

BRITISH ASSOCIATION
OF
PROGRESSIVE SPIRITUALISTS.

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
SECOND CONVENTION,
HELD AT NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE,
JULY 25 AND 26, 1866.

*Embodying the Prepared Essays and Papers Read, Inspirational Addresses by
Mediums, Resolutions and Discussions, with an Account of the Seances,
and the Wonderful Manifestations witnessed thereat.*

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THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF PROGRESSIVE SPIRITUALISTS.

OFFICERS FOR THE YEAR 1866-7.

Presidents.

MR JOHN HODGE AND MRS HODGE,
Prospect Place, Darlington.

Treasurers.

MR JOSEPH DIXON AND MRS DIXON,
Bondgate, Darlington.

Secretaries.

HUGH M'LEOD, Esq., M.D., AND MRS M'LEOD,
32 Bernard Street, Russell Square, London, W.C.

All official correspondence should be addressed to the Secretary. Subscriptions to the funds of the Association may be sent to the Treasurers or other officers. Inquirers as to the nature and principles of Spiritualism may address either of the officers or members, some of whom have consented to correspond with inquirers. The names of corresponding members may be obtained from the Secretary. On all occasions a stamped envelope should be enclosed for reply.

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS.

THE Second Convention of the BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF PROGRESSIVE SPIRITUALISTS was held in Bell's Crown Temperance Hotel, Clayton Street, Newcastle-on-Tyne, on Wednesday and Thursday, July 25 and 26, 1866. On the previous evening, many of the members had arrived, but it was rather late on Wednesday morning before business could commence, on account of the hour at which the various trains came in. The attendance was more numerous than at the first Convention, and to give a list of them would occupy too much space. The following selections, however, will give some idea of the extent of territory represented:—
Newcastle-on-Tyne: Mr James Carpenter, Dr M'Leod, Mrs M'Leod, and Miss M'Leod, Mr Job Sutcliff, Mr Paterson, &c.
Darlington: Mr and Mrs Hodge, Mr and Mrs Dixon, Mr Thomas Watson, Mr Richmond, &c.
Huddersfield: Miss Chapman, Miss Alstone, Thomas Etchells, Esq., &c.
London: Mr and Mrs Spear, J. Burns, Progressive Library, Mr W. C. Butterwick, Mr Pilborough and Mr Champernown, Kingston-on-Thames, S.W., &c.
James Colthurst, Esq., Cork, Ireland; Mr and Mrs Dennis, Carlisle; Edwin Harrison Green, Esq., Marsh House, Brotherton, South Yorkshire.
Hartlepool: Mr and Mrs Cowley, Mr Gregory.
Mr Jones, Bradford-on-Avon; Mr Heslop, Bradford, Yorkshire; Mr Lister, York; Mr Catherall, Hexham, &c., &c.

FIRST SESSION, WEDNESDAY, JULY 25.

It was nearly eleven o'clock before the arrival of certain members would allow the proceedings to be commenced. John Hodge, as President, having been installed in the Chair, J. Burns appointed Secretary of Convention, and M. Heslop, Verbatim Reporter, the session was instituted by singing "All people that on earth do dwell," Mrs Jones accompanying on the pianoforte. J. M. Spear then pronounced the following invocation:—

O Thou in whom we live and move, and from whose beneficent hand we derive all the comforts we enjoy, whether of a temporal, religious, or spiritual character; unto thee we lift up our thoughts, and with them our hearts, blessing thee for the privilege we enjoy in meeting together to take by the hand our brothers and sisters who have come into the enjoyment of the faith, that there is a communication between the earth and higher worlds. We bless thee for the revelations of the past, for the faithful seers, prophets, and teachers who have come forth to labour for the good of other people. We bless thee, Father, that thou dost permit us to meet here together, to feel that we have communion with thee, and that our brothers, sisters, fathers, and mothers who have gone before us are not dead, but still live; hence, live to come and do us good. We ask thy wisdom to guide our President and Secretary in forwarding this Association; and may they go forth from this Convention and over this country hand in hand, and may our voices be heard even across the Atlantic, and be the means of establishing a spiritual communion between the two countries. So may there be spiritual ties to bind us heart to heart and soul to soul. Inspire those in dark places, and bring them to a knowledge of the life of labour, glory, and progress of this present age. Help us, holy Father, to feel thou art our comforter; and when we are called to pass through the shadow of death may we have no cause to fear evil, for thy rod and thy staff shall comfort us. Gracious Father, to thee we commit ourselves and all we have or expect to have in this world; and as others have laboured in their time, so may we labour, and may the time come when the superstitious contrivances are swept away, and the walls of separation broken down, and may those engaged in war convert their instruments into implements; for all shall know thee, from the least to the greatest: and to thee we render all the praise, now, henceforth, and for ever. Amen.

The President delivered the opening address, of which the following are a few condensed sentences:—

Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends of Progress,—It is not my purpose this morning to inflict a speech upon this meeting. It would be quite out of place were I to spend an hour relating to you my individual experience and history. A person's experience may be interesting in the small circle of his friends, but there are few men whose history is capable of interesting the crowd. The history of our Convention also would be interesting to a few of us here, but to all it would not. It is so young and so tender in years that the baby is too weak and delicate to be taken up in muscular arms. I cannot well express the pleasure I have in meeting all of you here. It is a broad platform which we are now creating in this country. All sections of the thinking and religious mind will meet with us in time to come. Some will like to open our meetings with singing, and others will not; some will like to begin and end with prayer, and others will not. So that we ought, if possible, to have an understanding with each person, and thus have a broad and distinct basis for the various and distinct phases of human thought; for we have no creed or dogma whereby to test the suitability of candidates for fellowship. I think, friends, that the time has come for action. It has come when those who are favoured with spirit communion must take their stand in some shape or form before the world;

and here we are to-day in this capacity, meeting for the purpose of considering the ideas with which we have been impressed, and to make known those thoughts which have come from the other land. Hence, as an association, it will be well for us to be satisfied that we are right; and occupying the right position, let us, like our American friends, "go ahead;" and if we are certain of the first, we are sure of the second. So far as I am able to judge, I think that the position we have taken as spiritualists is right, and I think also that the direction in which we have struck out is the correct one, yet one that will bring upon us a great deal of persecution and disrespect; but if we have the disrespect and disregard of our fellow-men, we have the countenance and support of good spirits and higher intelligences; and to carry forward the great work inaugurated by them is our mission. With such coadjutors, the jeers of the world are only a stimulus to action. Let us, then, in accordance with our impressions, go forward with this great work till the love of truth and right illumine every human soul. Our cardinal truth is the fact of man's communion with higher intelligences, and his eternally progressive destiny. And such being the nature of man, many minds must be in darkness as to the more advanced thoughts and ideas; hence the obloquy and scorn heaped on those who occupy an advanced position. But if such a position be ours, let us thank God for the high and distinguished privilege, and take courage.

The Secretary was then called upon to read his report. Dr M'Leod, on rising, read the call to the Convention, making a few remarks thereon, and inviting all present to associate in the proceedings as "members of the Convention." He referred to his final note to the report of last year's proceedings, read letters from gentlemen who were not able to be present, and then presented the following

REPORT.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Brothers and Sisters,—First allow me to congratulate you on the excellent muster you have made. The success of this meeting is a certain and undeniable evidence of the progress of our promising Association of souls in general, but of spiritualists in particular. To the many mediums present and to the friends from distant parts, London, Ireland, &c., I tender my hearty thanks for their attendance, and a most cordial welcome. My heart is full. Thanks be to our God! His love endureth for ever!

As you are already well aware this Association began its existence outwardly in Darlington last year. The chief friends who began the movement are here also to-day, and I would now ask of these gentlemen—Brother Hodge and his coadjutors—whether or not they have

cause to rejoice at what they see as the results of their labour this day? It is only another illustration of the saying, "Cast your bread upon the waters," &c. ; and I argue that our third Convention will be "something to talk about."

What was done at the first Convention has been reported. At that meeting you were pleased to appoint me Secretary for a period of twelve months up to this date; and it now behoves me to tell you what has been done in connection with this Association, so far as that Secretaryship is concerned, during the past year, and to lay before you what may be called "my report." In the first place, let me tell you that I have *grown* considerably myself since that time. Then I was not much of a spiritualist—at least, in my own estimation—though I believed in the "phenomena," for I was a great "phenomena hunter" *then*. I have higher occupation now; not so well off for this world as I was *then*, but hope I am laying it up for the next! and a trifle more in earnest, as you shall find in the year 1867.

To begin at the beginning, I was afraid that, so far as the progress of the Association went, I should have nothing to report, I had so much opposition to start with. I received letters from all quarters deprecating the establishment of an Association of Progressive Spiritualists, and predicting all sorts of temporal evils to me, and ruin to it, if I persisted in my work. I had sterner opposition, however, from other quarters—from men of great social position and generous behaviour. This opposition to my progress was the most dangerous, because the arguments I received were couched in loving terms and in the politest language. I was told, in short, that an association of spiritualists was an "impossible thing," and that, whatever we did, my friends hoped that we should at least progress from Spiritualism to Christianity! To me, however, all these were only so many more incentives to renewed action, and I laboured away at Association business keener than ever.

But until this morning I am sure I was altogether unable to report what progress our Association had made. I could say nothing either as to its advancement or retrogression as a body; and as to cash received as donations, &c., the Treasurer and myself intend to render an account to the subscribers, at the conclusion of this Convention. This account will be a private affair, and will be given to *subscribers only*, as it concerns no one else. Perhaps it would not be wise to let the "world" see a manifestation of our wealth: perhaps some might join us in consequence! Suffice it to say, that we have had marvellous support from various quarters, and that we have that cheering thing which all business men admire—a balance in hand.

Still, in my capacity of Secretary—being by nature a terribly go-ahead soul—I could have done much, a great deal more than I have done, or attempted to do, in order to spread abroad a knowledge of Spiritualism, but the propagation of opinion or the diffusion of knowledge of an unpopular nature are expensive operations in England, as you all can testify. Nevertheless, I have done what I could both publicly and privately. Had I only been a sort of Peabody, what a row among the supporters of rotten "notions" and indefensible "fudges" would have been at this moment the "order of the day."

The friends in London have during the past year done a great work in the support which they have given to Miss Emma Hardinge. Her engagement in London, and whatever seeds of the glorious truths of Spiritualism she may have sown there, are mainly due to the spirit and energetic character of Mr Benjamin Coleman. But these lectures of Miss Hardinge to the wealthy and influential classes of the metropolis will show great fruits in time.

In September, 1865, I called a meeting of the Committee together at my house. Very few attended. The result of this meeting was the issuing of a circular, of which the following is the chief portion:—

The principal objects we have in view are, as an Association, to meet once a year, or oftener if it be deemed desirable, for the purpose of social communion, interchange of sentiment or opinion; to record and catalogue our united experiences, and the progress which Spiritualism is making in and around us; to devise means for propagating and diffusing among our fellow-men and women the principles and soul-saving truths of this divine philosophy, by the distribution of the best tracts and books we have upon the subject, and the delivery throughout the kingdom of lectures by persons of approved character and ability.

All spiritualists are most affectionately solicited to join our Association, by the simple and easy process of forwarding their names and addresses to the undersigned Secretary; and donations, subscriptions (the "sinews of war"), or books (carriage free), to our Treasurer, Mr Joseph Dixon, of Bondgate, Darlington, who will thankfully receive and acknowledge the same.

The present promoters have no other objects or end in view, so far as they are individually concerned, but the eternal welfare of mankind, the glory of God, in the most enlarged sense of the expression, and socially, morally, and religiously, the regeneration, sanctification, and redemption of the whole human family.

By authority.

DR HUGH ST CLAIR M'LEOD, Secretary.

Newcastle, September, 1865.

N. B.—Inquirers are kindly informed concerning a few of those things which Spiritualism teaches:—

1. That the spirit is the real man, the body only its physical envelopment during this initiatory or caterpillar state of man's existence. That as a caterpillar passing through the chrysolid state puts forth the perfect form and all the limbs of the butterfly, which naturalists tell us were all wrapped up in the caterpillar; so the spirit, stepping out of the body, stands revealed to the spiritual world a perfect man or woman—perfect in all the powers and members of man. That he steps into no shadowy or sky region, but into an actual world, with its woods, rivers, green fields, mountains, cities, and various employments of life, as on earth, but in a more vivid and real status.

2. That there is no such thing as *death*: it is but a name given to the issue of the soul from the body. "That which thou sowest is not that body which shall be. There is a natural and there is a spiritual body." (St Paul.) The spirit-man is perfect spirit-man, and goes to his place in the "many mansions;" and here, in the body, men and women choose for themselves, by their conduct generally, the "mansion" they would prefer, and to which they will assuredly go—*by preference*. This point will be better understood by those who choose to study and enlarge their knowledge of spiritual matters.

3. That there is no such place as *Hell*, as it is popularly preached and understood; but places of PROGRESSION, which truly are full of torments of various kinds—according to the *deeds done in the body*. The word purgatory conveys the idea of such places, where the souls of the abandoned (here), the murderer, adulterer, seducer, the cruel, lying, hypocritical, &c., go to expiate their offences, and, so to speak, *learn better things*, when they will receive

promotion to a happier and higher sphere ; though what term it may take to do this expiation, God only knows ! and thus it is infinitely preferable for us all to despise everything in our present state, except *virtue* alone. Spiritualism teaches, in this regard, a succession of spheres and stages ; a succession of regions of abode on the great journey towards the central heaven of God.

4. That there is a communion of saints and a besetment of devils, evil spirits. "Millions of spirits walk the earth unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep ;" but, thank God ! we all have the power to choose our own company. At every hour, every moment that mediums sit down to a seance, there is a pressing levee of spirits. It is not that Spiritualism brings or evokes them, it is that they are ever there, in our streets, our fields, houses, bedrooms, work-rooms, churches, and chapels. If our spiritual eyes could be opened suddenly, it would be a sight more astounding than that which the prophet at Samaria displayed to the army of the Syrians. This is one of the greatest facts which Spiritualism teaches. It is thus that we have the blissful communion of departed saints, and of such saints as never had their niche in any ecclesiastical calendar ; saints of our own lineage and family ; saints of our early friends, departed in the youthful bloom and ardour of affection ; saints of children whom we cradled and nursed, but whom God took softly from our unfolding arms, and who now watch over us with the love we sent with them, fresh dipped in the warmest fountains of the Divine ; saints of elder friends whom we knew in our youth, and whom we revered ; saints, by scores, forgotten at the moment in our long busy pilgrimage, but who now start up with familiar voices, and recal lovely memories, making us feel how infinitely rich in love and widely spreading soul alliance is that infinite world, where—though dogs and sorcerers and other abominations haunt its threshold—all within lie the measureless sunny realms of beauty and peace.

5. No fear of Death. And finally, Spiritualism teaches a system of religious truths based upon the gospel of Christ, and affirmed afresh by spiritual ministries to this common-place age. It is illustrating and making known to us the laws and conditions of man's mental and soul life, of angelic and spiritual existences, and is opening up new, glorious, and interesting regions of discovery ; and that Spiritualism in its legitimate action does this, we appeal to thousands who have mentally and morally benefitted by it. Why, then, should the timid churches fear and tremble ? Why should good men fear its approach, and call out "Demonology !" and run away ? It is the *evil* only who need fear ; and blessed are they who hear, see, and believe ; but thrice blessed they who have not seen and yet believe. It serves to develop the normal capabilities of the mind, to purify the natural affections, to rationalise our views of religion, nature, and God, to quicken the soul's aspirations after a higher life, ennobling the whole character.

Spiritualism teaches the most delightful truths, which should be thrice welcome to all good Christian souls. It has converted thousands from gross infidelity. It will cure millions of involuntary semi-scepticism. It will render a future existence *real* to the whole human race. It will re-invigorate every great religious and moral truth heretofore revealed to mankind. It will intensify all the sublime motives—all the sublime feelings that urge human nature on to a heavenly destiny. It will advance from step to step of demonstration till death shall be disarmed of all its terrors. It will usher in a new era of Faith, Hope, and Charity. It will bind us closer in love to one another, and ultimately bring us all home to the bosom of our Father and our God.

Directions how Inquirers are to Commence the Study of Spiritualism.

BY ADIN BALLOU.

1. Be not ashamed, nor afraid, nor unwilling to embrace truth come *whence* or *how* it may.—2. Respect your own senses and judgment enough to trust them *decently*.—3. Procure all the reliable testimony you can, in print and otherwise, concerning spirit manifestations, ancient and modern, weigh it *deliberately* at home, and be in no haste to examine cases, until you have

good opportunities; then improve them.—4. Hold no sittings with a medium whom you believe morally capable of deception or trick: *confide or refrain*.—5. Have few persons present, and none but candid, sensible, and well-behaved ones.—6. Be serious, deliberate, frank, and unaffected; propose what tests you please, and abstain from all pettifogging lawyerism, pertinacity, and over-urgency; be content with such developments as come freely, and set everything down for what it is worth. You may desire much, and get very little. Remember you are not required to give credit for more than you receive, nor to take chaff for wheat.—7. Take care not to overtax the nervous energy of the medium by long sittings or undue excitement. Keep an even mind.—8. Take notes of all important phenomena and incidents.—9. Accept or reject, or hold in doubt, what purports to come from the departed spirits, for what would be sufficient reasons if the same came from spirits in the flesh. This must be the standing rule.—10. Treat all persons concerned, whether departed or undeparted spirits, as enjoined in the golden rule; and if there be evil, overcome it with good. Be uniformly just, considerate, and kind.

A short time after this we tried a couple of addresses on Spiritualism at Darlington. Your humble servant was the lecturer, and I did my best to enlighten those who came to hear me. Friends said that I had acquitted myself well; that is, that I did my best to lay down plainly and fairly a few of the principles of Spiritualism; and I have every reason to believe that the fruits of these lectures will soon be made manifest. The receipts at these lectures very nearly met the expenditure.

On Wednesday and Thursday, March 21st and 22nd, I tried two more lectures at the ancient and priestly town of Hexham. (I am glad to see to-day two distinguished friends from there; these friends are worth many lectures.) This was done, I may be permitted to tell you, as an experiment, or feeler, in order that I might form some sort of estimate as to how the same sort of elaborate and expensive advertising (for it was indeed upon an extensive scale) would do in larger towns and more populous districts. These two lectures, however, hit me rather hard. They cost about £10, the receipts on both nights amounting only to the gross sum of twenty-two shillings. However, I must here mention that a kind friend was thirty shillings towards helping me to defray the cost. The chief advertisement occupied 95 lines of a newspaper column, and was sent out in demy sheets all over the district, as well as in small bills. And besides announcing the meetings, it likewise intimated that I would attend at the Assembly Rooms on the following mornings for the purpose of healing the sick.

During these twelve months past it would surprise you were I to place on record a list of the number of persons with whom I have corresponded in virtue of my office as Secretary of this Association. I dare venture to say that I have written and despatched upwards of one thousand letters of various sizes and contents, answering inquiries, making inquiries, sending abroad our circulars all over the country to Ireland and America, &c.; and I hoped to increase my spiritual correspondence in this year.

No doubt I have been laughed at for a deal of my pains, for the labour I have taken—labour which has resulted in this magnificent Convention—but I have tried to do my duty. I have been a living

secretary, and not a dead one. I will not notice my personal sufferings—the outrageous unkindness I have received from friends—the jeers and persecutions of my foes. They are not worthy of record in a place like this. I make no special complaints, but “still go marching on!” In order to do something towards increasing my practice in Newcastle, well-meaning friends have addressed me in a large round hand, “Dr M·Leod, SPIRITUALIST, Newcastle-on-Tyne.”

In a great many of these communications, I am sorry to say, the natural meanness of some spirits has been inconveniently displayed. I happen to be known as a healing medium; not only a doctor by profession, but—thanks be to the Father—I possess extraordinary powers to heal by the laying on of hands. It was made known to the public through an article I sent to that excellent journal, the *Spiritual Magazine*. This brought down upon me a great many letters from different individuals, craving my assistance, or opinion, but neither enclosing or promising any remuneration for my trouble, not even (except in a solitary instance or so) a postage stamp for reply. It would seem to be taken for granted by some spirits that the source from which I derive my healing power should also settle my tradesmen's accounts. I make mention of this matter only in a pleasant way, and, as our friends over the water would say, a caution to healers in general.

I do not wish to take up more of your time than is barely necessary to give you some sort of a report of my proceedings; but I could give you some curious and interesting spiritual experiences. Such as having a ring taken from me and magnetised in the spheres and then brought again to me, marvellous cases of healing, and so on.

Now, as I have a paper to read to this Convention besides this report, I will not address you further at present, but say once more that I am highly delighted to see our association so well represented this morning by members. May the blessed Father and his good and holy angels grant us a glorious and refreshing season together!

The Chairman was not aware that it was necessary to discuss the report, but would like to hear any remarks from those present. All were at perfect liberty to speak that which seemed good to them.

J. Burns said this was a time for emulation, not criticism. We ought all to have as good a personal report as the Secretary to lay before the Convention. The duties of the Secretary were only to do the business of the Association as an organisation, and not to do all the work in converting the world to Spiritualism. That was the work of each individual member, and the personal labours of the Secretary did not in the least diminish their's. He thought each active member should make a short statement of their efforts and success in the cause during the past year. For his part, he took every opportunity of bringing the matter before the public by the distribution of books, tracts, papers,

conversations, and lectures. He had devoted his life to the cause of human progress ; and high and above all other departments of progressive work towered that of spiritual knowledge and mental freedom. In his lectures on Human Nature he constantly interpolated the principles of Spiritualism with the subject matter under discussion, and he found that the great living soul of humanity responded to every utterance. In his personal contact with progressive minds he constantly brought Spiritualism up, and had the pleasure of founding a little colony of interested persons in every place where he lectured. His experience was that a great portion of the people were for the principles of Spiritualism, if offered to them so as to suit their stage of development ; and in all his experience he found neither persecution nor disrespect for the loving and timely advocacy of the truth, unless it was from a certain class of spiritualists themselves. He was glad to know that the cause was rapidly gaining ground ; and if all spiritualists did their individual duty it would advance with great success.

J. M. Spear thought that some less expensive mode of missionary labour ought to be instituted to bring the claims of Spiritualism before the people. He, however, rejoiced in the earnestness of Dr M'Leod. He earnestly desired associated effort, so that the printing press and human voice might be made more useful in this work. He had tried to get up a public Convention in London, but met with no response. He therefore called a Convention at his own rooms, by inviting gentlemen from all parts of the country, and they had two days of very profitable intercourse. He said he still carried on a large correspondence with spiritualists throughout the world. A gentleman in Russia, a correspondent, was translating the principal spiritual works into the Russian language. He had received many letters respecting the Darlington Convention. It had done good, yet he regretted that for want of a free, liberal press its influence had been confined to a comparatively narrow limit. He hoped the Association would soon have an organ of their own. He was rejoiced to see the present excellent meeting, and hoped much good would be done.

J. Dixon expressed himself well pleased with the progress of the movement at its present stage. It was feeble, and could not yet sustain the operation of public movements. He thought their organisation could not be carried on after the pattern of other organisations in existence. He had not much faith in public lectures, and thought individual influence more effective. For his part, it had taken him upwards of three years to store

his mind with the great truths taught by the spiritual philosophy. He loved those truths, and since his acquaintance with Spiritualism he had enjoyed a continual feast, for which he thanked God with his whole heart. As he received he felt disposed to give unto others. He needed no platform for his work. He was surrounded by those with whom he could talk, and to whom he imparted the truths he had learned. In this way he had removed many old errors from the minds of his neighbours, had made converts to the truth of Spiritualism, and opened a way for rays of light to enter not a few human souls, thus increasing their happiness and enjoyment of existence. During the whole year he had been so employed. This was his work, not to form organisations or make speeches. He had also developed a very truthful medium, and in his official position as Treasurer had formed many correspondences of a highly useful and interesting nature. He thought the Association had done well, and hoped it would progress in the same ratio next year.

The President was glad to hear that Brother Dixon had not given all his acquirements away. He commended his mode of operation, and said we wanted more such speeches on an occasion like the present.

Thos. Watson agreed with the remark of Emma Hardinge, when she said Spiritualism had taken a northern direction, but not so far as to be starved to death. He did not take such a desponding view of the progress made as some did. He knew many earnest and true spiritualists. They did not want to form a sect. That was not their business, but it was their duty and high privilege to open the prison doors to others, and usher them into the light and liberty of God's truth. During the past year he had been doing what he could, and he thought they were not behind the times. Things did not perfect themselves in a day; besides, their work was one of growth and progression as to the cause as well as in individual cases. His own experience was that he had been several years in finding the point at which he had now arrived. He long had had intuitions of what he needed, and Spiritualism exactly filled his soul longings and answered his requirements.

M. A. Alstone, in an eloquent and appropriate address, spoke of her high advantages in being a spiritualist. It would make her happiness complete if she could do for the world what Spiritualism had done for her. From the age of thirteen she had been a Wesleyan, but all was dark. She wanted something to take her higher and satisfy the cravings of her mind. She went amongst the spiritualists of Huddersfield, and found the

teachings to harmonise with her spirit life. Her burden seemed now light, and under it she lived to tread the progressive slopes of a future life. By impression she had resolved on attending the Convention, and she felt improved thereby.

E. Harrison Green felt it to be his whole desire to labour for the human race. No one could do better than investigate Spiritualism. He was a member of the Huddersfield circle, and felt stronger for the stand he had taken before the world in regard to Spiritualism. He thought suitable lecturers were wanted; also, the silent working of the mind in circles, which was more accessible, if suitable circles could be more numerously formed. A higher development was also required in these circles which would extend itself amongst the neighbours, and radiate to others from the inspired lips of those from whom angels speak. In Spiritualism he had found a broad basis of humanitarian love which was in harmony with the great life work of Jesus, whom, as a spiritualist, he respected. Many true spiritualists were working in private till the proper time for extending the field of labour. He regretted that Emma Hardinge had not been favoured with a more extended field of usefulness in this country. He held that the various phases of spiritualists should not criticise or find fault with each other, but shake hands, and work in their different planes of thought to spread this great religion, which was a religion and philanthropy combined, satisfying all the needs of man, and honouring the great God who was the author of all mankind, including the great mediums of the past time. He was of opinion that Spiritualism would yet gain upon the hearts of the people of this country, and would take deeper root here than in any other portion of the globe; and the time would come when spiritualists would be looked upon as the benefactors of the race, removing many superstitions, and planting in their stead the light of eternal truth. He travelled thirty miles weekly, and sometimes more, to attend his circle.

J. Richmond gave the Convention a word of encouragement. He said, keep up your correspondence, make visits and speak to your friends, deliver lectures as you may find opportunity, and make every effort to lift up the darkness of superstition. Work as you have opportunity, and the harvest will follow. Do not grapple with the powers of darkness, unkindness, and cruelty. They are too much for you. Let them alone. It is the light that disperses the darkness; therefore give truth and good feeling, and you will reap. He was pleased to meet the friends. He loved them all, he loved the movement.

James Colthurst would encourage all to investigate Spiritualism, whatsoever their means or talents might be. He had become acquainted with Spiritualism, and found in it what he had not found in any other system of theology or philosophy in existence. He had a life of leisure, and had devoted his whole time to intellectual pursuits. He saw that all other departments of progress were as nothing in practical importance to mankind compared with Spiritualism. At home he could not do much for the cause. The middle classes in Cork were intelligent, but very bigotted. His own friends, as well as the society in which he mixed, were opposed to him, yet he took occasion to introduce the matter in conversation. He subscribed for the *Banner of Light*, and lent it, advertised good books in the Cork papers, till, through these and other efforts, the public were now conversant with the leading propositions of the subject.

C. H. Spear (Mrs) thought the harvest from last year had been plentiful. The first Convention had given courage and life to local societies. Other towns looked to Darlington as their copy. The report had been invaluable; it had done much, and had given good. She gave many interesting items of progress witnessed by her in her labours with Mr Spear in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Liverpool, Glasgow, &c., and concluded by presenting the fraternal regards of the Birmingham Society to the Convention.

J. Burns stated that he had received a valuable letter from Thomas Martin Simkiss, of Wolverhampton, and that the "Iron Country" might be represented at the Convention he begged to read a few extracts, as follows:—

"I very much regret that the distance from Wolverhampton precludes my being with you, otherwise I should have much rejoiced to have met the progressive friends in Convention. I am very much pleased that you made such a good and decided start last year in the right direction, viz., PROGRESSION, and would not shackle yourselves with the fetters of so-called 'Christian Spiritualism,' which to me is most sectarian, being on a par with 'Jewish Spiritualism,' 'Mahometan Spiritualism,' and even with 'Fetichism.' No Spiritualism suits me that is not as broad as humanity, as open to investigation as the sciences, and as free as they are from CANT. I am and have been an harmonial philosopher for the past thirteen years, the first six of which I resided in America, and saw much of Spiritualism in its varied aspects.

"There are but very few spiritualists here at Wolverhampton. In my intercourse with them I am most anxious to make them harmonial philosophers and friends of progress, rather than mere technical spiritualists. Mr Glover commenced Spiritualism some six months ago, and has prospered very rapidly as a drawing, mechanical, and

inspirational medium, and lately as a seeing and psychometrical medium. My wife is a trance-speaking medium, but is at present going through different stages of development; and I doubt not but that in time she will be of exceedingly great service to the cause of Spiritualism in this country.

"Mr J. M. Spear has been with us for three days, and much good has been done by his visit. Finding what a strong harmonialist I am, his spirit guides have designated me the 'British Harmoniser,' and talk great things concerning my future work. But the future will be all right provided we make the *now*, the *present*, all right as well as we can ourselves.

"At any rate, my wife and I are given up body and soul to work for the progression of the human race in unison with progressive spirits, and in doing so we will endeavour to work harmoniously, and not erratically, following impulse where reason lights not. I have a small room, or hall, which is open to the public every Sunday evening, when I read one of A. J. Davis's "Morning Lectures," after which follows one hour's open discussion thereon, and from which great good is slowly and surely accruing. We progressives in this country must be content to be martyrs in our up-hill work of leavening the public, knowing of the blessed future of humanity. What a glorious and satisfactory sight it will be for us who have helped it on, as we look down from above, beholding it and helping it on still more! And with what a host of congenial progressive spirits shall we be in eternal sympathy!

"Yours for progression, not erratic and spasmodic, but harmonious, steady and sure,
T. M. SIMKISS."

Mrs Jones said Old England was not so dull and dead as some thought it was. She narrated some of her experience in connection with Psychology and the people. In 1835 she was a public speaker. She made a tour of England with a friend, on foot, entered the cottages and houses of the people, and in the lone country villages distinctly saw that England was not destitute of Spiritual influences even then. She had quiet audiences in the desperate districts round Dudley, and the clergy wanted to know what she did to manage them. But the people of England wanted to be quietly and kindly visited like lambs, and not as if they were wolves. Only touch the spark of God's spirit in the heart of all, and it will burn up and illumine their after lives.

William Jenner Champernown gave a very interesting statement of the wonderful performances done in the presence of mediums under his care. He said it was no uncommon thing in his experience for material substances to pass through the wall. He was accompanied at the Convention by Master Turketine, a boy about fourteen years of age, through whose mediumship the most remarkable physical manifestations had been produced. At

one stage the medium would be tied with cords in the most ingenious manner, even exceeding the care and intricacy with which the Davenports were tied. Yet the spirits would unloose him in a far shorter period of time than could those who tied him. His cap had been taken from his head, and secreted by unseen agency; books and other articles had been taken away right under their hands and before their eyes in the house; heavy substances, such as an iron scraper, had been moved from the front door to the back door; various boxes and other articles had passed from one room to the other, while doors and windows were completely shut, and in the presence of the circle; and lately the spirits had taken to the performance on musical instruments. They now performed on upwards of a dozen instruments, sometimes several at a time, and they were yet progressing in these phenomena. The spirits had ordered them to bring the medium to the Convention for further development and not for the purpose of exhibiting, as he was not sufficiently developed yet to produce the phenomena in promiscuous audiences. The speaker exhibited to the Convention many specimens of spirit writing, some of which were direct, without the intervention of any human hand in the flesh. He also produced a great variety of spirit drawings, of different degrees of merit, but all interesting to the investigator into these remarkable phenomena. Their circle also was favoured with spirit voices, singing, lights, colours, and other remarkable manifestations. The speaker then referred to a series of important communications through another young medium—Master Wallis, fourteen years of age. He read a number of extracts, of which the following are selections:—

“God is the King of all creation. God is that part of man which aspires to holy things, keeps him from sin, and makes him inspired! God is in all men’s hearts. Some try to question God’s Spirit, and some obey the motion of the Spirit. Be ye of the latter kind. In reading the Holy Scriptures, be ye led by the Spirit of Divinity. The Bible (that is, the truths in it) are like a nut within a shell; you must take away the outside to get at the kernel. My dear friends, do not trouble yourselves about earthly affairs; they are in the keeping of God. Be ye of a pure heart and steady faith in that which is good; and be ye persuaded of the truth in your own minds. Be not narrow-minded, but liberal in your faith and ideas. Be ye mindful of the saying that we are all brothers. O, heavens! O, glory! O, immortality! When your bodies are dust, then begins your glory! When you are dead in body you are living in soul! When your friends are mourning they ought to be rejoicing; for the day time when you leave this body is the day when you throw off the coils of the flesh, and are ushered into the bright and happy Summer Land.”

“We have that within us whereby we think, reason, and argue,

which tells us we are not of the earth, earthy, but that our grand destiny is before us; that which also tells us in unmistakeable evidence that Progression is the grand law that is to turn the world upside down, which will shake the present theology and ecclesiasticism to the ground, and scatter the creeds and sects to the four winds of heaven; which testifies that the mundane sphere is progressing now, that heaven and its joys are not only for those who believe this or that creed, or form of religion, but that God designs all who are true to their own soul-consciousness shall be happy and blest there; and that all, even those who do not now wish it, after certain probation, learning, and necessary punishment, progress when they deserve to do so. This is what the mind or soul tells us if we would listen without prejudice. . . . Before man was seen, or prior to his advent, this earth was being formed for him. Who formed it? He that formed those other worlds surpassing ours in size. The same infinite power which is superior to matter, and of whom we are all the offspring, the part; for we are all of God, of Jehovah, the great Spirit, who is the same that Mahomet believed in, and the one great Spirit whom even savages worship."

"Man is very great, and has great powers. Those powers are the greatest which belong to the divinity within him. Mind and soul, as terms, are nearly synonymous. They are both separate from the body, although now they are employed and moulded in, through, and with the body. Mind has more to do with head knowledge. Soul has to do with the divinity of man, and is said to belong to the heart."

"Mind and spirit has ever existed. Mind called matter into action, and lo! behold this earth! Spirit, in its most exalted sense called the Infinite or Creative Spirit, begat spirits, clothed them with bodies, and, having prepared the habitation, caused food to grow, beasts, birds, and fishes to supply us with meat, and everything necessary; introduced the human species called Adam. Henceforth this world has been the habitation of man, who is the image of God. I say man is a part of the Divinity; that is, the spirit of man is, and that THE DIVINITY is the spiritual whole—archangels, angels, men. These spiritual beings constitute God the 'I Am,' the Father of Spirits, each mind or soul being part of God. . . . When man recognises the Divinity and lives for immortality; when he recognises each human being as a brother, and that it is not the right order of things for a man to be ignorant, then may we thank the all-potent God for the coming of his kingdom."

"As the beauty of the morning—as the splendour of the shining sun upon the fields and flowers—as a spring morning, replete with loveliness—such is the glorified soul! A spirit it is escaped. A mind unchangeable. A body free from the earthly degrading tendencies which so much enthrall it in this life. An eye it has that can see, an ear which is unfolded, and senses spiritualised. It is a spirit beautified. O, glorious change! O, blessed revelation and fulfilment of wishes! O, the yearnings of the soul satisfied, and the sorrows and trials of life compensated for."

"How many thousands, yea, millions, would sink beneath their load of adversity to die, were they not upheld by the thought, the very

sure hope of being at peace, resting in quiet happiness in the heavens of love which are above, beneath, and around us."

"Judge of Spiritualism by its fruits. How many has it turned from being materialists by the direct evidence that it affords of another world! How many doubts has it dispelled! How many rescued from vice and evil by its holy and loving communications and spirit teachings!"

"There are some who on earth commenced true life, and began to live; but there is so much to retard the soul's education on earth, that it can hardly be said to live till the body dies. Then the soul is free. What a sound and what glory in the word freedom! liberty! Liberty of soul! Then the soul is clothed with a spiritual garment, which you call its spiritual body, as adapted to the capabilities of your time. Clothed in this body, it takes some time usually for the spirit to awake and realise the great change which has taken place. Each of its senses has to be sphereolised, has much to learn; and there are spirits whose office it is to teach those who are just entering on spirit life. There are exceptions to this. There are some who almost instantly they leave the body are awake to the pure life of the spirits. These are those who have lived on earth good and spiritual lives, close in harmony with God. There are those who have to wait an eternity before they awake to aspiration and progression. These are they who have been fearfully depraved on earth, and have deadened the divinity within them."

"The spirit world is analogous to the material, and in the spirit world are beautiful gardens, verdant meads, lovely flowers, majestic mountains, little hills, tiny rills, beautiful radiant spirits robed in white, beautiful everything."

"Mind is reasonable and it is also spiritual. We cannot see it, yet we cannot think without it; it is a self-evident principle. The mind of man achieves grand works, is wonderful in its many ideas, in the many inventions it brings forth, advanced in its native perceptions and lofty aspirations, but as yet it is nothing to the grandeur of a living mind progressing through the spheres."

"He should not investigate into truth who is not prepared to examine carefully, criticise without prejudice, and draw reasonable conclusions from what is presented to him."

"Never seek to force truth upon any one. If an inquirer comes to you in an honest spirit, assist him. Do not labour too much for that which you know to be true. A quiet self-consciousness and a little pride is good for yourself and the world. Truth does not need much demonstration; it carries weight and conviction with itself."

"Live not for pelf!
Live not for pleasure, nor for self,
But live for truth and God!"

After reading a variety of extracts, Mr Champernown concluded by saying that there were many equally good left behind, that they had been all given since the month of March last, either written by the medium or spoken in the trance state. The last

portions purported to come from John Bunyan, and many of the sentiments were highly characteristic of him. They had also communications from friends and relatives, and were on the most familiar terms with the departed members of their families.

The Session was closed by a few remarks from the President, who thought there had been very encouraging reports of progress presented. Mr Champernown's case was wonderful. The boy was quite young and uneducated, and yet he could speak those beautiful ideas which had just been read. These belonged to a high class of manifestations, and it was quite a privilege to receive them.

THE SECOND SESSION,

Wednesday, July 25th, 1866, was opened with a fine selection of music on the pianoforte, by Miss Blake. The Secretary then read the following paper by T. E. Partridge, Esq., on "Spirit Persecution and a Moral Police":—

Friends, ladies and gentlemen,—It is usual for spiritualists to paint everything relating to the spiritual world in bright and pleasing colours; to represent spirits as benevolent messengers who bring us the assurance of a future state after death, and assist to prepare our departure thither. It is common for mediums to try and persuade the public, that the spiritual world is justly and righteously governed, and that its intercourse with man in the flesh is usually a pure benefit. I must apologise to you, therefore, for taking the other side of the question; for taking into consideration the evils and miseries proceeding from the world of spirits, and contending for the formation of a fraternal organisation to oppose at present and ultimately to put a stop to them.

Modern spiritual manifestations have been useful to a certain extent in allowing us to have glimpses of the nature of spiritual life which remove our superstitious fears in regard to it; they bring us to the conclusion that spirits are but men arrived at a spiritual state, and that they are still subject to the passions and affections of the flesh; carrying away with them from this side of the grave their mental and moral constitutions. If, according to the Greek proverb, the bad preponderate here, we may reasonably conjecture that the state of things cannot be very different there. If education and moral training are necessary to make a man a good member of society here, much more must it be so to make him a good angel or spirit, for, as St. Paul says, "a man who is

spiritual judgeth all men, but himself is judged of no man;" he would, without doubt, when spiritual, have less restraint imposed upon his evil inclinations than when he was amenable in the flesh. We must then organise a proper brotherhood and church militant; and fit its members to do good here before it can do good in the other world.

The kind of organisation, then, which I offer for your consideration as friends of humanity, progressive spiritualists, and truly religious people, is that which has been already proposed to the Americans by Andrew Jackson Davis, under the name of the "Moral Police Fraternity." If this name is objected to, any other would do as well, such as Spiritual Vigilance Association, which it might be called, after the Vigilance Association of California, which was brought about by the deplorable state of society which existed in that country some years since; respectable men having been murdered in the streets and their destroyers screened from justice by an evil government;—or you may call it a Christian Protective Association, to aid its members in acting on Christian principles for the good of society at large. All good Christians, of whatever denomination, ought to approve of such an object, and might join and assist us. The ends in view would be the protecting of the persons, minds, spiritual liberty and development of its members; and, generally, the offering effective resistance to evil doers, so as to secure to all belonging to it the peaceable enjoyment of life and property, and of religious rights and blessings—"the promise of the world that is, as well as that which is to come."

As many here may doubt the necessity of such an organisation, I am under the obligation of bringing forward a few facts, and stating a few arguments in behalf of it, leaving it to others, far more competent than myself, to do more. I would beg them, then, to look around them and reflect;—all, I think, can find some case of human suffering which can only be traced to the spiritual world. I will mention only two that have fallen within my own knowledge. A nobleman, hardly past the prime of life, after suffering acutely from the formation of chalk stones in his legs and feet, at last succumbed to the disorganisation of his frame thus produced. In this instance I feel confident, as in other cases of excoriated bad legs ending in mortification and death, that the destructive effect was caused by the application of corrosive liquids by malicious spirits; for nature herself could never vitiate the humours of the human body to the destruction of its organisation, in so disastrous a manner as to resist the effect of medicine. The other case which I offer for your consideration was undeniably

the act of an evil spirit. My servant, a religious and well conducted woman, belonging to a dissenting connection, and in the prime of life, received, whilst engaged on her household work, a violent blow or wrench on one of her front teeth, which loosened it so much that it soon afterwards left its socket, thereby spoiling her appearance and injuring her articulation. I have myself had my front teeth splintered at my dinner table by the ferocious gnashing of an evil spirit who spoke to me like a lawyer. The teeth also, I know from my own experience to be destroyed woe-fully by the raining down upon them through the jaw bones of irritant and corrosive liquids, thus verifying the words of the Psalm, "Thou dost smite thine enemies on the jaw bone." Spiritual publications contain many accounts of the destruction of property by evil spirits that haunted human habitations; the most remarkable instance, perhaps, being the Joller case in Switzerland, where a respectable family were driven by all kinds of torment from their paternal residence. The recent instance of evil possession at Morzina in Savoy was as unusual as awful and afflicting. In neither case could the clergy afford any assistance.

In England, spiritual persecution seems to be carried on in a very quiet and stealthy manner, so as to avoid scandal as much as possible, and also combination against it. It secretly curses, blasts, and desolates, thus depriving its unhappy victims of any accidental advantages of wealth and social position. Most people (though they ought to know better), deny, under religious influence, all belief in evil spiritual agency, whilst they who suffer from it must suffer at present in silence and without hope.

It appears then, that we cannot look to our present religious organisations as a sufficient remedy for the evils complained of. In further proof of this, I may state that very recently, during what were called revivals, we have read accounts of spiritual attacks upon individuals which amounted to gross oppression and a subversion of social rights; people being thrown down on the ground in hysterics and made to repeat penitential exclamations—some, from terror and bad treatment, being driven to lunatic asylums. Even this, however, was not so bad as what happened some years ago during the preaching of Wesley; for through the agency of the spirit many fell to the ground in violent convulsions, and one or more were killed outright. This, by the advocates of religion, was called wielding the aggressive form of Christianity; but, surely, I need not ask my present hearers who can have a right thus to wage war on their fellow-subjects and reduce them to spiritual slavery and bondage;—this is not the Christianity which the New Testament teaches. The Primitive Christians

stood fast for liberty, resisted bondage, enjoyed the earnest of the Spirit; they were, as St Paul says, partakers of the benefit, had tasted the heavenly gift, and held together for mutual assistance and support. What can be more expressive than the words he uses when painting the natural hatred of mankind for oppression and ill usage—"For you suffer if a man bring you into bondage; if a man devour you; if a man take of you; if a man exalt himself; if a man smite you on the face." If, according to the vulgar adage, good wine needs no bush; if men eagerly seek after what is of advantage to them, so it is with good religion—all are eager to obtain its advantages, and it only needs to be administered with justice and equity to become quite self-supporting.

As results of bad and false religion, I hardly need point out to an assembly of progressive spiritualists the existing plurality of wives among the Mormonites, who, I am told, are increasing in numbers in England, as in other parts of the world—true religion, as well as social welfare, requiring universal monogamous union. It is scarcely necessary also to mention that the happiness of our Protestant country has again been invaded by the spread of the Roman Catholic religion. By the disregard of principle and treachery of some of the clergy of the Established Church (many of whom lean to Rome) those wretched prisons called convents and nunneries have been re-established in the land and enclosed within their walls unhappy Protestant victims. The tyrannies and oppressions of religion are not confined, however, to its public prisons. People are abused and persecuted by spiritual means in their own houses. This is known to the gentlemen of the press, who, however, cannot believe in Spiritualism. I quote the following passage from a London newspaper published a few years ago, which describes somewhat humorously a case of private wrong:—"A gentleman named Bastard, of Kitley, near Exeter, has lately gone over to the Church of Rome. The *Western Times* says, 'It is a capital windfall for the Jesuits; he is worth some £20,000 a-year, every copper of it, and body and soul the creature of the priests.' The honest gentleman, who was as devout as a faqueer, has been on ill terms with the body which God gave him, starving and walloping it most frightfully." Though I have availed myself of the testimony of the press in regard to the private ill usage of a Roman Catholic gentleman, I do not in any way pretend to say that the Catholic church is worse in oppressing or robbing its members than other churches. The folly of our legislators in repealing the Statute of Mortmain has made all churches ardent and perhaps a little unscrupulous in the acquirement of property; they wish to endow their

churches and chapels, and to support their clergy handsomely. We, however, as spiritualists, know that we have no need of a beneficed clergy, a privileged order of priests. We look to the spiritual world wholly at present for our spiritual aids and ministrations. We know we ought to be ourselves, to quote the words of St. John, "all kings and priests unto God."

Having thus made a brief and imperfect sketch of the spiritual evils existing in society in order to show that such an organisation as that proposed is necessary to carry out the views of reforming and progressive spiritualists, I leave it to this meeting to take my proposition into consideration, merely suggesting that the formalities used on the other side of the Atlantic appear to be sufficient in this country, namely, a written declaration made in the presence of good spirits that they will devote themselves in this world to the support of right and justice; resisting as far as may be oppression and wrong; that they will afford each other mutual support and assistance as far as their means allow; and look forward to form an effective church militant to carry out the same views on the other side of the grave. A central and district executive officer would be required and a small annual subscription to defray necessary expenses. Such an effort would be purely beneficent. What truly religious person could blame us for trying to carry out the beautiful prayer of the Established Church—that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety may be established amongst us, and perpetuated throughout all generations? I will not deny, however, I even think it necessary to plainly state, that ignorance and superstition still stand in the way of human progress. Though Bishop Colenso by unanswerable arguments has dispelled all delusion as to the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, and, at great pecuniary loss to himself, has offered his work on the Pentateuch at a very cheap rate to the English people, many clergymen and ministers who wish for ever to trade on the patent right of divine authority and to avoid personal responsibility, ignore it altogether. They cannot in these times openly persecute, but will, as far as society allows, practice spiritual injury and outrage. A popular preacher is reported in the newspapers to have remarked in a sermon "that he was for leaving the gentlemen who attack the truths of the Bible to the old women of the church. He believed, too, that the old women could answer the assaults in a much better way than the most able of the heretics would exactly like." What do my hearers suppose to be the speaker's meaning? Are they to come out in the spirit like witches to attack us with spiritual broomsticks, or are the old women converted into what profane

people call tabbies, and are they to be sent to fall upon us with teeth and nails till we succumb to divine government? If so, the old ladies would resemble but too nearly the familiars of the Holy Inquisition; and we should stupidly believe them to have been brought up in the school of Satan.

What is wanted now is not the tyranny of a legally established church, or the mob law of popular preachers, but responsibility of the clergy as "ministers of God and stewards of the mysteries of Christ." If they reap our carnal things, as St. Paul says, in return for the ministration of spiritual things, why should they not be answerable as other men are for the proper discharge of their functions? There are some passages of Scripture which justify us in demanding an account of their stewardship. I can remind you of two or three. St. Paul, referring to his own spiritual operations, asks the Galatians if they did not mistake him for Jesus Christ. He tells Timothy also to hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience, thereby showing that the mystery was human, and required to be carried out with a conviction of the due performance of duty. Another passage showing that religion is but a human mystery is that in which Christ reproves the Scribes and Pharisees for not allowing people to enter into the kingdom of heaven. This, according to the ideas usually conveyed by the words, would be making them contend against Almighty God the Creator, who reigns in heaven, which is impossible and absurd. It seems more sensible to consider the passage as pointing out the opposition of law to theology. The power of the keys also seems to have been confided to human agency alone. I have now just said enough to direct public attention to the subject, which is all that I can do.

I have lastly, ladies and gentleman, in regard to my not attending the Convention, and speaking for myself, to inform you that I am rendered incapable of addressing you personally by an impediment of speech. This unhappy affliction, which I allude to chiefly as a matter of public interest, affecting a great number of sufferers, is also a spiritual oppression; and it is useless to look for any other alleviation of it than that which the spirit world affords. More than five hundred pounds were spent by my parents and myself in the endeavour to procure fluency of speech, but all to no purpose. Charitable spirits, however, of late years have frequently enabled me to speak with comparative ease and fluency, whilst evil ones again have aggravated my defect, and almost deprived me of the power of utterance. Begging for your kind consideration, and hoping that I have not worn out your patience, I now conclude.

E. H. Green, in a lengthy and eloquent speech, gave a valuable experience of intercourse with evil spirits. He had been connected with those who endeavoured to aid unfortunate spirits, and he found charity and love succeed better than harsh, selfish, or vindictive measures, which at all times aggravated the evil. If an undeveloped spirit came to a circle, he counselled that it should be treated in accordance with the law of love, in consideration of its condition, under which treatment it would progress and get better each time it came. He gave many encouraging examples of the great good that had been effected in this way; and a very dark spirit was improving in connexion with their circle at the present time. He had never met with a spirit that would not give way to kindness. This mode would relieve all circles of evil spirits, whilst an opposite course would increase them; for combativeness excited combativeness, and made a greater blaze. Spirits wanted to attract attention, and if they could not do it by easy means they took those that were more effective till they learned better. He thought the writer of the paper would do well to attend a good circle, where he would get the proper magnetic influence to fortify him against the intrusions of which he complained.

After a few words from the Secretary,

J. Burns said he was tempted to discuss the "Moral Police Fraternity," as it was a great and practical means of aiding our neighbours, be they spirits or mortals. The original "Moral Police" was a grand scheme of philanthropy, instituted by Andrew Jackson Davis, after models which he saw at work in the Summer Land. The members of this fraternal body pledged themselves to do all the good they could, and on all occasions to overcome evil with good. It contained a thought too noble and holy to attract its legitimate share of attention at the present day.

The President said that Mr Green's thoughts admirably supplemented the paper; and he rejoiced to know that we had already in this country many excellent efforts in the direction just indicated by the various speakers.

The Secretary read extracts from a long paper on "Aspects of Spiritualism and Organisation," by Mr J. H. Powell, editor of the *Spiritual Times*. The author has forestalled this report by publishing it in the *Spiritual Times*, Nos. 115 and 116. The paper is well written, suggestive, and in many places eloquent. It briefly reviews Spiritualism in various aspects, and contrasts it with creeds, the old theology, ecclesiasticisms, and selfish pursuits. The spiritual theology is shown to be superior to the

crudities of orthodox dogmas, which makes the "devil" the creator of the conditions necessary for man's progress, whereas the new philosophy declares that all things are of God and from God, good or evil—all forming one harmonious system of eternal progress, in which "partial evil's universal good." The author "looks into the various existing institutions, but alas! he seeks in vain for that full, vigorous, philosophy which can feed the hungry servants of truth, but he is thankful to find it in Spiritualism—the grandest system of religion and ethics the world has ever seen." Then follows a powerful and well reasoned plea for organisation. All nature is shown to be in an organic state, and all the human enterprises have their organisations. Then why not Spiritualism? The spiritualist having once tasted of the precious joys of spiritual freedom shrinks from returning to the bond chains of "sect," hence he turns his back upon organisations, for fear of falling into bondage. The writer, however, argues that it is the narrow nature of creeds that makes organisations binding, but "that spiritualists, with souls unshackled, who recognise God, or spirit influx, immortality, and a true life as the only cardinal points upon which all need agree," have no cause to lose their freedom through association. He thinks the time has not yet come when union for the sake of truth and humanity on this broad basis can be accomplished, but he urges that now is the time to till the soil and scatter the seed. He has some excellent thoughts on individual sovereignty, and the contemptible "fripperies and mummeries of man-made aristocracies." No practical indication is however given of how a national organisation is to be founded to do for the whole population what the family circle does for the members thereof. Mr Powell seems to consider the great want to be a central mind, or individual, whose loving and magnetic influence would hold all parts together within the circumference and prevent isolated individuals from flying off at a tangent.*

The Convention deferred the discussion of the question of organisation till a time proposed to be set apart for that purpose, but the great amount of business prevented this being accomplished.

J. M. Spear made a few remarks on the subjects of the last two papers. He referred to the modes in which spirits manifested, especially those called "evil." Men and women, whatever their condition, could be helped. Once it was thought that criminals could only be punished by retaliation, but the higher view

* Those who wish to read the paper in full may procure it at the Progressive Library.

asserted that they could be reformed, and they had been so. Now we were coming in contact with the same class in a form which we could not see ; and the question was, could we do anything for them. Some repulse "evil spirits," drive them away, as once was the universal attitude assumed towards criminals. He cited an instance of a lady, called by the spirits Elevatus, who told her that spirits would visit her to whom she could do good. Murderers, drunkards, &c., came to her for assistance, and a circle of ladies and gentlemen met at her house once a week for twelve months to do good to those weak ones dwelling in the spirit world, who said they derived benefit from communion with the circle. It might be that in this country similar work could be done, if persons could be found who would consecrate themselves to such a holy and disinterested mission. He would give another instance. Once at a circle a spirit manifested through the medium. Mr Spear asked the spirit if it had ought to communicate. The spirit replied, "Yes, I stole a pair of boots once. You found me in prison, visited me, and spoke kindly to me ; and I desire to express my gratitude for the act." It was a relief to that spirit thus to confer, and free the mind of a debt so long owing. Such opportunities for doing good should not be thrown away, whether the subjects be spirits or our brethren still in the flesh. As to organisation, he would suggest that the propositions for a basis of union given in the Report of last Convention, at page 12, might be taken into consideration, as an indication of the purposes and opinions of spiritualists.

Edward Dennis spoke in favour of organisation. The result to be avoided was the effort to mould the minds of all one way. He would let all speak and think as they felt. They had something higher to do than the minds of men dreamed of ; and if the work was commenced on that higher plane, and with the true motive, it would succeed. Twenty-two years ago he became a Free-thinker, with Joseph Barker, before which period he had been orthodox. But he was not happy under it. He was looking out all the time for soul shelter, so as to identify himself with others in companionship for mutual good, and find a home for his spiritual affections. He hated human manufactured creeds, could not join the churches because he could not be controlled in thought, and so he would remain single until he could find some body to which he could unite himself. It was with pleasure and delight that he could see how this movement would be a home for wandering thousands, if they could only organise ; and he hoped they would do so, for their own good as individuals, and for the good of humanity. For a long time he had been of

opinion that the religious world was too much divided, but there was yet one party wanting—one in which every man could think and express himself as he pleased, and in which the members would mutually lead and progress each other. He delighted to hear the discussion that had just taken place. Some did not like bad spirits, and bad spirits, again, did not like them; but he considered it the best religion that could lend most good to the lowest spirits.

Dr M'Leod thought that Mr Partridge meant to do good to the evil spirits, but at the same time defend ourselves from them. Certain spirits had advised him to do the most diabolical things—things that would sink him in ruin—but when he reasoned with them calmly they left him. He thought that Mr Partridge meant to dispel these evil ones by doing them good.

After some further conversation, Miss Blake closed the session with a performance on the pianoforte about 5 o'clock.

THE THIRD SESSION

Assembled at 6.30 p.m., Wednesday, July 25.—Dr M'Leod made some remarks on the nature of a seance and the functions of a medium, as understood by him. Mr Spear offered prayer, after which the Convention remained in silence to await results. In a few minutes Mr Spear rose, in a state of trance, and said: Mr President, Secretary, and members of this Convention, assembled as you are for an eternal purpose, there is a corresponding body, invisible and more high, at the same time forming its plans and infusing them into your individual and collective minds. They look before you to that period when peace, love, and righteousness shall cover the earth, and when nations will be more elevated and live in higher planes of existence. They contemplate the action of mind upon mind, and heart upon heart, and when men shall love goodness for its rewards, and when all shall be united in one universal brotherhood. There is before you, around you, above you, nay within you, a father and a mother God; and you should go forth and develop the righteousness and justice which dwells in your hearts, and break the chain which binds the captive. You are convened here to-day not by chance nor by accident. The brain of your Secretary has been moved from week to week, and the hearts of the people have been touched by the almost irresistible power within, and they have come together to exchange knowledge and brotherly love, and they will not go back without the blessing of peace from above. Their views will be disseminated, and thus will give life and light, and cause joy,

peace, and harmony to dwell here. Accept, Mr President, the best influences from invisible circles for your faithfulness, your devotion, and your deep love of humanity. Accept, Mr Secretary, good wishes : you shall have encouragement from those who dwell above. They inspire you with the spirit of truth, and will enable you to labour with more fervour in disseminating the light of life so deep in your heart. Members of this Convention, you feel your hands moved, and let them act as wisdom shall direct ; and may this Second Convention excel the first, and result in something more complete.

A spirit then entranced Sarah Chapman, and gave experience of communion with the external world at the Huddersfield circle. This spirit was one of the inharmonious and undeveloped kind, and on entering the medium at Huddersfield, said, "My first thought was a curse, and my first expression an oath." The whole attitude of this spirit was defiance and resistance to the wishes or comfort of mortals with whom he might come in contact. Possessed of great will-power, he felt influenced to use it against those who would resist or oppose him. He was miserable, and had no higher pleasure than to make others so. On the present occasion, however, this same spirit spoke through the same medium, to testify to the great improvement that had taken place in his condition through the kind intercourse received at the hands of the Huddersfield friends ; and though once apparently a lost soul, now felt that there was hope of future glory and happiness. The spirit considered his case a very superior illustration of a wise mode of dealing with such examples.

It was considered expedient that a committee should be formed for the purpose of drawing up a series of resolutions to be submitted for discussion and adoption on the following day, so as to give readers of the proceedings some idea of the various views brought forward at the Convention in a condensed form. Dr M'Leod, J. Burns, Mrs Spear, J. Colthurst, J. M. Spear, Sarah Chapman, Mrs Jones, and M. Alston were deputed to frame a series of comprehensive resolutions by the next morning.

The President proposed a further discussion on mediumship, and called on J. Burns to offer a few remarks on it, who, in a long address, reviewed the connection between the soul and the body ; how the organisation was subservient to the requirements of the indwelling spirit, pointing out phrenologically the organic development necessary to a consciousness of the spirit world, and other phases of mediumship. A full report of this speech was demanded by many, but space will not admit of it.

The meeting afterwards adjourned for the evening.

FOURTH SESSION, JULY 26.

The President announced that the prepared papers would be read before any other business would be attempted; and he would therefore call on Dr M'Leod to read his paper entitled, "The Power of Spirit and Religious Liberty."

Dr M'Leod then rose and spoke as follows:—

Ladies and gentlemen,—I would ask, what interest does the *power of the Spirit* excite in the people of this or any other country? Not much, I have reason to believe. I should think that, in a fair way of reckoning, ninety per cent. of the whole population of England have their interests divided between the price of the funds and the price of bread. Things are *not* what they seem. A minister of religion stands up in his place, and most earnestly cries, "Thus saith the Lord!" and the "world" responds—"Gammon!" Remember, my friends, this is not ribaldry, but fact; I mean what I say, and I say what I mean. The people of England possess, and affect to value "beyond price," a book called the BIBLE. They call it the *Word of God*—that God who is a Spirit. Now, this book is very rich in spiritual lore—marvellous in stories concerning the power of Him "who maketh his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire." But do these people believe—are they honest in their professions of belief. One of these devout believers insulted me to my face the other day, by telling me that he never would or could believe that a man of my attainments could accept in his heart, for facts, the teachings of Spiritualism. I return to him and all such the like compliment. I cannot believe that they are honest in their belief. I also dare express my opinion, and I will hold to it until I shall have it upset by positive proof to the contrary, and it is this—that of the whole adult population of these Isles not FIVE PER CENT. truly believe that this Bible *is* the Word of God. Yet *everybody* seems to give to *everybody* silent but understood credit for an *honest* and *firm* belief. I, myself, know intimately well a great many persons who lie, drink, cheat, turn up long faces at chapel on a Sunday, and beat blood out of their unoffending children after prayers. I know some of the greatest scoundrels in ruffiandom who go in for the entire Bible-ticket, hell, damnation, and all—aye, and would fight for it too. But my chief reason for the expression of this opinion is based upon the expressed and unmistakeable hostility with which the people receive anything and everything relating to Spiritualism, or of matters partaking of a spiritual character. Yet in all these houses this most spiritual book, the Bible, may be found, and every Sunday will find them in church or chapel,

listening, in rapt attention, to the stories of spirit-power read therefrom. On Sundays they pretend to believe, or would have you believe that *they* believe (that's it) that a few years ago (for in the world's history 'tis but a few years ago) a medium called MOSES, by spirit-power, clove a sea asunder by the simple waving of a wand; that Abraham and others entertained and sat with spirits; that in the presence of a great eastern medium an ass spoke; that an angel spirit slew in one night all the first-born in Egypt; that two angels led Lot and his family from Sodom, and afterwards fired it and Gomorrah; that an angel killed seventy thousand of King David's army; and that another angel, in one night, slew one hundred and eighty-four thousand soldiers. This was spirit-power with a vengeance, and this the work of one ministering angel only! Few Assyrians would doubt, I should imagine, as to the "knocking" power of that spirit! These Bible champions like to hear of the exploits of MICHAEL the beautiful, and the glorious errand of GABRIEL the strong. They do not doubt for a moment that an angel appeared to Manoa's wife, and afterwards to the husband and wife together; that they roasted him a kid, and that he disappeared in the smoke of that fire, while the woman said, "we shall surely die, because we have seen God." The medium Samson was a reality. 'Tis quite true that *he* tore a lion's jaws asunder with his naked hands, and that (for a *real* miracle) bees rested upon the carrion and collected their honey there, which he, Samson, did eat; that he slew a thousand men with the jaw bone of an ass; and that, being athirst, by his touch a fountain of pure water gushed from the teeth of this same jawbone. They have no objection whatever to believe that Samson got out of his ropes, while the Davenports and Ellis Turketine and others are impudent impostors because they also get out of their tying. I have often wondered why, in order to be consistent, these defenders of Samson, among other tests, have not suggested the shaving of these mediums heads! With them—it is all right about Elijah, Elisha, the three Hebrew children and Daniel, about Jesus, the apostles and prophets; but, according to them, the power of the Spirit to perform such or similar marvels was entirely spent early in the first century of this Christian era—since which time the devil, a fancy hell deity of theirs, has been engaged in performing a series of "rubbishy imitations," in order to deceive the "elect." Of course they all belong to the "elect."

God bless us four—
 But no more!
 Amen!

The translators of the Bible must have made a mistake when they made Jesus to say, when the people were amazed at his marvellous works—"Greater things than these shall ye do." They, that is, the present defenders, hold that these phrases are altogether figurative. When the Great Teacher said—"Take no thought for the morrow; lay not up treasure upon the earth; bless them that curse you: give to him that asketh of thee"—He didn't mean it! When he healed the sick; raised the dead; brought the current coin of the realm from the mouth of a fish; stilled the tempest; walked upon the sea; held converse with Moses and Elias; made the dumb to speak and the blind to see—that was all right enough; but as to the rest, "He spoke in parables!" "He didn't mean it!" and, therefore, "Spiritualism is an imposture, as there is no Holy Ghost capable of doing any of these things now-a-days!" They now put their trust in steam, iron, coal, and electricity—these discoveries themselves the fruits of spiritual intuition; in pounds, shillings, and pence; in cakes and ale; in the financial media which can "work *the oracle*" to a marvel; in floating banks representing millions upon the attenuated capital of half-a-dozen jolly dinners and nothing to pay! Talk now-a-days, in Exchange Alley, of the power of God, and you would soon be given in charge of the police; talk of the beauty of true Christianity at the *table d'hoté*, and might not the waiter suggest to you the propriety of taking a private room. Relate your "dream," and they will order you a doctor—say you saw a spirit, and they would tar and feather you if they dared, or have you lodged in an asylum.

Now, do I blame any one because of these things? Would I correct and punish? Would I follow, had I the power, in the wake of the Inquisitions, fires, tortures, &c., &c., in order to correct this perversion? No—not I. I blame no person for bringing us to this state of things. Our predecessors preferred darkness rather than light—they went into willing and stupid bondage, and, necessarily, took posterity with them. This is the lamentable result of that pernicious system which declares man's total degradation and a book's (the Bible's) infallibility. This is the chief and broad basis of a murderous theology—a horribly shallow false science which, for more than a thousand years, has been carefully and insidiously infused into the souls of the population of Christendom. It is this system of mighty falsehood which I find fault with and would contend against. A system of lies inaugurated by fools and conspirators against man's ETERNAL LIBERTY, fed and supported by the blood of millions of soldiers and legislative enactment. Permit me to expose this baneful

system. This Convention shall be answerable for nothing that I say. I stand alone on my own responsibility, and I care not for consequences to my person or property. I would rather die now telling what I believe to be the truth for the welfare of my fellow-men, than hold one moment's compromise with these black falsehoods which I am about to expose.

On the 22d of last April, at New York, Hiram P. Crozier delivered an address before the First Society of Spiritualists. This address I look upon as a special inspiration; and, as some passages of that address will fit the present occasion, you will permit me to make use of them. Mr Crozier says:—"Among the thousand and one voices of the Church and dissenting parties of Christendom, touching the great and vital duty of man's religious welfare and education, there are at the present moment, and at the bottom, but two radical ideas or sentiments, pitching the voices—causing all the jargons and harmonies. One idea presumes the fall of man; the other assumes his mental, moral, and spiritual integrity. One system demands *redemption*; the other *education*. One asks for the Church, with all its appliances of creed, priest, bishop, minister, holy ordinance, infallible Pope, or infallible Bible; the other asks the lecture room, the closet of prayer, the white-winged messenger of thought and truth, the direct communion of one heart and soul with the infinite heart and soul. This accepts literature sacred and profane, the daily press teeming with man's best and worst burdened thoughts, and all the routine of life as allies of man's true growth into a sublime spiritual liberty. Time and eternity are one in the chronicle and consummation of this ideal of education.

"The system of Church education—founded upon the theological fall of man—presuming upon his disease and inability, yea, asserting his total depravity, his moral liking of all that is evil, and his moral aversion to all that is good, educates man *backwards*, not forwards; *downwards*, not upwards. It enslaves, it does not liberate. The unity of Church belief and Church method for thirteen hundred years, from the third to the sixteenth century, was the midnight of science, art, literature, politics and religion. This unity of Church belief and Church method, based upon man's total disease of mind and heart, and conscience and soul, **HAS ENSLAVED THE CHRISTIAN WORLD IN THE NAME OF THE MASTER WHO CAME TO PREACH DELIVERANCE TO THE CAPTIVE.** It has bound man in prisons in the name of Him who came to open prison-doors; it has whipped and scourged with its cords and withes of terrible *hell-fire* dogmas in the name of Christ whose first and highest truth was the Fatherhood of God. It has broken

the brotherhood of mankind by building mean sectarian pens, so small, that a great soul like Theodore Parker could not get into one of them, in the very name of Him who said, 'If you love me, keep my commandments.' It has framed together curious metaphysical devices called 'Catechisms' and 'Confessions,' and pushed them upon the unwelcome assent of children, women, and half-grown men, under penalty of the fear and hate of God, and the dread of a devil and a hell, in the name of the great apostle to the infidel world who said, 'The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart, a true conscience, and an unfeigned faith.'

"The Church built upon these ghostly pietisms has walled itself off from the world, and has called itself *sacred*! The great thinking, struggling, suffering, achieving world *outside*, full of the inspiration of angels and of God, thrilled with the blood of heroes and martyrs, sacred with devotions to truth and duty and the law of self-sacrifice, leading the forlorn hope of the world in scientific discovery, moral reform, social, physical, and religious progress; this great Gentile world of ours, its mammoth feet treading in the paths of the old sages, saints, martyrs and heroes of the past 'of whom the world was not worthy,' its great heart beating, beating with the tidal waves of God flooding all the centuries of time; this great, honest Gentile world of ours, pouring millions of men out in wars for liberty and busying millions at home in kind thoughts for the absent soldier, this Church has dared to call *profane*—called upon it to repent of its *natural* pagan goodness, and to accept the theological goodness of the instituted Christianity of the land!

"The Church has enslaved mankind in the *Messianic* doctrine of the destruction of the world by fire—which corrupted the very apostles of its faith, by engendering idle fears and ruinous contempt of business and of labour.

"It has enslaved mankind by its false classification of the sacred and the secular, which obtained in the Post-Apostolic Church, and which has been rank poison at the very heart and source of true religion ever since.

"When once you make a day holy above another, you do it by profaning all other days.

"When once you make the altar holy above all other places, you do it by profaning all other places.

"When you make any one ordinance holy, you do it by profaning God's ordinance of labour, which is the fulcrum and lever that holds and moves the world.

"When you make a priest holy you profane humanity, and

belittle God into a capricious pagan deity, who gets mad, and can be atoned by making the priestly function necessary.

“When you make the priest’s work holy above the work of an honest working man, you do it by profaning the labour of the millions who, as the fabled Atlas carried the world on his back, carry all our art, science, literature, civilisation, religion, priest included, in their brawny and sinewy arms.

“When God has commissioned man to subdue the earth, and to have dominion over it, which is the holier man—the priest who declines labour altogether, calling it *profane* and *secular*, or the man who takes his axe, plow, and spade to clear the forest, and make his track blossom with grain and fruit and flowers?

“Which is the holier person—the priest, with his gold pen, who writes smooth periods against the lust for money, or the honest pioneer miner who leaves eastern civilisation, braves savage perils, seeks the mountains, sleeps under the open sky, and digs under the dirty rocks by day that we may have gold for beauty and for use?

“Which is the holier person—the ghostly pietist who continually warns the good housewife of the *cares of the world*, or that good housewife, superintending her kitchen with God’s bounty, God’s chemistry, and man’s skill and woman’s art to cook a good dinner? ‘The son of man came eating and drinking.’

“You see the pietism of which we complain as an encroachment upon man’s rational religious liberty, in the monasticism which, from the fourth to the fourteenth century, overran all Europe, and became the leading, popular, and controlling religious sentiment. The very exclusion from the world, which the early persecutions of the Christians made necessary for personal safety, soon became a *voluntary* contempt and neglect of the world, and the excluded monk or pietist came to be regarded as pre-eminently religious! He had retired from the world to give himself wholly to God. Virginity, celibacy and almsgiving became patent virtues with which to purchase future bliss. St. Ambrose cried in the streets with holy fervour, ‘Heaven for sale for one penny!’ That penny went to feed religious indolence inside of gloomy walls—when God has driven man from out the walls of Eden and told him to subdue the world. It went to feed religious laziness, when Paul said, ‘He that will not work, neither shall he eat;’ and who illustrated his own precept by working at tent-making while exercising the apostolic function, that he might have money to help brethren weaker than himself.

“It is this false theology, false science, false spirituality; this religion of cant and sublimated pietism; this ecclesiastical Christianity that imprisons, starves, mis-directs the moral sense and

the worshipful needs of mankind—that puts a great gulf between sacred and secular things. It is this *false religion* that is responsible before God and the world for the sins and crimes of every species of human slavery. The late bloody wars in America, between brother and brother, which have so desolated that glorious land of liberty—those still raging over Europe—this false religion is alone responsible for. Yet these priests and their political coadjutors have the impudence to charge these things upon the reformers and abolitionists. As well charge the drunkenness of England upon the teetotalers, the angels of God's love with making the hells that surround us, or charge Christ with the rack and woe of Jerusalem; because he, the only liberal or radical of his day, told the Jews what a false *conservatism* would bring upon them.

“ This thralldom of the false classification of sacred and secular—making the Church holy, the world profane; making an ordinance holy, making labour profane; making a priest holy, profaning humanity thereby; interjecting the terrors of the second advent every now and then, with the *set time* for the visible destruction of the world by fire, and the annihilation of the *wicked*—all but the adventists; keeping the fires of eternal hell torments kindled all the time, and breaking out in jets of sulphur flame, in the white heat of so-called ‘revivals of religion;’ feeding hungry human nature with the husks and rinds of doctrine, instead of the Word of God, in every quickening truth; this appalling cheat of the soul, of all grace, in the name of the very and only grace of God, the Church and priesthood have bound upon mankind, through the artful withe and thong of faith in one INFALLIBLE BIBLE.”

Yield this point, that “ a book,” good, bad, or indifferent, composed in known and unknown periods of time, by known and unknown authors, *a real book*, is the “ only revelation of God,” and the “ only infallible rule of faith and practice,”—YIELD THIS POINT AND YOUR CITADEL OF LIBERTY IS GONE. You are stormed, taken captive, and doomed to prison. You are captive to Moses, David, and Isaiah in the Old Testament—to the *historic* and ideal Christ of the New Testament, and to all the *sacred* writers of the New Testament Canon! Your jailer is the Pope, the Established Church of England, or Ireland, or Scotland, or your innocent dissenting parson who plies his art with a “ Thus saith the Lord,” to drive home into the solemn sanctuary of the reason and the holy seat of the soul, an interpretation, or a text, or a dogma that your better nature scorned, and that had its inspiration from devils and bad men instead of angels and God.

Admit an "infallible book," and you are a timid, "erring," "fallible" "worm," at the mercy of any *keen-witted* interpreter of that "infallible book" who, for a low living, or a higher traditional *misguided honesty*, can make you believe that *he* knows more of the book, and more of the mind of God, than you know yourself with all the faculties God has given you, and in giving has ordered to be sanctified by use!

You are in turn Romanist and Protestant; High Church and Low; Conservative and Liberal; Trinitarian and Unitarian; Destructionist and Universalist; Liberalist and Spiritualist—as the pipes of your magnificent being become stopped by sin, sorrow, disappointment, discouragement, the drudge of care and labour, or as these grand pipes are opened to the Oratorio of Creation and the highest tides of God flood the receptive soul!

This doctrine of an "infallible book," post-apostolic, OF WHICH CHRIST HIMSELF NEVER WROTE ONE WORD; which had no canonical existence in the Apostolic Church; which is *a most monstrous assumption* of priest-craft and church-craft; which is belied by history, ethics, and science; yea, which disproves itself by its own *fallibility*, by its own endorsement of lying, deception, fraud, aggressive war, slavery and polygamy, and opposed to natural religion; this *monstrous assumption* that a "book," written from eighteen hundred to four thousand years ago, *has exhausted God* and measured the limits of human knowledge in spiritual things, is *the height of credulity*, and, therefore, *the depth of man's spiritual bondage*. This is the unmeasured influence of the priesthood, and, therefore, the unmeasured degradation of religious vassalage.

So much for the *negative* statement, now for the *positive*. What is religious liberty?

"Religious liberty is a recognition of and obedience to all religious truth. Truth is the only and final authority, and of truth man is the only final arbiter and judge. The Bible, and the Popes, and the Churches, and the Creeds must all abide this test of the individual reason—conscience and the soul. What in the everlasting nature of things is *fitting* to be pronounced true and reasonable? What in the everlasting nature of man is *fitting* to be pronounced venerable, holy and right? What in the divine harmonies of the soul is *fitting* to be pronounced sacred, beautiful and good?

"These are the tests which all that is worth saving in the religious progress of the race must abide. What cannot abide these tests must go to the 'moles and the bats'—companions of darkness and death. Whatever there is in the Bible that can abide these tests—the *moral law* firmly seated in the divine constitution

of man; the prophetic period of Jewish history, wherein you see the play and battle of radical and conservative, prophet and priest, statesman and politician, anointed king and haggard usurper; the gleams of the transcendent worth, dignity, and glory of man as child of God; the marvellous life of 'the man Christ Jesus;' the light and love of his beatitude, the sermon on the mount, the transfiguration—where we gaze into the true spiritual world and behold the possibilities of man becoming immortal—the wonderful life of Paul, who eighteen hundred years ago fought the good fight against Jewish priestcraft and pagan idolatry, and whose life was a grand epic of heroism and self-sacrifices, illuminating the ages of darkness and error between the first and the nineteenth century—all this, and all in harmony with the truth of the ETERNAL WORD, inspiring and informing the living and ETERNAL REASON, CONSCIENCE, and SOUL OF MAN,—*this will abide.*

“These simple propositions, that truth is the only authority; that of truth man is the only judge; that there can be no common ground between God and man unless man himself is possessed of this faculty of *reason* to determine the TRUE against the FALSE; that only through the reason, conscience, and soul of the individual man can we know any truth, any rectitude, any good; yea, only through the exercise of these divine human faculties can we know there is even a 'Bible' at all, or any God worthy to be worshipped—these simple propositions, self-evident to the commonest understanding, would never have been called in question in ecclesiastical courts had it not been for ecclesiastical cunning, demagogism, spiritual cheating, to enslave mankind by a false religious education.

“The awful power that early education, and sacred traditions, and so-called holy associations have to perpetuate *error* as well as truth; this law of the mind's *unconscious* assimilation to its mental, moral, and spiritual surroundings—this, and this alone, explains the marvellous tenacity of religious error, the slow growth of religious liberty, and the terrible bondage of the brightening present to the decaying past.”

This easily explains the sectarian drill and zeal of the “orthodox” machinery. Church and chapel service; Sunday schools; prayer and other meetings; town missions; young men's Christian associations, &c.—close these places, stop these things—as an *experiment merely*—for one generation, and your false ecclesiasticism would be an argosy ashore, with no tide to float it, no breath of God to give it life. This explains why the priesthood and the Church, from Rome to Newcastle, inveigh so much

against SPIRITUALISM, that is, against SCIENCE and REASON; and, especially, why the Established Church of England—the first Church in the world—prefers the error of tradition, and the power of its false control over the conscience, to the truth of Colenso and the inspirations of God in the heat of the day. Now, this should explain to us, to this the Second Convention of the British Association of Progressive Spiritualists, that this great work of ours is providing for the religious welfare and education of our children in a way and manner that shall LIBERATE and NOT ENSLAVE them, and not stem and stunt them with shallow conceits and false doctrines.

“ Let the dead bury their dead.”

It is wrong, if not blasphemous, to call any body of men and women *the Church of the Living God* which is afraid of God's own living TRUTH in the hearts, and minds, and souls of his own living and dutiful children. The Church must become the pillar and ground of truth, or become, sooner or later, the contempt of the world. The Church must stop garrison duty, break up camp and hospital, and nobly serve on picket, on the forlorn hope, in the great liberating army of mankind. She should be the vanguard of that army, or sink out of sight with Paganism, Mahometanism, and Romanism. God has put man into this world to grow in all noble directions. Baulk man's growth no power shall, and prosper in such dark work. The growth of man can no more be baulked than you can stay the grow of the coral reefs towards the “ Queen of the Antilles,” or the bursting of new suns and stars into life to glorify the Father in the infinitude of space. Man's mission is to subdue the world and to have *dominion over it*. That mission is to be fulfilled. If the Church cannot help its fulfilment, then, as a dead and withered arm, it must be buried out of sight.

All cry for *rest*, for the lull of “ *agitation*,” for garrison duty, for a “ rest and be thankful ” organisation, is a cry and signal of death! The truth of one genial soul, like CHANNING, has more meaning and more salvation for the race than all the instituted religion for eighteen hundred years. The bursting forth of one such century man as THEODORE PARKER, lifting religion above the sphere of the transient and accidental into God's sphere of the absolute and the eternal, is the undying prophecy of the spiritual world that the human race is not exhausted; that religion is not to be *organised* but DISCOVERED; that inspiration is now, and in future, as well as yesterday, and in the past; that God is *real* as well as *historic*; and that man's life may now glow with His life, and his pathway shine with the footprints of angels.

For the present, enough has been said on this subject perhaps, and it behoves us, who are assembled here this day, to take action upon the hints contained in this address. I presume that we are neither Catholic nor Protestant, but a party with an idea wider and broader, deeper and higher, than that of any organised body of Christians. As Theodore Parker has described us, we are an association of men and women who believe "*that God still inspires men as much as ever; that he is immanent in spirit as in space.*" We rely on no Church, Tradition, or Scripture as the last ground and infallible rule—we count these things *teachers* if they teach, not *masters; helps* if they help us, not *authorities*. We rely on the divine presence in the soul of man; the eternal Word of God, which is TRUTH, as it speaks through the faculties He has given. We believe God to be near the soul as matter to the sense; we neither believe that the Canon of Revelation is closed, nor that God is exhausted. We see him in nature's perfect work; hear him in all true Scripture, Jewish and Phœnician; we feel him in the aspirations of our hearts; we too stoop at the same fountain with Moses and Jesus and are filled with living water. We call God father, not king; Christ brother, not redeemer; Heaven, home; Religion, nature. We love and trust, but do not fear. We see in Jesus a man living manlike, highly gifted, living with blameless and beautiful fidelity to God, stepping thousands of years before the race of men; the profoundest religious genius God has raised up; the mighty medium whose works and words help us to form and develop the native idea of a complete religious man. But we believe that he lived for himself, died for himself, worked out his own salvation, as we must do, for one man cannot live for another any more than he can eat or sleep for him. We believe that his was a life at one with God, but not God—the divine incarnation is in all mankind.

The aim we have in view is a complete union of MAN with GOD, till every action, thought, wish, and feeling is in perfect harmony with the divine will. We lay down no creed, ask no symbol, reverence no time or place particularly, but all time and every place. We reckon forms useful to such as they help—one man may consume through the bread and wine emblems of the body that was broken and the blood that was shed in the cause of truth; another may hold communion through the moss and the violet, the mountain, the ocean, or the grand scripture of suns which God has writ in the sky; we do not make the means the end; we prize the signification more than the sign. We know nothing of a puerile distinction between *reason* and *revelation*; we own no contradiction between good sense and religion. Our

temple is all space; our shrine the pure heart; our creed (if we must use the word) all truth; our ritual, works of love and utility; our profession of faith, a divine life, works without, faith within, love of God and man. We bid every man do his duty, and take what comes of it, grief or gladness. This is our religion—our SPIRITUALISM; which in every desert opens a fountain of living water; gives balm to every wound; a pillow in all tempests; tranquility in each distress. It does good for goodness' sake, asks no pardon for its sins, but gladly serves out the time. It is meek and reverent of all truth, scorning all falsehood, though upheld by the ancient and honourable of earth. It bows to no idols of wood or flesh, of gold or parchment, or spoken wind; neither Mammon, nor the Church, nor the Bible, nor Jesus—but GOD ONLY. It takes all helps it can get; counts no good profane, though a 'heathen' spoke it; no lie sacred, though the greatest prophet had uttered it. Its redeemer is within, its salvation within, its heaven and its oracle of God. It falls back on perfect religion—asks no more; will take no less. The personal Christ is its encouragement, for he reveals the possible of man. Its watchword is, "*Be perfect as God.*" With its eye on the infinite, it goes through the striving and the sleep of life; equal to duty—not above it; fearing not whether the ephemeral wind blow east or west. It has the strength of the hero, the tranquil sweetness of the saint. It makes each man its own priest, but gladly welcomes him that would speak a holy word. Its prayer, in words, in works, in feeling, in thought, is this:—

"THY WILL BE DONE."

Let others, strangers to our movement, the great world outside the walls of this room, judge of the merits and defects of this spiritual religion and its professors. We have no visible Church, or places in which to congregate, in England. But we have a glorious hierarchy of great names—of saints who never had their niche in any calendar—who have in all ages set forth these doctrines. They were uniformly among the despised and forsaken. The world is never—has never been—ready to receive them. They have been stoned and spit upon in all the streets of the world. The "pious" have burned them as haters of God; the "wicked" call them bad names and let them go. They have served to flesh the swords of the Catholic Church, and feed the fires of the Protestant. But flames and steel will not consume them. The seed they have sown is quick in many a heart; their memory blessed by us this day. They were the men at whom the world opened wide its mouth in ages past as it does at this hour—draws out the tongue and utters its impotent laugh—but

they received the fire of God on their altars, and kept living its sacred flame. We cheerfully go on this seemingly forlorn hope of our race. Truth will be a wall of fire about us in the day of trial. The battle of truth seems often lost, but is always won. Her enemies but erect the bloody scaffolding where the workmen of God go up and down, and, with divine hands, build wiser than they know. **WHEN THE SCAFFOLDING FALLS THE TEMPLE WILL APPEAR.**

The President heartily commended the sentiments to which Dr M'Leod had given utterance in his paper just read. These were the kind of speeches that the age and the movement demanded, but the men were few who dared to stand up and utter them. He went heartily along the pathway indicated by the Doctor's paper: it was the straight and honest course. Others in seeking the truth might choose the roundabout orthodox road, and thus steal into the fold; but such a course was suicidal in the extreme. Some day truth would have to confront these popular preconceived notions, and it was best to state the truth at the outset. We must not attempt to build up an organisation on a false foundation, and by scheming, policy, trickery, and dodging seduce into it a heterogeneous assemblage of time-servers, "Christian" spiritualists, and disaffected parties. Such conduct would scatter the real friends of the movement, and break down the whole affair. No! a house to stand must not be divided against itself. The bond of union must be a sincere love of truth. The President concluded an eloquent speech, which was warmly applauded, by counselling an humble and faithful adherence to the supreme dictates of truth, and allow no inducements of success and popularity to sully the purity of the reformer's faith and motives.

Mr Etchells, on being called upon to read his paper, said he had the pleasure of presenting quite another view of their great and many-phased question. He begged to read to the Convention the experience of the Huddersfield circle, in a paper entitled—

**THE ATMOSPHERE OF INTELLIGENCE, PLEASURE, AND PAIN; OR
a Chapter from the Harmony of Matter, as unfolded in the
Circles of Spiritualists who meet at Brothers Chapman,
Varley, and Etchells', Huddersfield.**

Theorem First.—All truths, like matter and motion, are self-existent.

Theorem Second.—The mind must have a conception of each separate particle of truth as a primary process.

Theorem Third.—All truths of which the mind has a conception it has also the power to demonstrate.

Socrates of old, the good, the great, and the wise, was the first clear-headed philosopher who left any record, or whose record has been handed down to us, by those who were his pupils or had high truths to collect from the sayings and conversations of their much honoured master. He was the first to speak clearly of those abstract ideas, and those invisible yet material forces, which the investigations of modern spiritualists have been the means of again reviving in the human mind, and of again opening out that vast field of thought which has lain calmly waiting in the atmosphere around us, in the solid rocks beneath, in every flower, and in every living, moving thing of which our being is composed and by which we are surrounded. Little did the good old man think that the great truths which he toiled so hard to teach the youth of Athens, and by a knowledge of which he could pull Vanity so well from her proud seat,—little did he think that centuries would roll by without any great progress being made in the advancement of his greatest and his highest thought—that the good and the beautiful did not depend upon man, that the loftiest truths did not spring into existence at the bidding of vain mortals, but were ever with us, ever shining bright and pure to the mind which had sufficiently filtered from its outward covering those gross and heavy particles which alone hold it and keep it from passing *en rapport* with the real principles of its nature: those real, moving, invisible powers which are and ever were the only realities, and which ever did use the gross or heavier particles, in accordance with laws as definite and as tangible to the higher intelligence of which the human mind is capable, as the laws of chemistry are at present to the highest searcher in that great science.

Before I dare state to you the full purport of this paper, permit me at the outset to refer to a few at least of those great openings which the human mind has of late years made into the beautiful workings of nature. I would more particularly instance those departments of science which clearly show, that however solid the material, vast the work, or infinitesimally small the life-creature may be—from the tiniest microscopic life up to the largest sun which sparkles in the vast firmament of space,—go where we will, examine what we will, in thus searching for the cause we are obliged to come to the conclusion—that however stupendous or however small the work, the working power is invisible, and for the time being beyond our reach. But so soon as we have formed a moderately correct conception of the *ever existent idea* or power, so surely shall we be enabled philo-

sophically to demonstrate it. The almost infinite divisibility of matter, together with the microcosmatic powers of the human organism, which organism, all must admit, contains the seeds of all its future learning and greatness, declare that all such future learning and greatness can, and must be, the result of natural growth and development. Allow me, then, to recapitulate a few of the latest discoveries or developments of modern science, which will assist me in preparing your minds for the next great development and opening which our beautiful spiritual philosophy is about to make in the moral, scientific, social, and practical workings of human society.

In the *Intellectual Observer* for May, 1866, is a paper upon "What is a Cell?" followed by another article in the same publication for June, upon an equally intricate subject, viz., the "Velocity of the Nerve Force," being a notice of a lecture delivered in London, illustrated by practical experiment, in which the lecturer clearly shows that the nerve cord is nothing more than a hollow tube, through which a force passes to the brain, direct from the seat of pain, touch, or sight; that the transmission of such pain or pleasure can be stopped in its course before reaching the brain; that the time required for such transmission can be almost accurately shown, and that temperature had a great deal to do with the quickness of its travel, its velocity being not more than nine feet per second, while light travels about 192,000 miles per second, and electricity considerably more. And further, that the cells which are shown, in the former paper, to have almost an independent existence in the human organism, are the manufactory or battery from and by which is collected and transmitted the force or material which informs the government at head-quarters of what is taking place in the various departments: proving to my mind, that the real cause, or real power, is much, very much deeper, and much more infinitesimally divided, than nerve-cord cell, or the errand boy who takes the message.

In the *Philosophical Magazine* for June, is a paper by Drs A. Fick and Wislicenses, upon the "Origin of Muscular Power," which is equally wonderful, and which also is a great preparatory work for maturing the mind to receive and investigate more intricate and occult powers which are silently waiting for man to receive the glad tidings of great joy from angel minds. I cannot do better at this time than give you only one extract, and refer you to the paper for the remainder. They say—"We therefore repeat that the oxidation of albuminous substances cannot be the only source of muscular action. We can now go farther, and assert, that the

oxidation of albuminous bodies contributes, at the utmost, a very small quota to the muscular force; which simply means, that we might as well try to run our mills by pouring upon the boiler and shaft iron ore or iron filings to make them still continue to go round, as believe that the oxidation of albuminous matter is the sole cause of muscular force."

Need I refer you to photography as another instance of the fine divisibility of matter. You are too well acquainted with it, as all know that the "sun picture" is produced by means of certain rays of light, etc., the latest improved term being a "wave," no wave of light being less than the 60,000th of an inch, and no wave being greater than the 35,000th of an inch in breadth.

Science has still further prepared the minds of the people for the wonderful truths by which Spiritualism is about to startle the most occult and imaginative reasoner. In 1862 Professor Roscoe astounded and delighted the audiences at the Royal Institution by a course of lectures on the most thrilling discovery of modern times, namely, "The Spectrum Analysis." The writer who was set apart to notice these lectures for the *Cornhill Magazine*, July, 1862, remarks: "There are discoveries which flatter the imagination and exalt the mind, even when their immediate utility is by no means obvious; but this discovery of a process by which man can accurately ascertain the composition of the atmosphere of the sun and the stars, removed from us by such enormous distances, is not only thrilling to the imagination, but is also seen to be eminently useful, being, in fact, the most delicate method of chemical analysis which has been conceived. How is it possible, the reader will ask; how can we hope to know anything certain about the sun's atmosphere?" We are told then by those who believe in this most wonderful discovery, that the sun is one grand bonfire, burning away like mad fiends of whom in times past we have been told so much. The writer further says: "Is it not a glorious discovery? is it not marvellous that we should be able to assert positively that round the sun there is a dense atmosphere containing, in a volatized state, iron, nickel, chromium, sodium, potassium, and magnesium, such as exist upon the surface of our earth: silver and copper seem to be absent; and what is still more remarkable, the two elements of our clay—silicium and aluminum, are wholly wanting. A new and potent instrument of research is thus placed at the service of science. No imagination can prefigure its mighty results." How successful this method may be in analysing distant objects we will not at present decide, but are assured that by this means

the 180,000th of a grain has been revealed by the spectrum, which is all we require for our present purpose.

I will only give one more illustration, as a scientific link to join and weld together the science of the past and present to that of the still more highly sublimated future. This link you will find in the Transactions of the Royal Society, from a paper upon the development of the tadpole from the egg into the frog, in which it is stated that the eggs are embedded in jelly, and up to the time that Mr Higginbotham made these experiments, it was understood that this jelly was devoured by the animal as soon as it was released from the egg, and that this jelly was the only support it received, or could receive, for its growth and development for some time. But strange to state, Mr Higginbotham says: "We have this spring found that all the normal processes of growth and development go on in the entire absence of all visible food, jelly included. We separated three tadpoles immediately on their emerging from the egg, and placed them in a glass jar containing about two ounces of carefully filtered water, well exposed to light, but not to any higher temperature than that of our room without a fire. In this water there was not a particle of anything visible. Nevertheless, two of the animals survived for a month, increased in size nearly fourfold, and passed through the ordinary stages of development. The third died at the commencement of the fourth week." What does this mean or indicate? It indicates either that the young embryos bring into the world a stock of material sufficient to supply the early demands of growth and development, or that they assimilate from filtered water the material required. Both alternatives are difficult to understand. One more fact, and that is, the tadpole loses two-thirds of its weight in its metamorphosis.

From these remarks, then, you will perceive, that the progress of science and development go hand in hand. That however large and massive the work to be done, or whatever development or refinement nature makes in the completion of the structure, or the improvement of the animal's organism, the cause is at all times invisible; and the greater the change to be made, the more gross matter requires to be filtered, thrown down or left behind, by the higher organism which is at all times the result of such change.

These remarks now bring us to the first grand issue for which this paper is written. Seeing that the science of to-day teaches us that the nerve cord is but the telegraphic wire through which passes a power or force generated in a yellow slimy mass called

a cell, which must receive its support, and be used as a part or organ of the great whole, being made and developed to collect these required forces from the adjacent materials; seeing that muscle also is but another cord used to hold and maintain force thus collected; seeing that the photographic plate and the spectrum are nothing more than prepared organs to catch and hold for the use of man those material essences, which are the surrounding elements of our being; and, lastly, seeing that the tadpole can not only be developed, live, move, and have its being without the use of those grosser substances which have hitherto been considered necessary for sustaining life, but that it can be supported by those essences or forces, which are nothing more nor less than the *invisible* and consequently the *only real surrounding materials of its being*;—we are enabled to arrive at the conception of another *law of nature* (excuse the expression), and I must say, as great, as good, and as useful to man, as that divulged by the mind of Newton—as great as the *law of gravity itself*, which is, that the atmosphere, or our earth surroundings, contains all the necessaries of life—of *higher life*—and further, that through the aid of those invisible beings who have left their caterpillar bodies, we can for a short space of time be fed, or be more luxuriously supplied with any and every kind of material, producing sensations of the most excruciating pain or the most exquisite pleasure—likewise thoughts from the modestly clothed utterance to the most lofty aspiration which the development of the time is capable of understanding; nay, further, that the atmosphere is the Alpha and Omega of supply for man's wants—that it has its layers and its beds as surely as the crust of the earth has its beds, strata, and unstratified portions. Higher still, the atmosphere is *the real, the true ocean* for man, intelligent man of the coming time, in which to pass the greatest portion of his life below the spheres, where he shall learn and live the life, which he will have still to learn, when he leaves his case or body, at the change commonly called death. The time is almost here already. Intelligent minds cannot even now be held down amongst the beasts of burden, but will soar aloft—will go up higher—will give way to their natural upliftings—will allow themselves to be drawn to their natural affinities. Even *now*, as we shall presently see, we are so far developed that we can draw from our surroundings a power by which we can clothe our soul and spirit with a visible form, leave our body or case, and fly from circle to circle; nay, from nation to nation, and from land to land, making ourselves felt, seen, and heard, and return to our body with redoubled strength.

You might as well tell me that the ocean is not the birthright

of the fishes, and that they cannot live in that vast atmosphere of water, but must remain at the bottom to *creep and crawl*, as tell me that man has not the power of development within and around him, by which he shall unfold the means to put on one side the law of gravity! If there is a power to hold a man down to the surface, with a force equal to fifteen pounds to the square inch, there must also of necessity be a force or liquid by which he can buoy himself up, equal to that self-same law which binds or holds him down. Our present unfoldings are such as to lead us to feel that man does indeed contain within him the seeds of all future progress and greatness, just as the earth has wrapped up in its bosom all the seeds and fruits of all future time! How many millions of ages must the seeds of our present era have remained locked up in the arms of nature? Those fruits which are now decking and blessing, feeding and clothing the sons and daughters of toil,—the beautiful and delicate rose, which is now adorning the female forms before us—the very bread we have this morning eaten to renew our bodies, must have existed since time was, and have only been waiting for the proper conditions—for the proper development of our necessities, to supply which the great Father of all has never yet been found wanting, when right means, in accordance with his laws, have been used. And here I feel that your attraction of gravity, or law of affinity is in action, and desiring to know upon what grounds I make these great and high-sounding assertions. In answer, allow me to remind you of the theorems at the head of this paper—first, that all truths, like matter and motion, are self-existent; second, the mind must have a conception of each separate particle of truth as a primary process; and, third, all truths of which the mind has a conception, it has also the power to demonstrate. From these theorems, and from what has already been advanced, I flatter myself that you will feel that the first is a true definition, and that enough has also been said for us to form a conception that the atmosphere, or, what is a better term, our earth surroundings (together with the human mind, which cannot be separated from anything which it can think of), must, after all, be an ocean containing many things which have “ne’er yet been dreamt of in our philosophy,” and of which our present old worn-out notions of oxygen and nitrogen, and the other few mixtures which we are told are of not much moment, supply but a very feeble idea. Permit me, then, to give you one simple fact, which convinced me more than a little that it was high time for spiritualists to reconsider our immediate surroundings, not only for further proof of spirit force or

of the mechanical means used by them, but to really know more of the philosophy of the atmosphere—why it is a mixture and not a chemical combination—the why and the wherefore of this great pulling towards a centre of all bodies in space—and no longer rest satisfied with being able to calculate the force of the pull only, but try at least to find out the cell where the force is generated, and the cord used by the wonderful little cell; and find out also this great powerful earthy *atmospheric muscle*, which holds poor mortals with such a *firm grip*, allowing us only just to crawl and to creep along the surface.

Our first fact, then, took place or was noticed in the Spiritualist Laboratory at Slaithwaite, commonly called Holy David's, because the consumption of bread never exceeds the family requirements no matter how many strangers partake of it. I was there at a seance, when our full circle of about twenty were sitting in a small cottage with windows and doors closed, blinds down, not a breath of air (in the old notion of oxygen and nitrogen), when in came our friend and co-worker, Mr Burns, whose bright face I am glad to see once more. He had walked about fifteen miles over our Yorkshire hills, which had blistered his feet, and consequently much tired him. On entering the room as he did after the circle had been sometime sitting, his first impression was to have windows, doors, and blinds opened, believing, as he stated, that neither mind or body could be elevated by disobeying the laws of health in shutting out the oxygen. We knew that this was not the time for argument, and simply expressed a wish that our brother would not be hasty in his conclusion, as the experiment was of a different nature from ought of the oxygen and nitrogen kind. We had a lecture upon the harmony of matter, and spent a happy two hours, when, strange to say, our Brother Burns rose from his seat as fresh and as light as if he had not walked a mile, his feet quite well, and with an appetite as fresh and good as if pure oxygen had been blown through his whole system.*

The next experiment of use to us in this investigation was in a laboratory about 12 feet by 7 feet, with what our spirit friends call "a spout" at one end of the room, to which they say they have fixed their telegraph wire, by which means they can help us to communicate with the three laboratories, namely Brothers

* Brother Burns demurs to the reason here assigned for his good appetite. It must be remembered that he had 15 miles of oxygen previous to entering the Laboratory. He most heartily attests, however, to the remarkable effect produced on his chafed feet and aching muscles by the harmonising influences or what Brother Etchells calls "the surroundings" of the cottage. Brother Burns described the air as presenting a peculiar "saponaceous" feeling to the hand when moved through it.

Chapman's, Varley's, and Etchells'. Upon this night we had only those of the circle present who are working for the Development of the Double, of which more anon. The spirit having charge of the medium here intimated that they were about to experiment, and prove to us as distinctly and as certainly as the difference between pure rain water and rain water charged with salt, soot, or any other impurity could be proved. In this case I was the party made choice of to test the experiment, and I must here state that the room door, windows, and all were made secure, and as dark as possible. Six persons were present, two ladies and four gentlemen, the medium being perfectly unconscious. I was desired to empty my lungs, and take deep inhalations for practice. The invisibles then declared themselves ready to try the experiment, and told us that if they succeeded, during the first breathings violent pains would be experienced through the whole body, in the second breathings the pain would be removed, and in the third breathings the most healthy and exhilarating sensation would pervade the whole body. They also stated that that was the first time they had tried the experiment from that standpoint, or without a healing medium; that they collected or gathered the whole of the forces used from the atmosphere; and further, that every human being contained within himself the inherent power to draw to himself those higher powers or forces, which would entirely eliminate and remove all sickness and every ill which we have too long been told "flesh was heir to." Well, say you, what about the result? I found them just as stated before we began. My first breathings filled me with a dull, heavy, painful sensation throughout my whole body, my second breathings took them away, and my third breathings filled me with the most pleasant sensation imaginable and with the loftiest thought my highest nature could understand. Would to God that I could sufficiently understand his laws which govern us, that I could live a life such as I then felt, that I might have the great pleasure of pouring such happiness as I then experienced upon all who come within my humble attraction.*

I could fill volumes upon the various atmospheric influences

* Since the above was written I find in the daily papers of July 12, 1866, that an inquest was held upon the body of a physician, at Manchester, who lost his life by experimenting with ether. He is now considered a martyr to his loved science, which I doubt not he is; but what would have been my lot? what would the same press have said had I suffered in the least during these experiments through a mishap which might have even caused death, such as the sudden opening of the door, or a sudden glare of light, either of which in other cases have produced very serious results, though nothing of an explosive nature (judging from old notions upon the subject) has been produced?

which I have had the great good fortune for the last four years to witness at our regular meetings at Brother Chapman's. I have seen when not a sensible word could be spoken, when fun seemed to be the only power which possessed us; it has even been the same with those persons newly brought amongst us, and particularly when our sweetest of little angel ones, though she is or was black as thunder when upon the earth, for she was of Hindostan—when she has the charge of the circle her mysterious power fills us with mirth and fun. I have seen the feeling come over us instantly, as if the tap had been turned, and the hearty laugh has been changed to language of the highest possible kind, breathing the loftiest thought, and when pain has instantly been changed to the best feelings of physical health possible. I am fully aware of the ridicule this part of my paper will meet with from the weighing and measuring material chemists of our time, to whom I can only say that they had better weigh and measure their own pet notions referred to in the introduction to this paper. I refer to the nerve cord, the cell, the muscle, spectrum analysis, the sun picture, and last, though not least, the increased size of the tadpole, so beautifully rendered by Mr Higginbotham. And now, with your permission I will pass on to the last part of this paper, which to my mind describes one of the most astounding and mysterious powers of the human organism with which mankind has yet been blessed. We believe it can be demonstrated at pleasure, by the co-operative help of the various Spiritual Laboratories represented at this Convention. We feel that before long if you work with us, we shall settle the soul question for ever without the fear or shadow of a doubt remaining any longer upon the minds of any who are worthy the name of lovers and seekers after truth. The problem is this, my brethren and sisters—that you and I, and every human being, contains a real moving, living power or force which actuates this outward body, and which power and force can, by high and holy development, quit the body for a short space of time, during our present state of existence. That while apart from its body, this soul force can gather sufficient material or gross matter around itself, so that it may be seen, felt, heard, and recognised, not only by those at short distances from the body which has been left, but at any circle or laboratory, or at any house where an affinity for such knowledge exists, and provided that at the same time the individual desiring such manifestation be sitting for development.

I know you will have patience with me while I lay before you my "simple and unvarnished tale" of facts, which have caused me, and those with whom I am connected, to introduce this

question at this Convention—knowing that some, at least, have heard of our investigation in this matter. We have, however, been as quiet about it as possible until we could find that at least there was some truth in our conception; and now having arrived at that stage of development in which we can with confidence say, we have great faith in the realization of our most enthusiastic idea—of its beauties—and that the most wonderful amount of good will arise from its consummation, all we ask is your hearty co-operation. Make arrangements to meet in your private circles promptly, with closed doors, at the same time that we meet, to have the same individuals, and no changes without such changes be desired by your spirit guides. Begin and continue your experiments with a sincere desire for truth, not caring in what shape it may come—but it must be truth which will stand the test of proof. After a few sittings, we believe that one or both of our mediums who may be in affinity with your circle will be felt, then speak as a spirit does, and lastly, be seen in perfect form in your midst, though the body which the medium spirit has left may be miles away. All will not at first be equally sensitive, but after a month's perseverance, success will follow your labours. We are not particular about knowing of your sitting, suit yourselves on that point—only, after you have received a visit, let us know under what circumstances, that we may have all the information we can get.

Our first conception of this power of the human soul to leave the body, unknown to itself, or to those around it, arose when physical manifestations were much demanded, and when sound and useful information upon Spiritualism was cared for only by a few, except it was given with the "thus saith a rap"—thus saith a thump of some kind or other. I need not remind you that very few mediums possessed the conditions required for the spirit to use in that way; and then, as now, it was thought, that when the rap or the thump came, it must be produced by the "rough" or medium, for, said one, "I saw him or her distinctly take his or her hand away." I need not say more on the doings and sayings of this stage of our history, but come to the point. I thought myself, that if a finger touched me so as to leave a mark upon me produced by touch and not by explosion, I ought to see the finger, at least sometimes—and at one of our dark sittings for development, they (the spirits) placed me close to the medium and I was touched, and tried to catch the finger, but to no purpose. It came out afterwards that one person said he distinctly saw

the hand of the medium do it, and of course a fine row was the result. This took place again, and still it was thought to be the medium—but the impression came to me, though I knew argument at that time would be useless, may not this arm be the real arm of the medium—the real fellow who moves the visible arm, that has found out a means to collect our thrown-off force, just as all substances collect heat. Many, many weary hours did I pass. Many beautiful lectures did our spirits give us upon the invisible being, the real. Time passed on until the Davenports came, which revived the idea—old history was examined, and even there strange stories were found of good men and true—of people suffering some bodily ailment who had been seen in two places at once. My mind was made up. Brother Green was brought to our circle through meeting him at a time when riot and popular ignorance took the place of examination. We talked together in circle and out of circle. All the circle thanked the Father of all good that we had got more strength. The real soul man was again discussed. Brothers and sisters all saw a new era. We sat, we sung, we prayed, we tried in our little way—to speak as a Roman—to move the gods to help us. When one Sunday, after a most severe struggle with the—not *the Devil*—but with our difficulties, our Sister Chapman had been strangely used: she clutched my hand with a terrible grasp, she cooled down, motioned for a slate and pencil, and wrote in plain letters, “Atlantic, Emma Hardinge,” which was stated to mean that that lady, our noble sister in truth, was on the Atlantic. She came the next time we sat, and again wrote. We knew not where she was. She came amongst us every time. She was bodily asleep, or was under influence when we were sitting. We tried all means to prove our ground, and now we tell you here to-day that her identity is proved without a doubt, not only to us, but to herself, whose letters we have, as well as her own word to Brother Chapman. She can use our sister and our brother Green, and speak thoughts which give help and hope, thoughts and words which burn with true love and intelligence.

But how about the real *double* of your mediums, you now ask. I will give you our experience. We had been holding our regular Tuesday night meeting at Brother Chapman’s; we had that night had more than our usually good meeting. Sister Chapman put on her hat and walked on with the ladies to the railway arches, and I walked on with the men, leading the way some fifty yards, when the ladies called out, and said that Miss Chapman was going home without saying good night; to which I answered, “I wish she dare do such a thing.” While speaking I turned round and

saw her going towards home at full speed, when, at the same time, to my utter astonishment, she caught my hand. Why, said I, you are yonder. No, said she, I am here. And true enough she was, for I had hold of her hand. This was our first "double" exhibition, for which we were truly thankful. Nothing could exceed my astonishment, for the double looked more clear to me than her outer body; hat and dress, everything she had on, seemed as real as the form standing before me. Of the part, or use which our spirit guides play, or of the real *modus operandi* by which they collect the force of myself and the three other members of the double circle, I cannot at present give you the least idea; but that there is philosophy in it I am quite sure, as another phase of this mysterious power will better inform you than anything I can say. In Easter week our guides had requested that I should spend the holiday at Brotherton with Brother Green, which gave me a better chance of improving my mind and health upon this strange subject. I felt there was a meaning and a purpose underlying which would ultimately be brought to light. It must be understood that the country round Brotherton is very fine, resting upon the Limestone Rock, and produced, for so short a stay, a very good effect upon my body. We had a glorious time. We had a medium with us, and the most astounding tests were given to the family, and of such a kind as could not be contradicted. The second night Brother Green came into my room before retiring to rest, and we agreed to use all our will power so that our Sister Chapman, who was in Huddersfield, might be able to leave her body and come. In the morning, when all met at the breakfast table, strange to say, the medium declared that Miss Chapman had been in the house during the night, and that he never was more satisfied of anything in his life—and here I must remind you that this medium was an unbeliever in the human soul having the power to leave the body before death, and whether he had dreamed or how it had been done he could not tell; but this was soon settled to have been no dream, as Sister Chapman herself felt and knew that her soul had been to Brotherton, and actually described the room which I used, and also the breakfast room where we had our meetings. And what is more convincing still my wife and myself, accompanied by Sister Chapman, went again to Brotherton on Whit week, when Sister Chapman declared that that was the house she had before been to in her trance, but said that the paper upon the breakfast room had been changed since she came in the double. And sure enough it was the fact, for they had had the rooms, with the exception of

the bed-room I occupied, repapered betwixt my first and second visit.

I could give you many other instances, but you will gather from these the progress we have made in this really wonderful development. Brother Green has also this power developing, but our spirit guides complete one at a time; yet we fear not but he too is progressing, as the following will show. On the first Wednesday in this present July, 1866, our Sister Chapman was in her room reading, when lo! she was startled by the door making a noise, as if being opened, and to her utter astonishment our innocent brother here, I mean the real one, not this one our dull eyes look upon, but the one which moves this piece of human clay about—walked straight about his business, as I know he would, round the table, up the other side to the candle, blew it out, walked back through the door, more clearly seen by his own light (for other light is artificial and useless when we can arrive at the highest cultivation of which we are capable) leaving her, though she has seen spirits time after time, in the most profound amazement. I hope that some of our friends will take up the subject of light, which I doubt not will amply repay them.

Did I not feel the subject of vast importance, and that it was our duty as a circle to do all we could to open up and before long settle this question, I should not take up more of your time at the present; but I feel that there are yet other experiments in the results of which I know, if we are deceived we are not alone. At our last meeting at Brother Varley's there were present the whole united circle—not less than twenty persons of thought, some of whom have taken prizes at our Government second class examination. We had a more solid manifestation of the double. At my right hand I distinctly felt the form of some collection of matter, but I could not realize what. I did not speak, knowing that if I was right all would be made clear before the close of the circle. I had no sooner thought, than Brother Chapman, who is always placed at the other end of the circle, declared that something had passed quite through him, and that it was now standing at the right hand of myself. He also thought it was a spirit, and immediately another, and another—I could feel the different forces of each distinctly, and felt that if I could manage certain magnetic passes it would be made so tangible that more of the circle might feel or see the same as I felt, and as Brother Chapman saw. The experiment was quite a success, for more than one felt as I did, but none saw as did Brother Chapman. One lady was quite frightened when she received a more perfect realization than she had anticipated.

These manifestations turned out to be the first seven phases of the double, and the reason Brother Chapman could see better than others was the close affinity there existed betwixt himself and his daughter. Our double night was the next following, and unknown to our circle Mr Chapman sat at home in his own house, more than two and a half miles away from our double circle; and stranger still, the same phenomena was again exhibited, only with more force and less fatigue to the medium. Her body being more in the trance condition, as if the soul or power had got more clearly away from its fold, carrying with it more of the vital forces than before, showing to us from the beginning to the end that our progress in this development is slow, but sure and certain. The mediums themselves are most sensitive. They can tell instantly though thirty miles intervene betwixt them when one or other has left the body. In all our notices only one mistake has partially occurred, which took place on last Tuesday night; but even in that case we had sufficient to answer for it, as the medium at our end was occupied by a spirit in such a way as would take too much of your time up, and introduce other yet equally important matter. I have now brought our unfoldings up to Sunday morning, July 15, and in bringing this paper to a close I can but thank you for your patience, resting assured that by next year, when this Convention meets again, this grand power of the human organism will be fully established, and that the double will be then fully seen by all, and that the other important subjects of the atmosphere, gravity, the nature and uses of oxygen, nitrogen, and hydrogen gases, together with those of solar light and natural light—for, depend upon it, there is a light in embryo which is as sure to be of service to our higher development, as gas was above candles, and a power also as much superior to steam as steam is superior to horse flesh. 'Tis for the intelligent and fearless class of spiritualists, truth-lovers, and truth-seekers to walk in her high and only noble path, and meet to receive Truth as she is—not to require her to dress herself in clothing to suit the too often vitiated tastes of our pre-conceived notions. What, I ask, are pre-conceived opinions compared to the lofty and noble standard of truth? Why need we fear to be led astray by following the intuitive impressions of our higher natures. We cannot step out of our real selves. We cannot travel where the Father and Ruler of all good is not. He it is who is ever with us. He it is who is working and bringing forth fruit in proportion to the wants of His creatures. He is ever refining and ever remoulding our being—developing for the reception of the ever-increasing and ever-

glorious beauties which he has in store for all his children in his great show-room and store-house of nature. He it is who is at all times calling his children up higher, ever smiling upon us and blessing us with peace, plenty, and happiness. He it is in whose name we this day call upon the sons and daughters of progressive thought to no longer look upon their all-wise, all-good, and eternal Father as a jealous, vindictive God—but rather let us from this very hour put forth our whole powers into the study of this living, moving, guiding, loving, principle of nature which is in us, about us, and around us, from whose eternal law of progress we cannot depart without feeling the wrong we are committing. Let us, then, live well and learn much, in a few words, simple yet all powerful, which are, Love God with all our heart and soul, and our neighbour as ourselves.

Mr Etchells having concluded his reading, the President said he would give the ladies an opportunity to speak, and intimated that the meeting was open to them to remark upon the papers just read.

Mrs Spear related several instances occurring in the experience of Mr Spear corroborative of what had been read by Mr Etchells. One morning at breakfast Mr Spear described a man who he said would call on them. He did so that morning in their absence, and again at twelve o'clock, and Mr Spear at once recognised him as the person he had described. On another occasion, before setting out for Paris, Mr Spear described the interior of a room in that city. On their arrival they called on the editor of the *Revue Spirite*, and he introduced them to a strange lady. On visiting her they were ushered into the room seen and described by Mr Spear when in London. This was an introduction that was quite unforeseen by them, so that there must have been a power apart from the intelligence of Mr Spear to lead him to give such a description. Mrs Spear thought that Spiritualism would confer untold benefits on science, as in several instances it had already. Truth, she remarked, did not always come by ratiocination, but often intuitively, or by spiritual communication. She felt assured that when the nature of the human spirit and its relations was more fully known, the opinions of men on many important matters would undergo vast changes.

Mary A. Alstone thought that circles who wanted to communicate with each other by means of the "double" should sit at the same time, and with an express understanding, so as to produce harmony of effort. She thought the proof and demonstration of the phenomenon of the "double" was a most important matter,

as it cast much light on the nature of the soul and of its ability to subsist independent of the body; thus proving the real man to be immortal, and establishing the certainty of a hereafter. She believed every individual had a particular work to do in the great scheme of human progress, and thought that all great reformers and teachers had been instruments used by spirits for beneficent purposes. From childhood she had been directed by unseen influences, and she was of opinion that those who were anxious to attain knowledge and do good would by unforeseen means be enabled to attain their end.

Mrs Jones related many interesting psychological facts which had occurred in her long and varied experience as a healing mesmerist. Her facts went to demonstrate the power of clairvoyance possessed by many subjects under treatment for disease. One had given information which led to the discovery of a lost ring; another persisted in her demands for fruit which Mrs Jones did not know was in the house, but was a present which had been left in her absence. Her experience had been such as to convince her most fully of the power of the human mind to acquire facts independent of the external senses, all of which were corroborative of the general principles under consideration.

Mrs Spear gave an interesting instance of how she had seen herself out of herself while at Birmingham, a few days previous to the Convention. She had seen herself in a position which a series of unexpected incidents placed her next day. This vision or impression might not be considered of an identical kind with the "double," as she did not only see herself, but the carriage, horses, and surrounding objects.

This conversation closed the session, when the Convention adjourned for dinner; and a large group went to a photographic establishment to have a photograph taken, for distribution amongst the members.

THE FIFTH SESSION, JULY 27.

Business was commenced by James Colthurst reading a short series of propositions which he had published in a Cork paper, and upon which he made many instructive comments; after which the resolutions prepared by the "Resolution Committee," appointed on the previous evening, came on for consideration. It was not intended that these resolutions should take the form of a creed or fixed form of belief; but as many new and progressive ideas had been thrown out by the various speakers, it was felt to

be important that these sentiments, diffused through the body of the proceedings, should be summarised and presented to the public in a concise and logical manner. The discussion of such resolutions was also looked forward to as a golden opportunity for the expression of individual opinion and for mutual edification. But the result was a failure, as far as the discussion of principles or the elimination of truth was concerned. One of the members of committee busied himself previous to their meeting with a series of resolutions, which there was not time to discuss in committee. J. M. Spear proposed that the resolutions of last year, as suggested by him, should be taken as a basis, but the flight of time called the committee from their labours before a more definite result could be arrived at. When the time came for this committee to report to the Convention, J. Burns, as chairman, was called upon to read the resolutions he penned. He said he had much pleasure in doing so, as he believed them to be true, and could enter heartily into their discussion. He said a few preliminary observations were necessary. As a body of reformers they rejected many opinions, dogmas, and modes of action sanctioned at present by the religious world, and it was for them to throw out some suggestions as to what they did believe, what was their rule of faith, and how they intended to act in the accomplishment of their mission. Many ideas had been thrown out by the various speakers, and these ideas ought to indicate something, and such indications it was the business of the resolutions to pourtray. It would first be necessary, however, to search them narrowly and see if they were on the side of truth, and if the action based upon them would be beneficent and elevating to humanity. He then read the following series of propositions:—

PREAMBLE.

Whereas the popular theories respecting the nature of man, physical and moral, and theologies professing to explain the character of God and his moral government, also the plans of salvation and thoughts respecting the future destiny and nature of the human soul, are incompatible with the ascertained facts of science, principles of nature, tenets of sound philosophy, and the progress of true religion; submerging society and individuals in an ocean of ignorance, disease, vice, and spiritual darkness, producing individual misery and social evils deplored by all sects and portions of the community:

RESOLVED, that the British Association of Progressive Spiritualists institute a movement for the purpose of spreading knowledge on the nature of man and his relations—physical, social, mental, moral, and spiritual—so as to disperse the dark ignorance and injurious systems that at present prevail; and with a view to the better understanding of our new positions and effectual performance of our progressive

work, we beg to submit the following propositions for the consideration of all interested in human progress.

I. RESPECTING GOD.

(a) That all nature is a manifestation of motive, vital, intellectual, and spiritual power inherent or inseparably incorporated with that substance called "matter," which takes forms and exercises functions in accordance with its degree of molecular development and adaptation for the exhibition of this inherent spiritual power in its various degrees.

(b) That we cannot as yet determine the nature of this Universal Spirit—neither can we of matter—or intelligent power which, conjoined with external nature, is the father and mother of all created forms. We can only arrive at the nature of this Spirit through its attributes, and thus we recognise it as the self-sustaining fountain of all forces, powers, and degrees of consciousness in the universe, be they mechanical, chemical, vital, intellectual, moral, or spiritual.

II. RESPECTING MAN.

(a) That nature is the only exponent of God, and man in his entirety the highest form and combination of principles and powers in nature, taking him in his various degrees of development, terrestrial and celestial. Therefore to understand God we must study man, as the highest revelation of his nature and will; all so-called literary revelations of God being through the instrumentality of the human mind, and no more a revelation of God than any other functional work of the human soul, all of which, with everything else in creation, are revelations of God.

(b) That the powers which constitute the human consciousness or soul are immortal in their individualised state. That the fullest and most perfect development of man's organisation gives the possessor an indisputable consciousness of this future life, to which all nations and tribes of men, with few exceptions, in all ages have shaped their lives and motives for action.

(c) That man is therefore naturally a religious being, and governed entirely by his moral and spiritual results and necessities; living for high, holy, and eternal purposes, and not for the gratification of individual functions and powers; thus living for the normal gratification of all his parts under the control of and in harmony with the highest and most enduring.

III. GOD AND MAN.

(a) Man being thus constituted, God must be so also; hence his government of the universe cannot be for any selfish exercise of his own power or will; nor can man render him any pleasure or service apart from man's own eternal interests and normal modes of action, God and man being together equally amenable to the same laws and principles, and both harmoniously at work in carrying out the same great aims and purposes.

(b) That all men and all parts of nature being parts of God, they cannot be arrayed against each other, but must all be actuated by the

moral laws of goodness, justice, and truth, and the spiritual laws of desire for the sacred maintenance of instituted conditions, and aspirations toward holier states.

(c) Therefore the moral government of the universe is that of DEVELOPMENT, NOT PUNISHMENT; all so-called sin and its consequences arising from inharmonious conditions and eccentricity of action, but exciting the sufferer to efforts to procure a change of circumstances and a higher position in the scale of action; in short, to profit by experience, and thus ultimately carry out the full purpose of his creation.

(d) That true prayer is an aspiration of the mind towards its highest plane of action, and not an influence to alter the will of God, though it may attract the sympathy and co-operation of spirits; all selfish beggings being degrading to man and ungratefully oblivious of the blessings of a good providence that has placed all things within our reach, as we grow to attain them.

IV. OUR DUTY.

The attitude of all men and women towards their fellows should be regulated by the same motives as are displayed by God in his government; and we as constituting an association embodying the most approved means of benefiting our fellow-men, and therefore of serving God, hereby propose to undertake the following educational labours.

(a) To spread information of all kinds respecting the nature of man as a scientific fact organically, believing that much misapprehension and ignorance exists in this respect, producing bad and unphysiological habits of eating and drinking, neglect of sanitary laws, perversion of the social feelings, prodigality and poverty, resulting in vice, misery, crime, disease, and all that is low, gross, and incompatible with progress in every form. A knowledge of man's mental powers, emotions, and innate faculties should also be taught, which would introduce man to himself as a reality, would be a great educational triumph, and remove many gross superstitions respecting his nature, motives, and destiny.

(b) To investigate and teach the nature of man's soul, and its relations to the body and the future life, also the relations of the spirit world to this external sphere; accepting as scientific facts the elucidations afforded by clairvoyance, sensitives, seers, superior states, communications with the spirit world, and the developed intuitions of the human mind, knowing and believing that such faculties and means of communication do exist.

V. OUR MODE OF ACTION.

(a) By the holding of circles and the development of mediums of various kinds, so as to avail ourselves of the aid, information, and testimony of those who are already in the summer land.

(b) The systematic employment of literature, by the establishment of libraries and the circulation of books, periodicals, tracts, and other publications.

(c) By exercising the missionary character constantly, persistently,

yet judiciously, and thus bring the whole phalanx of individual influence of those who are "apt to teach" to bear on the community in a fraternal and consistent manner.

(*d*) That a place may be made for woman as well as man in all positions, employments, and liberties, as her tastes and capabilities may suit or impel her.

(*e*) By giving lectures and popular expositions of all the sciences that inform the people of the nature of man, physical, phrenological, and spiritual.

(*f*) By the employment of missionary mediums, whose consistent lives, devotion, and capabilities consecrate them to the work of oral and conversational teaching, addressing meetings, and the exhibition of phenomena. By the co-operation of spiritualists through this association, many of such useful pioneers might be kept constantly employed; and their operations could be facilitated and directed by resident brethren in the localities where they visited, who would at the same time be glad to find entertainment for these instructors.

(*g*) By the establishment of a free and independent weekly or monthly periodical for the "discovery and application of truth," and as a means of communication amongst reformers.

(*h*) By the holding of an annual convention, and the wide diffusion of the report of proceedings thereat.

(*i*) By deputing delegates as speakers or mediums to attend the usual meetings of societies or circles, to foster the formation of new circles, to attend district conventions and special meetings, and otherwise by their experience lead and encourage all action that may be taken in the cause of human progress, within reach of their several localities.

J. Burns having finished reading and expounding the nature and bearings of these propositions, said that they blamed no one, nor bound no one, but were suggested for the consideration of the Convention, so as to elicit their best thoughts upon fundamental principles and practical operations; and if, on examination, they were found to contain truth and practicality, they might, in like manner, be offered to the public as an indication of the necessities of the times, with suggestions for supplying them.

These propositions were listened to with considerable uneasiness and manifest signs of opposition. The preamble and first and second sections were passed by vote with apparent indifference, but on the third being read, the clouds of opposition gathered thicker and darker, followed by a descending torrent of various forms of objections, but not one sentence of reasonable argument. Several speakers were afraid of lending their influence in "limiting God." Others said the proposition was not true, but did not show how. Another would object, that though there might be an abstract truth in it, yet it would not be expedient to

tell the world the truth, for they could not appreciate it. Several discussionists wonderfully changed their tactics during the storm, and allowed themselves to float supinely on the billows of over-ruling opinion. And the last, but not the least, item of the "Discussion" was personal missiles levelled at the devoted individuality who proposed the resolutions.

During these proceedings J. Burns several times rose, and quietly and logically defended the truth embodied in the proposition. He said he believed it to be truth; and though the position was much against his feelings and popularity, yet he dared not to compromise or shelve an irresistible necessity. If there was anything objectionable or untrue he would be glad of the correction, as it was to elicit truth that the resolutions were proposed. Had he known that they would have been received in the manner they were, he would never have proposed them; but as he was co-operating with a Convention of Progressive Spiritualists, he thought that truth would be preferred to expediency, and, at least, be favoured with a calm and dispassionate hearing.

The popular voice declared that the proposition should be thrown out without any further discussion. The proposer then said his task was accomplished. While it was the order of the meeting that the proposition was under consideration, it was his duty to defend it, and devote his best services to the cause of truth; but now that the meeting had thrown it out, his duties in that capacity were at an end, and he would gladly listen to the productions of other minds. It was then suggested that the other propositions should be proceeded with, rejecting (a) of Proposition III.; but J. Burns said this could not be, as the propositions were so related to one another that if one was accepted, the other necessarily followed. If we took one brick from an arch the whole structure would fall. In fact, the rejected clause was a necessary consequent to the propositions that had just been accepted, and he felt the necessity of warning them from proceeding in a course that would appear illogical on future examination. During this part of the proceedings the Convention adjourned for tea, after which the

SIXTH SESSION

concluded the proceedings by a continuation of the business under discussion. The President called on the members individually to give their best thoughts, as there was a break in the proceedings by the withdrawal of the resolutions.

Dr M'Leod proposed three practical resolutions, which were passed with some unimportant amendments.

Resolution 1. That it is the opinion of this the Second Convention of the British Association of Progressive Spiritualists, that SPIRITUALISM is a harmoniser of all past mental, moral, social, and political conflicts, and therefore worthy of all acceptance, and of our decided individual and united support from this day.

Resolution 2. That the members of this the Second Convention of the British Association of Progressive Spiritualists present here this day hereby declare our desire and determination to do all that severally lies within the compass of our power and within our several means, in order to support the executive of this association in its efforts to diffuse the philosophy of Spiritualism.

Resolution 3. That the members of this Convention deem it not only advisable but their duty to give their names and addresses, in confidence, to the Secretary, in order that he may hereafter communicate with them, and keep them posted up in all matters of importance connected with the business and progress of this association.

The following ladies and gentlemen allow their names to be published as willing to correspond with inquirers into the facts, principles, and phenomena of Spiritualism. All letters must contain a stamp for reply.

James Colthurst, 55 King Street, Cork. Thomas Etchells, Dungeon House, Huddersfield. Sarah Chapman, Whitestone Lane, Huddersfield. Mary A. Alstone, care of Miss Chapman, Huddersfield. Mrs Jones, Post Office, Bradford-on-Avon. J. Burns, Progressive Library, Camberwell, London, S.

J. Burns thought some business ought to be brought forward respecting the future objects and workings of the association, so that if any associative effort should be practicable during the ensuing year, the present opportunity might not be lost for its preliminary arrangement and consideration.

Several voices here suggested that J. Burns should be requested to allow his propositions to appear in the Report; though they might not be appreciated nor understood by the Convention, they would be as valuable to the public as if they had been accepted by that body.

Thomas Etchells was anxious that a periodical for the diffusion of Progressive Spiritualism should be established. There was none in this country worthy of the name. He was sorry none of the editors were present. What could be done to have an organ?

E. H. Green felt deeply the need of such an organ. He would not on any account be without the *Banner of Light*. He would contribute £5 towards the establishment of a paper.

J. M. Spear said we could at the present stage make more use of the press than the platform. We want a thorough-going weekly progressive spiritual paper. He thought J. Burns was the man to publish such a paper, if assisted by means and co-operation. It might be made self-supporting in a year, but at first cash was indispensable. He thought it might be set afoot this year. Mr Spear then gave some account of a three months' tour he was about to undertake. He had just been in Birmingham and neighbourhood for three weeks, and had held many quiet meetings, and introduced the question to many minds. He would be glad to visit any town where there was a friend of the cause to receive him and open the way for his services. He had devoted himself to the work, and by the co-operation of friends his labours could be made doubly useful. He detailed the process whereby he made psychometric examinations. By taking hold of the hand of a person whom he never saw before, he was enabled by spiritual influence to delineate their state of health and mental characteristics in a most surprising manner. This was a power which was exceedingly useful in calling attention to the subject, and he placed it at the disposal of the cause under such circumstances.*

Thomas Etchells thought a company might be organised and a paper started on a small scale. He briefly explained the multitudinous uses to which Mr Spear had been put by the Huddersfield friends during his recent visit, and recommended the friends elsewhere to secure Mr Spear's services.

J. Burns did not think a company could be got up to publish a paper. As yet there was not definiteness of thought and unanimity amongst British Spiritualists to subscribe to a self-evident truth, and how could they agree about the conducting of a paper? His name had been mentioned in connection with such an undertaking, but under such circumstances he would decline the position. His connection with the cause of Spiritualism was far wider than the influence of the Association, and he contemplated at some future time to establish a periodical which should be broad and independent, and thoroughly at the service of the cause of human progress. He urged upon the meeting the importance of the missionary work they had just heard detailed. He suggested that each spiritualist present should

* Mr Spear's address is 23 Osnaburgh Street, Regent Park, London. Those at a distance may communicate with him by letter. He can give psychometric delineations either from the handwriting or photograph. Should Mr Spear undertake his contemplated trip to America, letters for him may be addressed to the Progressive Library, Camberwell, London.

successively invite Mr and Mrs Spear to visit their locality and spend a few days or weeks more or less. In this way much good could be done without much popular display, expense, or waste of time in official arrangements; besides, it would be a positive pleasure for a family of spiritualists to entertain Mr and Mrs Spear for a few days.

The President did not think that much could be done as yet in the publication of a paper, or in mission work on a large scale. He recommended individuals, however, to avail themselves of the co-operation of Mr and Mrs Spear. They did not labour for ease or gain, but were devoted heart and soul to the cause. He had been brought in contact with many reformers, but never met with one so disinterested as Mr Spear. Spiritualism was not mere table-rapping and the asking of silly questions. It was more, as their extensive literature showed, and Mr Spear brought out the subject in this higher light. He deprecated the impression prevailing in some minds that mediums worked for gain. True they required the means of existence; but if there was anything objectionable in the mode in which they obtained these means, it was due to the parsimonious and unfraternal manner in which some spiritualists regarded mediums and their peculiar position.

It was resolved that the Report of proceedings should be edited and published by J. Burns of the Progressive Library, London. Many hundreds of the Report were subscribed for on the spot.

Thomas Etchells proposed and E. Dennis seconded a vote of thanks to the officers for the past year, which was accorded with acclamation. The secretary made an appropriate acknowledgment.

The services of the reporters were also acknowledged. With the name of J. Burns one of the speakers coupled that of Mrs Burns, who laboured in the cause as hard as any one in the land.

The original officers of the Association were unanimously re-elected.

It was resolved that the third Convention be held in London sometime during the summer of 1867.

The proceedings terminated about 9 o'clock P.M.

THE SEANCES.

On Wednesday evening, at the conclusion of business, the whole Convention arranged itself in a double circle round a large table, for the purpose of producing phenomena and receiving communications. To some, this was a movement of absorbing interest, as the audience was composed partly of individuals who had never witnessed a manifestation, and partly of experienced mediums and members of the best harmonised circles in the land. Dr M'Leod had present the young lady whom he uses for the purpose of making clairvoyant examinations of the sick.* She is an excellent seeing medium in her normal state, which was amply demonstrated during the evening. But the Huddersfield mediums were on this occasion appointed by the spirits to receive their favours, the circle being under the management of Messrs Etchells and Green. Soon Miss Chapman was entranced by the spirit of the Hindoo girl referred to in Mr Etchells' paper. She spoke through the medium in broken English, the peculiar pronunciation and accent being entirely similar to that of Hindoos who have acquired the English language during adult life. She chatted familiarly and playfully with the circle, and her simple, unaffected, and kindly manner was specially noticed by all. She caused the medium to walk about the room, and through her spoke to Dr M'Leod, J. Burns, and others present, taking them by the hand and playing with their hair and hands like an affectionate child. The manifestations of this spirit were decidedly natural, beautiful, and impressive. A series of similar manifestations protracted the evening to a late hour, when the members of Convention retired for the night, overflowing with gratitude for the rich feast presented to them in the day's entire proceedings.

On Thursday evening the circle was formed with even greater zest than on the previous occasion, and the proceedings were of a much more remarkable nature. These notes are written from the recollection of a brain overwhelmed with protracted exercise, and hence are defective in the extreme, so much so that only a faint outline of what took place can be presented. After some of the usual class of manifestations a dark seance was held, at which most extraordinary phenomena occurred. The relations

* It may be interesting to the public to know that Dr M'Leod and the young lady have moved to London since the Convention, and are located at 32 Bernard Street, Russell Square, W.C., where he may be consulted daily for the treatment of disease by clairvoyant diagnosis and the laying on of hands.

of some present were announced, and by certain signs recognised. Blows were struck on the table so loud and heavy that had they been inflicted by a hammer or mallet the table would have been destroyed. It was also upset, and moved much from its position entirely by the agency of the spirits, and a heavy table it was, capable of dining a dozen individuals. The most positive class of physical manifestations were produced. Spirit hands pressed several individuals; and, what was most remarkable and conclusive, Dr M'Leod's medium would perceive the spirit hands in the darkened room, and notify to the individuals that they were being touched at the same moment of time that they felt the pressure. These manifestations having been ended, a high and beautiful class presented themselves. Miss Chapman was entranced by several spirits, one being that of Malibran, who sang several songs in the most beautiful and finished manner. This singing was far from being a mere caricature. It was highly artistic and polished; and a gentleman in an adjoining room, no tyro in music, was impressed with the idea that a professional singer was residing in the hotel, and was trying her voice or exercising in some select pieces. This portion of the evening's performance gave the most complete satisfaction; and when the circle broke up, after midnight, every one who witnessed the manifestations were overflowing with enthusiasm. Those who had travelled hundreds of miles to attend the Convention declared that being present at the evening circle itself was ample reward for the journey.

And now the Second Convention was at an end. Hearty farewells were exchanged with those who had to leave with early trains, and all felt that they had enjoyed a season of satisfaction rarely falling to the lot of mortals; and the regret arose within the mind, what a pity it is that such re-unions cannot be effected oftener! But the spiritual movement is yet young, and the bright future may bestow upon us the blessings of communion, often times repeated, with the good and true here on earth, and those of more ripe experience who have passed within the veil.

On Friday a large proportion of the visitors remained in Newcastle, and much time was spent in pleasant conversation and in the inspection of a selection from the Progressive Library of several hundred volumes, which J. Burns had provided for the use and entertainment of the friends assembled. Such an array of spiritual and progressive literature was quite a treat to many, who were not previously aware of the riches of Spiritualism in this department.

A duty remains in testifying to the kindness and untiring attention of Mrs Bell, of the Crown Temperance Hotel, where the Convention was held, and where many of the members boarded and lodged. The several large and elegant rooms placed at the service of the Convention rendered it a most appropriate place of meeting, while the house in all respects for the time being was a "home from home" to all. Mrs Bell was heard to express herself that there must be something good in Spiritualism, for she had never entertained a body of people who were more considerate and agreeable, or more unanimous amongst themselves.

"LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE."

