

# BANNER OF LIGHT.



VOL. XV.

{ \$3.00 PER YEAR. }  
In Advance.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, AUGUST 20, 1864.

{ SINGLE COPIES. }  
Eight Cents.

NO. 22.

For the Banner of Light.

## My Religion.

During my sojourn here in Virginia since the war began, while visiting among my friends and relatives, the subject of religion has often been the topic of conversation, in which my views have been pretty freely expressed. At times, I have reason to think, by bigotry they have been perverted. I differ, it is true, from the Orthodox of the day—my religious sentiments have not been lightly embraced as mere speculative opinion; but are the honest convictions of my mind, after careful and prayerful investigation, using as best I could, all the faculties God has bestowed, with simple, unalloyed aspiration for Truth, asking of him who said, "Seek, and ye shall find."

That I may be neither misunderstood or traduced, I leave this paper for the benefit of my children, in which I shall endeavor to set forth in clear and explicit terms what it is I do and what I do not believe, and "give a reason for the faith that is in me."

Truth is God's word, and a blessing to all; but error is a constant curse, whether spoken at the fireside or from the tattered pulpit. We never can be sure that our ideas are correct until we have examined them fairly, and scrutinized them without prejudice; otherwise we may be hugging a dangerous error to our bosoms, and casting the truth from us. There is nothing good that is false, and we should always be glad to exchange an error for a truth. Carlyle says, "To honestly believe a thing, we must first have disbelieved it." Yes, otherwise our judgment is partial and prejudiced, and we are apt to fall into the weakness of believing a thing because we like to, and not because we know it to be true. Many church members assent to the dogmas of their sect, and think they believe them, but between assent and belief there is a wide difference.

There was a time when I considered it wrong to investigate such a subject as this—when I thought that reason had no right to intermeddle with sacred things, and that every one did wrong who questioned God's Word, as I then regarded the whole of the Scriptures to be. That time is gone—gone. I argue with the proverb, "He that will not reason is a bigot; he that cannot is a fool; he that dare not is a slave." I have thought, read, investigated for myself. My practice has been for some years to cut from the papers whatever struck my attention, and also make copious extracts, cutting here and there wherever I found anything that accorded with my sentiments, and from a little book, the title of which is forgotten. The result of my investigation is before you.

The rough draft of this paper was completed on the 5th of August. The Sunday following (9th) was a happy day for me, for then was granted the great desire of my heart—then was the barrier thrown down which separated me from my unseen friends. I no longer require a medium to aid me in communing with them; for I myself am one, and can and do hold sweet converse with them.

Soon after I began to investigate the Divine Harmonical Philosophy in 1855, I hoped that I, too, might become a medium. I sat at the dial, off and on, for many hours, continued with short intermissions for several months; but all of no avail. I never could perceive the slightest motion of the table, and finally gave it up in despair—for the last six years or more I have not even made an effort.

Early in 1860, my spirit-friends endeavored to develop me for writing, and in some measure succeeded—a good deal was written through me, but I never could feel confidence in what came through my own hand, unless afterwards confirmed by the dial, or otherwise, through some other medium. I struggled against this want of faith, but in vain; and for this, perhaps, the gift was withdrawn after a few months' trial, and no influence has been since imparted.

While sitting at my desk reading, on the 6th of August, I felt impressed to take up the pencil. Instantly the well-known electric thrill rushed through my arm, my hand was shaken, and then a short sentence of not much import was written. Next day this was repeated, giving a page or more. I knew it was not from my own brain, because the phraseology was quite different from what I should have dictated.

Seeing they could so easily shake my hand, I requested them to confirm it by three distinct shakes, if it was indeed spirit-writing. Instantly the answer was given with a movement of two or three seconds between each motion. More writing followed, confirmed in the same way. It then occurred to me that possibly this might be the means of opening a channel of communication in which I could confide; accordingly I inquired if they could respond through the alphabet by shaking my hand. Yes. And immediately was given, "Get the dial—I will communicate. Nancy." Just the last thing I should have expected.

With a throbbing heart the dial was placed on the table. I sat for half an hour before I could perceive the least motion. Another half hour was spent in slow oscillations of the index. Then came: "It is difficult, father—be patient; we shall succeed."

This encouraged me. In a quarter of an hour more there came communications from my son Frank, and step-mother, clear and unmistakable! Overwhelmed with joy, with streaming tears, and a voice broken by sobs, I fell upon my knees and poured out my soul in gratitude to God for the great blessing just bestowed. Returning to the dial, it gave, "God has answered your prayer, for he is the hearer and answerer of prayer, and the rewarder of all who seek him."

Communications after this came freely from my spirit-friends. It seemed they were always in waiting, for the moment I took my seat the dial began to move. I inquired if they knew what had lately engaged my attention:

"Yes; you have been writing out your belief in religion. It is the strength of the Christian Faith."

I expressed a desire to read it out to them, and to have their opinion of it as I proceeded. To this they assented, and appointed 4 o'clock that afternoon for the meeting. At that hour I took my seat, and as I read along the dial moved, giving their comments, and concluded with:

"This is the word of God. Go on, my son; the angels are your ministers, who will record what you have written, and have it in remembrance when you are called from earth."

Who presided at the dial?

"Francis Hopkinson."

"Who else were present?"  
"Father, mother, Frank, Isabelle, Leigh" (my children), "two grandfathers, two grandmothers, Isaac."

The next day my son continued the list, and after giving fifty-eight names, some of them entire strangers, others known to me by reputation, but chiefly my friends and relatives. I remarked: "Why, you seem to have had quite a Congress."

"Half a thousand, father. They all approved of what you wrote; they thought it unanswerable. Take your stand on this platform, and naught can prevail against you. Delightful is the remembrance of the spirits as given."

I shall now resume my essay, and introduce the comments of the spirits as given.

The opinion of the Protestant churches is this: The Bible is a miraculous collection of miraculous books; every word it contains was written by a miraculous inspiration from God, which was so full, complete and infallible, that the authors delivered the truth, and nothing but the truth—that the Bible contains no false statements of fact or doctrine, but sets forth all religious and moral truth which man needs, and which it is possible for him to receive, and no particle of error; therefore, the Bible is the only authoritative rule of religious faith and practice. To doubt this is reckoned a dangerous error, if not an unpardonable sin. The Bible is master of the soul, superior to intellect, truer than conscience. It presupposes that each book within the lists of the Bible has an absolute right to be there, and each sentence and word therein is infallibly true.

Spirit.—"Believe nothing but what you can understand."

Now I ask, is the Bible "the inspired Word of God?" On the answer to this the whole argument depends. Let us look into its origin. When was the Bible formed? where? and by whom?

The Council of Nice, which assembled A. D. 325, under the command of the Emperor Constantine, is the pivot upon which all Ecclesiastical History turns. It was at this council of two thousand and four hundred bishops, who became so violent and vociferous, that for the Emperor's presence they would have engaged in battle. Constantine was obliged to expel one thousand seven hundred and thirty of them, and only three hundred and eighteen of them remained. Before them was produced a vast number of parchments, or pamphlets, comprising most of the religious writings of the day. From them was selected the present Bible, except "The Acts," not then discovered; also, James, Jude, and the "Revelations," which were rejected.

The Book of Tobit is in the apocrypha—that is, the Church may receive or reject as to them seems proper; but Eusebius, who was present, says it was rejected by three votes; consequently it lacked but three votes of being the inspired Word of God. But the decision of the Council did not settle the matter, for Dr. Lardner acknowledges that so late as A. D. 500 the Canon of the New Testament had not been settled, but Christian people were at liberty to judge for themselves concerning the genuineness of writings proposed to them as Apostolic, and to determine according to the evidence. Thus it continued until the Council of Toledo, A. D. 633, when the whole subject came up again for consideration. By them the rejected books were received and added to the Canon. Also, "The Acts," found A. D. 408, and thus was the Bible formed.

Now why were not those one thousand seven hundred and thirty discarded bishops who were qualified to decide which books were the "Word of God," as those who remained? It was no infallible judge who made the selection but the corrupt and licentious Constantine.

Thus it appears that what is and what is not the "Word of God," has been decided for us by three hundred and eighteen exasperated bishops, whose decision was afterwards revised and amended by another set of bishops, and given to us as an infallible rule of faith and practice.

Spirit.—"This is all true. The Bible is a collection of pamphlets, given to the world at different times by different writers, each one a revelation of spirit. Belief in them should be according to their respective merit, of which each must judge for himself."

I said, "You are doubtless aware that Church History has kept dark about the early Fathers and the Nicene Council. Have you obtained further information on the subject since you have been in the spirit-world?"

Spirit.—"We have. Your account, as given, is correct."

But the Bible itself makes no such pretension of infallible inspiration. It no where says that the sixty-six books of which it is composed are the "Word of God," and it does not say a powerful argument against its being so. David seems to have regarded the ten commandments as God's Word, but that is far from claiming the title for all the books. Paul indeed says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, &c.," but it should be known that the word "inspired" is in italics, showing that it is not in the original, but supplied by the translator. Scripture means writing, and as it now reads, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," then Homer and the Arabian Nights are inspired writings. What Paul appears to mean is this, "All Scripture given by inspiration is profitable, &c.," Let the Scriptures be tried by this rule, and it may well be asked what is there in the endless genealogies, or Solomon's Song, for instance, that is good for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and instruction? Does not this interpolation of the word "is" look very like a priestly fraud?

There are several theories of inspiration. The most common and Orthodox is, that God appointed men to write it, and breathed his spirit into them, so that they gave a faithful transcript of his will. Let us test this Book, and see whether it is in agreement with reason and the character we love to apply to the Divine Being, and to the Book of Nature.

The astronomy of the Bible differs widely from that of Nature. Genesis represents God as being employed for five days in making this little globe, and yet forming the universe of trillions of universes in one day! Six days spent by Omnipotence in forming and adorning this floating dew-drop; and an ocean of stars, one hundred millions seen by the naked eye, poured out in a breath, and dismissed in five words! "He made the stars also."

The same writer informs us there were three evenings and mornings before the sun was made "to divide the day from the night!" Light on the first day—the sun and moon on the fourth!

In Geology it teaches that God made the earth in six days about six thousand years ago; whereas Geology demonstrates that the earth has existed for millions of ages, and no geologist worthy of the name disputes it. Many attempts have been made to reconcile this, new explanations are being constantly made, and no two of them agree. One thinks the six days means six thousand years, for a thousand years is with the Lord as one day and one day as a thousand years; which also makes the Lord to have rested a thousand years!

Another pretends that every day was an indefinite period of time, embracing countless millions of years. Some think the six days were occupied in merely remodeling the earth—others, that it only applies to a limited portion, the Garden of Eden.

Spirit.—"The world is indeed millions of millions years old."

When and by whom were the books of the Bible written? These are questions still open to Biblical critics. I will briefly advert to some of the arguments relied on to show they could not have been written by their reputed authors.

1. The annals of Egypt record none of the Pharaohs recorded in Genesis and Exodus; and no history except the Bible and those taken from it celebrate the deeds ascribed to Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and others.

2. In Gen. xiv: 14, Abraham pursued his brother's captors unto Dan. No place called Dan existed until three hundred and thirty-one years after the death of Moses. In Judges xviii: 27, it is said the place was called Lais at first, and received the name of Dan after the death of Samson.

3. It is said in Gen. xxxv: 21, that Jacob spread his tent beyond the tower of Eder. Now the tower of Eder was over the gates of Jerusalem, and was not built until the reign of David, many years after the death of Moses.

4. In Gen. xxxv: 31, it is said, "And these are the kings which reigned in Edom before there reigned any king over the children of Israel."

No king reigned over Israel till eight hundred and sixty years after the death of Moses.

5. The book of Deuteronomy is made to record the death of Moses.

6. Joshua xiv: 31 is made to say, "And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua."

7. The phrase "unto this day" occurs five times in the book of Joshua, and shows that the author lived after the events which he is here happy to thus: "And Joshua burned the city, and made it a heap forever, a desolation unto this day."

"And Joshua . . . laid great stones in the cave's mouth, which remain unto this very day."

This expression means the lapse of a long, long time. It is supposed the book of Joshua was written after the establishment of the Jewish monarchy.

8. Between the first and last books rolls many centuries. All other languages have undergone great changes in much less time. In the English, for instance, the reader of Chaucer requires the aid of a glossary. But any one who can read Genesis can read any other book.

The Gospels, some of the Epistles and Revelations are supposed to have been written from forty to sixty years after the crucifixion, and except some of the Epistles—the authors unknown—that the chief inquiries and the collection of facts relative to the birth, life and death of Jesus were not made until many years after his death, and were transmitted more from hearsay than from actual knowledge, the art of writing being understood only by a very few.

But all this is considered of minor importance. It concerns us little by whom or at what time they were written. Here are the books handed down to us from remote antiquity, and believed for ages to be the inspired Word of God. Let us look into them.

If God has written a book to be the universal guide of man; to teach him what to do and what not to do; to deliver him from eternal death, and to lead him to everlasting bliss, we may reasonably expect that one part will perfectly agree with another, that the principles would be the same throughout, since God is the same in all ages, man's nature the same, and the laws of right eternally the same. But the principle of the earlier books is *halved*. The Old Testament teaches us to do our enemy all the harm we can, while the principle of the New Testament is *love*, and we are enjoined to love our enemy, and to do him good.

In the Old Testament we read, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, stripe for stripe;" but our Savior teaches us, "resist not evil; but whoso shall smite thee on the one cheek, turn to him the other also."

Joshua orders, "thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth;" and Joshua smote all the country, &c., and destroyed all that breathed, as the Lord God commanded."

The very opposite of this we read in the New Testament. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you. If thy enemy hunger, feed him."

A book written by the hand of God would show no contradictions. Turn to these passages: "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." And the Lord spake to Moses face to face, as he spake unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In the Old Testament we read, "For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God; therefore thine eye shall have no pity upon the nations which the Lord thy God giveth unto thee, but shall utterly consume them all." Holy people, indeed! If this be holiness, what is to tell how this holy people executed these instructions. "They utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both men and women, young and old, ass and sheep, with the edge of the sword." And in vili: 24-26, it says: "He drew out his hand unto him, and he utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai as the Lord God of Israel commanded."

Then we are told that for four hundred years God watched over and disciplined that portion of his children called Israelites, to wage the extremity of war against other portions of the great human family, all children of the same heavenly Father.

The story, as told in the Bible, is one of fearful horror. God, as it relates, had settled to destroy certain nations, and to give their country and wealth to another nation. Four hundred years before the deed was done, he is made to say that he must wait "all their iniquity is full." The Jews are led through various trials for four hundred years, till the Canaanites are wicked enough to be destroyed! Why not convert and not kill them?

Then by a series of most astounding events, such as the passage of a deep sea or river on dry land; of one million of people being sustained forty years in a desert without laboring for food or raiment, one suit of clothes lasting all the time; a flock of quails gathering round the camp of Israel, covering the surface of the earth over thirty miles in width all around the camp, and three and one-half feet deep, to furnish food for the people; the sun and moon standing still to enable these holy people to march to the slaughter of whole nations of God's children, which had never known or injured them. This God is said to have done, because he had sworn to Abraham that he would do it.

The great end of all this slaughter is said to have been to establish on earth the worship of one God, in opposition to Polytheism. Important as this may be, can it be supposed that to win men to the worship of one God, it was necessary to array his children one against another? Is this the way to root out error and establish truth? If living in darkness, could not the infinite wisdom and power of God have devised some way to enlighten them? But the Bible and all Christians would have us believe that the sword, dyed deep in the blood of millions, was the great argument to establish the doctrine and worship of God! So thought the Spaniards when they sacrificed mil-

pleasure in the death of him that dieth, because he hardened their hearts, to keep them from the state in which they might have been, and thus "destroyed." Scores of such self-contradictions can be shown, and no violation of the context.

Are they to be explained away by an ingenious and clerical reading of the text? Can it be said that these inconsistencies will not appear when the whole is read in its connections? Can they be expiated on the ground of garbled extracts and misrepresentations? Is it not fact opposed to fact, principle to principle? All assertion and denunciation regard as mere breath—it amounts to nothing. It is one thing to indulge ridicule, quite another to confute with argument.

Spirit.—"God is the same to-day and forever."

Turn to Deut. xli: 6-10. It is the natural, inalienable right of every one to judge for themselves of the character of God, and of the true and most acceptable form of worshipping him, and also to teach the same. Suppose my religious views differ from those of my family, my friends, and my neighbors, differ from the community and nation in which I live, and by Christendom generally. The object of their religious adoration is to me a demon of wrath, revenge and blood; and but for the fact that their conceptions of God could not wholly root out nor suppress in their hearts all kindly instinct and sympathy, all reverence for truth and humanity, all sentiments of justice, and all their theology had converted them into monsters of iniquity and cruelty. From a desire to save them from such dangerous views of God, I go to them and seek earnestly to win them to what I deem higher and truer views, and to a more practical and elevated worship. I am seized, and without regard to my sincerity and pure love, am stoned to death!

The idea that God will send a husband to a stone wife to death, a parent to kill a child, a child a parent, is monstrous. Human nature shudders at it. The human family is a unit, bound together by a common parentage, common natures, common destiny. The idea that the universal Father could have exacted this is simply horrible—the human soul recoils from it. It never was and never can be done, while man is man, and God is God. The Bible says he did, and gives certain evidence to prove it. I have no more respect for the proof than for the thing to be proved. I can believe nothing which militates against the noblest attributes of Deity. Both are opposed to the teachings of God in Nature. A wrong is a wrong, no matter who commands it.

Spirit.—"Death is the triumph of life, but God never sanctioned such barbarity."

Turn to Exodus xvii, Deut. xxv, I. Sam. xv. The Israelites attack the Amalekites, but are repulsed. Because of this it is said, "The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." Moses was commanded to record the injury done to them by Amalek, and their wrath and revenge kept alive till a suitable time arrived to gratify it. In I. Samuel is an account of the final extermination of the Amalekites, and the accomplishment of the long-nurtured revenge. Saul is sent by Samuel to do the deed; and the commission begins with the usual "thus saith the Lord God of Israel, and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have and spare them not, but slay both men and women, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass."

Some four hundred years had elapsed since the injury was done; now we are told God roused up in the Jews the spirit of revenge, and sends them out to slaughter men, women, children and sucklings, to punish those for wrongs done by their ancestors. Can it be believed that the God of Nature ever commanded a tribe of men to be exterminated because their ancestors centuries ago did wrong? What would be thought of vengeance inflicted upon the people of England because of something committed by their forefathers in the time of Edward IV? Can it be believed that the Father of Love commanded his children to do to their fellow-beings from age to age, and then, after ages had passed, instigate them to satiate their cherished revenge in the blood of infants? Yes, this is all asserted to us truth by Christendom, and I am denied the name of Christian because I do not and cannot believe it.

Spirit.—"God is a God of Love; that is a sufficient denial."

Turn to Deut. vii. Did the God of Nature write the laws of love and fraternity on the hearts of his children, and then forbid one portion to promote one enemy or enter into any agreement of friendship with another portion of them? The Bible says it did, and gives the following reason why he did it: "For thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God; therefore thine eye shall have no pity upon the nations which the Lord thy God giveth unto thee, but shall utterly consume them all." Holy people, indeed! If this be holiness, what is to tell how this holy people executed these instructions. "They utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both men and women, young and old, ass and sheep, with the edge of the sword." And in vili: 24-26, it says: "He drew out his hand unto him, and he utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai as the Lord God of Israel commanded."

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lions of innocent people in Mexico, to set up the cross. Who justifies this now?

And when silence hangs over except from their own records, that these Jews were "the chosen people of God?" Does any contemporary history even allude to such a claim? That they were corrupt to the last degree, we want no other proof than that afforded by themselves; nor have we any reason to believe that the nations whom they destroyed, with all their idolatry, were more wicked than themselves, in all the relations of life.

Spirit.—"The God of all the earth is a God of Justice."

In Judges xiv: 9, we are told that Samson, on the occasion of his marriage, put forth a riddle to thirty young men, and made a bot of thirty sheets and thirty garments, that they could not solve it. Through the connivance of his wife, they succeeded; and Samson, according to the account, inspired by the spirit of the Lord, murdered and robbed thirty men to obtain the means of paying his bet!

God is Love, the spirit of God is the spirit of Love. How, then, could Samson, under its influence, slay thirty innocent men? Suppose a man in the present day loses a bet, and to pay it, robs and murders the first person he meets on the highway, and when arrested, tells us that the spirit of God incited him to the act! Who could believe him? If sinful now, was it not so then? Thou shalt not kill—thou shalt not steal! was the law then as well as now.

In Judges xv: 14-20, we are told, "The spirit of the Lord came mightily upon Samson," and with the jaw-bone of an ass he slew a thousand men. Allow one minute to one man, there were then seventeen hours of slaughter!

And now the day declines—there stands Samson, and around the bodies of his thousand victims, stiff and ghastly. Exultingly he exclaims: "Heaps upon heaps with the jaw-bone of an ass have I slain a thousand men." His long continued labor made him thirsty, and he prayed. Prayed? Yes, prayed. To whom, Mars or Moloch? Is he a devil worshiper, about to offer his supplications to the God of Evil, who has assisted him in his fiendish work? No! he prays to the God of Mercy, Truth and Love—the Christian's God, who inspired Jesus to say, "Be ye merciful as your Father in heaven is merciful," and "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

But the story tells us, "God heard the prayer of Samson," and caused water to spring out of the gory jaw-bone to revive his strength!"

Spirit.—"All that is a fable, and not worthy of belief."

When I withhold my belief in these so-called miracles, I am told "all things are possible with God." True; that God can at will, control or modify nature, is unquestionable. I say, at will, for the question is of will not of power. It is not that the Deity cannot modify his laws, but that we insist him in imagining a possible necessity for modification. God's laws were fashioned to embrace all contingencies that could be in the future. With God, all is now.

An unchangeable God cannot work a miracle in the theological definition. He cannot produce an effect without an adequate cause, or an event above eternal law. God cannot contradict himself. He can will what he pleases, but he must will in accordance with the principles he has established. If he could be supposed to will a world to be oblong or square, gravity, one of his own principles, would pay no heed to it, but would round it just as it would a dew drop. We cannot suppose God to annul, alter or destroy his own perfect attributes.

The Israelites, at the command of God, through Moses, Num. xxxi: warred against the Midianites. All the male children and married women were ordered to be massacred, and the unmarried women to be given to the soldiers to be given to the soldiers. Thirty-two thousand maidens were thus distributed among them. How many men, women and children were butchered, the record does not show; and all done by the express command of God—"The Lord said unto Moses."

Pause—reflect on this order. "Kill every male among the little ones." The little ones all to be killed solely because they are males! and women and children were to be given to the soldiers to be given to the soldiers. Thirty-two thousand maidens were thus distributed among them. How many men, women and children were butchered, the record does not show; and all done by the express command of God—"The Lord said unto Moses."

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acted, committed under the pretended sanction of Jehovah. As likely would it be for the clouds to rain down fire, and burn up all vegetation, as that an all-loving Father should give his sanction to such iniquities.

**Spirit.**—We like that; knowledge is too well diffused for men to believe all that is in the Bible.

Turn to Exodus, xxxiii: which represents God as exceedingly angry, and saying: "Let me alone that I may consume them, and I will make of thee a great nation." But Moses is represented as remonstrating against such a wholesale slaughter; appeals to the Lord's ambition and vanity, and asks what the Egyptians will say of him if he does; tells him they will exit over him, etc. The Lord finally relents of the evil which he thought to do in killing the whole nation for that one act, sparing only Moses. But the Lord said, "Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp; and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor; and there fell that day three thousand men. By this sacrifice, the Lord's anger was appeased."

And is God angry with men, passionate, revengeful? Is he to be teased and exasperated by murder? Are we called on to believe this in the name of Christianity? It is true, there are men who profess to believe this to the letter—pious men, who find comfort therein, and count it part of their Christianity to believe it. Read the whole chapter, then contrast it with the idea, "God is Love," and reconcile the two if you can. It has been said with truth, "The Perfect Law is cast out fear." The converse is quite as true—fear casts out love. The superstitious man begins by fearing God, not loving him.

**Spirit.**—"We are pleased with every word." This God of terror, fear, hatred, revenge, belongs to the Jews; one which they fashioned for themselves after their own image. Now, turn to the teachings of the blessed Jesus and his disciples: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God, for God is Love. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

Look on that picture, then on this. Can two things be more essentially and eternally at war than are these two ideas of God? Yet we are told that both are true, and that we must learn to reconcile them.

Is it possible for human ingenuity to effect a compromise between the spirit that dictated the 100th Psalm, and that which dictated Luke vi:27-28? The spirit that controlled the Psalmist, led him to imprecate every conceivable curse and calamity upon his enemy, and upon his wife and children: "Let his days be few, and another take his office—let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow—let his children be continually vagabonds and beg—let them seek their bread, also, out of their desolate places—let the extortioner catch all that he hath, and let the stranger swallow up his labor. Let there be none to extend mercy unto him, neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children. Let his posterity be cut off, and in the generations following, let their name be blotted out. Let the iniquity of his father be remembered with the Lord, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out. Let them be before the Lord continually, that he may cut off the memory of them from the earth." And all this because his enemy had slandered him!

How different the spirit which influenced the heart of Jesus, which led him to say, "Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; bless them that curse you and despitefully use you and persecute you."

**Spirit.**—"This is the true religion."

The great evil of the doctrine that the Bible as a whole is to be received as a truth, is that it lays one under the constant mental effort to reconcile contradictions in morals; to prove that which is false now was just once; that which is wrong now was right once, and what is inherently opposed to the nature of God, was once in harmony with it.

The word of God should be pure. Coming from a God of purity and holiness to teach men to be pure and holy, there should be nothing in it to sully the mind, and thus beget in man, if the Bible had been God's book, and intended by him to be in the hands of all, he certainly would have made it fit for all to read. But many parts of the Bible are filthy, and unfit for the hands of young persons, and were they in any other book, a decent man would be ashamed for it to be seen in his house. How can that be the word of God which is too indecent to be read? what father would read out loud such parts to his daughters?

**Spirit.**—"That is a just criticism."

If God had written, or inspired men to write, a book which was to be man's guide to happiness and heaven, in all ages of the world, and of all time, is it not reasonable to expect that it would be filled with the most important truths, and that nothing would be found therein but what was of universal benefit? Now, all who have read the Bible with open eyes, know that a considerable portion of it is occupied with trifling matters of no importance to any one, and a great deal more is occupied with what might have been useful to the Jews, but do no good to the world. Look at the long and conflicting genealogies—the dreadful account of murder and rapine, and the numerous stories which can have no relation whatever to our well-being here or destiny hereafter.

What moral lesson is taught by telling us of David's intercourse with Bathsheba, and the Levites cutting up his concubine into twelve pieces, and distributing a piece to each of the twelve tribes? Of David's killing and mutilating two hundred Philistines, that he might marry Saul's daughter—of David's numerous adulteries, and of David's dying charge to Solomon to bring down the hoary head of old Shimei to the grave with blood, because Shimei had cursed him.

Of what use is it to us how the tabernacle was built—how many curtains were made for it, and what the length and breadth of them? Of what importance is it to us to know what kind of a dress Aaron wore—what the shoulder-pieces were composed of, and how it was fastened together? Such petty details might suit the cramped minds of a semi-barbarous people, but what world-wide use of beauty is there in them that they should be regarded by intelligent persons of the present day as divine oracles?

Who can believe that the God of Nature ever ordered a man to be decked out like a harlequin, in order that he might minister acceptably at his altar? Read the description of the breastplate, the ephod, the robe, the braided coat, the girdle, the mitre, and crown. Imagine a man decked out in all this gaudy show. Yet we are told that the quality, the cut, fashion, and trimming of the garments were all ordered by the "Being" who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and meted out heaven with the span, "whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain!"

**Spirit.**—"All this accords with our sentiments." Now let it be distinctly understood, once for all, that no one can entertain a profounder respect for the truths of the Bible than myself. Its moral teachings embraced in the golden rule, its sublime prophecies of good to come, and its eloquence challenge our deepest regard. But it does not follow that I am bound to accept the interpolations, puerilities and absurdities of the Rabbin, because they happen to be bound up within its lids along with much that is unquestionably true. I cannot believe that the waters of the Jordan ever stood in heaps like solid walls in the time of its flood, nor that the sun and moon stood still at the command of Joshua, or any other man. I cannot believe that in Noah's time a flood of water only twenty-seven and a half feet deep above the level of the sea, covered the Himalaya mountains, which are five miles high—fifteen cubits upwards did the waters prevail and the mountains were covered." A cubit is twenty-two inches.

I do not believe that the Egyptian magicians ever transformed rods into living serpents—that a whale's throat, no larger than a lion, ever swallowed a man—that the "Being" who brought down Egypt numbering 603,550 fighting men over twenty years of age, and to this we must add the old men, women and children to get the entire population. Those who have visited the plains where this vast host were said to have been, aver that by no possibility could every available spot of cultivable land in that whole region, from Suez to the Mediterranean, and from the Nile to the Gulf of Arabia, afford food enough in one year to support that number for a single week; while water for

such a host could have been had nowhere. I cannot believe that the Philistines slew of the Ephraimites, their brethren, 42,000 men—that the Benjaminites killed 40,000 men of Israel, nor that the latter retaliated, and killed 43,000 Benjaminites "all mighty men of valor"—that the Philistines slew of Israel 30,000 men—that the former had 20,000 chariots—that David slew 40,000 Syrian horsemen—that Pekah, king of Israel slew of Judah in one day 120,000 men, "all valiant and brave"—or that he carried away captive sons and daughters, women and fair maidens to the number of 200,000—that Abijah with 400,000 men went out to fight Jeroboam with 800,000, and beat him, leaving half a million Israelites dead on the field, to say nothing of his own losses, a carnage simply impossible. Waterloo's bloody field counted less than 5000 dead. Manassas, Richmond's seven days' fighting, Fredricksburg, Antietam, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, with their mighty hosts, backed by Parrot guns, shell, grape, and Minie bullets, rifles, muskets and revolving pistols, swords, carbines, heat and thirst, with all other dreadful engines, did not send half that number of souls to their long rest. How, then, is it possible to believe these Rabbinical stories?—and how can I believe that 12,000 Israelites slew all the males of an entire nation, the Midianites, and took captives all the little ones and women, without the loss of a man?

It is reasonable to suppose that if God had made or caused a book to be made that was to be a guide in the most important matters to young and old, learned and unlearned, that it would have been written in the plainest possible manner, with no ambiguity, that all might understand and obey. A book full of mysteries can benefit no one. But the Bible contains a great deal that the mass of people cannot understand, and not a little that no one can understand.

Take the Book of Revelations, for instance. Hundreds of persons have written comments upon it, and yet there is no agreement upon its meaning; a proof that it is anything but plain. One supposes that it is the history of the Christian Church to the end of the world; another, that it refers to the destruction of Jerusalem and the wars of the Romans. Protestants think that it points in the very plainest manner to the Roman Antichrist, and the final destruction of Popery; while the Catholics are equally certain that it refers to the Anti-Christ Luther, and the final destruction of Protestantism. The greatest portion of Ezekiel is a cloud of thick darkness that the mind's eye seeks in vain to penetrate; and the same may be said of Daniel. In fact, except the historical part of the Bible, a great proportion of it is dark and mysterious, and comparatively little of it plain and easy to be understood. Hence we have many contending sects and parties, each professing to make the Bible its guide and standard, yet all satisfied that the rest are wrong.

The Bible is so dark that it reflects the image of every sect professed to be based upon its teachings. The Methodist looks therein, and he sees the religious system of John Wesley. The Calvinist sees his partial, cruel God, and the everlasting damnation of all but the chosen few, etc., etc. The Universalist, the Unitarian, the Unitarian, in short, every one sees the image of his own belief, as in a mirror, and persuades himself that he alone is right. If the Bible were not obscure, there could not be this world-wide difference among honest, well-meaning men, as thousands of sectarians are.

Many think that the doctrine of the Trinity is contained in the writings of the Apostles, and history has marked its origin at a later period. The sentiments of the primitive Christians for the first three centuries were pretty uniform, but in the reign of Constantine a dispute arose between two bishops of Alexandria—Arius and Alexander—which soon spread into other Churches, inflaming bishop against bishop, and exciting the most deadly strife and hatred against each other. The controversy related to the character of Christ; one maintained the unity of God, while the other contended that the son was "consubstantial with the Father." Nothing was ever said of the "third person," that came in long after, nor was the word Trinity ever mentioned.

It was to settle this question that the Council of Nice was in fact assembled; the making of the Bible was a secondary consideration, and came up incidentally. The Council decided in favor of Alexander, and proceeded to draw up the "Nicene Creed," and to anathematize all who dared entertain a different opinion.

The Scriptures were then no longer the standard of the Christian faith; what was Orthodox and what Heterodox was to be determined by the decisions of Fathers and Councils, and enforced by imperial edicts and decrees. The new doctrine of the old was handed about from council to council, first the one and then the other being in the ascendant. Now the Orthodox are deposed, the Arians substituted in their places, with the murder of thousands, the new bishops introduced into their churches by armed soldiers, and when once in possession they treated those who differed from them without mercy. Then again the Synod of A. D. 375, after two months' consultation, decreed that "the Son of God being like the Father or to his essence, to be the true Orthodox faith, and deposed all the bishops of the Arian party. This highly exasperated the Emperor Valens, who convened a Council of Arian bishops, transferring their churches to their opponents.

In the year 378, Gratian, of the Orthodox party, ascended the throne. He recalled those that had been banished, and drove the Arians like wild beasts out of their churches.

In 383 the Second General Council was assembled at Constantinople, "in order to confirm the Nicene faith." Here, then, is the origin and progress of the doctrine of the Trinity. During all this time the controversy was confined to "the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son," several centuries rolled on before the personality of the Holy Spirit was broached, nor was the dispute finally settled until the Council of Trent in 1562 fixed the doctrine of "three in one and one in three" upon the Christian Church.

[CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK.]

For the Banner of Light.

LINE'S.

THROUGH MRS. CARRIE V. McLELLAN—WASHINGTON, D. C.

The earth was shaken with terrific thunder  
That sounded far and wide,  
And shed o'er Washington's great city  
A pall of warfare's tide.

The cannon told its fearful story,  
As loudly booming, its shot it sped,  
Marking with a desolation gory  
Its pathway o'er the early dead.

Soldiers with earnest looks and mien  
Went forth from out their earthly screen,  
And bade defiance to the band  
That would pollute a nation's land.

Man takes his course, and vengeance falls  
With fearful force. Lo! rise the dead,  
That waken from their bloody bed,  
On the bright spirit's happy shore.

There, lost in wonder, joy, and peace,  
Each mortal feels immortal life,  
And greets once more familiar face.

Still voices fall from spirit-land,  
To every patriot on every hand,  
"Your country cries—it begs—it bleeds  
For Justice, aye, for honest deeds!

Oh, will ye let it die indeed,  
For want of truth, in want of good  
Merely, for politicians' food?

Al! not remember the early fathers stood  
With planted foot, uplifted hand,  
Upon a glorious, free-born land;  
And now with eyes and ears more clear,  
Mark a nation's action on earth's sphere.

Oh, listen ere it be too late!  
A people's pride and boast should be  
Justice and Truth and Purity."  
Ah! loud and fearful is the storm  
That's gathering round the quiet home!  
For vengeance treads with awful feet  
The Nation's path—and small and great  
Must feel the force of heavenly fate,  
Till Truth is come, and Justice done  
In all the land of Washington.

Written for the Banner of Light.

## A PLEA FOR THE TEMPTED.

BY MARY ANN WHITAKER.

"But go ye, and learn what that meaneth;  
I will have mercy, and not sacrifice."

Swift rolling centuries have passed since He,  
The holy one, in whom was found no guile,  
Dare men, self-righteous, solve the mystery  
Of those strange words, nor the weak heart re-  
vile.

When striving 'gainst the fierce and angry sweep  
Of dark Temptation's waters, as they rise,  
And onward rush across the nightly deep  
Of life, o'erwhelming all its sympathies;  
And yet our hands we coldly, proudly wave,  
Unlike His hand stretched forth to sink the soul  
to save.

Man scorns his fallen brother, even now,  
Though Christ's pure teachings echo through  
the land.

He stands erect, with stern and haughty brow,  
The strictest retribution to demand;  
And the poor sinner, trampled in the dust,  
Bears to his grave the footprints of disdain;  
He looks around, but finds no place of trust  
Where he may rest, in hope to rise again.  
Relentless glances freeze the blessed tears,  
Which angels consecrate, and penitence endears.

Shame on the coward Pharisees that spurn  
The trembling, erring child of grief and sin,  
Who longs, yet fears to speak of thoughts which  
burn.

On the stained altar, once so fair, within  
That glorious temple of humanity,  
Now desecrated, yet not ruined all;  
Oh! Love's restoring power, so strong and free,  
Alone can answer the wild spirit-calls,  
And by a thrilling music of its own,  
Change every burning thought to sorrow's gen-  
tlest tones.

Where, where are they, the champions of our  
faith,

Whose bosoms throb with impulses divine?  
Headless of all that worldly wisdom saith  
In Reason's name, they wait not to define  
The complicated causes that have led  
Foul human beings down the rocky steep  
Of Error, with a rapid, whirling tread,  
Till, dizzy and affrighted, they would leap  
Into the dark abyss of woe; but there,  
Even there God's servants haste to save them from  
despair.

On wings of love they fly, and fondly clasp  
The drooping form so sullied and debased;  
No worldly's taunt can loosen their firm clasp,  
Which close, and closer grows, till hopes en-  
cased.

By iron prejudice once more are free;  
That casket slivers at Compassion's touch,  
And the warm sunlight of the life to be  
Renews the softening heart, though overmuch  
It sinned. Who knows how long such hearts  
have striven,  
Bruised, crushed, unaided, lone, by vain men un-  
forgotten?

Hopeful, we turn our yearning gaze around  
This busy, moving scene of mortal strife,  
Believing Christian heroes may be found,  
Steadfast and pure, to lead us on where life  
Immortal flows from the Eternal source,  
Transparent, pure, bursting the icy chains,  
Designed by rigid formalists to force  
The free-born mind to own their ruthless claims.  
Alas! how few stand true to Liberty,  
That glorious heritage of humanity!

Rise, soldiers of the Cross! your leader lives!  
Lift your glad eyes to yonder home of peace,  
Whence he surveys the struggling world, and  
gives.

New power to wield the weapons of release—  
Rise, in the strength of Him whose name ye bear,  
Fight the good fight of faith for all who mourn,  
Victims of sin, oppressed by wrong and care,  
Down-trodden by the world, despised, forlorn—  
Upl! rest not till the victory be won!  
Till Christ triumphant reign, till His great work  
be done!

St. Louis, Mo., 1864.

## Correspondence.

### Practical Spirituality—An Appeal for the Suffering Unionists.

There was a time when every moral impulse which filled a conscious nature with inward satisfaction was regarded as the Holy Spirit, so that Christianity came down to us baptized in its very essence with the idea of spirit influence. Too vague and mythical are all the expressions of religious literature for the metaphysician, who would base the laws of mind upon a natural and firm basis, with its superstructure symmetrical and beautiful, the handiwork of a divine artist, who had studied the sculptured souls of all creation, and imaged forth in man the omnipresent principle of intelligence in its perfection. For want of a true appreciation of divine or perfect harmony, we have fed, like the prodigal, upon the husks, and now the present age of reason and free thought calls aloud for the fatted calf to be slain, and the great family of mankind to be gathered together for a feast of rejoicing that our erring brothers are still with us, and not cast out of the humanitarian church, or the brotherhood of God, to wander alone with the passionate and selfish swine, and partake of their unsatisfying food, haggard and pale for want of a full and generous diet. The day when devils and diseased conditions were synonymous is being revived, with the latter as the most prominent idea instead of the former, and preachers of the sublime truths of love and humanity are quite willing that many theological notions which have hung as dead weights about Christianity should lie submerged beneath a rational religion, which has for its object the cultivation of the moral nature. That cultivation is founded upon a recognition of a germ of divinity implanted within every human mind, and by right of its divine origin and nature is yet to stand forth in its growth of freedom, an emancipated deity, that shall with one hand forge into plowshares and pruning-hooks the shackles that once bound its limbs, and with the other grasp the sword that determines the destinies of Empires and States, and say, "Peace, be still!" Then the passionate elements shall listen to the song that comes through all of Nature's harmonies, written in glowing letters, and vocal to the enraptured ear, "Peace on earth and good will to man."

The descent of the holy principle which rules and governs the universe was not more marked at Pentecost than it is to-day, when the language of Nature is so recognized that every man can hear and see in his own native tongue the words of humanity uttered and written on the bulletin, as telegraphic dispatches that come from the internal battery wherein is generated every motive and impulse. It is the day prophesied of when "the watchman should see eye to eye, and know-

edge should increase." He who lives true to himself, whose aspirations are for divine growth, will receive those inspirations which will link him to all the magnetic centres from which are radiated divine intelligence, and he may be said to be in rapport with Deity, and a most perfect image of Deity himself. But as the shell is often more conspicuous than its contents, and must be necessarily sacrificed in the perfection and growth of the germ, so the old forms, the old theologies, must decay in the incubation and birth of higher conditions.

The dawning light of to-day reveals where we have slumbered in the night of the past. Real practical benevolence is the watchword of souls standing at the threshold of heaven, and they who, infatuated by passion and selfishness, are wandering by the moonbeam's misty light to seek some easy couch or rose-scented bower of repose, and cling to the drapery of mysterious marvellousness, selling the gift of God for pieces of silver, will, like Judas of old, blindly fall from the rugged heights of sublime grandeur where they have stood in the presence of Deity of old, they betray him with a kiss into the hands of those who would cast lots for the spotless robe of purity, and place thorns upon the head of the just, till drops of grief and bloody sweat trickle down the face, and cruel thrusts bring forth the exclamation, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Ye upon whose vision has burst the floodgate of everlasting light, proclaiming freedom and deliverance from the thralldom of the past, why stand ye at the giddy shrine of pleasure, idly intoxicated with your petty schemes for happiness and a name, in the worship of idols you have carved with your own hands, while the cry of the mourner is heard in the land and the wretched souls ye have starved are crying to you for light, and seeking at your hands sympathy, encouragement, and aid?

The great battle between Gog and Magog is being fought. Hundreds of thousands of sufferers are martyrs, by loss of everything that life holds dear for the cause of freedom. The freed, themselves, fly in destitution together, only to suffer from fear of those who hunt, shoot and rob them, to whom they are indebted for property and wealth. They stand dying upon the shores of the great Father of Waters for want of food and clothing and knowledge. Family after family of white and black refugees, in the most squalid wretchedness and poverty, are coming to these shores for protection. Are those who ignore the Church for want of pure benevolence, who assume to contend for the weightier matters of the law, justice, temperance and mercy to be without commissions for their aid? Is it necessary that Spiritualists become organized into a body before they can send men and women, money, food and clothing to the suffering? If so, then in the name of humanity, be ye organized; if not, let it no longer be said to you, "By your fruits shall ye know them," that while "Christian Commissions" and "Sanitary Commissions" of every other name abound, that nowhere are the Spiritualists represented in the great work of humanity and benevolence. While they are rich and influential, ready for every good word and work, they have nowhere agents, or teachers, or commissions to give dignity to the great cause of social and political progress by occupying the field of usefulness and labor, upon principles corresponding with the liberality and charity which they hold forth, unfinanced, as not many societies are, like their representatives, by the bigoted and sectarian lines which they draw for the guidance of their charities. Hence the popular soldier, who is paid by Government and furnished by Government with liberal rations and food when well or sick, is the almoner of popular commissions, while the poor, and ignorant, and suffering die in sight of well-stored buildings for a more fortunate, but none the less deserving class.

To-day I met a woman living in a wretched hut with eight of her children, several grandchildren, and others, who says she has had nineteen children, five of whom are in the Union army, six are dead, and eight are with her, with nothing but the cold ground for a bed, suffering from disease and inclemency of weather. As I went from the wretched dwelling to another where were congregated women and children in the same condition, another said, "I have five sons in the army, fighting for freedom." And yet she, like thousands of others who have borne and raised up defenders of our country's honor, the martyrs for freedom in a darker hue, are gathered together in camps, women and children, whose husbands, fathers and sons are conscripted. In their closely crowded huts, rudely built, you will find an old woman learning her letters, with her children, half naked, around the blazing fire, terrified at the thought of guerrillas or rebel soldiers, who treat them without mercy.

Is there not work here for practical Spiritualists and philanthropists? and is it not consistent with the position by which you wish to contraindistinguish yourselves from others? There is a fascination in words fitly spoken, come they from intelligences in the form or out, but there is a more sublime significance in deeds that dry the tears of anguish, that warm the freezing heart, desolate and weary with want and suffering and pain.

Are the millions of Spiritualists, whose very name links them to the most benevolent and pure that ever trod the earth, who went about doing good, feeding the hungry and staying the tide of misery, the teacher and saviour of his age, who spoke the parable that illustrated the spirituality of the kingdom of heaven in these words, "I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was naked, and ye clothed me; I was in prison, and ye visited me," to stand idle amid scenes like these?

Is the kingdom of heaven, of spirituality, to degenerate, its light be hidden under the bushel of selfishness, and its only landmarks through the land be its arcades of selfish and passionate pleasure, its mercenary psychometrists, its fortune-tellers, its clairvoyants, its showmen? Is all the mediumship of the land to be sacrificed upon the altar of Mammon—a trade by the side of jugglers, advertised and made the capital stock of a lucrative employment?

If not, then in the name of the angels of mercy—who would be glad to use the humblest agency for good—take a position in your country's misfortune worthy your numbers, your intelligence, and your noblest aspirations. Such a work is necessary for your vitality and permanence; for want of it your conventions and gatherings are overrun with speculative theorists and monomaniacal hobbyists, from whose visionary harangues arise contentious bickerings and animosities that endanger your future influence and usefulness. The intellectual mind wants work; the moral as well, or its efforts will become abortive, and diseased from misdirection, become sickly and weak, the prey of idle passions or ambitious motives, till the otherwise nobler nature is wrecked on the shoals of deceit. Let the spirituality of Spiritualism but be the watchword; purity and benevolent action be inscribed upon its banners, then would it go forth, and its leaves would be for the healing of the nations. The darkest caverns of misery and want would be illuminated by its rays, and

no power could stay its onward progress. It would cause the desert to blossom like the rose, and bring the blest of the spirit-world into rapport with the generous souls of this, till love, goodwill, kindness and harmony would drown the spirit of passion and hate.

J. DWIGHT STILLMAN,  
A. A. Surgeon, U. S. A., Columbus, Ky.

### Overland Sketches.—No. 2.

DEAR BANNER—Again from the land of sunset I greet you and your many readers with a few brief sketches. We are now encamped for a few days to recruit our teams, upon a beautiful stream on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains, sixty miles from Salt Lake City.

While ascending the mountains, for many days before we reached Ft. Laramie, we saw Laramie Peak, whose snow-capped summit, high reared amid the clouds, seemed almost to join the shadow-land with ours. The scenery along our road is beautiful, ay, even grand, and defies my poor powers of description. Yet its grandeur does not come up to my expectations. Instead of passing through deep defiles and rugged gorges, with craggy cliffs towering mountain-high on either side, as I had supposed, our pathway has been smooth and almost unbroken over the top of the Rocky Mountains. The chief objects of interest along our journey on the eastern slope of the mountains, were the rocky bluff on either side of the Platte and Sweetwater rivers. These bluffs are not high, but old father Time, with his chisels of wind and storm, has beautifully carved their perpendicular sides into fanciful and grotesque shapes, making them resemble ancient castles, towers, and fortifications.

The Devil's Gate is composed of granite rocks forming a solid wall over four hundred feet high, on either side of the Sweetwater, a beautiful stream, whose surface seemed like a polished mirror, reflecting the perpendicular walls and the blue sky above, until the beholder fancies he has found a gateway to a beautiful world below. Inscribed high upon the walls of this gate are the names of hundreds who have passed on to the land of gold. Why this should be called the Devil's Gate I cannot tell; it seemed to me more like an entrance to paradise.

As we neared the South Pass, the lofty, snow-capped peaks of the Wind River Mountains presented a cold but beautiful contrast to the scenery we had left behind, yet one-half of their grandeur was lost to the beholder, for he cannot see them until he has more than half way ascended to their summit. Our descent down the western slope of the mountain, for nearly two hundred miles, is the same smooth and almost unbroken roadway which characterized that of the eastern slope. The surrounding scenery, however, is changed, for upon three sides of us are high mountains, whose snowy summits are lost amid the clouds—the Wind River on the northeast, the Bear on the west, and the Uintah on the south. Nestled upon a little stream which winds its way through the latter into the Great Salt Lake, is our present encampment. Close by, and on either side of us, these mountains rear their snowy heads. One of our party has just returned with a full pall of snow gathered from the top of the nearest. It was certainly a rarity for midsummer.

Our journey thus far has been a very pleasant one, the weather fair, and in the mountains quite cool. We have encountered but one storm since we left Iowa, and that was more terrific than I thought it possible for me to behold. The clouds commenced gathering about noon, and as they drew near they grew dense and still more dense, until it seemed as if one-half the sky was veiled in midnight darkness. And thus it continued to gather the blackened clouds of heaven, as if preparing for the mighty combat. We halted, pitched our tents, and prepared for the worst. About dark the storm broke forth in thunder peals above our heads, and the lightning danced in mystic majesty, lighting up the dense darkness, not at intervals as I had seen it in the States, for there was no cessation until nearly day-break. The rain fell as is usual in thunder storms, but the whole heaven of blackened clouds seemed condensed to water, and fell in one vast sheet, submerging the land surrounding our encampment in about eight inches of water; but the morning dawned again as calm, and the sun looked forth as if forgetful of the stormy past, and we passed on our way rejoicing.

We have passed hundreds of men and women, mostly with ox teams, bound for Idaho, California, Nevada, and Oregon. Nearly all exhibit happy, smiling faces as they greet us with, "Where are you from? whither are you bound?"

Although we have traveled hundreds of miles without seeing a human habitation save that of the red man, yet we have been in the constant society of numerous friends and familiar faces; not only have those of this sphere contributed to our happiness by their presence along our tedious journey, but the immortal ones from the summer-land have also been with us. Especially have they allayed our fears in regard to Indian depredations, which the emigrant is sure to hear have been perpetrated a little ways ahead. Through Mrs. Mary E. Beach—who with her husband and only daughter, like myself, are seeking on the shores of the Pacific the boon of health which they lost in the East—a fine test and speaking medium, come the denizens of the summer-land.

One evening after arriving at our camping ground, tired and weary with our day's travel, four red men of the mountains rode up and dismounted from their ponies. One aged man, claiming to be a chief, presented us with a paper, written by some officer at Ft. Laramie, saying that he was a chief, friendly, and worthy to be treated as a brother. And as brothers we greeted them; gave them a place at our table, which was upon the green carpet Mother Nature had spread so beautifully around us. After finishing our meal and while trying to make them understand us, Mrs. Beach was controlled by one of their tribe—a Sioux brave. She raised her hands and head as if in prayer. The old chief bowed his head and wept, saying, "That is good, that is good." She then talked to him of the beautiful hunting-ground the Great Spirit had prepared for his red children beyond the river of death—of his own loved children who had passed before him. They then entered into conversation, he asking and she answering questions. Although we could not understand them, yet it was interesting to see with what intense eagerness those red men listened to catch each word as it fell from the medium's lip.

The old chief who could speak a little English, said she talked to him in his own proper dialect. This was a good test for the few skeptics in our company. To us it was a holy communion with the inhabitants of the spirit-world.

They left us pleased and happy, telling us that the Great Spirit would bless us—that we were good pale-faces, and that they loved us—that we need have no fears of the Indians on our journey. Oh! how much better it would be to treat the Indians according to father Beeson's plan than according to that of our Christian civilization!

Mrs. Beach has talked with three different nations of Indians, all understanding her as well as



one of their own brethren; yet she, in her normal state, knows no other tongue than the English. We have passed several new graves, with headboards informing us that the occupants were killed by Indians. Yet we have never been treated better by white men than by these same Indians, and we have found upon inquiry that where Indian depredations have been committed, that the white man has been the aggressor.

Before leaving the subject of the Indians I will describe a Sioux grave—if it could be called a grave. It consisted of four posts driven into the ground. At the height of about ten feet is stretched the skin of a buffalo. The dead Indian was placed upon the skin shrouded in his blankets and buffalo robe, his gun and hatchet and bow and arrow placed beside him. Beneath his airy bed his brethren had killed and placed his favorite pony, believing that in the beautiful hunting-ground beyond the river of death he could use all that they had given him.

Since writing the above we have arrived at Great Salt Lake City. But of this city and this beautiful valley, and of its inhabitants, the length of this letter admonishes me to defer speaking until some future time.

Yours for the right, Mrs. C. M. STOWE.  
Chalk Creek, Utah Ter., July 14, 1864.

#### Letter from New Orleans.

In the midst of "wars and rumors of wars," the peaceful folds of the dear BANNER OF LIGHT, with its "glad tidings of great joy," come down to me with their heavenly treasures, breathing of peace, and love, and harmony, and a heaven near to us, and everything so good and true, what wonder that I hail with eager, thankful heart, the medium of enfranchised spirits—some from the flesh, others from mental and religious thralldom?

When the eyes grow weary of beholding the ceaseless accumulations of War's horrible paraphernalia, and the soul sickens and revolts at the narration and realization of this terrible sanguinary conflict that absorbs all else with its exciting intensity, then it is that the contemplation of a page containing communications from spirits dear to us in this and spirit-life also, fills the soul with joy unspeakable, and brings us nearer to the fact, that despite all the conflict and strife between the inhabitants of earth, those in spirit-life and those in this "lower sphere" are certainly drawing nearer each other, and approximating toward a loving union of the two worlds. May God vouchsafe to us, through the instrumentalities of his "ministering spirits," as full a union of love and confidence between man and his brother man, as between mortals and spirits.

It is impossible, dear BANNER, for me to write you anything about Spiritualism and its believers (if it has any in New Orleans), for I have not seen a single Spiritualist since I came South, excepting those from the North, who are with the Army, of whom there are a large number, I am told, including several officers of high rank. There may be Spiritualists amongst the citizens here, but being a "Yankee," and knowing how obnoxious everything that savors of Yankeeism is to the Crooles (the name here for everything native to the city or State), I have taken pains to do as they have desired of "Father Abram," "Let them alone."

Since favorable conditions are requisite to a spiritual state of mind, I doubt not my communication will be full of the doings of this world. As I write, everything breathes of the "earth earthy," excepting the BANNER on the table where I write. The steady, measured tread of the patrol guard rings out from the sun-heated sidewalk, and the deep rumbling of wheels told of artillery dragging their murderous weapons of war to and from various barracks in and about the city. Near me, on one hand, a massive pile of brick and mortar rears aloft its dark form, and from many a quaint, venerable looking gable rises a huge cross (typical of the God therein worshipped), which answers as an unmistakable label, and says, "Cathedral."

On the other, looms up a less imposing piece of architecture of the same material, indicated to be "Parish Prison" by a troop of hard-visaged mortals, who find their way thither every morning from the numerous courts of justice. The most noxious plants and poisonous vegetation grow rankest in the shade. Thus, the temples reared by man shut out the sunlight of God, and crime and sin flourish as a result.

New Orleans may not be a worse city than any other, but I think one can truly say there are as many causes breeding before the various Police, Provost, and other Courts each week, as there are church-communicants on the Sabbath in this temple of worship, numerous though they be.

There is an opinion that poverty produces more crime than any other cause. If so, New Orleans has plenty of material on hand, or will have anon. The prices that prevail here for the common necessities of life, make it nearly impossible for people to live who have a very small income.

Walking through the Market of a morning, inquire, "How much apiece for those chickens?" (half grown.) "\$1.50, madam." Look dissatisfied with the price, and you are assured they are "Creole chickens, madam." As though the information would silence all objections!

"How much apiece for those peaches?"

"Forty cents—Creole peaches, madam"—the invariable clichee resorted to when a word or a look evidences a difference of opinion as regards value.

"How much, per dozen are your oranges?"

"Three dollars—fine oranges, madam."

"So they should be;" and remembering how much better I had bought for thirty cents per dozen in Boston, make no purchase. Strawberries, in their season, sold for one dollar and fifty cents per box, which would be considered dear at ten cents in Boston. Fruit is a necessity in this climate, and where it grows so abundantly, almost spontaneously, one would expect to pay at least fifty per cent. less than at the North; but "Creole" is equivalent to *Rebel* (in the opinion of one Yankee, at least), and the fruit-vendors, &c., seem determined to try and maintain the exorbitant prices that ruled under the "reign" of Jeff Davis, when gold sold at \$12.50 instead of \$2.50. And so long as the authorities do not interfere, they are successful to a great degree.

This is one of the richest States on the continent, the resources of which have never yet been developed. The "upass" Slavery, blighted all the enterprise that has ever been introduced here, and thousands of acres of land are waiting for Democracy to supercede Aristocracy, to make glad the hearts of hundreds of homeless men and women, who need but meagre capital, if possessed of much energy, to make this desert waste of uncultivated land blossom like the rose. A shrewd Yankee farmer would hardly credit his own senses, if he were to see the implements used here for tilling the soil (they are three hundred years behind New England), and the rich reward which comes of their poorly executed labor.

Think of the prolific productions of this country under its farmers and present management, and ask, "What may we not expect when the old shall give place to the new?" Let there be a

interpenetration of Creole capital and Yankee enterprise half as many years as there has been of Anglo-Saxon and African blood in this country, and the wealth of the State would be increased an hundred fold, ay, a thousand.

The health of this climate cannot be disputed, since the "Yankees" have demonstrated to a certainty that "cleanliness is next to Godliness," and notwithstanding the numerous predictions (accompanied with prayers that it might be so) of the rebels, that yellow fever would soon make way with the contemptible "Yankees," we find that Yankee prudence and cleanliness have as fully non-plussed "Yellow Jack," as rebel wisecracks and prophecies have been disappointed. Two months of summer are gone, and the city and parish are both remarkably healthy. Thanks to the vigilance of such able Post Commanders as Generals Butler and Banks.

The announcement of the Grand National Convention at Chicago, fills me with a longing desire to be with the many noble and true hearts that will meet there. My heart responds to the call, and if impossible to be there in *propria persona*, I shall be in spirit, and hope to be remembered as one still true to the faith.

Thine for Truth and the Right,  
LAURA DEFORCE GORDON.  
New Orleans, La., July 30, 1864.

For the Banner of Light.

#### LINES.

WRITTEN AT THE GRAVE OF A YOUNG FRIEND.

BY JOYCE JOYCELIN.

Tread lightly, speak gently,  
For here 'neath the shade  
Of the cypress and myrtle,  
Sweet Elsie is laid.  
Where the fragrant sweetbriar,  
And the jessamines climb,  
And the wild flowers blossom  
To the brook's mellow chime;  
In the vale of her birth,  
Just in life's summer morn,  
Perished Elsie; oh, Elsie!  
Thou hast left us forlorn.

So graceful thy beauty,  
So guileless thy truth—  
Oh! why hast thou fallen  
In the spring of thy youth?  
Fair rose of our valley,  
Like the roses of June,  
Though withered, they still yield  
A fragrant perfume;  
So thy beauty still liveth—  
In our inner heart glows,  
And a hallowed sweetness  
O'er our memory throws.

When the spring-birds were joyous,  
And hill-sides were green,  
And the maye-buds crimson,  
And mignonette seen,  
Her step was as light  
As the nimble gazelle's,  
And as blithe was her song  
As the glad marriage bells,  
Till death, cruel death—  
Without warning came he,  
In the bloom of her youth  
Struck down lovely Elsie.

Then tread lightly, speak softly,  
For here 'neath the shade  
Of the cypress and myrtle,  
Her grave we have made;  
Long the murmuring brooklet  
Where the violets bloom,  
In the spot that she loved,  
We have made her a tomb;  
And though tears wet the grass  
Of her grave 'neath the tree,  
Yet we know a bright angel  
Art thou, lovely Elsie.

### Spiritual Phenomena.

#### A Remarkable Manifestation of Spirit Power in the Fine Arts.

In a former communication I gave an account of the portrait of a child with her guardian angel, painted by an old gentleman of this city, in vision, through spirit-power. I have now to give an account of a similar manifestation, which, to my surprise, comes much nearer home to me.

My wife, who is a medium of varied powers, on seeing the portrait above alluded to, expressed in the hearing of the artist medium, that she would like of all things, to possess a portrait of our daughter, who departed this world some eighteen years ago, when she had only passed ten months in this earthly existence. After giving this expression to her desire, we thought no more of the matter. Two or three weeks subsequently, our artist friend told my wife that he desired her to come to his residence—that he had something of exceeding interest to show her. So soon as opportunity presented, my wife went to the residence of the medium artist, and to her amazement, was shown a life-size portrait of a young woman of nineteen years of age, whom she readily recognized as our daughter. Of course my wife told me of the wonder, and as soon as convenient, we went together to see the picture.

On looking at the portrait, I was more than surprised. Without saying a word I gazed upon it for full a quarter of an hour. There were half-a-dozen ladies present at the time, and they were anxiously awaiting some expression from me.

"Mr. Starr," addressing the medium artist, "I sincerely trust that picture is a portrait of my daughter as she now is in the spirit-world." Mr. Starr replied:

"It is a portrait, as much as the gross material of paint and brush, in my hands through spirit-power, could make it."

I asked how it was painted, and Mr. Starr proceeded to explain: That soon after he heard the wish expressed by my wife to have a picture of our daughter, he was deeply impressed to execute a portrait; and some days thereafter he was absolutely impelled to take paint, brush and canvas, and go to work; and when about to begin, with all materials collected together, a most beautiful vision presented itself, of a young woman; and then, with that vision before him, to work he was impelled to go, his hand, in the execution of the picture, being guided by spirit-power. He exercised no volition about it, his hand and brain and eyes seemed to be possessed by another. He did no brain work; he exercised no intellect in the production of the picture, but was merely an instrument with all material prepared in the hands of a higher power.

"But, oh," says Mr. Starr, "if you could only have seen that young spirit woman, as I saw her. To say that that picture represents truly what I saw in vision, would be a gross outrage; what I saw was spirit-form, feature and lineament; that picture is of the earth earthy."

He then went on to describe his vision, and I

must confess, his description was far superior to the picture.

"But nevertheless," concluded Mr. Starr, "that picture is as good a representation of what I saw in vision, as paint, brush and canvas could make it."

And now to the picture itself. It is that of a young woman, apparently about nineteen years of age—the age that our daughter would have been had she survived upon earth. She holds in her left hand beautiful flowers of the "Forget-me-not," and with her right hand and index finger, her arm across her bosom, she points to them, as if she were reminding us to forget her not. She is of blonde complexion, golden hair in ringlets, blue eyes, and full face, with singularly regular features, all of which were the eminent characteristics of our child. But a peculiar characteristic is that of a pouting under-lip which belonged to our child. She looks more like my wife than myself, yet there is a combination of the likenesses of both my wife and myself in the picture, and this every one who has seen the picture has observed, and think it remarkable. The dress is of a beautiful azure color, and covered over the shoulders with a mantle of lace of most exquisite workmanship. This lace painting is truly skillful. On the right shoulder is a beautiful, small white rose. And all this white and azure, the artist told us, was emblematic of purity and truth. From the top of the forehead shines an effulgent star, its rays beaming upward, and its centre made resplendent by the insertion of a "gem of purest ray serene." The artist told us he was obliged to insert this gem in the centre of the star, to give any idea of the brightness of the pure star which he saw in vision. What is most curious to observe is, that the portrait seems to be in a kind of haze. How this effect is produced, I know not, but it is remarked by all who have seen the picture. It does not, indeed, look quite like the production of mortal hands alone.

As to the character of the painting, I do not think a connoisseur in art would place it on the highest plane; but even with them it would be considered a good painting. The artist medium, Mr. Starr, has always been an amateur painter, but he wholly disclaims being a professional artist, and besides, he is now over sixty years of age. He tells us he cannot paint now in his normal condition. So soon as he undertakes to paint, he gets at once under spiritual influence, and some spirit guides his hand. He has executed recently several other spiritual paintings.

This painting of my daughter was exhibited by the medium artist, at the hall some Sundays ago, before the congregation of progressive Spiritualists, and all recognized the combination likeness in it of my wife and myself, and thought it truly remarkable. No one failed to observe the singularly hazy atmosphere which seemed to belong to the picture. I was called upon by the audience to speak of the picture, and I did so in some fifteen minutes' narration and reflection, and concluded by assuring the audience that the picture was certainly a portrait of our daughter, as we would expect to see her now, if so we could, in the spirit-land.

A. G. W. C.

Cincinnati, O., July 6th, 1864.

[We have received from our friend, D. H. Shaffer, of Cincinnati, a photographic copy of the picture above described, together with ten others, one being that of a child of Mrs. Anna E. Carver, formerly Miss Anna E. Kenley, of this city. The child is represented as being brought in the arms of its guardian. It was immediately recognized by Mrs. C., as being a picture of her child. The other picture is a group, in which a young lady is represented as having just received a letter announcing the death of her betrothed in battle. Near by stands the spirit of the departed, seeking to impress the young lady with his presence. The scene has been recognized.]

#### Mediumship Among the Contrabands.

MY DEAR BANNER—Are you willing to receive one more paper from an old subscriber and contributor? If so, you are at liberty to publish this, and I may send another, if material should offer of sufficient interest to fill a place in your columns.

I am in the service of our venerable old relative, Uncle Samuel, and have been since last spring. I am First Lieutenant in a Wisconsin regiment, and we are doing picket duty about three miles from this city. We see but little of the enemy actually in arms. There are, however, any quantity of enemies in the city and all around us; but Gen. Washburne knows how to handle the Chivalry, and where to put them when they get too blatant.

We have just had a sharp fight at Tupelo, between Generals A. J. Smith on our side, and Forrest on the part of the rebels, in which Forrest was wounded, and his army badly whipped. There is another expedition on foot that will move ere long.

We had a terrible steamboat accident, by which we lost many brave soldiers, mostly belonging to the Tenth Missouri Cavalry. I saw the boys when they came ashore from the wreck, and while they gave evidence of sorrow for the loss of their comrades, they were still ready and willing to fight and whip rebels.

The negro is here in great abundance, and is virtually free. No slaveholder in this city, or State, at present, pretends to hold or retain them. The negro character is one of great interest to me, and should be to every Spiritualist. It is intuitive, inspirational, religious and mediumistic. They are good, natural, jolly fellows, and make the best of soldiers, and are always faithful to the Union cause. I said that the negro is mediumistic. My reasons for saying so are—First, a knowledge of the properties in man that warrant mediumship; Second, in the fact that they have amongst them those who see spirits, foretell events, and recognize influences. They, of course, from their religious training as slaves, believe it is God, or Jesus, who influences them. We know that it is of God, and through his agents the spirits and angels.

I saw an old, grey-headed negro, a slave from Mississippi, an exhorter in the colored Methodist Congregation, and he told me thus:

"Why, Massa Lieutenant, we know all 'bout dis war long ago; de good Lord cum an' told it to de ones dat he talk wid. Massa, I saw de Lord in his own home up yonder in de skies, and he told dis poor child dat he should live to see de glory of de Lord, and dat de niggers should be free. But, Massa Lieutenant, de Lord showd dis chile more den dat."

"Well, Uncle Ben, what did he show you?"

"He showed me dat after many years de colored people should pass away like de red man, and be no more in dis country. Dat I didn't like; but de Lord knows what is right, bless him."

"Well, Uncle Ben, when did the Lord show and tell you all this?"

"He showed me dis ting more 'n ten years gone; an' my ole woman's mother saw dis war when she was a little gal, and dar is more 'n fifty dat I knows on who saw dis war long time ago."

On the 4th of July I was at the Negro Camp,

near our regiment, when I noticed a negro man looking earnestly and mournfully at one of the soldiers, a negro also.

"Well, my man, what do you see about that man, or soldier?" said I.

"What?—me?—dat soldier? Nothin'."

"But hold on, my man; what were you looking at, if you saw nothing?"

"Well, Massa Lieutenant, dat soldier die 'fore long."

"How do you know?"

"Cause I seed it."

"What did you see?"

"I saw de light over his head, and I saw de black spot in de middle of de light, and when I sees dat light wid de black spot in it, den I knows de person is gwine to die; but when I sees de light and dar is no dark dare, den I know he is gwine to live."

"Do you see anything about me?" I asked.

He looked at me earnestly for a few moments, then there came a light, spasmodic shudder over him, he waved his hand toward me, and said:

"De good Lord talks with you, and shows you more 'n he does this chile," and then walked off.

I then talked with the negro soldier referred to. I found him well, his pulse regular, and his tongue gave no evidence of fever. Ten days after this, the negro soldier was borne to his long home in the spirit-land.

Now, Mr. Editor, every medium will at once recognize in these traits, mediumship. We know what it is. There is considerable interest here on the subject of Spiritualism, and my mediumship attracts a good deal of attention; and I am so situated that I can give considerable time to the discussion of the subject. Among the firm believers here, Dr. Gilbert stands out in bold relief; and next to him, Elder Watson, presiding Elder of the Methodist Church in this section; and he preaches it, too. All minds engaged in investigating the subject are of the best order; and I predict that the day is not far distant when there will be a spiritual revival here that will astound the world. I am, dear BANNER, thine fraternally,  
Memphis, Tenn., July 25, 1864.

LIEUT.

#### Do Animals see Spirits?

While at Alton, Ill., on business, I became acquainted with a lady who is a partially developed medium. Being a stranger, she introduced me to Mr. and Mrs. Burns, who are both mediums—Mr. B. a healing, and Mrs. B. a tipping medium. As we approached the gate Mr. Burns was there, and at his side a large Newfoundland Dog. The lady addressed introduced me to Mr. Burns, but declined going in on account of the dog, as he was not inclined to be sociable to strangers. The gate was opened for me to pass through, and immediately the dog was noticed to act uncommonly strange. He rushed in the house and crept under the sofa, from which place Mr. Burns had the greatest difficulty to get him out. Mr. B. remarked that it was the second time only that the dog had ventured into that room. After harmony was restored I was invited to the table, and we placed our hands on it for a few minutes, when it tipped. Mr. B. then asked if there were any spirit-relations of mine who wished to communicate. The answer came, "yes." I then asked what relation; answer, "Grandfather." I then inquired if my good old friend, the Indian doctor, was present; answer, "Yes." Mr. B. then asked my grandfather if he could tell why the dog acted so strangely. He answered that the Indian came with me through the gate, dressed in his full costume, and brandished at the dog to keep him from me, and that the dog was a seeing medium, and saw the Indian. The next evening Mr. Burns asked his guardian spirit about the dog; he said he saw the whole proceeding, and described it the same as my grandfather had done.

This being the first occurrence of the kind I have heard of, I send the account of it to you, thinking it may possibly interest your readers.  
CHARLES CHATFIELD.

#### The Fifth Annual Festival of the Religious-Philosophical Society, at St. Charles, Ill.

(Reported for the Banner of Light.)

This Society convened for their Annual Festival at St. Charles, on Saturday morning, July 23, and continued through the following Sunday and Monday. A large number were present, and nearly all the Northern States were represented. The weather was fine, and a harmonious spirit pervaded the large assemblage.

Hon. S. S. Jones, of St. Charles, was chosen President; E. S. Holbrook, Mrs. Martha Wilson and S. R. S. Uford, Vice Presidents; Milton T. Peters, of Salem, Ill., and Mrs. M. M. Daniels, of the Rising Tide, Secretaries.

After the transaction of some preliminary business, the President addressed the Convention. In behalf of a common humanity, he said, he again greeted them with a cordial welcome. This was the fifth call which had brought them together; and once more upon a broad and free platform we were to compare notes of the additional experiences and wisdom we have gained while floating down the tide of time. He then alluded to the present time as a momentous era in the history of our country. We were active members of an age big with mighty events. But he whose soul is filled with the inspiration of truth, can look calmly upon the terrible convulsions of the times; for with the prophetic eye of the seer, he can behold the bright sunshine just beyond the dark clouds that now enshroud our beloved country. The resplendent glory which is soon to dawn upon us, will more than compensate for all our present suffering and sacrifices. We, as Spiritualists, as harmonious philosophers, see and acknowledge the power that controls all for good. He then spoke of the hard struggles through which all reforms had to pass. Experience was the schoolmaster, and "compensation" the result. The ordeal is terrible to pass, but the compensation is full and ample. He continued to dwell at some length upon this theme, and then proceeded briefly to discuss man's religious enslavement. In speaking of the subject of slavery, he said African slavery was the only type that seemed to engross the attention of the masses at the present day. He feelingly touched upon various other conditions of bondage. How long he asked, would it be before the victims of all kinds of tyranny—despising their condition—would strike for independence, demand a reform, and with the powers now dormant in their natures, execute the demand.

When every soul is willing to listen to the "still small voice" speaking from within, and crying out against public and private wrongs, then, and not till then, will the fathers of this Republic be able to draw near, and imbue impressive minds with the spirit of a new and high type of Government which shall be truly democratic in spirit and fact. The true principles of the harmonious philosophy will then be felt and recognized, and upon it will be built the future Government of our people. Then let us, friends, be bold and firm; and with renewed energy persevere in the great work of human emancipation from the thralldom of ignorance and superstition. The cause is a noble one, and worthy of our greatest exertions.

one, and worthy of our greatest exertions.

Milton T. Peters thought organization was necessary, so far at least, as to obtain the names of Spiritualists, so that we might know who they were. Mr. Dayton spoke upon harmony and charity, and endeavored to show that evil had its uses and benefits. Mr. Hamilton favored liberality. He thought we should divide the fruits of our superior mental and muscular faculties with our neighbors. Dr. Dunn spoke upon the diversity of human organisms. Dr. Lowell explained the developing influence of Spiritualism.

Dr. Hamilton, of Maine, delivered the first regular lecture. His subject was "Charity and the overruling power of fortune."

Mrs. Crowell and Mrs. Conners spoke on the subject of spirit influence. Dr. Lowell spoke upon mediumship. Mrs. Todd, Mrs. Tryon, Mrs. Tefft, made brief addresses.

Mrs. Tefft then read a very beautiful lecture written by Cora Wilburn, on the subject of "The Life of the Affections."

Warren Chase spoke on the good time we were now having, and Harvey Jones on the free agency of man; followed by Mr. Dayton, Mr. Parks, Dr. Dunn, Warren Chase and Mrs. Tryon, which closed the first day's session. The house was so crowded that many who came could not obtain admission.

Sunday Morning.—Met in the grove at 8 o'clock. Opened in Conference. Judge Boardman, of Waukegan, made some very interesting remarks upon the religious instinct of man; his emotional or affectional nature, and true and false religion.

Dr. Lowell, Mrs. Snow, Mrs. Tryon, Mrs. Lyon, Mrs. Parker, Dr. Hamilton, Mr. Matteson, all took part in making the occasion one of profitable instruction. Music and singing were freely interspersed between the speeches, by Miss Morgan, Mr. Watson and others.

Mrs. Barnes, of Chicago, then gave the first regular lecture of the day, on "The Past, Present and Future," which was listened to with close attention.

Warren Chase and Dr. Hamilton made brief speeches, and after Miss Morgan sang "Spirit-Rappings,"

Mr. Warwick Martin, of Waukegan, delivered the second regular lecture, taking for his subject this text: "I was alive without the law once, but the law came, sin revived, and I died." He dwelt with marked ability upon the power of Authority and the power of Love.

After singing, the Convention adjourned till afternoon.

Afternoon.—Mrs. Potts, of Geneva, spoke on self-culture, dress, reform and individual freedom; followed by Mrs. Munn, on the same subject.

Mr. Peters spoke of the transition state of the world, religiously, spiritually, theologically and politically. Mrs. Lyon recited a poem, and after singing,

The third regular lecture was given by Warren Chase, who took for his text, "Gen. Grant," and for his subject, "Change of Base." The discourse was full of live sentiment, and practical suggestions, which, with Mr. Chase's well-known ability, commanded the closest attention of the large audience.

A session of Conference followed, in which Dr. Lowell, Dr. Hamilton, took part, when the meeting adjourned.

Evening.—Mr. Niddozer spoke upon Spiritualism, and the absurdities in the Bible, followed by Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Robinson.

Dr. Dunn said Spiritualists were constantly reaching out and upward after truth.

Monday Morning, July 24th.—The Convention was very largely attended, and the grove was alive with eager listeners, by 8 o'clock.

After singing, Mr. Swan gave an interesting account of his visit to Salt Lake, and interview with Brigham Young.

Judge Boardman made some able remarks on the supremacy of faith.

Letters from Dr. John Mayhew and Dr. Underhill were then read. S. S. Jones, Esq., then read and explained the Constitution of the Religious-Philosophical Society, closing with some interesting remarks on organization.

Mr. Brewster, of Michigan, advocated home reform associations, and gave a description of one at Black Lake.

Warren Chase then delivered a Fourth of July Oration, defining what he considers a truly democratic government.

After singing, Miss Worthington spoke upon the war and the good results which will accrue from it. Mrs. Barnes spoke upon the beauties of truth.

Afternoon.—The President exhibited to the Convention an ambrotype of the spirit-pictures, by Anderson, of the deceased husband and children of Mrs. Martha Wilson, of Princeton, Ill. Mrs. Wilson then explained their history and how she obtained them.

E. S. Holbrook spoke of Mr. Anderson and his spirit-pictures. Leo Miller exhibited the spirit-portrait of his deceased sister, and related how he was converted to Spiritualism while lecturing against it.

Leo Miller then delivered the second Oration of the day. His subject was "War generally; the present war; the state of the country generally, and the issues involved in this rebellion." It was an excellent and highly instructive discourse.

After singing, and brief speeches from Dr. Lowell, Mrs. Logan and the President, the Convention adjourned to meet again on the next Fourth of July. Harmony and good feeling pervaded throughout the three days' sessions.

#### Pay up Old Debts.

Now is the time to get out of debt and to release the property from all pecuniary incumbrance. The abundant, depreciated paper money will pay old debts once payable in specie, or its equivalent. The Government can, and has, and will, make the greenbacks as good as gold, to pay all liabilities on contract, however much the unjustifiable raid on the currency by a set of Shylocks in New York may depreciate it, or widen the margin between it and gold. A metallic currency is the currency, or basis of currency, of all nations; and of course for foreign trade we need it, or export exchanges, but for home use we have no more use for gold and silver for currency, than we have for foreign coinage. We are capable, as a nation, of producing all we need, even of gold and silver, and our foreign trade should be in our favor by balance of exports, and will be in times of peace. If the rivers were out, and all our intercourse with New York and Brooklyn closed for six months, our currency would be regulated, and there would not be over ten per cent. difference between greenbacks and gold, and prices would recede to reasonable rates. This wild speculation and reckless extravagance is neither produced by scarcity of articles, or of money, nor by real depreciation of value in the currency, except, perhaps, in the over issues of some local banks. The people need not look after gold, nor care what its price, but sell all they have to spare at the high prices; buy as little as they can get along with, pay all debts, use no tea, coffee, tobacco or liquor; mend the old clothes, wear the old coat and dress a year longer; work steadily, and practice rigid economy, and all will be well, and the country prosper in spite of the speculators.

W. H. CHASE.

Whitewater, Wis., July 27, 1864.



## Correspondence in Brief.

## The Banner-Herald Convention.

Enclosed please find one dollar, the half of which you will do me the favor to accept as an act of justice, to enable you to meet the current expenses of the publication of the BANNER, and the other half you will be kind enough to appropriate toward the support of our "free Circles," neither of which shall be howled at for want of adequate pecuniary support from its list of grateful, and, I trust, generous subscribers.

In an emergency like the present, when high prices rule, I think it is the bounden duty of every one of the subscribers to the BANNER, who really and truly values the sublime philosophy of Spiritualism, and is desirous that its lofty and divine principles should be promulgated to the world, should come forth and not only protect you from a pecuniary loss in its publication, but should also use every effort to distribute and extend its circulation as widely as his influence may permit; that those beautiful principles which we so sacredly cherish, and by which we have been enriched, may be sent forth on the wings of the wind to bless and enrich others. Let every one feel this a duty incumbent upon them, then shall our glorious BANNER not only wave from pole to pole, but the praises of our exalted faith and its divine philosophy become resonant from shore to shore.

I sincerely regret that our Brother Davis has been compelled to suspend the Herald of Progress for lack of support. These things should not be; and I do think if our brother and sister Spiritualists would only consider the matter over a little in their minds, they would arouse themselves and rally to the rescue.

I do most earnestly hope that the things at the forthcoming Convention at Chicago, as it is the first great National Convention of Spiritualists, may be attended with much good, and infuse new life into the hearts of all who may assemble there on that occasion. I hope, dear BANNER, that you will have a reporter there, and that the sayings and doings of the National Convention of Spiritualists may be duly and fully reported and put into pamphlet form, similar to those of the Rutland Convention a few years since. I think the thing would pay; but apart from that, should there not be a record kept of one of the most extraordinary movements that has ever agitated the world? Say, shall this thing be done? I know not but that you may have already arranged it to be so.

With best wishes that prosperity may attend your every effort in the good cause, believe me, as ever,

Yours very truly,

THOMAS MIDDLETON.

Woodstock, Vt., Aug. 8, 1864.

## A Loud Voice from Canada.

RESPECTED BROTHERS.—I do not know what effect the suspension of the HERALD OF PROGRESS may have had upon you, but it seems to me as though I had lost a dear friend. What a pity that amongst the millions of Spiritualists in America the BANNER should be such a liberal to support their presses. There must be thousands of Spiritualists to whom five dollars per annum can be no object. Why, then, do they let a well-conducted organ like the Herald of Progress perish for lack of support? It is a shame!

My object in writing to you is, that should you (which I doubt if you will) be like circumstances, before you suspend the BANNER, you will make an appeal to your wealthier subscribers for an increased subscription, sufficiently remunerative to enable its proprietors to keep it flying to the end of time. I do not know the number of your subscribers, but, according to its merits you should have them by the hundreds of thousands. Let not a second such calamity afflict the spiritual camp. Let a few thousand well-wishers to the cause of Progress and Truth, pay five dollars for their yearly subscriptions, and then they need not fear the lowering of the BANNER, to the great rejoicing of our opponents.

Let my subscription in future be charged five dollars, until such time as the restoration of peace and prosperity to the land will render it necessary. I would not raise my twenty dollars than that the BANNER should stop.

Yours sincerely, for the advancement of our truthful Philosophy,

L. BENTON.

Quebec, L. C., July 25, 1864.

[Those who love the cause and have the means, our worthy brother adds in a postscript, had better "go and do likewise." We should not have the slightest objections. Bro. B. will please accept our heartfelt thanks for the great interest he manifests in us and our glorious cause.]

## Notes from Dr. Cooley.

DEAR BANNER.—We are longing to meet you again regularly. In this section the HERALD OF PROGRESS has been taken more than the BANNER; and for some reason which I cannot tell, where there has been the case, the Spiritualists are not, and have not been so active as where the BANNER OF LIGHT circulates most freely. It will soon be different. We lectured here July 24th, and more interest was manifested in this place, than at either of the times when we were here before. We are to speak again Saturday evening, Aug. 6th, in Bank Hall, in the place where the "War and its Results," and next Sunday in the Court House. Last Sunday we spoke in Marengo twice, to good audiences. A sudden and heavy shower caused the morning meeting to be rather small. In Marengo progress is plainly visible. The Spiritualists and Universalists have united, and now hold regular meetings in the Episcopal Church, every Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock. Rev. A. B. Call, of Chicago, who was the first Methodist minister until quite recently, when his spirit, grown to big for the Methodist body, burst its bondage, and is now an anxious seeker after spiritual light, and teaches, as far as he sees, the truth. Spiritual lecturers who may be acceptable to the moral perceptions of the people, can have the use of the church Sunday morning and evening.

We have had in this section, for the last three weeks, the finest harvest weather I ever saw; and it is pleasing to report that the crops in Illinois have never been better in average; two months since some of the farmers thought to plow up their wheat fields, but leaving them, those very fields are now yielding from twelve to twenty bushels to the acre.

L. K. COOLEY.

Elgin, Ill., Aug. 5th, 1864.

## An Appeal to the Subscribers of the Banner.

MR. EDITOR.—In consideration of your appeal in a late number of the BANNER for help, and more especially since the announcement of the fate of the HERALD OF PROGRESS—viz, its discontinuance for want of sufficient means—I am constrained to hand you one dollar, in addition to your present price of subscription, which I have heretofore sent you. Every reader of your most excellent paper must be aware that the BANNER must go long before the fate of the HERALD, unless you receive a larger price for each and every paper.

What Spiritualist is ready to say, Discontinue the publication of the BANNER; we can do without it? I trust not one. No; you can each and every one of you better afford to send on another dollar, gratis, to the publishers, than you can do without your paper. Shall we, the subscribers, allow an enterprise of the magnitude and bearing upon the progress of the civilized world to go down to the shades of night, and then grope our way on the journey of life in Egyptian darkness, as it were? I trust not.

In behalf of our noble cause, in behalf of the present and of coming generations, I appeal to you, one and all, with the earnest request that you without fail, send forward the sum of one dollar, and that immediately. Say to the editor, send me your paper as long as you can afford to for the amount advanced, and then give us notice that you want more.

W. D. HOLBROOK.

Waukesha, Wis., Aug., 1864.

## Dynamic Institute, Milwaukee, Wis.

Healing the sick, raising the desponding, and casting out disease, forms a large part of living and active Spiritualism at the present time. It is astonishing to see the success of some of the mediums, and the interest awakened thereby. It is only three weeks since the above Institute was opened by Dr. Persons and Mrs. C. A. Gould, who purchased and fitted up the magnificent residence of the late Moses Kneeland, one of the largest and finest in the city, and they have already treated almost one hundred patients (having over eighty

on their books). Many of Dr. Persons's cures are of the same character as those of Dr. Newton and Bryant, equally wonderful and powerful, and his success seems as great, to the extent of his applications. Mrs. C. A. Gould, M. D., whose success as a practitioner in Chicago has long since given her a wide acquaintance, I have known for many years as one of the best and most successful clairvoyants and magnetic operators in the West. They have also one other excellent trance medium and operator, and will soon need more, their business rapidly increasing. Several of the most prominent citizens of the city, inside and outside of the professions, are among their patients, and give their testimony to the cures or benefits.

It seems a day of triumph for our cause. I have been compelled to yield the last two weeks of my time to the treatment of a patient in this State, but lectured to good audiences July 24 and 31, in Whitewater, Wis., and in this city twice yesterday, to two of the most intelligent audiences I ever addressed in this city. I enclose a notice of the Institute for the afflicted.

WARREN CHASE.

Milwaukee, Wis., Aug. 8, 1864.

## Spiritualist National Convention.

Bryan Hall, Chicago, Illinois, August 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th, 1864.

(Reported for the Banner of Light by U. CLARK.)

## FIRST DAY.

Pursuant to the call published in the BANNER OF LIGHT for several weeks in succession, the National Convention of Spiritualists to commence in Chicago, Tuesday, Aug. 9th, began to attract a large number of visitors from a distance, several days before the appointed time. On Sunday, the 7th, Metropolitan Hall, the place used by the Spiritualists of Chicago, was well filled in the morning and evening. Miss Lizzie Doten, of Boston, had been engaged by the Chicago friends to occupy the platform. Her inspirations were in her highest and happiest vein. In the afternoon, ten-minute speeches were announced as the order, and J. S. Loveland, Miss Julia J. Hubbard, Mrs. Dr. Bryon, U. Clark, Dr. H. F. Gardner, and an Iowa friend, were called to the platform.

On Tuesday, the 9th, at 10 A. M., a large number of speakers and delegates from a distance, as well as Chicago friends, assembled in Bryan Hall, the largest hall in the city, and intense interest appeared in every countenance.

Dr. H. F. Gardner, of Boston, Chairman of the Committee for calling the Convention, called the meeting to order, and was then elected Chairman pro tem, and J. S. Loveland, of Willimantic, Ct., Secretary.

The Boston and Chicago Committees having been in council on the day previous, and having prepared suggestions in regard to organizing the Convention, U. Clark, in behalf of said committees, was called on to report, J. S. Finney, and several others entered into a warm discussion, protesting against receiving the suggestions of any previous consultation. But all objections were finally overruled.

Voted, that one delegate from each State, Territory, and the British Provinces, be appointed to prepare a list of all the persons in attendance, willing to act as delegates; and that the said delegates select one man and one woman from each State, Territory and Province, the whole acting as a committee to nominate permanent officers for the Convention. Adjourned.

Tuesday, 2 P. M.—Dr. Gardner in the chair. The following States, etc., reported the following persons to form the nominating committee: Maine, D. M. Hamilton; New Hampshire, Miss Julia J. Hubbard; Vermont, N. Randall, Mrs. E. M. Wolcott; Massachusetts, Miss Lizzie Doten, A. H. Richardson; Rhode Island, delegate not arrived; Connecticut, J. S. Loveland, H. B. Storer; New York, J. W. Seaver, Mrs. L. Heath; Pennsylvania, J. Whiting; Maryland, J. Brist; Tennessee, J. E. Chadwick; Kentucky, Mrs. S. Smith, J. L. Taylor; Ohio, Mrs. Laura Cuppy, S. J. Finney; Michigan, J. G. Wait, Mrs. J. E. Fuller; Illinois, M. W. Leavitt, Mrs. J. S. Fuller; Indiana, F. M. Shuey, Mrs. P. Eddy; Iowa, A. P. Bowman, A. J. Smith; Wisconsin, O. Townsend, Mrs. S. Williams; Missouri, A. J. Brown, Mrs. D. Oversole; California, C. Pinkham; Canada, Wm. Bissell, U. C. Whiting.

The Committee retiring, U. Clark moved that the interim be filled up by voluntary ten minute speeches. Leo Miller, Benjamin Todd, Dr. H. F. Gardner, Warren Chase, H. C. Wright, J. M. Peebles, Dr. Parker, Mr. Reynolds, and Mrs. S. E. Warner each spoke in the order named, and held the meeting with interest.

The Nominating Committee then reported for President of the Convention, Hon. S. S. Jones, of Illinois; Vice Presidents, Dr. H. F. Gardner, Mrs. Laura Cuppy, Ira Porter, and Miss Lizzie Doten; Secretaries, H. B. Storer, Mrs. L. Patterson, F. L. Wadsworth, and Mrs. Buffum. The report was accepted and adopted. The President, on being introduced to the chair, made some pertinent, congratulatory remarks. Several Committees were appointed, after very warm discussions, growing out of a radical minority element among a few Western friends, and the afternoon session adjourned.

Tuesday Evening Session.—An audience of about one thousand appeared in Bryan Hall, notwithstanding the intense heat of the evening. S. S. Jones in the chair. On motion of H. C. Wright, a committee of five was appointed to report on the state of the Country, consisting of Mr. Wright, Col. Fox, Mr. Waterman, S. J. Finney and Leo Miller. J. M. Peebles was announced for a half-hour speech, and was followed the same length of time by J. S. Loveland.

The Committee on the State of the Country reported a series of strongly loyal and patriotic resolutions which were loudly applauded by the large assembly. On motion of Warren Chase, the resolutions were received and laid over for action till Thursday. Dr. D. M. Hamilton closed the evening with some pointed drives at the popular idea of infernal agents, and the Convention adjourned to meet at nine, A. M., on Wednesday.

The delegation of the first day was much larger than the most sanguine had anticipated, about twenty States being represented, and more than fifty of the most popular lecturers reporting themselves in preparation for the greatest Pentecost in our age. It is difficult to anticipate the results of this Convention, but the readers of the BANNER may look for an interesting report in a few weeks as possible. Our synopsis will continue in the next issue of this paper.

## Peace between Germany and Denmark.

The following is the latest European intelligence by the Persia:

LONDON, July 31.—The Paris Press, under reserve, announces the conclusion of peace between Germany and Denmark. The basis is unknown. The French journal continues to harp on an impending sea-fight between Federal and rebel cruisers in the channel.

In the House of Commons Mr. Layard said England intended to recognize the new Mexican Empire without waiting for the States and Territories now under Juarez to be brought within the authority of the new government.

This Paper is issued every Monday, for the week ending at date.

## Banner of Light.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, AUGUST 20, 1864.

OFFICE, 158 WASHINGTON STREET, ROOM NO. 3, 2D FLOOR.

WILLIAM WHITE & CO., PUBLISHERS AND PROPRIETORS.

For Terms of Subscription see Eighth Page.

LUTHER COLBY, EDITOR.

SPIRITUALISM is based on the cardinal fact of spirit communion and influx; it is the effort to discover all truth relating to man's spiritual nature, capacities, relations, duties, welfare and destiny, and its application to a regenerate life. It recognizes a continuous divine inspiration in man, it aims through a careful, reverent study of facts, at a knowledge of the laws and principles which govern the occult forces of the universe; the relations of spirit to matter, and of man to God and the spiritual world. It is thus catholic and progressive, leading to true religion as at one with the highest philosophy.—London Spiritual Magazine.

## Price of the Banner.

Our friends will please take notice that the price of the BANNER, commencing with this number, is three dollars per year, or eight cents per single copy.

Our former co-worker, the Herald of Progress, was obliged to suspend for want of sufficient support; but we trust the friends of the BANNER will not permit a like disaster to befall their favorite Journal.

## Economy.

It is easier by far to talk of this homely virtue and the practice of it, than to set up an example which others will like to follow. And yet the times press such a lesson upon us with full force; everything, in truth, has turned into a preacher of economy. Not long ago the country was teeming with all that was wanted to eat and to drink, and the last thing that troubled a body's thoughts was the fear lest enough more might not readily be got where the last supply came from. And so the country produces now, refusing nothing which its generous bountifulness has always furnished. But the difference between these times and those times is just here: we have to carry the heavy burden of a vast national debt on our shoulders now, and those shoulders had not felt the gall of such a load then. We were perfectly free then, and knew not what was the privilege we enjoyed.

Yet, even if this necessity did not press us so heavily, and were not sure to press us still more so in the future, it would be just as incumbent on us to take care of our current expenditures, and see that they did not outstrip our incomes. Economy should be the order of the day; instead of that, however, wastefulness would seem to have taken its place. There is little or no thought about results—everything is left to present luck. We do not stop long enough to calculate. We crack on as if there was no end to the resources. Caution and prudence are the least fashionable of all habits and practices. There is waste everywhere—waste at the spigot, and waste at the bung-hole. A dollar more in the yard now, is of less consequence in general estimation than a shilling more only a little time ago. The war, with its gigantic expenditures, which few or none of us can realize now, has so familiarized us with large sums of money that we appear to think it as necessary to lavish on ourselves as for the treasury to answer lavishly to the calls of the nation.

It is so easy to fall into such habits that the difficulty of getting out is all the greater. But get out we must, and that right speedily, else the fate that awaits us is no different from that which has overtaken other nations before us, for having given themselves up to the temptations of extravagance and luxury. Where expenditures exceed incomes, as ours do in this country to-day, ruin will inevitably result; and we cannot expect that our experience is to be very much different from what that of other people has been in the past. In dressing, in living, in equipage, in general style of social expenditure, in all things where money is to go out of the pocket, we must certainly begin at once and turn over a new leaf. The last one will say, upon this, "Oh, yes, we can economize in ever so many respects. There is the weekly paper—" But we ask you to stop right there, friends. When you seriously take hold to cut down expenses in the matter of meat and sugar, of wines and cigars, and of the various superfluities and waste that afflict rather than advantage your lives, then it will be time enough to reduce your living and your life by trying to do without the weekly visitor whose cost to you is so trifling at the most, but whose return is so generous and permanent. It is short-sightedness that begins at the wrong end in these matters: Dr. Sam Johnson trying to get up earlier in the morning, by way of mending his habits, but going to bed no earlier the night before.

How effective this huge debt will prove, through its taxes, to make us temperate and thoughtful, almost any reflecting person can foresee. It cannot operate otherwise than as a power to balance us and keep us steady. We shall find that we must either increase our supervisory care over ourselves, or go entirely under, there is such an ocean of waste all around us. Go into almost any large family where money comes easily just now to the hand of it, and you will find a recklessness in relation to the table alone as will make a prudent person discouraged. In France the people are economical to the last letter; nothing is suffered to be thrown away or wasted; it is used to be said that they could cook a nettle in forty different ways, and we know that every scrap of everything is adroitly turned to advantage and made to contribute its part in the general economy. Just so in Germany. Probably a more frugal nation of people, in a domestic sense, does not live anywhere, than these same thrifty, healthy, industrious, and always well-to-do Germans. None could get along more economically than they and still secure a better subsistence.

And from these, and such as these, old-world people, all of them, we must take our lessons. They have practiced this primal virtue of economy from generation to generation, and know how to do it traditionally. They have learned to bear the burden of taxation, and do it patiently. And all these things are come but newly upon us, and we must now begin to learn. Our attitude, however—be it set down to our credit—is far in advance of that of any other people in existence; and there is little question that we should learn in a single generation what it has cost others so much time and struggle to master. Yet learn it we must, as a first condition of our knitting together and consolidating the character which it is our undoubted destiny to fill up and establish.

Heaven teaches us economy on all sides. The Almighty Power wastes no single stream, however minute, of that unlimited, spiritual force which is all the while flowing over the universe. Great as are the divine expenditures of spiritual power, they are such by reason of the fact that nothing of it all is suffered to be lost. Profuse beyond human and angelic conception as are the

resources of that power, they are nevertheless expended with a wise adaptation of means to an end, which rebuke our thoughtless wastefulness in the most overwhelming manner. There is certainly no excuse for our criminal lavishness with all our resources, given to us, too, when the generous donor himself takes infinite care that not a particle of His power be thrown away or used to no purpose.

## Browning on Mediumship.

Robert Browning, who owes his distinction chiefly to the circumstance that he became the husband of Mrs. Barrett Browning, has put forth a new volume of poems, entitled, "Dramatic Personae," in which he undertakes to throw ridicule on the spiritual phenomena. In a piece entitled, "Mr. Sludge, the Medium," and which is understood to be aimed at Mr. Home, we find the following passage:

"What's a 'medium'?" He's a means, Good, bad, indifferent, still the only means Spirits can speak by; I he may unconceive, Mutter and stammer—'ie a their Sludge and drudge, Take him or leave him; they must hold their peace, Or else put up with having knowledge strained To half-expression through his ignorance. Suppose the spirit Sludgeoven wants to shed New music he's a brilliant of why, he turns The handle of this organ, grinds with Sludge, And what he poured in at the month of 'the mill As a thirty-third Sonata (funny now) Comes from the looper as brunswick Sludge, naught else—The Shakers' hymn in G, with a natural F, Or the 'Stars and Stripes' set to consecutive fourths."

This is a fair specimen of the somewhat hazy style which Browning indulges in. With the exception of one or two tolerable ballads, he has done nothing to entitle himself to any high reputation as a poet. In genius he falls incomparably below Mrs. Browning. This lady, as we all know, received the great truths of Spiritualism, investigated them with the profoundest interest, and found a congenial soul for them in her devout, studious and liberal mind. It was a sore mortification to Browning, that in spite of his own protests and bitter opposition, his wife should accept as true, what he chose to reject with a supercilious and arrogant contempt. And now, not even respect for his wife's memory, was potent enough to withhold him from the expression of the bitterness he has long cherished.

Mr. Home, in a communication to the London Spiritual Magazine, has given an interesting account of his own interviews with Mr. and Mrs. Browning, in which he exposes the ill-temper, bigotry, and intolerance of the former, and the truthfulness and candor of the latter. The lady seems to have been as far above her husband in generosity and elevation of character as she was in literary ability and poetical genius. Browning's foggy verses against Spiritualism can do little harm to the cause, and will hardly be relished even by those who hate it as heartily as he. The testimony of two such intellects as Archbishop Whately and the late Mr. Selous, is more than an offset for all that a host of such bardings as Browning can utter.

The truly great poets, like Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, Tasso, are all Spiritualists. The number of passages that could be quoted from these writers, showing the truth of this assertion, would surprise the foes of modern Spiritualism. We may some day give evidence of this in our columns. Meanwhile, we dismiss Mr. Browning with the remark, that as his new book will be soon republished by Ticknor & Fields, the curious may learn for themselves whether or no we have done him justice in our remarks.

## No Need of Arguing.

Many persons think they cannot have a sound hold in what they are really conscious of believing, unless they can at any time support their formula of faith successfully, against the world, with downright arguments. It is a mischievous delusion. Our spiritual instincts are far above reason, and reason comes up late to do its work of harmonizing what is perceived so clearly with the capacity of the intellect to comprehend. But a living faith never rests upon reason. It takes hold a good ways ahead of that; flies farther and faster; outstrips it everywhere in the race; completes its work, in fact, before reason has begun it. More than this, it is impossible to make the reason adopt views which the higher instincts positively reject; thus showing that it is the soul which explores for ground on which to establish its faith, and not the intellect, which is but one of the faculties of the soul. Emerson discourages everything like holding arguments over one's form of belief; for, in arguing, we talk far more than we think, in spite of ourselves. But the truth is what we want to get at, and not intellectual victory. Besides, a very different class of feelings, thoughts and reflections are called out when a person is under the stimulating operation of discussion with another; but in the hour of contemplation, which is the most truly spiritual season the soul knows anything about, the stimulus is of a very different character. Then no spirit of antagonism rises in the heart to cloud the thought. A subject is taken hold of by the handle, and for the sake of mastering it; not wherever it can be most adroitly seized for the purpose of overthrowing an opponent. Much argument only proves too little genuine spirituality.

## A New Policy for England.

The English Ministry have just laid down a policy entirely different from any which has characterized their national life hitherto. It has been publicly announced that hereafter, England will occupy a ground, among nations, of complete isolation, refraining from all interference in the interests or rights of other nations, and prepared to use her army and navy only when such use is demanded by an immediate threat of danger. The leading English journal, the Times, endorses this novel platform for the nation and proceeds without delay to apply it to the matter of aiding in putting a stop to the African slave trade. That paper argues that, under the new rule of national conduct, it can no longer be expected of England that she will lend a hand, in the shape of a fleet, off the coast of Africa and in the West Indian waters, to repress the slave trade, that being none of her business any more, and the Africans being probably as well off with this incident of slavery hanging over them as if they were suffered to be left alone, where they are born. It all means—this change in English policy—a plan to get the slave-trade machinery ready to run, by the time it is expected that the South will achieve its independence; then there will be cheap labor in plenty to take the place of what has been sacrificed in the rebellious States by means of the war, and cotton will be got out of the Southern fields for British account without any hindrance. England means, by isolating herself just now from the world, to do what the old rat did, that bade his children good-bye because he was about to retire from all earthly vanities; when it was discovered that he had provided himself with a snug berth in a whole Cheshire cheese!

We invite especial attention to an article on our first page, entitled "My Religion." It is from the pen of one of our old and valued contributors, and written in the spirit of fairness and candor.

## Psychometry applied to Stones.

We had a little experience a day or two since that may interest the readers of "The Soul of Things." A friend, recently from Rome, gave us several specimens of marble from various interesting localities thereabouts. Happening to be in company with Mrs. J. S. Adams, we placed one of these relics in her hands in such a way that she could not see it, and said nothing in relation to what it was. She was therefore ignorant, so far as the outer senses were concerned, of its nature and history.

In about one minute she remarked, "I am in the sphere of some place, or building, that is very old. I see a dark marble, and the name of Severus is before me."

This was all correct; for we had given her a piece of dark green marble taken from the Baths of Caracalla, at Rome, the building of which was finished about A. D. 212, by Severus!

We then, without imparting to her any knowledge of the object, placed in her hands a piece of white marble from a temple on the Via Appia, at Rome, and she said:

"I see a large and elegant building formed of white marble."

To test still further this power, another article was handed to her, which was no sooner done than she remarked:

"I see fine palm trees, and camels, and sandy plains."

This was in keeping with the object she held—a small earthen mold taken from a catacomb in Egypt.

Such uniform correctness in her expressions concerning the sphere of each object, and the rapid changes from one to another, giving the appropriate surroundings of each without the least hesitation, may well puzzle the savans among us whose only source of information on these subtle mental phenomena, is a dry and musty library, a repository of the thoughts of those who knew no more than themselves. Leaving these, however, and becoming receptive to the tide of inspirational thought that is flooding the world with light, we may become informed of the philosophy that governs these things, and add something to our limited knowledge of the wonderful powers of the human mind.

## Popular Fiction.

Those journals, styling themselves literary, which have taken it upon themselves to stigmatize works of fiction like Hawthorne's "Scarlet Letter," as *unhealthy*, because they lay bare the springs of human action and minister to the long hidden diseases of the human heart, are found on examination, to be the very ones which endorse and praise the melodramatic tales, as thick as the locusts of Egypt almost, whose turning-point is the rascality of the deepest dye, and whose heroes are sure to be adulterers, traitors to all forms of moral, and secondarily without room for apology or palliation. This style of fiction is especially popular in England at the present time. It argues anything but a pure and healthy condition of the human heart over the water. Miss Braddon's works, largely as they are read among the higher classes of readers in England, all turn upon a hinge of the description above alluded to. As for healthy domestic fiction, or fiction whose interest rests mainly on those natural and legitimate analyses of human motives in which all speculative minds are strangely interested, and which they love to follow out to the last investigation of the mystery—little or none of it is "the rage" in the reading world of England to-day, and it is a question if for some time it is likely to be. That fiction is a powerful preacher of morals, there can be no doubt; but nobody can make us believe that such superficial and such really dirty stuff as is spawned from the English press, is of any particular account in the work of making men wiser or better. It is not nature at all; it is high-splend crime, vulgar and unseemly; unfit to be taken into the family where a healthy domestic sentiment is sought to be produced and perpetuated.

## New Philanthropic Paper in New Orleans.

We have received the first number of the "New Orleans Tribune," printed in French and English, the object of which is to advocate and defend the rights of the colored population. It is now published tri-weekly, but the proprietors announce a daily edition, to commence as soon as type and press can be obtained from New York. The number before us contains a report of the proceedings of a meeting of the National Union Brotherhood Association, No. 1, held at St. James's Church. This association, to use the words of one of the speakers, is composed of "a people just emerging from darkness into light, from chains and handcuffs to freedom, some of them with the marks of the slave-driver's lash upon them." Another speaker, Rev. J. Goodwin, said, "I judge this to be one of the greatest institutions of the present age. I have passed through blood to reach this land of liberty. Where I came from the number of stripes was from five to six hundred, and if you could not stand the flogging you would have to die. I have known some to die under the lash. I have been whipped to make me deny my religion, but here I stand, thank God, upon free soil, a living monument of God's mercy and protection to those who love and serve him."

The new paper, in connection with the "Brotherhood," is destined to do a great and good work. Certainly the field of their operations is very large, and one in which there is much need of laborers. May their philanthropic efforts be crowned with abundant success.

## A Slight Mistake.

The Herald of Progress was the medium through which departed spirits communed with the inhabitants of this terrestrial ball, and its decease will cut off all communion with the celestial powers.—New York Sunday Mercury.

Our friend of the Mercury has made a slight mistake which we hasten to correct, that he may not suffer under the idea that communion with the celestial spheres is entirely suspended, for such an event would leave this world in a sad condition. The writer has ascribed to the Herald what is due the Banner. The former never has, to any extent, published communications from the spirit-world, while the latter has in every issue for the past seven years given its readers from two to six columns of them. And we are happy in being able to state that it will continue to do so. If the editor of the Mercury could see the quantity of MS. articles sent us for our columns, and the almost innumerable letters which wait our attention every morning, he would reasonably conclude that the interest in Spiritualism had not abated to any very great extent.

Susie Rivers informs us that the poem published in the BANNER of August 6th, entitled "Angels are ever near," by Isaac P. Aiken, was written by her and printed in our paper about a year ago, (with the exception of part of the first two lines), under the title of "Presence of Angels." We are sorry that any one should so far forget the golden rule as to desire to impose upon us or any one else.















