

THE

SPIRITUAL TIMES

A WEEKLY ORGAN DEVOTED TO THE FACTS, PHILOSOPHY, AND
PRACTICAL USES OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM

WE HOLD THAT GOD IS OUR FATHER, MAN OUR BROTHER, IMMORTALITY OUR DESTINY.

Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

"The life that now is shapes the life that is to be.

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Spiritualism unfolds to our internal senses substantial realities, presenting us not only with the semblances, but the positive evidences of eternal existence, causing us to feel that the passing shadows we speak of belong not to the spiritual, but the material world. It is easy to imagine that we are dealing with the absolute and enduring, because we associate our thoughts with the external and apparently lasting; but, on reflection, we discover that the only absolute and enduring facts are beyond the tomb.

CIVILISATION—ITS SUPREME CRIMINALS.

If anything can prove the utter feebleness of the existing religious institutions, with all their dismal dogmas and outside formularies, we think the constantly increasing list of murderers can. Who can contemplate the subject of crime as it presents itself in this century of civilisation, with its churches, chapels, schools, missionaries, Bibles, prisons, workhouses, gin-palaces, and gallows, and not shudder at the picture? We have philanthropists, noble institutions, and marvellous displays of true heroism; but Calcraft, after all, is the busiest State functionary. He is never idle, and his important business never at a discount. He is the terror of the age, yet is he rewarded with the world's thanks; for does he not draw the bolt which opens the door of eternity to murderers of every grade, thus ridding society of its "supreme criminals?" But, alas, why do these criminals increase? Are they necessary to a true Christian Civilisation? Calcraft has surely made examples enough of the supreme criminals to teach us the moral value of hangings. We cannot fail to be sensible of the brutal lessons taught by the gallows, and we look in vain for any diminution of the yearly average of murderers through the examples he makes. We have long grown familiar with the ordinary visits of chaplains to the condemned, and their results—dying confessions, and belief in a Saviour's pardon—just before the fatal bolt is drawn. All this, as a matter of outside varnish, has its effect upon the world, doubtless, and people learn to parrot forth morbid expressions of satisfaction, that the prisoners, after all, repented, and gained pardon, possibly before yielding up themselves to the official mercies of Calcraft; and so these hanging affairs give place to others, and the old scenes with variations, of course, are re-enacted. To us there is something exceedingly sickening in the dogmatic teachings which lead the criminal to suppose that a life of fearful wickedness and terrible crime can be baptised and purified in the Saviour's blood, on the gallows, where the act is opened by the chaplain and closed by the hangman. Whilst such an alluring dogma is inculcated, is it reasonable to anticipate a reduction in the list of murderers? What man but one who loves virtue and truth, for their own sakes, will halt at wickedness and crime, whilst he can hold by the comforting assurance that a dying confession and a penitential prayer or two will ensure him a place with the brightest examples of goodness in the many mansions of bliss? No wonder our prisons are full of thieves and vagabonds—that our convict-ships carry their heavy freightage of human renegades to our prison colonies, and that the expert hangman not only keeps in practice at the pinioning and bolt practice himself, but that he needs assistance at

times, that the law's mandates may be strictly obeyed as to time and place where the supreme criminals are to drop into eternity. We write this article fully aware of the grave objections which are commonly urged in favour of the murderers being properly attended by their spiritual advisers, &c. But whilst we feel that human nature would be outraged were we to prohibit the condemned, who truly desire the chaplain's sacred services, from this privilege, we feel that human nature is most terribly outraged by the doctrines so commonly taught being palmed upon the wretched culprits. If hangings are intended as examples to terrify evil-doers, the teachings of modern theology, as applied to the criminal, cannot be expected to have no effect upon society. Take, as an illustration of the marvellous beauty of modern theological teaching, Dr. Pritchard, whose life has just been forfeited. He had received a thorough schooling in orthodoxy, and, as was shown in his two confessions, knew how to tell the most atrocious lies, and, as a last piece of cool calculation, to enact the part of a pious hypocrite. He had slowly and scientifically murdered his wife, having, too quickly for his purpose, murdered her mother. He was tried, the charges being proved against him, and condemned to death. He then wrote a confession, in which he denied having poisoned his mother-in-law; but his confession was not believed, which, by the way, was spiced with orthodox cant phrases. Again he confessed, declaring that his former confession was not true, and that he, and he alone, was guilty of the two murders. In his second confession there is a supply of the orthodox element of contrition, &c., but that has not saved him, though doubtless he thought it would. Now, how any sudden confession, supposing it be truthful, is to regenerate, in the twinkling of an eye, a soul like Dr. Pritchard's, who, according to his own two confessions, was living a life of sin—cohabiting with his servant, drinking whiskey to excess, and murdering, by degrees, his own wife and her mother—is a problem we should like our orthodox Divines to solve. To say the least, a belief in such a regeneration is sure to tend to a laxity of morals, and to act as a counterpoise to all self effort, necessarily weakening responsibility, and making the soul a receptacle for selfish desires. We need, as a people, more of the vital truth and less of the formal and deceptive. If theology be allowed to supplant Christianity all the lengthened train of evils which theology fosters, will keep stubborn root in the soil of life, and it can be no cause for wonder that we maintain a "Pagan sham" for a vital reality, and, as a consequence, criminals increase. So long as self-effort in the way of life-purification is ignored mankind will need the not very satisfactory props of theology, and as they lean against them, will find to their deep regret that they are no real support in the hour of weakness. If our immense machinery of schools, churches, prisons, and gallows fail to decrease, but, on the contrary, increase our criminal forces, it is high time some regenerating power should be introduced in order that we may live in the light of righteousness and peace.

Spiritualism comes to us with no Sinai thunders of Almighty Wrath, but with holy, hallowed whispers of Al-

mighty Love. It teaches us to recognise the true, and to eschew the false, in every form and creed. It gives us not only a certain assurance of immortal existence, but a knowledge that our inheritance in the halls of immortality depends, not simply on our faith, but our *actions* here; hence we learn that external forms cannot save the soul, and consequently only those who win the crown can wear it.

Spiritualism comes to us and *proves* the existence of disembodied spirits, and presents the murder-disposed with examples far more effectual for good than those presented by the Hangman. It shows that the murderer is haunted by his victim, and that he must continue to suffer remorse until he has sufficiently expiated his offence, thus proving that no mere avowal of guilt and feeling of repentance at the last moment on the scaffold can atone for the guilt that lies heavily upon his soul. Thus a Divine principle of compensation rules, and our reason is saved the monstrous necessity of accepting the idea that a dying repentance fits a wretched criminal who has, through a long life of guilt, earned for himself a criminal's doom, to occupy a position with the noblest and purest of spirits gone before. God forbid that we should betray the slightest feeling of vindictiveness towards any poor guilty wretch who goes to his account from the scaffold. His sins having "found him out," will work an inevitable judgment upon him, and so will the sins of all. We have no pleasure in his distress, but we feel that the sooner we teach our children and society at large the utter impossibility of escaping the consequences of sin, the sooner shall we reach the points where murder and crime of every description will be on the decrease. We need no other argument to convince us of the necessity for Spiritualism to be made known than that afforded by our criminal lists, which present us with a frightful feature of our civilisation.

SPIRIT-KNOCKING.

We were present at a *séance* on Friday, July 21, at Mr. Broad's, Bayswater, when we listened to some extremely loud knockings of a spiritual character. We do not remember to have heard anything louder or more distinct at the Marshalls. The knockings were alleged to come from a spirit who could not approach the table, on account, as it said, of its criminal character, it having when in the body committed murder by poisoning. We had all been talking of Dr. Pritchard, the Glasgow poisoner.

MISS EMMA HARDINGE sets sail from America on the 5th of August for England. We sincerely trust she may be favoured with good audiences. We are pleased she is coming amongst us, and shall do our best to aid her.

ON ORGANIZATION.

An Address by THOMAS BREVION, Author of *The Two Worlds*.
Delivered at the Spiritual Lyceum.

UNDER the name of Organization, we have these two evenings been engaged in considering two distinct questions, which may, indeed, naturally run the one into the other, but which have no necessary connection; and which for present purposes it will, perhaps, be most convenient to consider separately.

First, then, it is suggested that some kind of Organization be formed to sustain, and render more efficient, the work carried on in this place, and for which this Spiritual Lyceum is instituted:—to lighten the responsibilities of its proprietor and the labours of its manager. To any wise concerted action of this kind—to the formation of a committee—especially of a committee appointed by the general body of subscribers, and which would thus have something of a representative character—to a committee of reasonable men, in general agreement, to manage the regular delivery of lectures, the issue of tracts, to make this place as neat and orderly, and attractive, and useful as possible:—to this I see no reasonable objection, and it may possibly do good service.

But behind this, there has been shadowed forth, more or less distinctly, by almost every speaker, the idea of a more comprehensive Union—a general Organization of Spiritualists into a distinct body—a Society according to some, a Church according to others, for the better defence and diffusion of the principles we hold.

I do not think the question is, at present, at all ripe for practical decision even in the judgment of those who deem such a plan in itself advisable; but it is now mooted, not for the first time, and more than one abortive attempt has, to my knowledge, already been made in this direction. We shall doubtless hear of such projects again and again, and it is therefore, well to try and form a clear and right judgment herein, for right thinking in this, as in most matters, is necessary to right doing, or

to wise abstention, if that course should, on the whole, be deemed best. We should not waste power in futile, or impracticable, or even very doubtful action where there is so much urgent and unquestionably useful work immediately before us; and in which men of thought and men of action, are alike needed.

For whatever conclusion we may arrive at, it seems that this question is not one that should very long occupy us, or hold a paramount place in our regard. It belongs to altogether a lower plane of thought, and is diverting our attention to topics of meaner range. It deals with means rather than ends; the mechanical rather than the dynamic; the external in place of the internal; with methods not with principles. This, of course, is not used as an argument against Organization, but only against our allowing its consideration to encroach too far on the time and attention which might be given, I think, more profitably, to higher things.

Examples of successful Organization are daily before us. Railways, Telegraphs, Gas and Water supply, Postal delivery, are among its most striking instances; and the thought could hardly fail to suggest itself—Would not Organization be a power in the hands of Spiritualists, and should not they avail themselves of it to promote what they believe to be a great and salutary truth? Ah! therein lies the important destruction. The associations referred to as examples are formed, not to promote truth, but to make money. Their basis is necessarily commercial, their motive-power, the love of gain; our end and means alike must be different. If we mean to work to advance the recognition of a truth we must count not to gain, but to lose: we must appeal not to selfish, but to self-denying motives. A Joint-Stock company may do very well for a Bank, or a Brewery, or a Cotton Manufactory; but a Joint-Stock Company with Limited Liability for the Promotion of Spiritualism, would, I am afraid, turn out a very bad speculation. I could not recommend anyone to take stock in it: it would stand no chance in competition with the elegant simplicity of Three per cents, or the Post Office Savings Bank.

But another class of examples is cited—that of the Churches. It is said,—look at the Cathedrals and Chapels they have built, the Missionaries they have sent abroad, the funds they have raised to carry out their several objects. Well, this class of instances I admit is more in point, as having not a commercial, but a moral basis; moreover, the principle has been applied in them a length of time, under a variety of circumstances, and with such aids from experience as to give it a fair, I had almost said, an exhaustive trial. What are the results? Well, in certain respects, I admit they have achieved great results. Raised funds? Yes. The Treasury of the Churches might have bought the fee-simple of the habitable globe. But have they made the nations practically Christian? Let the National Debts of Christendom, contracted chiefly for wars between so-called Christian nations, answer. Let Europe, armed to the teeth, and making the ingenuity of science to perfect its instruments of human slaughter, answer. Let the long and fear of daily calendar of crime,—let slavery so long practised, and not yet wholly blotted out from Christian civilisation, answer. It has built gorgeous churches.—Yes; but where it has had longest sway, men in greatest numbers have ceased to worship, and oft are aliens to the faith. It has stimulated education.—Yes; but how has it narrowed and sectarianised it! How does it, even now, here in England, stand in the way of a broad, comprehensive National Education! It has spread Christianity.—Yes; but how fearfully has it corrupted and perverted it! Could I now fully enter into the question, it would be necessary too, to carefully discriminate between the foreign elements—the outside civilisation that has grown up beside ecclesiastical Organization, and the influences which such Organization has itself exercised. I know no more striking example of the disastrous influence of Organization, especially to the cause it was invoked to aid, than this which has been cited in its favour. It History teaches any lesson, it teaches this:—that, as a rule, the earliest period of a Church is its best and purest. When united by deep convictions and earnest faith—when rejecting outward bonds, with organization, if any, not fixed, but light and elastic, then, it is most expansive and exalted. When most free, then its influence for good is the most potent. The great Religions of the world—from Abraham or Zoroaster downwards, whence did they originate? From Organization? No; but in the depths of the individual soul, and their greatest enemy has ever been the Ecclesiastical Organization of the time. To go back no farther than the Christian faith—Christ exercised His ministry in the temple, and on the mount, in the synagogue, and by the way side. He proclaimed the Fatherhood of God, and preached of the Kingdom of Heaven. The magnetism of His pure and loving nature and Divine Life attracted to Him affectionate souls who followed Him even unto death; but He founded no visible church, instituted no formal subscription to Articles of Faith, built up no priestly hierarchy; but He condemned and reproached the priesthood for their corruption and hypocrisy. We have a creed called "The Apostles Creed," but every scholar knows it was not written till many years after their death. The essential part of their teachings, as they themselves regarded it, was the proclamation—not of opinions, but of facts. They preached "Jesus and the Resurrection." They testified to His divine life and wonderful works—the spiritual manifestations of a Divine order which they had witnessed; and in that faith they went forth to Martyrdom and Victory; but the beginning of the Church, as an Organization, was the beginning of discord. The Jewish Christians and the Gentile converts quarrelled about rites and ceremonies. The Apostles were themselves divided, and Paul withstood Peter to the face; and, as in all Organizations, there sprung up party spirit and party feuds. Some were of Paul, and some of Apollos, and some of Cephas. The infant Church was nearly wrecked at the start on the breakers of Organization. Soon sects multiplied, and with them jealousy, and strife, and bitterness, and hatred. They quarrelled, they anathematized, they forged, they fought; aye, even in the sacred place the blood of the priest flowed around the altar; and when, at length, from these conflicting Organizations one emerged triumphant and supreme, O what a long and terrible career of crime and infamy it wrought out! How did enthroned Priestcraft torture and slay, and trample with its cloven hoof on freedom, and conscience, and all that men hold sacred, and while usurping all authority, claiming to be as God upon earth, and to hold the keys of Heaven;

selling indulgencies for sin, and itself such a mass of moral corruption and rottenness that outraged humanity could no longer bear the pollution, and the Reformation poured, like a river, through the foul Augean stable of the Church.

Next, and side by side, with the old ecclesiasticism, now shorn of its limbs, and with its claws and teeth drawn, the experiment was tried of independent National Church Organization. How has it succeeded? I need refer only to our own country, and remind you that here, but little more than three centuries ago, it burnt Romanists and Anabaptists, it cut off Puritans ears, it established its Protestant Inquisition—the Star Chamber, and those who would not bow down to worship the golden idol which the king had set up, were compelled to seek in the New World, a home where they might worship God according to their consciences.

And they, too, these hunted, pilloried Puritans, unwarned by their own bitter experience, must set up their Organization, and inflict on others the persecution from which themselves had fled. They had been chastised with whips for their nonconformity, and now they had the power, they chastised Quakers and others with scorpions for their nonconformity to them. The Quakers, to their credit be it said, have not been a persecuting body, but even they have felt the cramping, deadening effect of Organization. George Fox was a man whose noble soul burned against every form of oppression, he was eminently a spiritual medium. He, and others of the early Friends, had frequent manifestations of spiritual power, and were conscious of spiritual inspiration. They spoke much of "the light within," and at their meetings they "waited for the Spirit;" but in their Organization, faith soon hardened into formula. They retained the old phrases, but not their spirit. They became a dull decorous body, and having very little soul left the proportions of the body have dwindled too, and they have been driven to take counsel of prize-essayists as to the causes of the sad declension in their numbers and influence.

One other instance, the last with which I shall trouble you. Swedenborg was one of the greatest men of the eighteenth century, and perhaps, the most remarkable of modern mediums. For more than twenty years, as he avows, he was in constant communication with the World of Spirits. For part of this time he kept a Diary of these experiences—fully as strange as any in our own day. His narratives and teachings are in themselves a library. But he founded no Church, and seems never to have contemplated doing so. Some of his followers, however, less wise, organized themselves into a Church, which they called the "New Jerusalem." Well, this is not yet half a century old, and already, not only has it degenerated into one of the most narrow and illiberal of the sects, but the ruling section of the sect, has become the most virulent and bitter of the opponents and revilers of Spiritualism, though its truth was so abundantly illustrated by the eminent man whose name—but not whose spirit—they have adopted; and the Court of Chancery has actually had to be invoked to settle the differences of the "New Jerusalem;" the Lord Justice lifting up his hands and exclaiming with astonishment, "Are those men Christians?"

The truth is, that Organization is the poor human substitute for deep conviction and earnest faith. For the strength of a Divine impulse and noble inspiration, we club together our several weaknesses, thinking that by adding them up we shall find in the total what is not to be found in its several constituents.

It is "More life, and fuller that we want;" and in its place we are offered a sorry piece of mechanism. When the Prometheus fire burns low upon the altar of our hearts, or is altogether extinguished, we hope to evolve the spark that shall relume its light by some trick of party, some friction or device of Organization. Organization is a sign, not of strength, but of weakness. Organization is circumscription. If you organize to promote certain views and principles, you must begin by defining them. Definition is limitation. It shuts out those who cannot accept it. It fails to satisfy those who think it falls short of, or goes beyond, the mark at which they would aim. It thus becomes exclusive and sectarian; and here I must protest against the declaration that has been made, that Spiritualists are already a sect. That is not true, but it would become so, if a general Organization, of the kind referred to, was adopted. A sect is a body separated, sected, or cut off by its own act from the general community, society, or church, to which it belonged.

Spiritualism, as a principle, is an element of not only all forms of Christian faith, but of all Religions, and is even held by many who profess no definite religious faith. It belongs to Humanity,—it is no more sectarian than light, electricity, or gravitation. As phenomena, its facts are the subject of observation, evidence, and experiment; those who engage in their investigation can no more be considered a sect than can chemists or astronomers be so regarded. The one class of researches relate primarily to the physical world, the other class of researches relate primarily to the spiritual world. That is the whole difference. We all see how absurd and mischievous it would be to form a sect or Church of Astronomers, with thirty nine or any other number of articles of astronomical faith; but it seems we have not yet all got to see that it would be at least equally absurd and mischievous to form a sect or Church of Spiritualists as of Astronomers.

It is rejoined that the evils I have pointed out as flowing from Organization, are only its abuses. Well, I think it must be confessed that if I have made a pretty large induction, it is at least based not on petty, isolated experiences, but on a broad survey of Ecclesiastical History; and it has been made in reply to the appeal to the churches as a precedent and example. "The abuse of Organization." Well, it is against the abuse that I contend; and I hold that it is abused whenever it is applied to purposes foreign to its proper sphere. That sphere, as it seems to me, is the arrangement and administration of the external and the physical. It is legitimate when applied to affairs of business: it is not legitimate when applied to affairs of conscience. Organize to build a place of meeting, if you want one; but if you propose to organize to build a creed, or to impose one, I cry—Hold there, you have no business with that!

But it is urged that there is no danger that Spiritualists in the Nineteenth Century would ever be guilty of such acts as have been practiced in past times. Well, I have no fear that even should they degenerate into a sect, they (or, indeed, any sect in Christendom) would revive the

fagot and the thumb-screw, or even the milder forms of direct persecution; but there are other evils inherent in every organization for promotion of a faith, from which they could not so easily escape, or, indeed, as I think, escape at all. A lady who has spoken in favour of Organization warned us, nevertheless, of four dangers to be apprehended from it—namely, Cupidity, Ambition, Jealousy, and Prejudice;—a formidable four-headed Cerberus to guard the gate. But apart from these dangers, it requires no prophetic eye to see other breakers immediately ahead. In America, one party of Spiritualists has found it necessary to call themselves "Christian Spiritualists," to distinguish them from another, and, apparently, the predominant party, which may be considered as not only non-Christian, but, to a great extent, if I may so without giving offence, as anti-Christian; or it may be defined affirmatively as Pagan and Pantheistic. As to moral evil, one section, at least, of this party holds that there is no such thing,—that "Whatever is, is Right,"—that what we call evil is only a lower form of good,—that sensuality and every other form of what we have been accustomed to call Sin, is but the green fruit which, by the mere process of the suns, must ripen into absolute holiness and perfect purity,—that the depraved debauchee, unrepentant, foul with the rottenness of three-score years, shall, from this centre, when he enters the Spirit-world, by mere living on—by a law of natural progression, develop into perfect angelhood, no less than if he had been the most humble, self-denying over of his kind.

Again, a large body of Spiritualists in France and on the Continent of Europe, insist on the ancient doctrine of the transmigration—or, as it is now phrased—re-incarnation of souls. According to this theory, the babe whom the Christian mother to-day presses lovingly to her bosom, may be inhabited by the spirit which yesterday emerged from the gallows, its hands red with a brother's blood. And even without taking so extreme a case as this, still, in every instance, the identity of the spirit being lost and merged in successive incarnations, all the tender associations, the sweet memories, the bright hopes and consolations, which Christian Spiritualism teaches us find their full satisfaction in the Hereafter, are, in this view, remorselessly swept away. To me, these theories are simply absurd and blasphemous. I cannot too strongly express my detestation of them. Another speaker, on the contrary, has asserted that those who entertain these vagaries (as I deem them) are the "liberal and advanced Spiritualists." Well, you see the difference is radical and fundamental. It does not admit of reconciliation. But however pained I and those who think with me may be at these views, we are not compromised by them in public estimation, or, at all events, only remotely and indirectly. Nor are others held responsible for any specialities of opinion we may hold which may be obnoxious to them. But, if there were an Organization claiming to represent Spiritualism, how, I ask, could it deal with these, and, perhaps, other fundamental differences? It could not represent both sides; and if it adopted either, it would simply represent a faction, and would unwarrantably assume the common name. If, for the sake of peace, it ignored these differences, both parties would have to suppress their convictions, and might be justly charged with making Truth subordinate to Expediency. If it adopted what is called a free platform, in which these questions should be open to free discussion, then you would soon have division, party, sect, antagonism; and as it is the tendency of human nature to insist on points of distinction and difference, rather than on those of agreement, the points in controversy would acquire an increasing prominence and importance in the eyes of the disputants, and so the very object of the Organization would be defeated; instead of being instrumental in extending a common truth, its time and energies would be consumed in internal and internecine strife.

Life is the cause, not the product of organisation. No statue, either in snow or marble, though the genius of Michael Angelo or of Phidias be employed in its construction, can be made capable of thought or affection. But where there is a principle of Life, it attracts to itself suitable conditions and elements, and builds up a suitable organism or instrument through which it can perform appropriate functions. In proportion to the depth, and fulness, and quality of the life, will be the organic outgrowth. This is the prime distinction between natural organizations and those of human contrivance. The one is a growth from a principle and centre of Life: the other is altogether a manufactured article. We see a type of the latter in the old history, or myth. Men say now, as they said then, "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven;" but soon dissensions arise, their language is confounded, they understand not one another's speech; and they leave off to build the city, and are themselves scattered abroad on the face of all the earth. That is an epitome of the course and results of Organization. Truly, the name of that city is called Babel. Again, the human Organization is ruled by a central sovereign will, governing all its members; but if, when the right foot proposed a motion, the left one moved an amendment; if there was one party of the head, another party of the heart, and another of the stomach, and no supreme *Ego* to rule with authority these disorderly members, I (if I could in that case speak of an I) should feel strongly inclined to jump out of my "organization," and run away from it as fast as possible.

I do not by these remarks mean to assert what has been called "the sovereignty of the individual," for though that is a doctrine true in one sense, it is only a segment of a circle of truth, not itself a circle. In some minds it is a noble protest against conventionalism and the tyranny of numbers, and an assertion of the rights of the soul; in other minds, however, it is simply the assertion of self-will, of inordinate egotism; and would, carried to its logical ultimate, be simply disintegration and universal anarchy. The true relation of the individual to society is, however, an old and very deep question, into which it would not now be possible to enter. I have already indicated what I deem to be their several spheres, and have only further alluded to the much talked of principle of individual sovereignty, to guard myself against being supposed to accept it absolutely, without limit or qualification.

On this point I will add only one remark. Providence works from forms to ultimates—from seed to fruit—from centre to circumference. Trace back some mighty river to its head, and you will find it a mountain spring; trace back through the ages some great stream of thought and you will find it originate in a single mind. Islamism is Mahomet;

Judaism is Moses: the Protestant Reformation is Luther. Talk of the power of Organization! why there is more power in the Divine impulse, the righteous indignation, the o'ermastering Faith in the soul of a Luther, than in all the complex organization of Papal Rome, though perfected by the skill of centuries. Spiritualism, in its modern phase (for in itself, it is as old as Humanity), had its birth or germinal centre in an obscure family in a small village, and every step of its development, so far, at least, as this country is concerned (and I believe it is equally true of other lands), has been mainly due to individual thought and enterprise. The idea—whether of a cheap periodical among our busy artisans of the North, or a metropolitan Magazine, or a weekly Journal, or a Lyceum, or the manifestation of spiritual agency through mediumship,—each and all have had their beginning in, and been chiefly outwrought through, some one mind or person; others have been attracted, have formed a friendly group, have sustained the work, and aided its development and extension. This is the natural order: call it, if you will, co-operation. It is spontaneous, voluntary, free. Each aids in that direction which most fully commends itself to his judgment, and just so far and so long as he is willing and able to do so. There is in this little or no waste of power, no needless friction, no contention concerning dogma, no obligation or responsibility, which is not voluntarily assumed and maintained.

What, now, is Organization? Take the most perfect form of organization—a well-disciplined army. It is a power which no human force can successfully resist save by an organization similar to its own. And why? Because it is simply a machine, under the supreme direction and control of a single mind. The soldier, as such, has no individual will, no power of independent action; he is simply a piston, a wheel, or, it may be, but a cog in the wheel, of the great machine. Were each soldier to form his own plans, and act according to his own judgment, the army would be powerless, or, in military phrase, demoralised; it would cease to be an army, and would be but a military rabble. Again, the most perfect moral organization that the world has perhaps seen has been that of the Jesuits. Kings have trembled before it; the Vatican itself has been alarmed at its power. What has been the secret of its strength? Implicit obedience—unconditional submission to authority—the entire surrender of every faculty and purpose to the requirements of the Order and its chiefs. No wonder it was formidable. Would you have the power of Organization? Well, you may: but you must pay the price for it. That price is—LIBERTY! Nothing less. If you admit freedom into your Organisation, just to the extent that you do so you impair its efficiency. They are the opposite poles of the magnet. You may have your money, or you may have your cake; take your choice, but you cannot have both.

I do not say that there are not some things more urgent even than Freedom;—concerning which it is reasonable, and right, and even necessary, that we should forego it. Something of this is implied in the very existence of society. We delegate to Parliament the power of the purse, the protection of life and property, the administration of justice; but Faith and Conscience are a domain beyond the policeman's beat; into which no State, Synod, Church, Convocation, or Organization, under any name whatever, has any right or business to intrude.

Will you bear with me, friends, when I affirm my conviction that much of this craving for organization is but a sad indication that we have not sufficient faith in God; that we do not trust Him and the power of His truth, for all truth is His. That was a great saying of Augustine—"God is patient, because Eternal." His works ripen slowly, but surely; and they proportionately endure. How many centuries of ages had the stars looked down upon our earth, ere this wild, weltering chaos had become a blooming Cosmos, fit for the habitation of man! But we, with our short span of earthly life, are impatient of results. We cannot plough the soil, and deposit the seed, and trust the kindly heavens for rain, and dew, and sunshine to ripen, in due season, the golden grain; we cannot trustfully say with the poet—"Be gracious, Heaven! for now

Laborious man has done his part."

We are impatient for the harvest; we must put our spades into the earth, and turn over the mould, and lay bare the roots to see that it is actually growing. Friends, this is wrong. We have nothing to do with results. They are not at our disposal. So long as we work in this spirit, we are indeed sure of one harvest—a plentiful crop of sorrows, and disappointments, and discontents. Let us be thankful that we are privileged to do the duty that lies; immediately before us, satisfied of this, that no true word was ever spoken, no true deed ever done, in vain; that the fruit will all be gathered in in the harvests of Eternity.

But if ever men had reason to complain in this respect, surely, friends, it is not we. The spiritual evidences given to this generation have created a faith which already well-nigh girdles the earth. That it has spread so far, and struck its roots so deep, is, I think, mainly to be attributed to the fact that it has been free,—that, like the sunshine or the viewless winds, it has refused to be imprisoned, or to be yoked to the chariot-wheels of party or of creed.

I, however, recognise another and a noble element in the impulse to organization. It is, in great measure, an expression of that yearning for sympathy and association which, however misdirected, is itself a Divine instinct, the basis of all family and social relations; binding mind to mind, and heart to heart; leading us to feel the claims of dear kinship in our common humanity, even in its lowest types; and which, transcending all bounds of time, space, and mundane conditions, makes us one with the whole spiritual Universe of God.

And here I feel that Spiritualism is eminently a strength and consolation. We are not dependent on external and visible supports. If faithful to our best selves; working out our highest conceptions of the True and the Good, we come into the fellowship of all, whether of this or past ages, who are like-minded,—we breathe the atmosphere of their sympathy, are quickened by their inspiration, strengthened by their association, and aided by their loving, though it may be invisible help. We are fellow-members of that true Holy Catholic Church whose members are God's humble, loyal, obedient children, of every age, and clime, and creed.

[Although we print Mr. Brevior's lengthened article, we by no means endorse the views he has put forth.—E. S. T.]

EMMA HARDINGE'S FAREWELL TO HER AMERICAN FRIENDS.

PART SECOND.

From the *Banner of Light*.

LET the readers who followed me to the house of this lady, where, according to my friend's promise, I was to be "developed right away," imagine a person totally ignorant of the meaning of this phrase, finding herself in a room full of strangers, in vague anticipation of some mild kind of surgical operation, by which a rational being, in a perfectly natural state of existence, was suddenly to be converted into a modern prototype of the woman of Endor. Awaiting my mysterious fate with direful misgivings, I was suddenly addressed by the lady medium—to whom, by my own request, I had no introduction, and from whose notice I had sedulously shrank away—with the words, "Come here and sit with me; you are a great medium." Obedient to her commanding gestures, I seated myself at the magic table, when the lady began rubbing my hands with considerable energy, but explaining all the while that I wore a *silk dress*. Why I should not do so was more than I could divine; but before I could even arrange a question in words to this effect, a strange, misty sensation came over me, which so completely obscured my faculties that an endeavour to recal who I was, and where, only ended in convincing me that I was a highly respectable old gentleman, in which character I gave what I was afterwards informed were some remarkable personating tests of spirit identity to several strangers in the room. To recapitulate the events and sensations of that evening—the first of my test mediumistic experience—would be neither possible nor profitable. It is enough to record that the touch of Mrs. Kellogg's hand appeared like a magician's wand, illuminating the latent fires of magnetic power, which, once enkindled, ever after burned in the steady light of mediumistic gifts.

During the three hours' *séance* of that evening, it was found that I could give tests of spirit identity by personations, impressions, writing and automatic movements of my fingers over the alphabet. All present seemed much more interested in this sudden and unexpected development than myself, its subject, who, to confess the truth, was so bewildered with my own marvellous performances, besides being half the time lost in the identity of the spirits who were influencing me, that I was far more disposed to question my own identity, than that of any of the spirits I was said to represent.

The experience of most investigators in the spiritual philosophy has shown that no tests are thoroughly convincing to individual minds, which are not addressed to the individual's own knowledge and reason; hence all I did by way of convincing others that night, would have failed to impress myself with any other belief than that of an unnatural and foreign influence upon me, had not some of the tests been addressed to myself in automatic writing, which, though produced by my own hand—being written upside down, and requiring to be held up to the light for perusal—convinced me my own mind was not the originator of the sentences. One of these contained simply these words—"Tom"—"Find a great sea snake!"

The name of an only and idolized brother was here written, and with it the last words I ever heard him utter on earth; namely, a charge that I—a singer—would find for him the words of an old sea song, of which he was passionately fond, and which he had begged me to learn to sing for his gratification. He spoke this sentence as he was departing on his last earthly voyage, from which he never came back again. These utterances of the lost sailor boy were forgotten in the last whirlwind of grief for his death, far, far at sea, which swallowed up all minor details, until, after an absence of ten years, what I had been taught to believe the impassable gulf of eternity, stood revealed before me as a bridge, on which stood my beloved and lost, smilingly repeating that sentence—too trifling to have been preserved in the solemn archives of the memories of death, and too surely identical with the precious dead to be repeated by any but his own very self.

In scornful unbelief of the power I was investigating, I had said to my conductor, before entering the circle room, "If all you tell me of Spiritualism be true, and they succeed in making me one of these wonderful mediums, I will return to England and make my fortune."

Late in the evening, automatic writing, through my own hand, purporting to come from my spirit-father, assured me I was a fine medium; that I *must* use my gifts, as such, for the benefit of the world, but—repeating my own careless words—that so far from using those gifts to make my fortune, I was never to take fee or reward for mediumship, nor would the spirit communicating release me from the strong control in which I was held, until I made pledges before the witnesses then present, first, that I would devote my gifts to the service of others; and next, that I would not take gift or reward for the same.

As this was not the custom of my hostess, and certainly was far from my own views in the matter, this charge could have been no emanation from either her mind, or my own. And in justice to the many self-sacrificing mediums who have resigned other and more lucrative employments to give their services to the public in return for fees so modest, that they, too, often fail to supply the wants of those who demand them, I must here add, that the objection of my spirit friends to taking pay for mediumship, was special to my own case. It seemed they perceived in me the capacity to exercise many forms of mediumship, all of which they desired should simply be used as means to prepare me for a lecturer—a destiny which I should then have contemplated with so much disgust, that if apprised of it, I should, in all probability, have ceased my investigations at once. But though the reasons were not then given me, I have since learned to appreciate the excellence and wisdom of the advice.

By not becoming a professional medium, I neither felt anxiety to please my sitters, nor temptation to impose, when the power failed me. Besides this, I passed through many phases too rapidly to be available as a stereotyped test medium for any special gift, and thus I had the happiness of doing good, and conferring spiritual light upon those who sought me, besides gaining a vast range of experience and unfettered practice, which has been, and still is, of incalculable use to me as a teacher of the spiritual philosophy. All this I can now perceive "face to face;" though then, I may truly say, I could only "see as in a glass darkly."

Returning from this, my first mediumistic *séance*, a review of the memoranda furnished me of the circle convinced me I had been acting under some foreign influence, but by no means of the fact that the cause was supermundane. A full acceptance of this belief involved the abandonment of opinions and prejudices too deeply rooted to be readily conquered; besides, in my condition of semi-conscious control, I could not exercise the clear judgment which was retained by the observer; hence I returned a medium, but not a Spiritualist.

I had been advised by Mrs. Kellogg to procure an alphabet, and continue to sit, at stated periods, for practice and development. This I promised to do; but not finding the requisite leisure during the following day, my convictions of the spiritual origin of my previous night's performances waxed weaker and weaker with the lapse of every hour.

I mentioned, in a former paper, that I had come to this country in the steamship Pacific—one of the Collins line. Ever since my arrival in America, I had maintained a kindly intercourse with some of the officials of the ship, between whom and myself little offices of friendship were exchanged every time she came into port. The ship Pacific was due on the memorable day when I became developed as a medium, to wit, on Tuesday, February 19th, 1856.

On Wednesday I went down to the wharf in the hope of receiving a little package that was to be sent me from England, in charge of the storekeeper—an officer between whom my mother and myself the most kindly acquaintance had been kept up ever since our landing.

The ship had not arrived, and no tidings were received of her; but as she was only due some thirty hours—the season rendered it likely that winter storms would occasion the delay of even some days—no anxiety was felt in consequence. I mentioned the circumstance to my mother; but beyond a slight expression of regret, neither of us commented on the matter.

That evening, just as my mother and myself were about to retire for the night, a sudden and unusual chill crept over me, and an irresistible impression possessed my mind that a spirit had come into our presence. A sensation as if water was streaming over me, accompanied the icy chillness I experienced, and a feeling of indescribable terror possessed my whole being. I begged my mother to light up every lamp we had at hand; then to open the door, that the proximity of people in the house, outside our room, might aid to dissipate the horror that seemed to pervade the very air. At last, at my mother's suggestion, I consented to sit at the table, with the alphabet we had provided turned from me and toward her, so that she could follow the involuntary movements of my finger, which some power seemed to guide in pointing out the letters. In this way was rapidly spelled out, "Philip Smith, ship Pacific."

As that was the name of the store-keeper for whom I had been only that very day inquiring, our curiosity and interest was now considerably excited. For a few moments this mode of manifestation ceased, and to my horror, I distinctly felt an icy cold hand lay hold of my arm, then, distinctly and visibly to my mother's eyes, something pulled my hair, which was hanging in long curls; all the while the coldness of the air increasing so painfully that the apartment seemed pervaded by Arctic breezes. After a while, my own convulsed hand was moved tremblingly, but very rapidly, to spell out, "My dear Emma—I have come to tell you I am dead. The ship Pacific is lost, and all on board have perished; she and her crew will never be heard from more."

I need not remind my readers that this statement, though made within too short a time from the day when she was due to

permit of the least anxiety to be felt on her account, was strictly verified by subsequent results. The ship Pacific and her ill-fated crew were never heard from more; and despite the indignant threats of prosecution that the owners made against the "impostors" who dared to predict her loss on the faith of spiritual communications, which both myself and others, to whom I named the facts, did not scruple to repeat, Philip Smith, and some few of his fellow sufferers, in their messages from the harbour which happily sheltered their enfranchised spirits, were the only revelators that ever lifted the awful veil of doom from their ocean grave. From this time, and during a period of eighteen months, I sat constantly, for all who sought my services, as a test medium for a great variety of manifestations. These followed in rapid succession, each one practising my whole frame in a striking and powerful manner. I frequently saw spirits with great distinctness, describing them with accuracy, and conversing with them as I did with my fellow mortals. I wrote in various ways automatically, and by impression, spoke in various conditions of trance and semi-consciousness; became a psychometrist, partly clairvoyant, and occasionally a physician. In fact with the exception of boisterous physical manifestations, or that which I coveted beyond all else—a medium for raps—it is impossible to name a phase of mediumship through which I did not pass, and in which I was not fully and powerfully exercised.

My experiences during this period were sufficient to fill volumes, and will not, in this sketch, admit of even a brief description. I visited almost every medium I could hear of; sat in circles morning, noon, and night; pursued my investigations in garrets, cellars, saloons, and public halls; was now lifted up in ecstasy, now depressed with misery, harassed by doubts, confused by contradictions, repulsed by lies, mistakes and deceptions. But amidst it all there was the one great cardinal fact, that spirits disembodied could communicate to earth, and that spirits still embodied could and do act magnetically upon each other—appear, at times, in distant places, and frequently give communications, with as much accuracy and test circumstance, as spirits from the other world. No phase of the spiritual phenomena ever more sorely perplexed me than this communion with the spirits of the living. From what source, or by what law, such manifestations are made, I cannot now pretend to discuss. My own experience, confirmed by many others, bears ample testimony to the affirmative of this fact. And so frequently did I find that the spirits of persons still on earth were seen by me, described, and gave manifestations, as if they were still and actually in the spirit-world, that I was often doubtful of the fact, and sometimes disposed to attribute the entire phenomena of Spiritualism to the same cause; but in such hours of scepticism, some revelations, so clearly identical with the departed, and none but them, or some bright and beautiful evidences of true, genuine communication from the angel-world, invariably reassured me as to the inviolate and fundamental fact, that the disembodied soul of man can and does communicate from spheres beyond the grave.

That there is a vast field of untrodden science, in which the human soul, while still an inhabitant of its mortal prison-house, is the agent and instrument, I have full and conclusive testimony. For many months I communicated by mental telegraph, according to preconcerted arrangement, with my friend, Mrs. E. J. French, a resident of New York City, whilst she was at home, and I absent on distant travel; and these experiments were made in the presence of, and witnessed by scores of persons still living. On ten different occasions, whilst I was engaged in lecturing, I have been seen and described accurately in all minutiae of dress and appearance by strange mediums who had never seen me, and who were resident hundreds of miles away from my place of abode. Sometimes, I am told, a phantom Emma Hardinge has entered a circle, and given communications highly graphic of that remarkable personage, and all this without any knowledge of her own, or volition on her part. In short, the mysteries of mind are infinite, and the earnest and industrious student will find himself on the verge of a new world, and standing on the very threshold of a new era, when he enters upon the investigation of the marvels of the science of mind.

Another of the specialties of this mediumistic life, was the mass of revelation which the spirit-circle brought to light concerning the nature, cause, and effect of crime. Fearful have been the disclosures made through this source concerning the causes of death recorded by the physician, in the shape of disease, but witnessed of by them, not unfrequently, as murder, and just as often negligence, ignorance, mistake, and every conceivable form of crime. Deeds, which the actors fondly thought were buried in the tomb, and laid away in the dim archives of eternity, have risen up, in all their glaring deformity, to confront the secret criminal in the very presence of the victim and accusing angel. Other scenes, too, varied these dreary records of crime. Dear loved ones re-united—bereaved hearts sent away in all the ecstasy of re-union—precious little children, deemed as lights untimely quenched, or buds of promise nipped in the bitter frosts of death ere the vital spark had made it a conscious soul—all these beloved and ministering band of angels crowded around

my altar-like table, converting my humble circle-room into a living church of a living religion.

The courts of justice, too, are not forgotten; and many a piece of unlooked for testimony, many a strange witness, and singular "chance of haphazard" disclosure, owes its momentous and timely appearance in the smoky atmosphere of the law, to the promptings and hints of the spirit-circle. Blessed spirit-circle! I have seen the blind eyes opened, the crippled limbs made straight, the broken hearts bound up, the criminal converted, and the guilty startled from the path of secret crime by the revelations of the spirit-circle; and, moreover, the whole time that I was thus privileged to minister to others, my own career was a marvel of spirit guidance and influence to myself.

By the urgent request of my invisible friends, I entirely withdrew from the stage, concert, and reading-room, as a public performer, and attempted to supply the lack of this source of remuneration by giving music lessons. This, however, I found a far more difficult task than I had imagined. I had myself been a proficient in music, and I found, with a sensitiveness rendered painfully acute by a first-class musical education, and yet more so by the inspiration from the spheres which musical spirits occasionally poured upon me, that the task of instructing the totally uninspired with the "rudiments"—the only branch which offered itself to so obnoxious a person as a well-known spirit-medium—was irksome beyond endurance. Now and then an opportunity occurred of giving instructions more in accordance with my taste; but no sooner did the fact leak out that I was "a medium," than my pupils fled from me as from a pestilence. Friends grew cold, acquaintances shrugged their shoulders, and pitied and prophesied "lunatic asylums and beggary."

My own best interests, means, and position, depended on my return to England; but now by arguments, and still more by wonderfully cunning little schemes, my faithful invisibles kept me on, steadily, zealously pursuing my career as a test medium, and an indefatigable student of Spiritualism, and though often bringing me to the very verge of desperate resolve and the last dollar, never leaving me there, but tenderly leading me back, with their own obviously arranged efforts, to hope and temporary prosperity again. Meantime I reel with astonishment the changes that are imperceptibly being wrought in my opinions, habits, and manners. The gay and fashionable girl, educated amongst the privileged classes of Europe, enamoured of French society, and French life and customs, imbued by both associations and education with an unmitigated dislike of "common people" and "common ways"—was becoming converted into a thoughtful woman, a steady reformer, metaphysical thinker, and devoted Republican.

I dare not ask my readers to follow me through the marvels of my mediumistic career, nor my moral and intellectual new birth; it must suffice to say that I owe to Europe the endowments and refinement, education, popular and aristocratic opinions, manners, and accomplishments. To America, my birth into womanhood; and to the blessed gospel of Spiritualism, all light, knowledge of immortality, of (not belief merely) true happiness, charity, and metaphysical lore that I possess; and when I add to this a partial realisation of several precious spiritual gifts, who will marvel when I declare that poverty, persecution, obloquy, sordid cares, doubts, fears, disappointments, and a whole age of bitter struggle, fatigue, and suffering, crowded into a few years' experience, are all too poor a price to pay for the invaluable boon of Spiritualism. From the Spiritualists of New York City, where my development and first two years of experience took place, I received the warmest tokens of personal friendship and appreciation. I had offered my services to furnish them music at their Sunday meetings gratis, and finding that I was likely to quit them and seek remunerative employment elsewhere, they voluntarily pressed upon me a fair salary, and tendered the gratuitous service of a large and excellent choir of voices, to be placed entirely at my disposal.

Sometimes my choir numbered as many as thirty voices, composed of young persons of my own faith; mediumistic, and full of inspiration, and unbounded in their devotion and affection for me. For nearly two years this delightful choral society rallied around me, only breaking up at last with my enforced departure from New York.

I composed the music of our services, met with my young singers twice a week for practice, and can truly declare that the angels sang with us, and that as much of heaven as can ever be known on earth, often burst forth from the lips of this dear choir, bound together as we were by affection, mutual admiration, and esteem, and the constant presence and inspiration from beloved spirit friends, who christened my young singers "Singing Stars," and for whom they would often select and compose special anthems they wished performed. I linger on this page, one of the brightest and happiest of my American memories; but time and space are still the elements in which my too fluent pen is manipulating; these warn me to conclude this portion of my experience, lest the still more important era of my life as a lecturer should be crowded out of the pages already overcharged with the lucubrations of the test medium. My next article, then, will invite my readers' company in the third and final era of that

career, where my own wandering and faltering feet have been guided by that host "of mighty dead," whom the orthodox, in the words of their Scriptures, declare "are not;" whom the pious hide away from us in the unapproachable realms of an impossible Heaven or Hell, or a yet more impossible condition of oblivious corruption in the tomb, but whom I know to have been the lamps to my darkened eyes, the stars of my night, the sun of my day, the pillars of cloud and fire in my wilderness, the Heaven-sent Moses, who are still leading on their wayward charge to the shores of the beautiful river which divides me from the promised land, where I know in grateful blessing and tenderest re-union I shall meet my invisible guides in visible glory, my veiled loves in the revelation of that morning whose sun shall know no setting.

THE CONVENTION AT DARLINGTON.

A new epoch has commenced in the history of Spiritualism in this county. The first Convention in connection with this movement amongst us has been successfully held. The idea originated, and was triumphantly carried out, by Mr. John Hodge, of Darlington, an old and consistent Spiritualist of the true progressive stamp.

The call for this gathering had been before the public for some weeks, and on the 26th ult., a goodly number of Friends of Progress assembled in the Lower Hall of the Mechanics' Institution, Darlington. Mr. and Mrs. Spear were present, from London, with many earnest friends from different parts of the country. The Convention shaped itself by unanimously voting Mr. Hodge in the chair, and business commenced by a rich address from Mr. Spear, composed under inspirational influence. Three interesting Sessions were held that day.

On the 27th the Convention assembled an hour earlier, to give an opportunity for all the useful and original papers to be read and commented on. The chair was occupied by various members of Convention of both sexes, and the interest increased towards the close. The question of "Woman's Influence in Society" was ably discussed by Mrs. Spear. "Literature" and "Theology" by Mr. Gardner, of Newcastle. Dr. McLeod gave an excellent paper embodying many striking and instructive experiences. Mr. Burns, of the Progressive Library, London, read a long paper embodying the positive teachings of the progressive Spiritualists. A practical Mesmerist was in the camp, and contended that the phenomena were mesmeric. This was ably rebuked by the Spiritualists, and much light was thrown on the subject. Many wonderful personal experiences, inspirational addresses, and suggestive remarks, were recorded during the proceedings, on which we need not dwell at present, as they are in the hands of Mr. Burns, of the Progressive Library, who has been entrusted with their preparation and publication.

An association was formed under the name of the "Association of Progressive Spiritualists of Great Britain;" and Dr. McLeod, Newcastle-on-Tyne, was appointed Secretary.

It is the intention of this body to encourage similar Conventions in other towns throughout the county. It was a novel feature of the Convention that woman took equal rank with her brother, man, in managing the business, and acting as officer in the new association.

The members of Convention were delighted and refreshed, and their souls enlarged, by this never-to-be-forgotten event; and it is hoped the friends of humanity and religion, in their truest sense, will ardently improve an opportunity which has been so successfully inaugurated.

THE REV. J. M. SPEAR IN BIRMINGHAM.

To the Editor of the *Spiritual Times*.

We have had quite a feast, or revival of Spiritualism among a few friends here, which I think will do good to the cause. Mr. Spear left London on Saturday, July 22nd, and on his way to the Darlington Convention (by arrangement) called at Birmingham. On the following Sunday morning about thirty friends met to hear him lecture, which he did in a clear and effective manner, in which a portion of his own wonderful history was related. So pleased were his hearers, that a wish was expressed to hear him again in the evening, with which he complied, when a pleasant and profitable three hours were spent, Mr. S. speaking twice—once a prepared address, and the other inspirational. On Monday a few friends met again for conversation and Delineation of Character, which latter were remarkably correct, so much so as to prove, beyond a doubt, that he is aided by a higher power than his own both in the Delineation of Character and Diagnosis of disease. Few people, I think, could converse with him without being interested and made better by it. With so good a teacher of Spiritualism at their command, I hope some of the numerous friends of Progress scattered over the country will invite him to lecture and converse in their different localities.—Yours truly,

JOSEPH UNDERWOOD.

SPIRIT COMMUNICATION GIVEN TO MR. GEORGE
TURNER, MERCHANT, OF LEEDS, JUNE, 7, 1865.

To the Editor of the *Spiritual Times*.

WHEN will My people hear me? I command, and they shall know that I will be obeyed. I have said, I will give power with My command, and My people shall see whose words shall stand: My word by thee, or those who dispute My word by thee. If man can stop the sun from going down, or stop the tide of the sea from flowing, or remove the pillars of heaven, or dry up the sea, or carry the whole earth on his hand, or dissolve the hills and mountains in chaos, or sink for ever the earth,—then may he think to contend against Me, the Lord, who speaketh by thee; and hinder the fulfilment of My word. But still his thoughts would be vain, for these to Me are as the dust of the balance. If I say unto man, show Me the remote parts of the universe, or ask him the bounds of heaven, or the number of my angels, and how they receive light at my word; or if I demand of man to stand before Me, to speak in wisdom things I do not know, or answer words I should speak; if he can tell how light was formed and darkness appeared; or who found sight to comprehend the light, that vision might appear; or in what consists the happiness of heaven; or how long eternity hath endured or will endure; and what changes there will be in eternity; and how the universe is upheld; and on what pillars chaos stands; and how they came there without Me, the Lord of heaven and earth. If man can answer Me in these few, then he may boast of his wisdom; but with Me all this would be as ignorance and foolishness; when I come forth with My knowledge, who ordered and supports all this. Then let man fear Me, the Lord, and bow to Me, that he may be happy. I counsel man to hear My voice, that he may live and receive the Divine life, and enjoy My glory. So sure shall My word by thee be fulfilled, as all things are in My power; so let not thy heart faint nor fear. The earth is Mine, and I will give it to man to enjoy, in holiness, happiness, and glory, which none shall molest or destroy. I am the Lord who promises this. Now, My children in the visitation who fear and love Me, continue in My love: for this inheritance is for you and your generation to inherit; and I will rejoice over you to bless with my delights, unknown to man, and pleasures that will endure, which eye hath not seen nor ear heard: nor hath it entered into the heart of man yet to conceive or comprehend the joys of My life. Thus do I talk with My family of faith, that they may know their portions and enter into my rest: Jesus, your Father, Saviour, and Redeemer: and I will dwell with man. These things let My people know, that they may wait upon Me in full assurance of my love, which shall never end to My faithful.—Endorsed by

DANIEL JONES, Bradford-on-Avon.

July 24, 1865.

A LETTER FROM MR. HOWITT.

My Dear Sir,—I thank you for your little volume, *Spiritualism; its Facts and Phases*. As an individual contribution to the general mass of testimony on this great topic of the age, it is very valuable. You are aware that Spiritualism extends over all North America, and over all Europe from Spain to Siberia. That it numbers its votaries by millions, and in all classes, including the crowned heads of nearly every Continental country, especially of the sagacious French Emperor, and, as certain persons very high in this country say, of our own beloved monarch. See what was said on this subject in the *Memorial Diplomatique* the other day. You are aware that Spiritualism possesses a whole library of literature, by men many of them of great name in various countries. To such men, familiarly acquainted with all the facts and phases of the question, each personal narrative is a fresh stone quarried for the building of the great Temple of Truth. Professor Hare, the great Faraday of America, has observed how very ignorant even the learned look, when they talk of things they don't understand, in the presence of those who do. The people down your way are precisely in this case on the subject of Spiritualism. They seem to think it is some new little heresy, broken out in a corner of one of their villages, instead of being what it is—the faith and practice of the most educated and honest portion of the public, nearly all over the world. To hear people talk and rant, as they do in your neighbourhood, after it has been thoroughly investigated by men of the highest intellects and attainments in all countries, and has convinced in my millions, is to us old veterans one of the most laughable spectacles imaginable. Some denying the phenomena altogether, and others attributing them to the devil, reminds one of a lunatic asylum, rather than a population in a country with all the educational pretences of England.

What nonsense your neighbours are talking about consulting "wizards," and "those who peep and mutter." Why, I have not only been several years a Spiritualist, and have conversed with scores of others who have been so much longer, and some of them in the very highest ranks of this country, and have been amongst Spiritualists abroad, and read a good cart-load of books on the subject, yet I have never been able to hear of, much more to meet with, one of these much talked of "wizards," or one of these "peepers and mutters." Have any of the people who talk about them, seen a single specimen of these buggaboos of silly country ladies and interested country parsons? If not they had better say something rational and probable. And they cannot do better than to begin a wiser course by reading your little volume, which, I can tell them, from long experience, is a personal narrative of facts, and most useful and profitable facts.

When they have read that, I advise them to begin and read their New Testaments a little, and compare the doctrines and the conduct they find there with the doctrines and the practices of the present age in this so-called Christian country, and if they do not think it high time there was a reform in religion, and a return to the religion of the Bible, not much can be said for their sagacity.

We have now been nearly 2,000 years professing the religion of Christ. What is the religion of Christ? A religion of wars and fighting? Of giving and receiving flattering titles? Of worshipping of rank and riches, and of despising the poor? Of buying and selling in the public markets the right to preach the Gospel—in other words, selling church livings? Of love of finery and follies of all kinds? Of all kinds of sensuality, drunkenness, and profligacy? A religion that no longer believes in its own doctrines to be found in the Book of Common Prayer, in which guardian angels, and ministry of spirits, and communion of saints are taught? Of disbelief of all which Christ, His Apostles, and the early Church taught on this subject? That is the notorious state of things of to-day, and is just as much like what your neighbours will find to be the religion of the New Testament, if they will look there, as a black-a-moor is like an angel.

The best that can be said of modern theology, as sold and taught by the clergy, who purchase the right to sell it, is, that it is AN ENORMOUS HUMBUNG, and a most scandalous libel on the name of Christ, which is thus impudently assumed by a public which serves Mammon with all its heart, and lives in "the pomps and vanities of this wicked world," which their daring sponsors have sworn that they shall renounce. Just let your howling and cracker-firing neighbours* remember what was the conduct of Christ and His Apostles. Did they hoot, and yell, and make a riot? No; it was the other party—the persecuting Scribes, Pharisees, and ignorant mob. They, like the Irish priest, Nangle, said that Christ "had a devil." If your neighbours will look into the mirror of the Gospel, they will see their own images to the life in the noisy, yelling, and crucifying Jews. And if they don't like the look of themselves thus presented, I again advise them to sit down and read your "Facts and Phases of Spiritualism," where they will have a more Christian conduct and a more vital faith pointed out to them. Of one thing let them be assured, that if fifteen years of persecution in America only ended in creating five millions of firm Spiritualists, and ten years of like foolish behaviour in Europe has produced the like result, their efforts, so far from moving a single hair of Spiritualism, can only help to root it deeper, and give it a much wider publicity.—Yours faithfully,
WILLIAM HOWITT.
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A MATERIALISTIC AGE.

It is an undeniable fact that there is abroad, in this age of ours, a very great deal of Materialism. Men seem to regard themselves as intelligent pieces of mechanism, whose only business here is to be what common sense calls as practical-minded as possible; to have an eye to self in their every movement of existence; and, in short, to exhaust the ingenuity of the soul in amassing whatever is material and satisfying to the body. The mind, the soul, the spirit of man—call it what you will—that great vital element which is so mysteriously combined with, and acts upon matter, is but secondary in man's consideration; and religion, which is addressed to it, shares no better fate. However lamentable the fact, it need not be attempted to be overlooked, that the great question, "What shall it profit a man, though he gain the whole world and lose his own soul," is by the vast majority of men never anxiously thought upon; nay, not even the great truth, "'Tis the mind that makes the body rich."

REV. DR. FERGUSON, of Tennessee, who has been preaching the sublime truths of Spiritualism to the people of England for some time, and who has made a deep and lasting impression upon the public mind there, has just returned to this country. We thank him, in behalf of the Spiritualists of America, for the noble work he has performed in thus sowing the seed of our beautiful philosophy in the Old World. We earnestly pray that it may spring up and bear fruit a thousand fold.

Banner of Light.

* Alluding to the disturbance at Mr. Cooper's lecture at Lewes.—*Ed.*

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