, and phenomenal investigation, the result of the whole of which to-day points with emphasis to those thoughts that illuminated the mind in the grey dawn of that spiritual morning.

I had seen but little phenomena then. Spirit communion of a beneficent kind was enjoyed by my family, but for several years I was never at home, but a night or two at a time, and, consequently, saw none of it; but what I heard was all that could be desired, as it has been all along. My Spiritualism was, and has been, the light within; which explains all facts, determines all phenomena, resolves all difficulties, and is a guide to that which is most appropriate and best. The basis on which I erected my school of thought, comprehended an educational area vastly greater than that which is occupied by the notions of a certain class of "Spiritualists" of a type too frequently most noisy and self-assertive in the Movement.

OPEN-AIR WORK.

This movement is bearing fruit in two ways: it is introducing the question to many new minds, and it is bringing out not a few fresh speakers. Professionalism is the death of Spiritualism. It is the interest of the paid speaker to keep all out of the field except himself. Unless you become one of the craft, the professional will do all he can to make it hot for the friend of the Cause, who works for the love of it, and incites others to do the same. These considerations, and the "organizers," have broken up the Movement in many places, and set all at loggerheads. The selfish principle is, in verity, the "devil," and when such a principle becomes the basis of action it can never lead to good. The open-air scheme is free and open to all. The field is wide, with no one to hinder, no one to command. The absence of formality removes restraint and nervous feeling, and he who has never spoken in public before is able to do efficient work, and is straightway "developed" as an advocate of the Cause. Many of the meetings have afforded proof of these statements.

LAST SUNDAY.

CLERKENWELL GREEN.—Mr. Burns opened the meeting briefly on Sunday morning. He was followed by Mr. Towns, who gave a lengthy address. Then Dr. Brown, of Burnley, stepped forward, and actually bore the burden of the meeting. A large and highly intelligent audience assembled as the meeting went on.

HYDE PARK.—Mr. Burns gave a brief exposition of Scripture passages. He was followed by Mr. Fred. Wilson. The meeting was not so successful as hitherto.

REGENT'S PARK.—Mr. Walter says he met one of his inquirers at Quebec Hall, on Sunday afternoon. In the evening he went to Regent's Park, but felt out of sorts. However, conversation led to a hymn, and he adds:—"I found myself soon addressing a large orderly crowd. I had to dismiss them at 8 o'clock; my strength gave way. I hoped some speaker would turn up, because, as I am not in the best of health, I want moral and physical assistance. I shall therefore give up the work in Regent's Park, and I hope somebody else will take it up."

VICTORIA PARK.—There was an excellent meeting on Sunday under the leadership of Mr. Jennison.

NEXT SUNDAY.

CLERKENWELL GREEN.—On Sunday morning, at 11.30, Mr. Burns will give a Temperance Address, showing its relation to Spiritualism. Friends would assist much by being on the ground promptly, so as to give the meeting a good start. Other speakers are invited.

HYDE PARK.—Mr. Burns and friends will be at the old place at 4 o'clock; but may determine on another location, nearer the public and more sheltered.

REGENT'S PARK.—Mr. Walter's strength having given way, we hope some other speakers will occupy this station.

VICTORIA PARK.—Mr. Jennison and Mr. Downing will be absent, but we hope this will not interrupt the meetings. Mr. Emms and other friends will no doubt be on the spot, and make up for all deficiencies.

BATTERSEA PARK.—Mr. Walter writes:—"If the Spiritualists in the locality of Battersea Park will accept my humble services, I will open the meetings for them until they find an abler speaker. I am no coward, but I am not strong enough to have all the excitement to bear myself."

THE NEW PRINTING MACHINE.

My dear Sir,—Having read in the MEDIUM your appeal to Spiritualists to help you in your good and useful work, it is with pleasure I send you a remittance, hoping that others who are interested in the Cause will add their deposits to mine, and thus enable you to prosper in your work, and carry out your undertaking successfully. Believe me, dear sir, yours sincerely,
"LUCRETIA."

A correspondent offers to donate £7 to this matter, but he involves it with other considerations. Another friend will deposit £10 as soon as the whole amount is made up. To revert to the proposal of last week we have the idea presented that this matter must be a purely business arrangement, and stand on its own merits. We do not wish to receive deposits unless there is some prospect of the depositors using the amount in goods within a reasonable time. In the meantime promises may be given, and when sufficient is subscribed to enable a beginning to be made the amounts will be called in and some machinery will be obtained to make a start. These deposits are simply advances to account, and will be duly honoured whether machinery be obtained or not. We have received thousands of pounds on the deposit principle, and we do not suppose an unsatisfied depositor exists to-day. All claims have been satisfactorily honoured, notwithstanding recent trials and troubles. Since the foregoing was in type other contributions have been received.

TO-NIGHT—A FRIENDLY MEETING WITH A TYNE-SIDE SPIRITUAL WORKER.

The name of Mr. Joseph Stevenson will have been noticed frequently in reports from the Newcastle district. Being in London, he has accepted an invitation to meet London friends at the Spiritual Institution, this evening, Friday, August 3, at 8 o'clock. We hope there will be a pleasant gathering of friends.

AN APPARITION OF ONESELF.—A medical man was thrown from his horse and considerably injured. While his wounds were being dressed he saw an apparition of himself standing near, which became conjoined with his body. Then he became more sensibly aware of his condition. A fuller statement of his experiences would be interesting. A lady had for some time an apparition of herself attending her, previous to a severe illness.

About three or four years ago, says "Drus" in the "Cornubian," a certain miner residing near Camborne went abroad, leaving a wife and child at home. One night comparatively recently the little boy, who was accustomed to sleep with his mother, awoke her, exclaiming, "Oh! ma, I have just seen father: he's gone into the next room." Two days subsequently news arrived of the father's death. He succumbed to illness soon after landing at Liverpool; and it was proved that the event occurred just at the time the son had seen him. Such occurrences are not rare; and occasionally the voices of the visitants are heard directing to beneficent purposes.

MRS. BERRY, HEALER.—Dear Mr. Burns,—Will you allow me a little space in your columns in which to give my testimony to the uncommon gift of healing possessed by Mrs. Kate Berry? I have recently had occasion for her professional services in my family, and feel it to be my duty to other sufferers to speak of her magnetic healing powers in very strong commendation. Mrs. Berry's magnetism is of a very genial character, at once soothing and strengthening, and it seems to me highly important that she should be known as well on this side the Atlantic as she is on the other; since there is even a greater dearth of good healing mediums here than in America, where Mrs. Berry belongs. Her present address is No. 5, Grenville Street, Brunswick Square. I should like also to say that this is written for the benefit of those who may need her services, and without any solicitations on her part, though my wish to keep Mrs. Berry in London is not altogether an unselfish one, I confess.—Sincerely yours, FRANCES V. HALLOCK, 25, Alma Square, St. John's Wood, July 29, 1883.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

A harmony of expression will be found in this Number. Mr. Colville and Mr. Schutt touch upon part of Mr. Burns's theme. "Gambetta's" control is on the same plane. The second visit of this spirit will be given next week. It deals with political matters in Egypt, India, and Ireland.

We hope to be able to resume "Egypt" next week. A quantity of important matter is in preparation for that issue.

Dr. and Mrs. Brown returned to Burnley on Tuesday, professional duties having unexpectedly cut short the visit South.

Do not forget to send for a parcel of MEDIUMS to sell at all important meetings. We print a quantity for the use of the Spirit-world weekly, and true servants of that realm use them as best they can, faithfully sending us the proceeds. There are a few who are not too lazy nor ashamed of such service.

Communications for Mr. A. Duguid, should be addressed, 15, Southampton Row, London, W.C.

Mr. J. R. Burrell leaves his father's home in Accrington next week for New Orleans. He sails in the s.s. "Alaska," on August 11. He reported Mr. Schutt's address—"What is God?"

BIRTH.—On Monday, July 30, 1883, the widow of the late Joseph Ashman, of a son. Mother and infant doing well.

MORLEY.—On Sunday last, Mr. Thomas Holdsworth, of Newtown, Keighley, delivered a trance address on "Spiritualism and its bearings." Mr. Holdsworth being only sixteen years old astonished the audience with the beautiful illustrations with which his discourse abounded. Miss Agnes Hance, of Shipley, is expected to speak for us on Sunday next.—PH. BUCKLEY, Sec.

OFFER OF SEANCES.—To the Editor.—Dear Sir,—From Sunday, August 5, to Wednesday 8 (inclusive), Messrs. Savage and Cristus, trance, healing, and clairvoyant mediums will be in the Midland Counties—Leicester, Northampton, and neighbourhood, and are open to engagements to give seances. Anyone desiring the same will oblige by communicating with me.—I am, sir, yours truly, C. H. DENNIS, 10, Broseley Terrace, Crouch Hill, London, N.

QUEBEC HALL: Free Spiritual Mission.—On Sunday, July 29, in the afternoon at 3, Mr. Hopcroft kindly took Mr. Savage's place, and a most enjoyable seance was the result, perfect harmony prevailing. As usual, enquirers were present, and they evidently received food for thought, the medium having read their surroundings to a nicety. Next Sunday at 3, Mr. Hopcroft will be present again. All are invited, especially investigators.—D.

LEICESTER: Silver Street Lecture Hall.—On Sunday evening last, Mr. Bent delivered an inspirational address to a goodly congregation. The spirit guides took for their subject Psalm, lxxiii., 28: "But it is good for me to draw near to God. I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works." The address was very much appreciated.—R. WIGHTMAN, Sec., 74, Mostyn Street, Hinckley Road, Leicester.

MANCHESTER.—On Sunday morning, July 29, our platform was occupied by Mr. R. A. Brown, of Manchester, when he read a passage out of the new bible, OAHSEPE, and commented upon it, which was very interesting to all present. After he had finished reading, "Sunflower," one of Mr. Brown's controls, described spiritual surroundings to some strangers who were present, to their surprise and satisfaction. In the evening Mr. Ash, of Openshaw, took the platform, whose spirit guides chose for their subject, "Spiritualism, its effects and defects," which was very powerfully delivered, to the satisfaction of the audience. We intend having a Picnic on Bank Holiday, August 6, to Miller's Dale. Time of starting, 7.45, from the Central Station. Tickets, 2s. 6d. each. All members and friends who intend going with us should meet at the entrance to the station at 7.30, so that arrangements can be made for all to go together.—SAMUEL CHESTERSON, Sec., M.S.S.S.

PLYMOUTH: Richmond Hall, Richmond Street.—On Sunday morning, July 29, we received a visit from our respected friend and brother, Mr. Hussen, whose guides conducted the service. We were highly gratified to hear words of encouragement and truth from them again, after a lapse of many months. In the evening the rostrum was occupied by Mr. R. S. Clarke; subject—"Inspiration and Revelation." The control, in dealing with the subject, very ably proved that inspiration and revelation in all ages, had been universal and progressive, in strict harmony with the laws of nature. We are not to accept all inspiration as infallible. The lecture embodied a great amount of practical and useful teaching, and must have made an impression on the minds of the many strangers present. On Sunday next, August 5, at 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m., Mrs. Groom, of Birmingham, will give addresses, when we expect large audiences.—J. T. B. PAYNTER.

On the previous Sunday, Mr. Clarke lectured on "Heaven and Hell." Mental states and their influence on one another, were discussed; also the influence of the spirit world on man, and man on the spirit-world. We regret that the report was overlooked.

OBITUARY.

EDWIN COWPER.

Passed to the Higher Life, on Tuesday, July 23, Edwin, the beloved son of Mr. and Mrs. Cowper, of Edgware Road, after three years of most intense suffering, caused originally by vaccination; scarcely able to sit upright during the whole time, except for a few moments. I visited the dear—very dear, to me—young man for two years, very seldom missing a Sunday afternoon, spending an hour or more with him, and I do not think I ever heard a complaint escape his lips, although his sufferings were great. He is now free from pain and sorrow, and I feel sure that if conditions are given, he will, in a very short time, give real proof of his continued life, by producing for his bereaved parents and friends some paintings, of which he was very fond and had great ability. Glory to God in the highest for the knowledge of this grand truth: we know he lives, because we have added knowledge to our faith.

J. M. DALE.

RECEPTION TO DR. AND MRS. BROWN, OF BURNLEY.

On Friday evening, the Reception Room at the Spiritual Institution was crowded by friends in response to the invitation to meet Dr. and Mrs. Brown.

Mr. Burns, in introducing the Doctor, expressed his pleasure at such an occasion, which he had long looked forward to. Many times he had rested, when on his toilsome travels, at the hospitable residence of these friends in Burnley. Dr. Brown had done much for the Cause in the locality, in conducting public events and in the exercise of his own mediumship. History had already made record of these matters. When Dr. Monck was incarcerated at Huddersfield, as we then thought, and still think, on a false accusation, Dr. Brown and Mr. Burrell visited him, and offered bail in the most handsome manner. Even at great distances the Doctor had often experienced a personal sympathy for friends in trouble, as accurately as if in their immediate presence. To come from generals to particulars, the speaker expressed his deep gratitude for the valuable friendship extended towards him by these visitors. But it was not only himself that had been befriended, but the Cause was in a position of indebtedness for what had been done on behalf of the Institution in which they were assembled. When the existence of that Institution was menaced, and friends few and enemies many, it was Dr. Brown, of Burnley, who came to the front, and dared to speak kindly when so many condemned. This noble act stands out as a glorious incident in the annals of our Movement, and to it the pleasure of that meeting was due. But like the Movement itself, the mediums therein have to pass through tribulations. There is continual change, painful transitions to higher states. No honour which past faithfulness could confer, lightened this load of suffering which their friend had to bear. His health had broken down, and it was with the view of receiving benefit that he had come South; and that he might return to his home invigorated by the change, the speaker sincerely hoped.

During the evening, Dr. Brown was twice controlled by spirit friends, who manifested well-marked indications of identity, in tone of voice, accent, and style of matter. Mr. A. Duguid was also controlled, and his influences tended to maintain the harmony of the meeting. Mr. Cusdin's guide delivered an address, and other spirits would have manifested had there been time. These proceedings, with friendly intercourse and a service of fruit, made a long evening pass rapidly.

MATERIALIZATIONS WITH MR. HUSK.

On Monday evening Mr. Husk gave a Seance at the Spiritual Institution to Dr. and Mrs. Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Duguid, and other friends. "Irresistible" described it as an excellent circle, and the manifestations were worthy of it. All hands were held round the table as usual. In the first part, in addition to the movement of musical instruments and direct voice, the medium was lifted on to the table, while Miss Ware held one hand and Mrs. Brown the other. This was a most difficult feat in the dark, as one foot of the chair on which he was lifted was placed on the breast of a musical instrument, yet it did not crush it. Mr. Husk's head was close under the gas pendant, and both of his arms were through the back of the chair, his face being turned to it, and yet the grip of the ladies holding his hands had never been relaxed; so that the material of the chair back must have given way to allow the fact to occur.

After this magnificent demonstration of the power of spirit over matter, the circle was reconstituted, and in due course "John King's" powerful voice was heard. It was a grand salutation he gave to the friends there assembled. Shortly afterwards he materialized, and showed his face by the luminous slate. He spoke and showed for a long time; then he showed his hand against the luminous surface of the slate, concluding by shaking hands with the sitters. His grip was firm and natural.

Considerable clairvoyance was exercised by several mediums present. In addition to spirits being described, the clairvoyant saw the action of the manifesting spirits. Thus, when the fairy bells were carried apparently out of the room, the clairvoyant saw them on the top of the book-case. "Irresistible" admitted the fact. He did not pretend that they were taken out of the room, as it was not always possible to do so. The clairvoyant also saw "Irresistible" go to the book-case, and take therefrom a plaster cast of a spirit hand. This, the humorous spirit was about to present round the circle for the sitters to shake hands with, when the seer revealed the fact. The power of spirits over material objects was further illustrated in the controls bringing the sofa cushion on to the table to cover the luminous slate, and in dragging the squab from the sofa to stop the light that came in under the door.

The phenomena were varied, powerful, and indisputable throughout.

A JAPANESE MATERIALIZING MEDIUM.

The newspapers are publishing an "incredible story" from Japan. There seems to be nothing so incredible about it, all and except that the "manikin" is so diminutive in size. We have seen full-grown human figures, derived from an entranced medium,—not however, through the intermediation of a "blue flame." Here is the fragment:—"According to the correspondent of a Tokio journal, a native philosopher living at Hakodadi has discovered a method by which he can at will materialize his own soul. This remarkable man is, so it is asserted, accustomed, for the amusement of himself and his friends, to take his seat towards evening in a large bamboo chair, and to become apparently unconscious. No sooner has his body lost all sensitiveness than there issues from his open mouth a faint blue flame, which slowly takes form and assumes the proportions of a well-developed manikin of some six inches in height. This manikin, who is the materialized soul of the philosopher, talks freely with those present, and eats, drinks, writes, and in fact, exercises all the functions of a civilized and perfectly constituted human being. He dare not, however, so he is reported to declare, break contact with the inanimate body of his possessor; and on one occasion, when he was forcibly removed and set up on a neighbouring table, the philosopher began to gasp and struggle as if in the agonies of death, whereupon the manikin was quickly replaced on his master's head. The correspondent professes to give the names of several Japanese gentlemen who have more than once witnessed the experiment."

ORGANIZATION.—To the Editor.—Sir,—In answer to your correspondents on the above subject, I think we need not look far to find out the cause of failure. One cause is the many minds that we have to deal with, coming as we do from different creeds, some free and some partially so, each one wanting to lead. Another cause is the want of money; being mostly working men they have not much to spare. The great organizations, you know, are built up by wealth, and we must not expect to organize until we get more popular. Your correspondent speaks of the Birmingham Society coming out with a flourish of trumpets. Now if we did, I don't know as there is any harm in that. We did the best we could with the men we had to deal with. Now I think it was just the reverse, for the Birmingham people would not have known we had existed but for the small advertisement in our Saturday's "Mail." Now, Mr. Editor, I think it is not a question of organization, but of men willing to work and make some sacrifice. It is the want of these kind of men that is the cause of our failures. But, with all our failures, the work is going on. For these last nine years the meetings have been kept going, and we have always in the summer suspended the meetings, simply because we could get no audience. Before organization will come we must educate the people into it. I think it would look better of your correspondents, if they would put their shoulders to the wheel, and come and help to do something; and also put their names to their letters, so that we should know who they are. We know who has done the work so far, but there are plenty of carping dog-in-the-manger sort of men in Birmingham who will do nothing themselves nor let anyone else if they could help it. But we shall commence again very soon, if there is no one but myself. But I have always had a willing helpmate in our friend Mr. Smyth, when he is in town, as he is at present; and we have engaged Mrs. Britten for the second Sunday in October. We are quite willing to co-operate with any of the friends that are willing to help us, and for that purpose we meet at the Bull Street Coffee House, on Monday evening next, at half-past eight, to talk matters over.—Yours truly, R. Groom. [Another letter received since the above was in type need not appear, as the ground is so well covered.—Ed. M.]

W. PARRY.—We have referred your first question to Mr. Oxley. You will find the information you desire in "Bible Myths, and their Parallels in other Religions," price 16s., occasionally advertised in MEDIUM.

A COLUMN FOR THE LADIES.

SYBIL'S IDEAL.

A Tale of the Daybreak.

By MRS. RAMSAY LAYE.

PART II.—(CONTINUED.)

She was reading quietly in the drawing room, towards one o'clock, when a shabby fly appeared at the door; a lady and two children alighted, and the servant announced—

"Mrs. George Branscombe."

Sybil was taken by surprise, but there was no lack of cordiality in the greeting with which she went forward.

Mrs. George Branscombe was a large woman of about forty, dressed in weeds, which had the shabby appearance which pertains to mourning when it is not fresh and handsome. In spite of a somewhat florid complexion, owing to a fixed colour, her face had a drawn suffering expression which spoke of confirmed bad health. She explained that she had come to London for a few weeks to consult a celebrated doctor, and gave the address of her lodgings, which were in the neighbourhood of Sybil's former home.

"It ain't a very nice part, but cheaper than the West End, and I have come without delay to see you, as I wanted you to know the children. Speak to your aunt," she added, to the girl and boy, who hung bashfully back. "I have been telling them they must not be too shy."

To Sybil, who had never had a nephew or niece in her life, it seemed strange to be so suddenly invested with a new dignity, but she told herself, "It is all right; I am their aunt, what else should they call me?"

The children were awkward, as though not accustomed to strangers, and while their mother and Sybil conversed, sat stiff and prim on their chairs, answering only in monosyllables when addressed.

Sybil sent away the fly, saying they must spend some hours with her. She wished she had known of their coming, as she would gladly have had an early dinner for them, her house-keeping being not on a very elastic scale. She gave what she had with a welcome, however, and soon had the party seated at an impromptu repast of cold meat, bread and butter and fruit.

Returned to the drawing-room the ladies seated themselves together on a sofa, but conversation flagged. Mrs. George had an absent air, and offered spasmodic remarks, with intervals of silence, while Sybil's attention wandered uneasily from her to the children, who, more at home since they had partaken of a meal in their aunt's house, were moving restlessly about the room, speaking to each other in suppressed tones, and evincing a strong propensity to finger the bric-à-brac.

"Don't touch anything," said their mother, abruptly, as the boy took hold of a Dresden china figure. "What a quantity of pretty things you have, Mrs. Branscombe."

"I am fond of works of art of every description," replied Sybil. "Some things have been given me, and some I have picked up in the course of my foreign tours. I go abroad for a few months every year—Oh—"

And involuntarily she started forward, for George, who had obediently withdrawn his hand from the tempting object at his mother's bidding, had the next moment, without thinking, leaned against a flower stand. It was precipitated forward, and a tall plant in falling, all but struck a beautiful statuette of Psyche, which Sybil had bought in Florence and brought safely home only by dint of great care and trouble. Its destruction was averted by Mary, who with some presence of mind caught the falling plant, but the catastrophe was near enough to render Sybil nervous.

"Perhaps you would like to come into the garden," said she; "the children will have more liberty there."

"Yes, it may be better; this room is almost too pretty, and children are so restless; they do mischief without intending it."

"Too true," thought Sybil, bitterly; "and would do more to spoil things in a week than I should in a year."

She rang for a maid to remove the debris of broken pots and earth, then took up the shady straw hat which she wore about the garden, and led the way on to the lawn. They took two or three turns, but Mrs. George walked with difficulty, and after a few minutes the ladies sat down on a garden seat, while the children, who were rather awed by the accident they had caused, stood at their mother's knee.

"You two walk about, and look at the flowers," she said. "Mrs. Branscombe, I dare say, will allow you, but don't touch anything."

"There are no daisies," observed the little girl, regretfully. "No," answered Sybil, "the gardener wages war against daisies: he cuts off their heads."

"What a pity," said Mary.

"Run away," repeated their mother. "I want to talk quietly to your aunt."

"The two widows left alone together, silence ensued, which was broken by Sybil remarking,

"I hope you are likely to derive benefit from the advice of a London doctor!"

"No," was the reply, with a sigh; "he can do very little for me, and it is of that I wished to speak. It is hard lines for a mother to have to leave two orphan children almost unprovided for. My husband was not successful in Australia, and the little he left has been reduced by my illness and the expense of the voyage home."

"Is it not almost a pity," remarked Sybil, "that you incurred the expense of so long a voyage?"

She did not mean to imply that she wished they had stayed in the Colony, though she did devoutly wish it, but the ear of poverty and dependence is apt to be sensitive, and Mrs. George Branscombe's face slightly flushed, as she replied:

"No, there was nothing to keep us in Australia after my husband's death. Living there is quite as expensive as here. Though we were married in the Colony, I am an English woman, and my sister, the only relation I have, is in this country."

"Ah, I am very glad to hear you have a sister," observed Sybil, to whom the information brought a feeling of unspeakable relief; "Is the lady married?"

"No, she is a single woman in poor health, and of narrow means. She lives in Bristol."

"I know Clifton, which adjoins Bristol," observed Sybil: "a charming place."

"My sister does not live at Clifton," was the reply, dryly; "she occupies a small house in a back street in Bristol. It is not a cheerful situation, but it suits her. She has promised to take the children when I am gone, and will do the best she can for them."

"It must be a great comfort to you to know that they will be with your own sister," remarked Sybil, "and you may be sure that I will also do what I can. I will make them an allowance."

She stopped abruptly, for she would like to have had time to calculate what she could afford, before committing herself by a definite promise; but after a moment's silence, during which she hastily reviewed her own resources, she added:

"It will no doubt be a comfort to you to have something certain to look too, so I think I may promise to contribute eighty pounds a year; that will be forty pounds for each of the children. It shall commence from next quarter, and if, as you anticipate, it pleases God to take you away, this allowance shall be paid regularly to your sister on their behalf."

Sybil had not an income from which eighty pounds per annum could be deducted without her feeling it; she knew perfectly that it would involve sacrifice on her part, and she expected to see the mother's face brighten at the promise. But there was no change in the sad, rather stolid expression with which the other sat gazing before her, while the words:

"Thank you, you are very kind," seemed mechanically uttered.

Sybil looked at her inquiringly, then said:

"I don't think you are quite satisfied. Tell me what you really wish or expect."

"I hardly know," answered the poor woman, rousing herself. "All I know is, that I am dying, and leaving two orphan children: the poor naturally look to the rich."

"But you are mistaken if you suppose that I am rich," observed Sybil, gravely, "my income is only in hundreds—what many would call very small indeed."

"But this place must be very expensive to keep up," remarked her sister-in-law.

"Well, it is my own, so I have no rent to pay, and it is an interest and pleasure to me to keep it in nice order, but I assure you, it is only by being very careful on many points that I can live as I do. I have a very small establishment. I economise on my table and on dress. My whole income," she added, with a little laugh, "is not so much as what some ladies in London I am told spend on dress alone. You see, therefore, that the word rich is quite inapplicable to me."

Mrs. George did not see it; she saw only the diamonds sparkling on Sybil Branscombe's hand.

"Well, we must be going home," she observed, "if you will have the kindness to allow one of your servants to call a cab; I cannot walk to the station. Now, children put on your hats, we are going home."

"Oh, don't let us go home," exclaimed the little boy, running up to them. "This place is much nicer than the lodgings; much nicer than Bristol. Ma, can't we stay here always?"

"Don't be silly," answered his mother, sharply.

"You must come and see me again," said Sybil, smiling.

She went into the house to hurry tea, which she wished her guests to have before their departure, and ordered the pony-carriage to convey them to the station. Then she took the children round the garden, showing them this and that, and gathered nosegays for them. She took leave of them all at the gate, and saw the children smiling with their hands full of flowers, but the last thing that made an impression upon her was the suffering careworn face of Mrs. Branscombe.

"The thing that would really ease that mother's heart," was her reflection, as she re-entered the house, "would be a promise from me to take the children after her death." But she put the idea from her; it was too unpalatable.

There are childless women to whom the notion of adopting a young nephew and niece would not be unacceptable; but Sybil was not particularly fond of children. Had her own

lived, she would no doubt have loved them tenderly; but she had not the strong maternal interest which prompts some women to kiss every child they meet. She might rather have liked a graceful, docile little girl, whom she could mould, or, at any rate, fancy she could mould to be just what she approved; but a girl of ten has already taken a bent of her own, and Sybil recalling the image of Mary Branscombe with her sturdy black-stockened legs, and face, plain yet full of character and energy, felt sure that she would not be mere plastic clay in any one's hands. Or she might possibly not have been averse to a tiny boy, whom she could dress artistically, and curl and pet; but her nephew was already in knickerbockers and would soon require school discipline. No, the idea was utterly impracticable.

Nevertheless, as she sat alone in the twilight, she thought it out in all its unpleasant bearings. First there would be the expense, which would be far heavier than the definite allowance she had promised; for living with her, she would feel bound to give them advantages in accordance with her own position. Then, the encumbrance, the change they would cause in her life in many ways, the responsibility, the anxiety. Sybil's meditation on the subject ended as it had begun, with the conviction that the step was not to be thought of.

Within reasonable limits she was prepared to be very kind, for she was really sorry for Mrs. Branscombe, and she even went so far as to wish that they lived nearer that she might take her drives in the pony-carriage.

"Poor things," she thought, "it is not nice for them to be where they are. How I used to dislike the neighbourhood! The air is not good for an invalid, and the children can have no enjoyment."

Then occurred the question whether she ought not to ask them to stay with her while they remained in London.

This idea was only less unpalatable than the other, and she argued mentally the pros and cons as she drove over two days afterwards to return the visit. She had spare rooms, and it seemed cruel to leave her poor connections in dingy East End lodgings, when they might be revelling in flowers and sunshine. Then she pictured Mary and George running wildly about the house and garden, knocking down flower stands and breaking Dresden cups; and any day their mother might take to her bed, and there would be the trouble and inconvenience of a long illness, perhaps a death in the house.

But this very objection turned the scale in their favour; a pang of self-reproach shot through Sybil's heart.

"Is her affliction a reason for me to shut my door in her face? I am a selfish wretch, I fear! May heaven forgive me." And she resolved from that moment to give the invitation.

And she gave it kindly, without any want of cordiality. No one could have suspected the struggle it cost her, as she placed the advantages of the proposal before her sister-in-law.

"You will be able to sit out in the garden, and I can take you drives, and the children will take country walks with one of my maids."

She had not a shadow of a doubt of the invitation being accepted, but it was not. Mrs. Branscombe expressed herself gratefully, but replied that she preferred to remain where she was. She would not like to give the trouble in a friend's house which her illness must cause. The people of her lodging were kind and considerate, and it suited her better not to make any change. So Sybil had done her duty in intention, yet was spared the sacrifice; nevertheless, she had a vague feeling that it was not quite the same thing, for herself, I mean, as though her kindness had been in deed as well as in intention, and she was the more resolved to be kind and useful in other ways; in every way, indeed, short of offering to take the children.

The illness caused great expense; doctor's fees quickly mount up to a formidable sum. There were better rooms in the house than those which Mrs. George occupied, and in her state of weakness a personal attendant was almost needful.

(To be continued.—Commenced in No. 693.)

PROGRESS OF SPIRITUAL WORK.

MR. W. J. COLVILLE IN ENGLAND.—BELPER.

On Sunday, July 29, Mr. W. J. Colville occupied the platform of the Lecture Room, Brookside, Belper, where the Spiritualist Society of that pleasant and picturesque town meets regularly on Sundays, and often during the week, in hospitable spiritual gatherings.

At 10.30 a.m., Mr. Colville, under influence of his spirit guides delivered a powerful and soul-stirring discourse upon "Spiritualism as a Science, a Philosophy, and a Religion," showing how admirably adapted is true Spiritualism to the entire nature of man. The Lecturer declared that science simply meant knowledge, and that Spiritualism was just as much knowledge of the spirit world as geology implied knowledge of the physical developments of the earth. Theology should be a science, the church a school for the cultivation of the spiritual nature of its every individual member. As an ecclesiasticism it is but a decaying relic of a less enlightened age. Philosophy, said the speaker, is but systematized knowledge; pure and

speculative philosophy being entirely independent of each other: the former being a system which classifies facts and endeavours rationally to explain them, the latter being a system based upon conjecture, usually, though in exceptional instances, as in the case of many of the best minds in Greece, it may express much that is valuable that flows into the mind through the gateway of the intuitions. Religion was defined as practical philanthropy, the application to the hourly needs of mankind of all the truth which can be gathered by us from all available sources.

At 3 p.m., a very interesting service was in order. After some very pleasing music Mr. Colville, under spirit influence, at the request of the parents named a child. The exercises consisted of a fervent invocation, a choice practical discourse of ten minutes duration upon the training of children, so as to fit them for this life and the hereafter, and a brief benediction, in which the name of the child was pronounced, and he and his parents specially commended to the charge of those pure and holy spirits, who made themselves known to the guides of the speaker as ready to stand in specially near relations to the little one whom they had chosen as their instrument on earth. A few important questions were then answered, and the services ended with a fine poetic improvisation on "Ralph Waldo Emerson."

At 6.30 p.m., the subject—"Spiritualism as a practical reformatory power," proved very fruitful and instructive. Spiritual reform was said to be pre-eminently a work of individual culture, and Spiritualists were powerfully urged to work bravely as they were inspired by the angel-world and their own good judgment to do, in their own centres of social and business activity, and not trouble themselves about "national organizations," which would soon bring about a case of committees versus spirits, and submit mediums, and even their guides, to the arrogant dictates of tyrannical officialism. Individual societies were encouraged to go on in the good work they had begun, and places of usefulness were also found for those whose work must, of necessity, be independent of all organizations. The speaker dwelt upon the folly of complaining that Spiritualists had not built hospitals, asylums, reformatories, etc., and declared that many institutions which crowded the sick and afflicted, and criminal, together, did more harm than good. The spirit world will reform all who will be reformed, by working so beneficently upon individual homes and lives that vice will be prevented as well as overcome, and kindly persons will see that those out of the way will be brought back to the fold by the all-powerful might of kindness and wisely directed WILL.

At all services the hall was well filled, and the audiences were composed of highly intelligent and appreciative persons, many of whom came several miles to be present.

On Monday, July 30th, a very good audience assembled at 8 p.m., when Mr. Colville's guides inspired him to answer many important questions very instructively. The impromptu poems were regarded as very pleasing features at all the meetings. Mr. Colville spoke in Belper, privately, on Tuesday, at the house of Mr. W. P. Adshead, and publicly on Wednesday. His return visit to Belper is much desired.

MR. A. DUGUID AT QUEBEC HALL.

The meeting at Quebec Hall, last Sunday evening, was of a peculiar kind. The place was crowded with an enthusiastic audience, composed of many mediums and prominent Spiritualists, and afforded to Mr. Duguid, who was the lecturer, an excellent opportunity of conveying his impressions and thoughts of his mediumistic sphere. The proceedings commenced by the lecturer giving a discourse on the appearance of Jesus to his disciples after his decease, based on Luke, xxiv. The return of the spirit was an often recorded truth in the Bible, and the most positive and clear description of Jesus appearing to his disciples was dwelt on at length, and was made the key-note to the phenomena recorded under the province of Modern Spiritualism. The return of the human disembodied spirit was also spoken of as a possibility, from the condition and constitution of nature, and the manifestation of spiritual force which is everywhere seen in the order of the universe. The feelings and aspirations of human life were also illustrated, as teaching the same truth; and all through the lecture, pervaded by a true spiritual tone of feeling, there was a continual outbirth of inspirational fervour.

After the lecture a number of envelopes were distributed, and these were conveyed back to the platform from parties who had enclosed some little article, whereby to relate their surroundings or sympathies to Mr. Duguid, that he might thereby give a clairvoyant delineation. The respective numbers were spoken out, and the reading given in connection. In most of the cases there was a clear connection between the remarks offered and the life incidents of the person, who had sent up the article in the envelope, and instructions were given of a valuable kind. One gentleman told the clairvoyant that every word that was said was a literal exposition of his thoughts and feelings, and of course the future stream of events had yet to be proved, but from the faithfulness of the delineation these were considered reliable. The whole transactions were of a novel character, and illustrated a mode of reaching

the general public with the wonderful powers and teachings of clairvoyance. At the close, some persons expressed themselves in a touching strain of feeling, as to the truths which had been communicated, and a lady spoke of a scene described by Mr. Duguid as the death-bed of her sister, as a literally true picture of what had taken place. In all that was spoken there was a spiritual and elevating influence, and quite in harmony with a religious service. A vote of thanks was passed to the speaker by the meeting, and after business matters had been talked about a most harmonious assembly dispersed.

A "Frequent Visitor" desires us to express his objections to the discussion of money matters which almost nullified Mr. Duguid's gratuitous and excellent services on Sunday evening. Not only were the financial prospects of Quebec Hall paraded, but another hall had also to contribute a portion of this very unspiritual part of the evening's proceedings. Our correspondent hopes the "money changers" will refrain from advertising their business arrangements on such untimely occasions, in the Spiritual Temple. A direct appeal followed by a good collection should evoke expressions of hope and gratitude.

WEST PELTON SPIRITUAL ASSOCIATION.

Mr. Editor.—Dear Sir,—Will you kindly acknowledge, with our grateful thanks, the following kind remittances towards our Building Fund?—

	£	s.	d.
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Hoping to receive the sympathy and support of those who wish Truth to predominate, I am, yours truly,

THOS. ALDERSON, Sec.

22, Edward Street, West Pelton, Chester-le-Street.

PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS AT BYERS GREEN.

To the Editor.—Dear Sir,—It was my good fortune to be present at one of Mrs. Beardshall's seances. I held one of her hands and Mr. Beardshall the other; all the sitters in the circle held hands in a similar manner. When the light was extinguished, powerful table manifestations commenced. With all our hands on the top it rose about six inches; then we held our hands above it, and it rose quite six inches without contact. Beautiful lights were seen, and three forms came out, but they were not recognised. Mr. Beardshall described, clairvoyantly, to Mr. W. Nesbath, who had not sat in a circle before. A sister was first described, and her manner of passing away; then his father, even to the clothes he last wore on earth. The spirit also appeared in the condition he was when killed at work. At another sitting, in addition to table manifestations, the tube and bell were used by the spirits during the singing. Mr. Beardshall's clairvoyant descriptions were again recognised, this time by Mr. W. Wright, another new sitter. On Sunday evening there were six sitters present. Two forms came out. The tube was carried to cabinet, and bell rung. The clairvoyant descriptions were again very good. The following witnesses attest the truthfulness of these statements:—W. Wright, Sunnybrow; S. Wragg, Sunnybrow; T. Morros, Brancepeth; W. Nesbath and Mrs. Nesbath, Byers Green.—J. AYER, B. Park, July 30, 1883.

BATLEY CARR.—On Sunday last we had Mrs. Ingham, of Keighley, occupying our platform, when we had a splendid time. The room was comfortably full; an event that has not taken place for a long time past. Several persons had their deceased friends and relations described to them, which was quite affecting. After the service was over, a copy of the MEDIUM AND DAYBREAK containing Mr. Wilson's "Spiritual Allegory," was presented to each visitor.—ALFRED KITSON.

D. B. RANDOLPH'S WORKS.—It is of the greatest importance and advantage to all who have heard of, or have read, or are interested in the works of P. B. Randolph, of America, if they will at once correspond with me, addressing, "Sexagrams," care of Editor of the MEDIUM.

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MEETINGS, SUNDAY, AUGUST 5TH, 1883.

LONDON.

SPIRITUAL INSTITUTION, 15, Southampton Row, at 7.
QUEBEC HALL, 25, Great Quebec Street, Marylebone Road, at 11, seance for clairvoyance; at 3, Free Spiritual Mission for Inquirers; at 7, Fred. Wilson, "The little clown"; Mrs. Wilson will sing. Friday, 8.30, Mr. Towns: Seance. Saturday at 8.30, Clairvoyant Medium.
CAVENDISH ROOMS, Mortimer Street, W., at 7, Mr. J. J. Morse: Questions and Answers.

PROVINCES.

BARROW-IN-FURNESS.—75, Buccleuch Street, at 6.30.
BATLEY CARR.—Town Street, 6 p.m.: Mr. Henry Briggs.
BELPER.—Lecture Room, Brookside, at 6.30.
BINGLEY.—Intelligence Hall, 2.30 and 6 p.m.: Mrs. Gott and Mr. Schutt.
BISHOP AUCKLAND.—Temperance Hall, Gurney Villa, 2.30, 6.
BRADFORD.—Spiritualist Church, Walton Street, Hall Lane, Wakefield Road, 2.30 and 6 p.m.: Mr. Armitage.
Wade's Meeting Room, Harker Street, Bowling, at 2.30 and 6 p.m.: Miss Harrison.
Spiritual Lyceum, Oddfellows' Rooms, Otley Road, at 2.30: Miss Hance and Miss Ratcliffe.
EXETER.—Oddfellow's Hall, Bampfylde St. 6.30, Rev. C. Ware.
GATESHEAD.—Central Buildings, High Street, 6.30.
GLASGOW.—2, Carlton Place, South Side, at 11: Mr. James Robertson; at 6.30: Mr. Hay Nisbet.
HALIFAX.—Spiritual Institution, Peacock Yard, Union Street, 2.30 and 6.30, Mrs. Dobson.
HETTON.—Miners' Old Hall, at 5.30.
KEIGHLEY.—Spiritualist Lyceum, East Parade, 2.30, and 6.30: Mrs. Hollings.
LEEDS.—Tower Buildings, Woodhouse Lane, 2.30, and 6.30, Mr. Collings Briggs.
LEICESTER.—Silver Street Lecture Hall, at 11 and 6.30.
LIVERPOOL.—Rodney Hall, Rodney Street, Mount Pleasant, at 11 a.m., and 6.30 p.m.: Mrs. E. H. Britten.
MACCLESFIELD.—Spiritualists' Free Church, Paradise Street, at 6.30 p.m.: Mr. G. Rogers.
MANCHESTER.—Bridge Street Chapel, Bridge Street, Ardwick, 10.30 and 6.30.
MORLEY.—Spiritual Mission Room, Church St., 6: Miss Agnes Hance.
MIDDLESBOROUGH.—Granville Lecture Rooms, Newport Road, at 10.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Weir's Court, at 6.30.
NORTHAMPTON.—Cowper Cottage, Cowper Street, 2.30 and 6.30.
NORTH SHIELDS.—Bolton's Yard, Tyne St., 6.
OLDHAM.—176, Union Street, at 2.30 and 6.
PLYMOUTH.—Richmond Hall, Richmond Street, 11 a.m. and 6.30 p.m.: Mrs. Groom.
SHEFFIELD.—Psychological Inst'n, Cocoa House, Pond St., 6.30.
SOWERBY BRIDGE.—Progressive Lyceum, Hollins Lane, at 6.30, Mr. A. D. Wilson.
SUNDERLAND.—Avenue Theatre, at 2.30, and 6.30.
WALLSAL.—Exchange Rooms, High St., at 6.30:
WEST PELTON.—At Mr. John Taylor's, at 6 p.m.

MR. W. J. COLVILLE'S APPOINTMENTS.—Sowerby Bridge, Progressive Lyceum, Hollins Lane, Sunday, August 5, at 2.30. Subject: "The Mission of the Spirit World to the Present Century"; 6.30 p.m.—subject to be chosen by the audience. Same place, Tuesday, Aug. 7, at 7.30 p.m., subject: "Spiritualism in the Light of Reason, and its Place among the Sciences." Manchester, Sunday, Aug. 12: Tuesday, Aug. 14; & Thursday, Aug. 16. Liverpool, Sundays, Aug. 19 & 26; and intervening days. London, Tuesday, Aug. 28. Plymouth, Thursday and Friday, Aug. 30 & 31; & Sunday, Sept. 2.

Mr. W. J. Colville can be engaged on very moderate terms for week evening lectures anywhere within ready access of Manchester. Address all letters to him without delay to 4, Waterloo Road, Manchester.

MR. J. J. MORSE'S APPOINTMENTS.—London, Sunday, Aug. 5, Cavendish Rooms, at 7. Questions and Answer night.

KEIGHLEY, Sunday, August 12.
Mr. Morse accepts engagements for Sunday Lectures in London, or the provinces. For terms and dates, direct him at 53, Sigdon Road, Dalston, London.

MRS. HARDINGE-BRITTEN will lecture for the present at Liverpool, the 1st and 3rd Sundays, and at Halifax the last Sundays of each month; at Rochdale, July 22nd; Blackburn, August 12th; Wallsal, September 9th.—Address: The Limes, Humphrey Street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.

MR. R. A. BROWN, 33, Downing Street, Manchester:—July 22, Manchester; 29, Macclesfield.

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Electrician and Mesmerist,

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Dear Sir,—I have great pleasure in using my pen on behalf of Mesmerism, as we have found it of great benefit in our Family. My Wife had been troubled with EPILEPTIC FITS over 20 years. We tried a great many Doctors, but all to no use. During the time she had Fits, it caused a great deal of uneasiness in our family. When I have gone out to my work in the morning, I have not known where I should find her at night. Sometimes I have found her in bed, shockingly disfigured from ill-using herself. She was always to watch during the day when I was at work. But now there is a great change. My Wife came to you in Feb., 1880. You cast her into the Mesmeric Sleep, and she told you, when in that sleep, she would have 289 Fits, her last being on New Year's day, 1881. She came out of that Fit exact to the minute, after being 9 hours in it. Thank God, since then she has not had the *LEAST SYMPTOM* of a Fit. Dear Sir, I thank you most sincerely for what you have done for my Wife, and I hope you will make this case widely known.—I remain, yours ever gratefully,
JAS. EDWARD THORNTON.

Carter's Yard, Carlisle, Batley, Yorkshire. July 9th, 1883.

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| CHAPTERS | INTRODUCTION. |
| 1 to 6. | SPIRITUALISM IN GERMANY. |
| 7 to 12. | SPIRITUALISM AND SPIRITISM IN FRANCE. |
| 13 to 32. | SPIRITUALISM IN GREAT BRITAIN—IRELAND, SCOTLAND, AND ENGLAND. |
| 33 to 36. | SPIRITUALISM IN AUSTRALIA. |
| 37 to 38. | SPIRITUALISM IN NEW ZEALAND. [ISLANDS, |
| 39. | SPIRITUALISM IN THE POLYNESIAN AND WEST INDIAN |
| 40. | SPIRITUALISM IN SOUTH AMERICA, MEXICO, NEW GRANADA, &c. |
| 41. | SPIRITUALISM IN CHINA, JAPAN, THIBET, &c. |
| 42. | SPIRITUALISM IN INDIA. |
| 43. | RESUME OF SPIRITUALISM IN THE EAST—MAGIC—OCCULTISM AND SPIRITUALISM. |
| 44 to 46. | SPIRITUALISM IN HOLLAND. |
| 47. | WONDERFUL MANIFESTATIONS AND OFFICIAL INVESTIGATIONS IN THE DUTCH INDIES. |
| 48. | SPIRITUALISM IN RUSSIA. |
| 49. | SPIRITUALISM IN SCANDINAVIA. |
| 50. | SPIRITUALISM IN SWEDEN AND SWITZERLAND. |
| 51. | SPIRITUALISM IN ITALY. |
| 52. | SPIRITUALISM IN SPAIN. |
| 53. | SPIRITUALISM IN BELGIUM, TURKEY, AND OTHER EUROPEAN LANDS. |
| 54. | SPIRITUALISM IN AMERICA. |
| 55 to 71. | SPIRITUALISM IN AMERICA. |
| 72. | CONCLUSION. |

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