

RELIGION AND DEMOCRACY.

A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE

THE SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS,

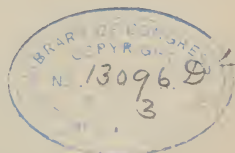
Assembled at ROBINSON HALL, New York,

OCTOBER 19TH, 1873.

By S. B. BRITTAN, M.D.

There is something nobler than the Love of Liberty and Life ; it is the respect we all owe
to Truth and Justice.—*Brittan.*

41
J.B.B.



NEW YORK:
STANDARD SPIRITUAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION.

1873.

π

BF1272
- B87

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1873, by
S. B. BRITTAN,
In the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.

CHAS. E. WILBOUR,
PRINTER AND BOOKBINDER,
205-213 *East 12th St.*,
NEW YORK.

RELIGION AND DEMOCRACY.

Exordium—Pious Proposals—Long Lance strikes for the Republic—Equal Rights of all Religions—The Claims of the Heathen—A Soulless Philosophy—How the true God is in the Government—Nobility of Jesus of Nazareth—The great Commoner and Communist—Lame Logic of his Libellers—Mania of the Bible Haters—Straining at Gnats and swallowing Vipers—Religion Characterized—A Wild Beast—A Seductive Influence—A Modern Titan—Wrestling with the Republic—Trying to tread down Religion—War against Reason and Nature—The crowning glory of Manhood—Lampooning the Priesthood—A Mythological Triad Preferred—Defaming the Divines—Beecher's Flying Artillery—Ravaging the Sheepfold—Moral Scavengers and Resurrectionists—Lofty Example of an Artist—The Pencil in the Light and Beauty on the canvas.

MANY eccentric developments result from unlimited freedom of thought and speech. The large liberty of the Press—claimed and exercised in this country—does not always promote the ends of public justice and morality. In the hands of unscrupulous persons it often becomes an instrument of corruption and oppression. Ignorant and depraved men are liable to pervert everything they are allowed to handle. They can not meddle with a pure faith and a spiritual worship without reducing both to the low level of their own lives. Perhaps they may employ a minister to preach “malice toward none and charity for all,” on Sunday, while through the week they use the engines of the law to oppress the poor.

They speculate in the funds of Trust Companies, take three per cent. a month, and, perhaps, at last run away with both capital and deposits. And now it appears that some people who thus "devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers," are exercised about the godless character of our Constitution. They animadvert on the infidelity of such men as Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin. The "Young Men's Christian Association" has discovered that the founders of the Republic were ungodly men whose evil ways we must not imitate. They believe that the Lord will be well pleased to have us so amend the Constitution of the United States as to recognize his presence in the Government. They appear to discover no such recognition in the fact that we hire men to pray daily at the opening of the sessions of both Houses of Congress, and of all the State legislative assemblies in the country.

As a nation we are fond of novelty, and we often mistake change for progress. The American people know no repose. Not only "The wicked are like the troubled sea," but even the saints find no permanent rest anywhere. The absurd attempt to sectarianize the Constitution, and to legislate morality and religion into men and women, show how unsatisfied and restless they are. Every now and then they get up a mild indignation meeting to subvert the laws of Nature, and to pass resolutions against the ways of Providence. As a rule, the people at large are not disturbed by these pious eccentricities; but the recent proposal to admit God into the national Constitution seems to have awakened a feeling of intense hostility that finds emphatic expression in all directions. Many professed Spiritualists appear to be alarmed for the safety of our institutions. In their opposition to the proposed measure

they often display very little wisdom. They usually begin by denouncing all religion, and end by boldly defaming the character of the Christian clergy. We have an example of this in the work entitled "The Clergy a source of Danger to the American Republic," by W. F. Jamieson. Those who are familiar with the history of Jesuitism are quite likely to take alarm at the first attempt to subvert the liberties of a people, under the pretext of honoring God and advancing the interests of religion. It is well, however, to exercise a calm judgment in the discussion of such questions. Not only does Mr. Jamieson make war on the measure, but a large class, and the motives of many sincere people fall under his sweeping and vehement condemnation.

Here let me say, I am opposed to so much as an implied recognition of any man's creed—in whole or in part—either in the fundamental law of the land, or otherwise in the statutes of republican States. So far, at least, I find myself in sympathy with the author named. But we must recognize the fact that one may be right in principle, and unwise in his methods. The interests of a righteous cause are sometimes damaged by the mistaken views and intemperate zeal of the advocate. It is conceded that whatever may be the motive of those who would have God formally recognized in the Constitution, the proposal is pregnant with mischief. At least it would be so if the success of the measure were possible. The wolf that finds his way into the fold in the disguise of a lamb's skin, will not scruple to show his teeth when he is hungry. So, also, a grave political heresy is not the less dangerous to the State and to Liberty, because it has been baptized in the name of Jesus. To be true to itself and to the noble principles of its founders, the Government must accord equal free-

dom to all classes of persons, and afford the same protection to all systems of religion. This freedom also implies the right of the citizen to discard, *ad libitum*, all the forms of religious faith and worship. Among a people composed of all tribes and nations the ideas of the Divine nature are as various and contradictory as the phases and aspects of the human mind and character. What, then, is the true nature of this proposed recognition of God in the Constitution? Why, it is simply proposed to give legal sanction and authority to the particular conception of God entertained by the Evangelical party, who thus endeavor to influence and govern the legislation of the country.

Now as strict equality of rights is an essential principle in our system of government, it follows that the Jew has the same claim as the Christian to have his God enthroned in the Constitution. It may, indeed, be assumed that Judaism and Christianity recognize the same God. This is not true if we regard the character ascribed to him, and his assumed relation to man. The God of Moses is an inexorable judge; the God of Jesus is a loving Father. But without inviting controversy on this point, I beg to remind you that the difficulty does not terminate here. Our people are not all believers in Moses and Jesus. The Pagans from the polytheistic temples of all countries have a similar claim to representation. Who will say that the heathen Chinese—now a large element in our population—shall not be heard? Where rights are equal, Brahma may be worshiped and the religion of Fo must be respected. Is it proper, under our institutions, to have the object of worship expressly recognized in the Constitution? If it is, then let the Chinese worshiper express his god to the National Capitol, and there burn the odoriferous goss-

stick under the nose of his idol? If there are any Asiatic Tartars among us, they may apply for the recognition of the Grand Lama to finish the Magna Charta of our liberties. The Capitol would soon rival the ancient Pantheon. In that assembly of all the gods several ancient divinities might appear to great advantage in comparison with some that are now worshiped. Amongst the most earthly and repulsive the scientific Juggernaut of the positive philosophers would occupy a conspicuous place. This god—whose devotees make one vast offering of all human souls!—has no distinct personality, and not form enough to make a respectable figure-head for a small schooner. The worshipers are a peculiar people, with whom all life, all thought, all hope, all love, and all worship are but hypergalvanic forces and functions of matter. This religion, so prevalent among our modern sciolists, is a miserable hylotheism that makes no distinction between divinity and dirt! Verily, the god of the positive philosophers would neither adorn nor strengthen the national Constitution.

It should be remembered that the attempt to govern us too much may be as fatal to our institutions as the suspension of rightful authority. It was the imperative demand for rational freedom—for *religious freedom*—that gave this continent to civilization. I am not prepared to believe that the country will renounce the settled policy of a century. Our legislators can never so far misinterpret the national will as to forge for us the chains of a religious despotism. The enthusiasts of the "Young Men's Christian Association" may memorialize the Lord and Congress, but they will pray in vain. The American people have not forgotten the traditions of their fathers; and they are too familiar with the bitter and bloody

persecutions of former ages to tolerate any legal or illegal interference with their religious liberty. The inalienable right to worship in one way or another, or not at all, will be preserved. We can not put religion into a man by a congressional vote ; nor can it ever be eliminated from human nature by any such method. God can neither be introduced into the Constitution, nor kept out of it by the mere mention of his name. The true God does not wait for a complimentary invitation ; he can neither be made to come nor go by the passage of a resolution ; and he can only be recognized in any government so far as rational freedom is maintained and equal justice administered.

Whatever belongs to morals and religion comes within the jurisdiction of reason and conscience. We are not under Cæsar, and we propose to keep the civil authority, or the law-making power, within its proper limits. This will be done, whatever may be the consequences to the bold and insidious enemies of universal freedom. But is Mr. Jamieson's method of dealing with this question best suited to promote the object he has in view ? Is the sweeping denunciation of Christianity and its clerical representatives—which makes the staple of much of the so-called spiritual literature—calculated to inspire public confidence in our wisdom and moderation ? Any misstatement, or distorted representation of the views of our opposers, to their prejudice, indicates a want of candor, and the inability to form a dispassionate judgment. Nor is this all ; it imperils our chances of a popular verdict on the right side. No matter what may be the nature of the contest, the spectators—who have no personal interest in the issue—like to see “fair play.” Even in the prize-ring, where men are not presumed to be governed by a very nice sense of jus-

tice, the man who strikes a "foul blow" is ruled out of the ring. The palm of victory is awarded to his antagonist

"Thrice armed is he who hath his quarrel just."

In a struggle so utterly unworthy of our manhood, the combatants are thus compelled to recognize a certain principle of honor. Those who enter the higher arena of polemics, and the advocates of the noblest principles should be just and not tarnish the weapons of their warfare. If we aim at the triumph of truth, our indictment against an offending party will be precisely drawn, in accordance with the facts. We shall neither allow the imagination, a momentary enthusiasm, nor a passion for victory to pervert the testimony of the witnesses.

In his opening address "To the Friends of Civil and Religious Liberty," Mr. Jamieson says :

"Christianity is not only foreign but antagonistic to American liberty. Either Christianity or a people's free government must fall !"

This assumption does not indicate any very clear or profound ideas of the Christian religion, by which *I mean the religion of Jesus, and not the poor but well-dressed effigy that appears in the temples*. There is a spiritual and sublime philosophy in the teachings of the Nazarene. A divine nobility is illustrated in the record of his life, or I have studied the subject to no purpose. This profound philosophy and that simple and beautiful life must be comprehended if we would either correctly interpret the one or form a just estimate of the other. The assumed incompatibility of the teachings of Jesus and the principles of a true democracy, is neither proved nor rendered apparent by Mr. Jamieson or any of his class. If

we may judge from the manifest spirit of his teachings, and the imperfect details of the evangelical biographies, Jesus was a bold, just man, gentle in spirit but firm in purpose, who took independent views, and fearlessly criticised the men and manners of his time. He never recognized the assumed authority of priests and princes, and he counted as nothing but dishonor and shame

“The thrift that follows fawning.”

Jesus was a *communist*. He and his disciples had a common purse, and not one of them had exclusive property in anything. He was a more illustrious democrat than either Jefferson or Garibaldi. The early church was a commune. The manly sympathies of its founder were with the common people, who “heard him gladly.” The rich and pious aristocrats of his time stigmatized him as “a friend of publicans and sinners.” So loving, indeed, was he to the inferior classes—without reference to such distinctions as are predicated of individual character—that he fed even those who were recognized as following him for the “loaves and fishes”—in other words, from personal and selfish motives. So gentle was he, in speech and manner, to an abandoned woman, that he was accused of consorting with harlots. So manifestly were his teachings at war with kingly prerogatives and priestly rule, that he was openly accused of disloyalty to the government, of blasphemy, and of serving the infernal purposes of foul demons. It is evident from the whole history that Jesus was a bold, free thinker. He emerged suddenly from the humble obscurity of a manger and a carpenter’s shop in a despised province. He came into the temple to argue with men learned in the mysteries of the Jewish law and religion—came

to dispute with the Rabbinical masters of the Synagogues; and he taught his disciples to "call no man master," but to recognize all men as brethren.

And this is the man whose teachings are alleged to be subversive of "a people's free government." Himself a representative man of the people, who fed the poor, encouraged the weak and healed the sick; this childless man who yet fondly folded "little children in his arms and blessed them," is represented as the enemy of popular liberty! The evidence necessary to support this bold indictment is nowhere to be found. It is not in the record of his words and deeds. Did he not contend manfully for great moral principles and purposes? Did he not fearlessly rebuke the dominant classes, and with a calm severity criticise the criminal code of Moses and the traditions of the people? He did all this and more. In the interest of Humanity, he assaulted every "refuge of lies." He was a devout man in the best sense, worshipping silently, alone and in spirit. He was a pure patriot, and wept over the doomed capital of his country. He was sincere in his friendships, and his tears moistened the grave of a poor man whom he loved. And yet, incredible as it may seem, this man is here arraigned and his teachings condemned as dangerous to liberty! How, and why does the influence of this teacher of men endanger the liberties of this people? I may rouse the lion of an irrational, profane and rampant skepticism, but I affirm that the only possible foundation for such an assumption exists in the ignorance and prejudice of the irreligious mind and heart.

I am not here to deify the Nazarene. In all I say I am regarding him as *a man*, endowed with remarkable natural powers—possessed of rare spiritual gifts and graces, whose

life foreshadowed the grand possibilities of the human race. He was a Medium,

“Clothed with transcendent brightness,”

whose single presence—body, mind and spirit—bridged the gulf between two worlds. And yet many professed Spiritualists are determined we shall relinquish all claim to his mediumship. They would make him the exclusive property of the Christian Church. This course is at war with enlightened reason. This is blind infatuation ! I tell you we have a large interest in this representative of the humanity redeemed from selfishness and spiritualized. This illustrious Commoner—whose simple virtues are yet matchless in authentic history—this radical Reformer who was so warm, tender and universal in his sympathies for mankind, that even in the last moments of mortal life and agony he prayed for his persecutors—even this man is the teacher whose religion is said to be “antagonistic to American institutions” ! Mistaken judgment, and absurd to the last degree ! Was he not as pure, as humane, and as patriotic as Washington ? And is there a Spiritualist here—is there an American citizen any where who would not denounce such a libel—with a righteous indignation—if spoken against the Father of his Country ? If the time shall ever come when the American people, blinded by their ignorance, prejudice, bigotry and infidelity to all rational principles, can no longer recognize the essential nobility of such a nature and such a life, then we may well despair of the Republic. Then there will be little left of our institutions worth saving, and even the grave of Liberty will have been desecrated and forgotten.

But it may be assumed that the Bible and the history of

the Church contain many things that justify the use of such language as I have quoted from Mr. Jamieson. On this point a very different opinion is entertained. The Bible doubtless contains much that is false ; a corrupt church may be pleased to wink at iniquity ; and some of its ministers may sanction many vile abominations. But it does not thence follow that Jesus was an impostor. It does not even appear that he is any more responsible for these evils than any other good man ; nor indeed that the gigantic wrongs that flourish under the shadow of our corrupt civilization are to be charged to the influence of his religion. We might with equal propriety ascribe the frauds of political rings, and the scalping of Christian Commissioners by the Modocs, to George Washington and the Declaration of Independence, merely because these vile abominations occur in this country and under our democratic institutions.

The fanaticism of the Nineteenth Century is not all confined to the churches. We have a class of people among us who have gone mad about a book. Their peculiar mission seems to be to denounce the Bible, to rave against Jesus and his Mother, and to caricature the Apostles. Now why should any Spiritualist go about the country defaming the Madonna, and libelling Paul, Peter and John ? What has a mere book to do with madness

“ That I should snarl and bite, and play the dog ” ?

And pray what is there, in the record of a worthy life and a willing martyrdom, that should cause a sane man to rave, rend his mantle, and beat the air ? Manifestly nothing. The Jewish and Christian Scriptures are a miscellaneous collection of historical records, biographical sketches, mys-

terious prophecies, spiritual communications, inspired poems, pious proverbs, scraps of sermons, personal correspondence, etc., written by men in different ages, countries and languages—under various systems of government and religion, and with only very vague references to any idea of mutual relation, reciprocal dependence, or essential unity of purpose. It was by an arbitrary arrangement of councils, translators and publishers that these writings were all printed and bound together; and it is only in this respect that they sustain any intimate relation whatever. In the bond that unites these incongruous elements there is nothing stronger than the fibers of sheep, goat and calf skins, except it may be the addition of metallic clasps to the binding. In such a heterogeneous collection of papers, derived from sources so various, we might naturally expect to find great contrarieties. Things good, bad and indifferent, in the traditions of dissolute and wandering tribes, in national institutions and individual conduct, may not only be sanctioned, but, here or there, both approved and condemned. But these incongruities neither determine the character of Jesus nor the principles of his religion. No; never! The blameless life, the practical religion, and the spiritual worship of that pure and profound Spiritualist who came to be “a light to the Gentiles” and “the glory of his people,” must be separated from the cunning depravity of false prophets, the gross materialism and disgusting sensuality of cruel tyrants, hoary polygamists, and princely debauchees who had no respect for virtue, no sense of justice, and no faith in immortality.

It must be admitted that the Christian Church fosters the prevailing ignorance. It keeps up the confusion by recognizing no proper distinctions, in respect to the characters of the

different biblical writers, the several degrees of their illumination, and the diversified sources of their inspiration respectively. They claim the same absolute authority for *the whole*—the Oriental Love Song of Solomon, with its sensuous thought and voluptuous imagery; the passionate and pensive lays of a penitent adulterer; and the pure ethics of Jesus and John. The obvious absurdity of this claim leads the minds that are not well poised to reject much that is intrinsically good and true. Thus multitudes are driven out to wander in the wilderness of a barren skepticism. Because Christians are so shamefully ignorant and so sadly warped by prejudice and false education, shall we jump at conclusions founded on popular ignorance? Because a clumsy saint or a blind Pharisee stumbles and falls, shall we be excused for going headlong after him? No; never. It is for us to exercise a just discrimination; it is for Spiritualists to look at the whole subject from the high stand-point of our Philosophy. While the “leaders of the blind” go their own way, it yet remains for us to make proper distinctions, to recognize the differences in men and things, and to reason to more logical conclusions.

Mr. Jamieson and the writers of his class have exercised considerable influence in the direction of popular thought. But my observations are by no means intended for a limited or personal application. I trust that the freedom of these strictures will not be misinterpreted. They are prompted by no disposition to give offense; no private interest, no personal consideration, no unfriendly feeling inspires the present discussion. It is the duty of a candid reviewer to rise above all such incentives. But I will not disguise the fact that, as a people, we are too much disposed to accept everything that

comes to us in the abused name of Spiritualism. We have permitted this too long. Our sublime philosophy has become a packhorse—a patient beast of burden that staggers under a vast load of monstrous absurdities and moral trumpery. The public should be made to understand that we are not a mere transportation company. We must get rid of our heavy freight, or the better class of passengers will take another line. In this remark no personal application is intended. The evils that lie in our way are quite too general to admit of such restrictions. It is time to stop the child's play of closing the eyes, opening the mouth and swallowing; for why should the function of deglutition in a Spiritualist embrace everything deleterious and unclean? We make use of sieves and strainers in the kitchen, but seldom in the library. We “strain at a gnat” in the water and swallow an invoice of scorpions and a nest of adders in a bad book. We winnow the grain we eat, and filter the water we drink, and why not sift our literature. It may be a thankless task, but some one must perform this labor for the spiritual household. Many persons write for the papers and publish books, professedly in the interest of Spiritualism, but so far miss their aim as to damage the very cause they desire to serve. Of course we should not expect any one to do his or her work after our method. Let us appreciate independent thought, and recognize a strongly marked individuality wherever we find it. I cannot afford to be uncandid in my treatment of the subject, since unfairness toward an author is injustice to the public.

But I must also illustrate the independence I so much admire in others by a free and honest expression of my own convictions. I may speak with more freedom because we all know that every strong and really enlightened man prefers

severe criticism, if it be just, to indiscriminate approval and fulsome praise. Claiming no infallible source for my impressions and opinions, I here venture the observation that portions of Mr. Jamieson's work are characterized by no little asperity of feeling and expression. Take the following example from his sixth chapter :

“OUR COUNTRY OR RELIGION, WHICH ?

‘Religion in general has rendered human nature worse, by everywhere exciting enmity between the members of the human family. It has always been an uncompromising foe to mental freedom. Its blood-stained history shows it to be an infuriated beast. Experience has proved it to be safe only when chained ’ (p. 109).

‘From a close observation of facts I am led to believe that more young women are wrecked under the influence of religion than in any other way ’ (p. 266)

Is there not something in these examples like a feeling of hostility that shapes the author's thought and tempers his expression ? This fiery zeal needs to be modified by sober inquiry and a deeper insight into the philosophy of human nature. Such analyses of the views of others are too impetuous to be always just ; and such hasty judgments appear to be the result of spasmodic action rather than deliberate reflection. If I correctly apprehend the import of this language, it is distinctly implied that our Government and Religion can not long exist together—that one or the other must speedily leave the country. It is also assumed that the existence of Religion, in any form, is a chief cause and unmistakable evidence of human depravity, and that the Christian religion—especially in the experience of young women—is a principal road to ruin. These assumptions do violence to our reason

and the sense of common justice not less than to our reverence. By common consent Religion is a universal principle or constituent element in the composition of human nature. In all climes and countries ; in the savage state, and in all stages of civilization, man is a religious being. His temples and altars exist in all lands. It is this that chiefly distinguishes man from the inferior animated creation. There is something in animal instinct that is often closely allied to reason, but we discover no distinct shadow of the religious sentiment below the plane of human existence.

The author does not appear to distinguish between Religion *per se*, and those abnormal manifestations of this principle in human nature which naturally occur when it is left to act in conjunction with the selfish and destructive passions. By his sweeping verdict he would have Religion, even in its superior forms, obliterated from the face of the earth. He treats the subject as if he conceived of it, not as an integral element in human nature, but rather as something unnatural and terrible that has found its way into the constitution of man since his creation. Many of our public speakers and writers manifest a mournful ignorance of the philosophy of human nature. They appear to regard Religion as a dangerous eruptive disease, communicated by inoculation from designing priests and the doctors of the popular divinity. If this were really the true view of the matter, their attempts to eliminate the virus would require no justification. But if, on the contrary, Religion is an important element in man, and absolutely essential to the completeness of his nature, it will appear that Mr. Jamieson and his class are carrying on a controversy with God and Nature, and that if they could succeed in destroying Religion they would also disorganize the soul. In

this view of the subject the author, who has come to the rescue of the Republic, boldly attempts to impeach the wisdom of the Creator in using such mischievous and explosive elements in his noblest work as inevitably endanger all the interests of society. There is a singular complexity in his characterization of Religion. He calls it "an infuriated beast," that must be kept chained; he speaks of it as a seductive influence, that leads young women to ruin; and otherwise represents it as a modern Titan, come to wrestle with Liberty and to overthrow the great Republic.

It is conceded that in the history of the development of religious ideas and institutions incidental evils occur. These are often of a startling and terrible character. It does not occur to Mr. Jamieson to seek a remedy for these evils in universal education; in a more complete and harmonious development of human nature, and otherwise in improved conditions of being, moral and material. He does not appear to think it possible that the religious sentiment should ever be tempered by mutual love, and regulated by a higher wisdom. He rather looks for relief in an arbitrary and total *suppression* of Religion. An ignorant people, strongly imbued with this very feeling, would most certainly become persecutors. Failing to get rid of Religion by any species of moral medication or evisceration, they would soon find a pretext for securing safety by chaining that "infuriated beast"; and then what would become of the religious freedom of mankind?

Those who would adopt the policy of suppression would discount their own intelligence and make war on Nature and Reason. The suppression of any normal faculty is both unnatural and impossible. Would you palsy the strong arm

because it may be used in acts of violence? Will the sane man stop his ears from fear of recognizing a discord in the world; or pluck out his eyes because they may lead the mind to the contemplation of sad scenes and gross deformities? Would you have the world struck dumb because base men utter lies and blasphemies? Shall we sacrifice Reason—that holds the balance of the mind—because it has been perverted by some men, and is still feebly exercised by the many? And can we afford to dispense with the godlike power of Imagination—the creative faculty of the soul—because some people, in whom it is not developed, are hallucinated and indulge in wild reveries? Such reformers would pluck the plumes from the eagle and make of him a sober dunghill fowl! They would extinguish the fire of Prometheus, annihilate Poetry, Music and all the grand creations of Genius and Art—and for what? Why, merely to

“Scatter the idle dreamers of the time.”

The faculties are all essential to the normal constitution of the human mind. Its integrity could never be maintained in the absence of the religious principle. The errors and abuses which have hitherto characterized the religious life of individuals and nations, neither warrant the assumption that religion is an evil in itself, nor do they diminish our estimate of its immeasurable power and importance in the economy of human nature. Were it even possible to separate this mysterious force from the faculties and affections of the mind, we should at once disfigure and destroy the humanity in man; interrupt all his higher relations, and forever limit his pursuits and aspirations to the ephemeral interests of time and

sense. While the religious life of a people can never rise above the average level of human development and refinement, it is still true that these faculties constitute the crowning glory of human nature. They especially occupy the coronal region of the brain. Thus, from the very dome of the spirit's temple, they feel after invisible realities—peer into the opening heavens, and lay hold on immortality.

It is not without strong provocation that Mr. Jamieson handles the clergy with great freedom and severity. The manner of his treatment is bold and aggressive, evincing little respect for the members of the profession, and a very sparing reverence for the assumed sanctity of the ministerial office. The reader is neither invited to a dress parade nor a holiday entertainment. It is not a pleasant review, but it is a pitched battle. Moses and the Prophets, unable to stand their ground, disappear in the distance, and we fancy the Apostles have a sorry look. With a strong will and a naked lance he strikes with relentless energy. He is very sure that the clergy are the mortal enemies of the country, and that the religion of Jesus is ruinous to young women; and so he dashes in among the tents of the saints and pursues the leaders after this fashion, (I quote from his book, page 298):

“Need we be astonished at anything the clergy may do? *Their religion licenses them to commit all sorts of crimes.** If some of them are good citizens, it is because they are less influenced by their religion than their human nature.”

Just here it occurs to me that *Religion is a very important part of their human nature*, which by implication is denied. To be sure, the surgeon did not find it with his knife; the chem-

* These words are not italicised by the author.

ist's analysis did not discover it; a man does not weigh any more when he has religion; therefore religion is no part of man. Shade of John Locke! And is this the logic of the teachers who talk glibly of "our philosophy," and profess to find all the essential elements of the real manhood in the spirit?

Well, if this kind of chastisement should serve to humble the false pride of a numerous class among the clergy, and thus render them less dogmatic and arrogant in the exercise of priestly authority, it would be a useful lesson. But our too common observation and experience do not warrant the expectation of any such result. The people who most deserve such chastisement are too wise in their own conceit to profit by these stern reproofs. They are far more likely to denounce the author of this vigorous indictment as a graceless infidel and a bold blasphemer. Those, however, who have not fallen from the grace of common sense and modesty can but feel the severity of the retribution, whilst they weep in view of the dark and devious ways of their brethren. Mr. Jamieson has fearlessly lifted the vail from whatever was most shameful in their lives. The Nemesis of Grecian story was a woman; but she scarcely pursued the proud and insolent with a more inflexible determination than this man displays in following the watchmen in Zion that he may bring them to judgment. His summons is not syllabled in the air, to be speedily forgotten among men. No; he has assumed the office and performed the function of the recording angel, and so their deeds of darkness are embalmed in his book.

But when it is affirmed that the religion professed by the Christian clergy "*licenses them to commit all sorts of crimes,*" I am bound to dispute the statement. This bold assumption is given to the public in the name of Spiritualism. For one

I am not prepared to accept any share of the responsibility of such an unwarrantable declaration. If Spiritualism is indeed a philosophy of all being—more especially of human nature and its relations to another life and world—its accredited advocates should weigh their words and be guided by reason. I protest that Christianity—by which I do not mean some form of sectarian theology, but the religion of Jesus—*sanctions no such thing*. By this wholesale method of impeachment the noblest characters are defamed, and the grandest truths buried beneath the débris of old systems and mythological traditions. Is this the proper business of the Reformer of To-day? I apprehend not. The occasion impressively suggests some nobler occupation, worthy alike of the time and of the great unwritten philosophy of the Spiritual Reformation? We care not whether the truth be taught by Zoroaster, Confucius, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Jesus, Paul, Mohammed, Swedenborg, Channing, Parker, Emerson, Davis or any other man. If it be the same in fact and essence we are equally bound to respect it. We can never determine the value of truth by a mere reference to the name of the speaker or writer. The rational Spiritualist will settle all such questions by the more scientific method of quantitative and qualitative analyses. Error has a grand company of well-dressed and courtly friends, always in attendance; but we accept Truth, though friendless, naked and alone, on its own authority.

Now while the multitudes must have the truth prefaced by a "Thus saith the Lord," and indorsed by the fathers of the church, we are, at the same time, unpleasantly reminded that we have *a peculiar people among us* who, on the contrary—for some unexplained reason—prefer to take the truth from ancient Pagans and modern Infidels. The "Golden Rule"

as taught by Confucius was a good thing—good in fact and in their estimation ; but as practiced by Jesus it quite escapes their notice. They speak very well of Brahma and Vishnu, the first and second persons in the Hindoo godhead ; indeed, they scarcely object to the whole mythological trimurti, and they are really in love with the Vedas ; at the same time they caricature the Jehovah of Moses, ridicule the Christian Trinity, and discount the New Testament. They have only taken the contract to “ run a muck ” against Jews and Christians ; and so they rend the mantles of the Prophets, criticise the Sermon on the Mount, as the impracticable utterance of a pious enthusiast, and poke fun at the epistles of the chief Apostles. They give audience to the teacher who will very loosely interpret their personal freedom, and seem ready to believe in anybody who does not believe in anything in particular. They suspect the Virgin Mary was a free-lover ; they dispute St. John, swear by their own particular medium, and overstock the market with the poor

“Fustian of thoughts and words ill sorted.”

Some of the people who undertake to champion our cause go into the contest with fearful implements in their hands. Their *ante-bellum* declaration suggests the terrors of the war-whoop. Their fierce logic is a kind of broad-axe exercise that may astonish the enemy and cause stragglers to fall into line. It is a great point gained if we impress the opposition with a sense of our prowess, and those who contend for victory rather than Right use all the means at their command. Our Christian government puts the fleet Indians on the trail of savages to hunt them to the death. It employs Modocs to catch Modocs. In like manner Mr. Jamieson drafts the

clergy whenever he can turn their services to account in his battle with the Church. After such a sweeping denunciation of the whole profession, as might be understood to invalidate the testimony of all ministers of the Gospel, he employs the flying artillery of Henry Ward Beecher and the straggling light infantry of all Christendom in his hot pursuit of the clerical cohorts.

I have yet to refer to that portion of Mr. Jamieson's labors which will be most regretted by the enlightened friends of Spiritualism. More than fifty pages of the concluding part of his book are devoted to a republication of the newspaper evidences of ministerial mischief—illustrated by the numerous cases of seduction of young women by their religious teachers. All this has but a remote bearing on the question at issue as thus stated in his title—*The Clergy a source of Danger to the American Republic*. Such men are not guilty of treason against the state, but against God and humanity. They corrupt the innocents—hearth and home become desolate. Hence it is private virtue rather than the public safety that is imperiled by the presence of these “wolves in sheeps' clothing.” The account of their ravages among the lambs of the flock is dreary enough, and all such details should be suppressed in the interest of public morality.

The surface of the earth is clothed with beauty and daily illuminated; but the light of day is not permitted to shine into the foul precincts of our common sewers. The guardians of the public health do not allow us to uncover our sinks and cesspools lest the air we breathe should be contaminated. We bury the dead out of our sight that the rapid chemistry of decay may not endanger the living. But we have yet to learn that moral scavengers and resurrectionists who perpetually

uncover the sinks of iniquity ; who lift the veils from secret chambers and expose the Night's Doings, likewise corrupt the social atmosphere, and thus endanger the moral health of the community. Such work is not at all suited to our taste. There is something in it even more repulsive and hideous than the opening of old graves and the rattling of the dry bones of the dead !

It must be admitted that both literature and art perform thankless tasks when they only show us deformity. We see enough of filth and depravity in the streets every time we go out ; we want no exhibition of these either in the nursery, the dining-room or the library. We prefer to take our wife and daughters to the Picture Gallery rather than to the Morgue, and to the Opera instead of those Anatomical Museums, where loathsome disease and fungous developments are exhibited in wax to morbid curiosity-seekers. We will neither have corpses nor skeletons for our companions ; and we would leave the effete remains of the dissecting-room out of the photographic album.

I was some years since acquainted with a distinguished American Artist (now deceased) whose pictures were at once so admirably drawn, and shaded with such exquisite delicacy of touch and manipulation, that they were often compared, in their delicate beauty, to the figures of Raphael. It was a peculiarity of this artist that he would never paint a face in which the supremacy of the selfish and destructive passions was apparent. He entertained the idea that any form of grossness, that every image of sensuality served to corrupt popular feeling and thought, and—by a subtle power of assimilation—to lower the standard of character. So firm was he in the conviction that whatever is ignoble and base

in human nature should be kept out of sight, that he would never prostitute his rare gifts for money. I honor the name and memory of that man, in a degree I can find no language to express. I accept the reason in his words and the clearer and deeper logic of his love. For why should even the semblance of imbecility and depravity be preserved? Why should coarseness and vulgarity have a perpetual license for exhibition? Why give deceit, intemperance and lust a place in the cabinet and portfolio? Who wants to be haunted through life by the effigies of harlequins and monsters? And shall we have moral deformity, even in purple robes, to look down from gilded frames on succeeding generations? Rather let the images of all these perish from the world, and be blotted out of human remembrance forever. Let us imitate the lofty example of the Artist who refused to prostitute his genius and to degrade his humanity for gold. He left the poor scene-painters of this world to make clouds and daub the darkness. His was a nobler occupation. He dipped his diamond-pointed pencil in the sun, and only touched the canvas that Beauty, in outward forms, might live and be immortal.

BRITTAN'S QUARTERLY JOURNAL

AN ORGAN OF THE

Spiritual Reformation

OF THE

NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Reverent in spirit, but independent in thought.

CRITICAL OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

From the National Quarterly Review.

BRITTAN'S JOURNAL is edited by a veteran journalist. There are few, if any, abler writers in America than Dr. Brittan; in the peculiar field to which he has devoted himself he has no equal. Our readers know that none have less faith in what is called Spiritualism than we. We believe in no miracles but those of science—the results of irrevocable laws. Nevertheless we have read several of Dr. Brittan's essays on Spiritualism with interest and pleasure; if he has not succeeded in making a convert of us, however, it is because no one could. We do not hesitate to recommend Brittan's Quarterly. We acknowledge its decided merits all the more readily, because if the Editor occasionally introduces a ghost or two in his essays, they are not of the vulgar tribe—they are, in fact, philosophical, interesting, instructive ghosts. There are but few who regard the ghost in Hamlet as a real representative of the nether world; and still fewer think the less of that noble drama on account of its ghost, even when the latter stalks about in his clumsiest fashion. By all means, then, let "Brittan's Journal" be read. We wish we could extract a large part of the Editor's Salutatory, addressed to the Friends of Progress, replete as it is with striking thoughts.

From the Religio-Philosophical Journal.

BRITTAN'S JOURNAL.—The Editor is a profound thinker, possessing a mind that can express in clear language those abstruse principles that are now receiving the attention of advanced minds. He is just the man to enlighten the people, to lead them into new fields of thought and inquiry, and in his "Journal,"—from which we shall from time to time take extracts—there is a vast mine of intellectual gold that will enrich any one who will carefully peruse the same. Bro. Brittan is an author of world-wide reputation, and we are confident that his efforts and advanced ideas will be fully appreciated by the leading minds of the present time.

From the Sunday Gazette, Washington, D. C.

BRITTAN'S QUARTERLY bears the imprint of a veteran in journalism. The name of the Editor, S. B. Brittan, M.D., is a guarantee of its worth. Its clear white paper and beautiful typography recommend it at the first glance. Then as we open its pages and look into them more deeply, we recognize the presence of a master-hand.

From the Newark Evening Courier.

DR. BRITTAN'S publication is a model of neatness, taste, enterprise and literary excellence. The skill of the artist combines with typographical cunning to render it externally quite the handsomest publication ever attempted of its class. Of the literary matter it would be entirely superfluous to say anything, after the mere mention of the fact that it is edited by Dr. Brittan, and that the contents of many of its pages emanate from his pen. For strength of style, facility of expression and brilliancy of rhetoric, Dr. Brittan has few superiors among the best writers. The gold of thought cannot be gilded to any greater degree of brilliancy, neither can the pure lily of chaste expression be painted above its pristine hue. The work is creditable to the genius of its founder. We wish for Dr. Brittan's enterprise a pleasant constituency and a prosperous career.

From the Hartford Daily Times.

BRITTAN'S JOURNAL appears at the right time, and has the field to itself. By its candid and liberal tone, as well as in the nature of its themes and the manifest ability which it brings to bear in their discussion, it is well fitted to challenge the respect and command the attention even of those who reject its philosophy. We very much doubt if any intelligent, thoughtful man, be he orthodox clergyman or downright atheist, can read this Quarterly and fail to be interested—nay, elevated and instructed and made conscious of a gleam of joy and gladness in his heart. The contributors to this JOURNAL are among those who have a reputation, many of them, wider than the land in which it is published. Professor Brittan is one of the most acute and thorough thinkers, as he is also one of the very best writers, within the entire range of modern spiritual literature. His writings and his conclusions exhibit none of the too common crudities of that highly stimulated and productive field, but they evince a fine culture, a strict mental discipline, and a habit of trained and analytical thought.

From the Banner of Light.

BRITTAN'S QUARTERLY JOURNAL is all that could be demanded by the ideal of any reader. A want of genuine Spiritualistic literature thus promises to be filled. The first number opens with a profoundly appreciative and affectionately familiar biographical sketch of N. P. Tallmadge, whose noble head and clean-cut features make so positive an impression on the frontispiece illustration. Professor Brittan has evidently written this sketch *con amore*, and it will heighten the popular estimate of the writer and his subject together. "The Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century," by Prof. J. R. Buchanan, is a lucid and instructive *résumé* of the history of thought for the last seventy years, particularly on the grand problems and underlying principles which govern the progress of mental and spiritual development. The Editor's department is full and skilfully made up, catering to a variety of tastes and wants, commenting in not too cursory a manner upon recent movements, events, and social and religious phenomena; and bringing up to the body of the Quarterly a light artillery reserve which sets off the whole to excellent advantage. The work has the appearance of stability and intellectual permanence. It will strike all eyes and minds as supremely successful. We sincerely bespeak for Prof. Brittan a most generous support for his new Spiritual Quarterly, and appeal on his and its behalf to all readers of the best literature to give it a prompt and efficient support. Let it be borne in mind that the literature of Spiritualism is one of its most powerful buttresses in the popular opinion. However convincing the phenomena to individual minds, it is not until they have passed through the alembic of intelligent discussion, and become clarified as well as classified in the general mind, by restatement in their right relations, that the profound value of their truth and meaning is made more and more apparent. Prof. Brittan has launched a Quarterly that deserves a long life, which will not fail to be an influential one. We welcome the new and stately visitor in the field of spiritual literature with sincerest greeting.

From the Orange (N. J.) Chronicle.

BRITTAN'S JOURNAL presents the finest typographical appearance of any American publication. The Editor is a gentleman of culture and literary attainments, and there are other contributors of acknowledged ability in the school to which they belong. The second number of this superb Quarterly fully meets the expectation aroused by its predecessor. The Editor has inaugurated a remarkable feature and one that we should not be surprised to see copied by other standard magazines. It consists of short biographical sketches of living American Reformers, each sketch containing, in the subject's own language, his or her own "central thought," accompanied by an autographic fac-simile.

From the New York Tribune.

BRITTAN'S JOURNAL.—Among the contributors to this number are names widely known in the literature of Spiritualism. It is the intention of Dr. Brittan to make this work an organ of high character in a literary point of view for the treatment of profound questions in metaphysics and psychology, of the great problems of life, death, and immortality, and of the laws of vital motion, sensation, thought and consciousness. The influence of this journal will be antagonistic to the material tendencies of the physical sciences of the day, and will undertake to present the latest information, not only on the phenomena of the Spiritual World, but to expound the philosophy of the spiritual arcana.

From the Golden Age.

S. B. BRITTAN, well known in reform and literary circles, has begun the publication of a Quarterly Journal, which will represent the higher and more philosophical and more advanced phase of Spiritualism. The first number is full of interesting and suggestive matters, whether one accepts or rejects its philosophy. Considering the sloppy and insipid character of much of the spiritualistic literature, this journal is a much needed and promising venture, and deserves success.

From the Daily Alta California

BRITTAN'S JOURNAL.—In everything relating to appearances, this Quarterly is faultless. We have no doubt that this magazine will find anxious readers, who will yearn to have a more practical elucidation of the special benefits the world is about to realize from Spiritual Manifestations. We recommend the perusal of this quarterly as the best exponent of the doctrines it expounds.

From the Sunday Call, Newark, N. J.

BRITTAN'S JOURNAL.—Space will not permit us to mention in detail the excellent articles which the work in hand contains. Dr. BRITTAN evidently understands what he has undertaken, and we welcome his periodical to our sanctum with pleasure. His clear, analytic style, and evident scholastic ability well adapt him for the editorship of a magazine of this distinctive literary character.

From the Hartford Daily Times.

BRITTAN'S JOURNAL.—The second number, for April, has appeared, and we have examined its attractive and varied table of contents with interest. Whether the popular taste is as yet sufficiently elevated among the masses of those who are interested in the general subject, to insure a large and immediate popular success for such a journal, is a question to be decided in the affirmative if obvious intellectual merit alone were the governing factor in the problem. In BRITTAN'S QUARTERLY JOURNAL the Spiritualists may find an organ of their faith and literature of which not even the most cultivated and advanced among them will find cause to be ashamed. Liberal and catholic in its comprehensive views, this spirited and elegant magazine gives expression to the best and most matured thoughts of the ablest writers on the various themes which it discusses. Nor are these themes, and the papers which treat of them, mere beautiful but flimsy abstractions, captivating to the ear, but intangible in the practical man's grasp. No magazine grapples more directly with the practical issues of the day. Take, for instance, the paper on "The Relation of Religion and Politics," by Alfred Cridge—a very vigorous statement, which contains a practical suggestion for those who would compel a recognition in political affairs of their plans of reform and progress. In the "Dangers of the Republic," and "The Impending Question," the Editor deals with very practical questions; the first pointing out the true danger of our country in the abounding bribery and corruption of the day, and the second striking out boldly for woman suffrage. Dr. Buchanan, probably the ablest living illustrator (he was certainly about the earliest and truest scientific investigator) of the recondite facts and laws of the human mind, in its inner relations to the corporeal form, has in this number a paper on "Errors in Biological Science," in which the ignorance of pretentious and assuming "scientific" lights is strikingly demonstrated.

One of the most remarkable things in this, as in the first number of the magazine, is a series of papers from Fanny Green McDougal, a California lady, giving a narrative of "Souls and Scenes in Spirit-Life," purporting to be inspired by Gen. Baker, who was killed in the battle of Ball's Bluff. Altogether, the QUARTERLY is decidedly the most creditable organ of the higher phases of the Spiritual movement that has yet made its appearance.

Office of BRITTAN'S JOURNAL,

No. 80 Broadway, Room 49.

POST-OFFICE BOX, 3806.

EDITOR'S RESIDENCE, NEWARK, N. J.

Address,

BRITTAN'S JOURNAL.

THE EDITOR ON THE ROSTRUM

THE LECTURE SEASON.

S. B. BRITTAN respectfully announces to Societies of Spiritualists and Reformers, Lyceum Committees, and the Public, that he is prepared to lecture during the present Autumn and ensuing Winter on various philosophical, spiritual, and popular themes, on Sundays and evenings during the week. Without being at all confined to a narrow range in the selection of topics, the following subjects, embracing Three Courses of Lectures, may be specified:

COURSE I.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. The Spiritual Element in all Religions. | 3. Philosophy of Inspiration. |
| 2. Relations of Science and Spiritualism. | 4. Natural Evidences of Immortality. |

COURSE II.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Ideas of Life. | 3. The Gallows Moloch. |
| 2. The Positive and Negative Man. | 4. The Gospel of Beauty. |

COURSE III.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. The Philosophy of Prophecy. | 3. Philosophy of Miracles. |
| 2. Sacred Symbols of the Ancients. | 4. The Rationale of Worship. |
| 5. Lunatics who have no Asylum. | |

A course of four or six Lectures may be made up by selections from all of the above, at the pleasure of the contracting parties.

In looking over the list of Lecturers employed in the Lyceum Courses, from year to year, one might be led to the conclusion that a few persons in this country perform all that labor by a sort of divine right or inheritance. It is time for Spiritualists who support such Lectures to see that they are themselves respected and properly represented in the selection of the Lecturers.

Address

S. B. BRITTAN,

Post Office Box 3806, New York.

THE FINE ARTS, HISTORIC AND IDEAL.

THE DAWNING LIGHT.

Birthplace of Modern Spiritualism.

Home of the Fox Family, Hydesville, N. Y.

Angel messengers, descending through rifted clouds in floods of celestial light, are most successfully linked and blended with historic scenery and associations.

The house and its surroundings of road, yard, the well and its oaken bucket, orchard, shade trees, and the Hyde farm-house against the hill in the distance, were correctly drawn and painted by our eminent artist, Joseph John. Through inspiration he united the ideal or spiritual with the real, rendering it an attractive and beautiful parlor ornament.

Suggestive twilight pervades the foreground of the picture, surrounding the house in beautiful lights and shades. A light for the wandering pilgrim shines from the windows of the room where spiritual telegraphy began to electrify the world with its "glad tidings of great joy." Luminous floods of morning light stream up from the cloud-mantled horizon, illuminating the floating clouds in gorgeous tints, then falling over the angel bands and the clouds beyond.

It was translated on steel, in a high style of art, by that distinguished artist, James W. Watts. In design and execution, it is an honor to American art.

A large circular containing a map of Hydesville, a diagram of the spirit house, a description of the picture, and other reading matter, is presented to each purchaser of the engraving. Price TWO DOLLARS.

THE ORPHANS' RESCUE.

AN ALLEGORICAL PICTURE.

It represents two children—a brother and sister—as little voyagers on the "River of Life," their boat in the foaming rapids, nearing the brink of a fearful cataract, shadowed by towering rocks and lighted by the setting sun, and the "Angels of Rescue," they who were their parents, hovering near with outstretched arms to save.

The work is not only touchingly beautiful and fascinating, but truly sublime. Painted by Joseph John, and engraved on steel, in excellent line and style, by J. A. J. Wilcox. The original painting, valued at fifteen hundred dollars, is on free exhibition at our publishing rooms, where all are invited to call and examine it and other paintings and engravings.

The inspiration of Professor John is radiant with the golden light of the nineteenth century; consequently, he paints angels without antiquarian and mythological wings.

Price of the engraving of 'The Orphans' Rescue,' TWO DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS (\$2.50), postage free.

Pictures sent by mail, postage free, securely rolled, warranted safely through to any Post-office in America.

Send all orders to

R. H. CURRAN & CO., Publishers,

28 SCHOOL ST., BOSTON, MASS.

RELIGION AND DEMOCRACY.

A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE

THE SOCIETY OF SPIRITUALISTS,

Assembled at ROBINSON HALL, New York,

OCTOBER 19TH, 1873.

BY S. B. BRITTAN, M.D.

There is something nobler than the Love of Liberty and Life ; it is the respect we all owe to Truth and Justice.—*Brittan.*



NEW YORK :
STANDARD SPIRITUAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION.
1873.