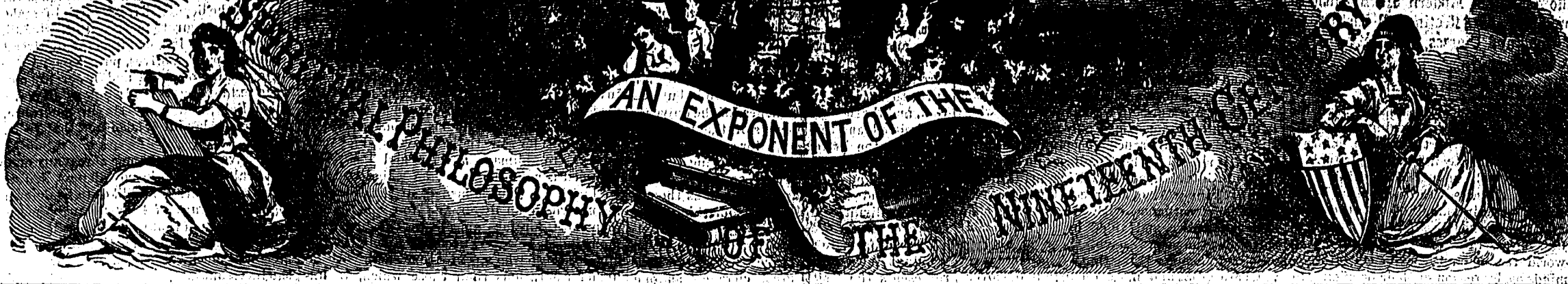


BANNER OF LIGHT.



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Written for the Banner of Light. MOTHER. BY MRS. J. M. O'BRIEN.

Throughout the days of your absence, Through life's sunshine and tears, Your spirit-arms encircle me, As solace for my fears; A guide, your fingers at the pane, A light, your smile for me; The hours your spirit presence fills Stored in my heart will be, I catch the sound of your footsteps, As they reach my humble sill; I faint would hear your pleasant voice, Its influence lingers still; In the sombre midnight silence, Or in scenes of household mirth, A breath as faint as falling leaf, Reveals your call on earth, Come back yet closer, mother, From spirit rest above, Come-while my hopes lie shattered, I need your help and love!

Gloucester, Mass.

Original Essay. A TEXT, SERMON AND REVIEW.

BY DELTA.

"But the spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron.—Paul to Timothy, 4th chapter, 1-2. Rejected Version."

(EXORDIUM.—1. Spirits consciously exist and act. 2. They communicate to mortals. 3. They speak intelligently and with express purpose. 4. Some of them possess the prophetic gift. 5. They exist in classes, good or bad, as in human society, and deal with mortals. 6. Their influence and statements are heeded by the mortal living. 7. Falsehood, or hypocrisy among mortals attract low, seducing spirits. 8. These teach false doctrines, which, when accepted, destroy the sensitiveness of the human conscience, etc., etc.)

The above text formed the basis of a recent pulpit tirade against the Spiritual Philosophy and religion, uttered by a reverend D.D. of the Methodist Church, in one of our Western cities. It is needless to say that he did not make the exegesis which appears in brackets. In his introduction, he said:

"Had Paul lived in our day, he could not have described more accurately some people that may be found in almost every community than he has done in my text."

And we reply: If Paul had lived in our day, he would have characterized modern bigots and ignorant defamers of the truth, and its disciples and followers, in much stronger language than we care to use. Being an honest and free man, and not a slave to a church or an old creed, he would reassert, for the benefit of his seduced clerical brethren, the truths of his spiritual mediumship, including gifts of healing by spirit-power, immunity from poisonous serpents, clairvoyance and clairaudience, etc. He would take the pulpit or platform, and repeat his experience-testimony before the bar of this modern age, just as he gave it in writing to the citizens of Corinth, to whom he ministered while in the body, by saying: "I know a man in Christ, fourteen years before this testimony was first publicly given (whether in the body, I know not; or whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth). Such a man was caught up even to the third heaven, and heard things impossible of repetition, description or explanation in the language of mortals. And that man was myself."

And he would further affirm that while conducting an evening service on the third floor of a hall in Troas, and his sermon lasting until midnight, the room being excessively heated by the addition of a large number of lights, a young man sitting on the sill of the open window fell asleep, was precipitated from the third floor to the ground and was taken up for dead; that he, Paul, did not send for a physician and examine his parchment to see whether he had legal authority to take charge of the case, but exercised his own mediumship of healing and restored the unfortunate young man to consciousness and normal health. He would testify that in the presence of witnesses, on the island of Melita, where he was shipwrecked in the night, the barbarous inhabitants showing them extraordinary kindness by building a fire of twigs and small wood, which was encircled by himself and his fellow-voyagers, a venomous viper, driven by the heat, leaped and fastened its deadly fangs upon his hand, but that he shook the reptile from his hand into the fire, and while the superstitious crowd looked upon him as an escaped murderer, receiving his punishment from God through the viper, and expected his sudden death, he suffered no harm whatever, which led these superstitious ignoramus to immediately declare that he was a God.

And further, were he present in earth as the man Paul to-day, he would recondense the facts certified to by himself and his medium associates, that the blind were made to see, the deaf to hear, the lame healed, the sick restored to health and cleansed of their maladies by spirit power, through mediumship. And unlike this Western Methodist divine, and too many of his Eastern brethren, he would have honored the medium servants of a spirit ministry of help and comfort to mortals, instead of abusing and traducing them. He would say, I repeat, what he wrote to the Christian brethren at Corinth—you can read it in your Bibles—"And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then powers, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues." And he would further certify that the promise and prophecy given by the great medium master of Nazareth and Galilee, in the hour of his departure from earth, at Bethany, has been and is now being literally fulfilled by his medium followers: "And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out malicious, obsessing spirits, they shall speak with tongues or in languages they have not learned, they shall take up serpents without injury, and if they shall drink any deadly thing it shall in no wise hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

Knowing the outspoken character of Paul by his history and writings, we think he would repeat his published words in his Corinthian exhortation to this skeptical, unspiritual and uncharitable Methodist minister: "Follow after charity: yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts. Brother, be not a child in mind; howbeit, in malice be ye a babe, but in mind be a man." This Western Methodist D.D. in his sermon falsely said: "These mediums have added no facts to our store of knowledge." How many have he tested, and of what character? Has he carefully studied the revelations of the unseen world, or psychic laws, forces and relationships exhaustive-

ly, or even carefully, that he speaks so confidently, when wiser minds and better men have been moving with slower step and a more unprejudiced mind and heart? Is he simply ignorant and prejudiced, as his loose assertions go to show? No addition to the stock of human knowledge!

What knowledge had the race of an immortal, conscious life after death, save as the theory was accepted by faith? Is faith knowledge? Then why does his own special witness, Paul, advise him and all others to "add to their faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge"? Both virtue and knowledge being supplemental to faith in the moral field, or the building of a spiritual character in harmony with the laws of the highest realms of life.

We are tempted to ask this Western Methodist brother and teacher why the old Methodist plainness and simplicity of life, the old spirituality and force which took hold on the intellects, consciences and hearts of gathered thousands, from the days of the two Wesleys to the middle of this century, have departed, and left the organism a spiritual ruin like the other churches, but with elaborately adorned and garnished spiritual sepulchres, in which a spiritual deity can take little delight? Is it because they are resisting the manifestations of a spirit-God in their own universe, as the Jewish theocracy resisted the medium Jesus, and drove him from the earth? Is the church to say just how a living and loving spirit father shall visit and minister to his children?

Such prejudiced, creedal bigots as this Western Methodist brother, who, as a preacher, wears the honors of a D.D., and his clerical associates, are not strewing thorns roses in the paths of honest, conscientious mediums who have received "the gifts of the spirit," and are using them for the benefit of their fellow-beings and the enlightenment of the world. But God is not dead, nor has the power of spirit to perform the material acts illustrated anciently and to-day, and certified to continue by the great Nazarene medium, been withdrawn from the world, as modern credists and dogmatists assert.

It is with a heart filled with charity and love for the willfully-blinded, and to our Western-preacher brother, especially, that we recall to them and him the personal exhortation which they have so often used from which to preach pungently to others: "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, for the times of refreshing have come from the presence of the Lord."

AN OPEN LETTER.

To Prof. C. A. L. Totten, (and all who share his views.) Greeting:

I have carefully read and re-read your somewhat mystical letter as published in the Boston Globe for Oct. 1st, 1893, and I feel moved by the same spirit of "anxiety" for the knowledge of truth which evidently animates you and inspires you to proclaim your convictions for the good of the race. But while earnestly seeking truth, and opening my mind to every revelation of its authority, it is natural that we differ in our methods and conclusions, even with the same data from which to reason.

This has ever been, and ever must be so. For this reason many hundreds of varying and more or less conflicting creeds have grown out of the textual authority of the Bible, accepted by each as the only standard of authority in all matters of faith and practice, and the only revelation from God. Upon this book, it is assumed, we must rest our hopes of the future, and our judgment of duty to God and man. If it is a safe and certain guide, by which you can predict with such mathematical certainty the date of the great changes anticipated, why have so many other scholars been misled in attempting to determine its meanings? Fifty years ago the elaborate calculations of Miller were regarded as conclusive, and upon them the date fixed for the coming of the Lord was 1843. Then 1843-6, and several other dates were fixed as the time indicated by prophecy for the coming of the great day. Mr. Miller and his devoted disciples were as confident that they had the key to prophetic meanings of the Bible as you can be. What can you offer in evidence that is any clearer or more reliable than they had? If all the biblical scholars before and since those times have been at fault, misled by textual renderings and prophetic symbols, why should we expect your predictions to come any nearer the truth?

Most of the teachings and prophecies in the Bible are figurative, symbolic, and quite indefinite. They may have been understood at the time they were given, and they may have meant, to the people of those times, little or nothing that applies to our day. A careful reading of the New Testament, it seems to me, ought to convince any intelligent person that the "second coming of Christ" was looked for within that century—before a generation should have passed; and if we can believe Peter, the prophecies which modern Adventists apply to this century were fulfilled during the lifetime of the apostles. It was after the ascension that the outpouring of the spirit on the day of pentecost affirmed the active presence of the heavenly host; and Peter said: "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days (saith God) I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. . . . And I will show wonders in the heavens above, and signs in the earth beneath, blood and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood before that great and notable day of the Lord come." Acts II, 16-21.

Here is a distinct declaration that "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel," and according to Peter the prophet Joel was declaring what should "come to pass in the last days." If "the last days" were eighteen hundred years ago, what days are these in which the same prophetic shadowings are used to indicate the final crisis?

You seem to think the doom that awaits all who are not prepared for it is an essential feature of the Second Advent of Christ. But why should his second coming bring with it disaster and ruin, any more than his first advent? He was the friend of sinners and companion of outcasts; his words were sweet with love and holy compassion for the erring. Has he retrograded? Is he less divine because more spiritual? Why should his second coming bring calamity, when his first advent proclaimed "peace on earth, good will toward men"? Why should there be such "an awfulness" connected with this climax, which brings the world anew into the holy presence whose mission to earth was that of the great physician? When he ascended in the glory of his spiritual triumph, silently, peacefully, leaving this world behind him, the angels ("men in white apparel") were beheld observing the scene, and they said: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." What is there in such a peaceful event, so full of promise to our immortal hope, that savors of "tribulation" or "awfulness"? It seems to me that the nearer we are to God and his Christ the safer we are; and the more tangible the divine presence the better and happier must this world become.

You tell us you are "not a prophet, but an interpreter." What, then, entitles your interpretations to more confidence than any of the others which have preceded yours, and whose calculations have disappointed those who trusted them? If God delivered these prophecies to men for their instruction and guidance, why should they be so obscure that even the best scholars cannot agree upon their meanings? If they were intended for a beacon-light to the nations in darkness, why were they not put in such clear, definite language, that those who most needed them could understand them without an interpreter, and with no uncertainty as to time or the issues involved? If these prophecies, like all modern forecasts, were the expression of a human faculty more or less inspired and illumined, but limited by organism and development, it would not be difficult to understand the need of interpreters and the imperfection of data; but if they are the expression of Infinite Wisdom and Omnipotence, what is the consistency of having a human interpreter, upon whose limited knowledge and fallible judgments the world must depend for the meaning which God intended for its guidance?

You tell us that that which you declare you are "also able to prove." If you can prove the certainty of all you declare so that the people can understand it and recognize the proof—so that no doubt can remain to weaken the force of your appeal—I think there will be no lack of interest and immediate effort to realize all the protective influences of wisdom and grace possible to attain. Who would willingly "go down without appeal into the abyss of all dead things"? Who would hesitate to trim their lamps and obtain an abundance of the oil of salvation, if they knew the danger and were able to avert it? Certainly no one possessed of reason and moral responsibility. It must be, then, a question of data and evidence, and among so many conflicting authorities what are the poor people to do while the impending crisis is hastening to the great climax, and a hundred divergent ways are indicated as the only correct road to safety and divine acceptance?

You tell us that the "first seven sections" of the parable of the ten virgins are now in process of evolution, and are "natural" consequences of measures already at work. Have they not always been operative in human development? Of course this is all figurative, and we have a liberal latitude for interpretation. Suppose the "oil" to stand for righteousness; that includes many virtues, such as love, justice, kindness, purity, self-abnegation, reverence for truth, fidelity, etc. If the foolish ask of the wise when they awake to a sense of their deficiency, and realize a need of these virtues, is it in keeping with holy character and superior wisdom to deny them the help they ask? Does it diminish our store of virtue to help needy souls who ask for righteousness? If we are good, do we lose the quality of goodness by helping others to be good? Does virtue grow less by use? Can it be bought and sold? It seems to me that all who have righteousness have it to spare; and the more they give of their spiritual wealth the more they have to give.

It appears to me that you have read scripture too literally, and lost the thread of prophecy that runs through history and human life, in attempting to adhere to the "letter which killeth"; thus your lamp of prophecy, having the wick well trimmed, is without the oil of the spirit; and you grope in outer darkness, and see in the promises of divine beneficence "an awfulness" that belongs to the dark ages of the gloomy past. For the past fifty years the civilized world has been rapidly filling its lamps with the oil of righteousness, and it needs no awful stroke of doom to emphasize its beneficent tendencies. You tell us that "This parable is to be literally fulfilled." I may not get your meaning of literal, but I understand it to be in exact accordance with the letter as expressed—no figures and spiritual renderings to accommodate the language to our reason, but a rigid, matter-of-fact fulfillment. Then the wise ones are to have a meagre supply of the saving "oil," and it is to be of a quality that can be bought and sold, and by giving it to those in need the supply is diminished, and their lamps would flicker and go out! The wise ones, then, are so morally defective that they can render no service to others; and they are so selfish that they care only for their own glory, and turn the spiritual beggars away with the counsel to purchase wisdom of those who have it and can interpret the book! In other matters such a spirit of selfishness and cold indifference to the welfare of sinners would be counted unworthy, and even wicked.

Finally, when the foolish have learned wisdom by tribulation (and who learns it any other way?), and shall come and knock for admission, "they will be treated as strangers and denied entrance." Are we to understand this "literal" language to mean a final and permanent rejection and going "down into the abyss of all dead things"? Is this idea in keeping with the genius of the Gospel, and the all-embracing philanthropy of the Great Master? Oh! my good brother, pause before this question of the soul. When he came, his own received him not. Those who should have been prepared to receive him, and to know him by the prophecies which heralded his coming, knew him not. They had misunderstood their own prophecies, and were looking for a literal prince, arrayed in the habiliments of royalty, and coming with the authority of a political dictator to rule his people and establish a kingdom of this world.

How wide of the reality was this ideal! In like manner I suspect you will miss the second coming if you dwell upon the literal meanings of the prophecies to the neglect of the spiritual significance, which is now opening, as never before, the treasures of wisdom and the revelations of heaven for the healing of the nations. You admonish to "besiege" our "teachers for information." Alas! how shall we know that their instructions are reliable? They do not agree among themselves. We cannot be sure if we "purchase oil" of them that it will serve to light us in the ways of wisdom. They are, for the most part, blinded by irrational teachings borrowed from paganism, and brought down the centuries in the shadow of demoralizing dogmas which are a blasphemous travesty on the character of God! We are safer to trust our own reason and moral sense, and follow the light of conscience and such revelations as touch our superior faculties and illumine the inner chambers of the soul, than to attempt to "purchase wisdom" at the theological headquarters of original sin, vicarious atonement, eternal misery, innate depravity, divine jealousy and infinite revenge! The oil of righteousness and saving love does not generate or keep well in such a climate. Whoever carries a cup of water to a dying soldier, soothes the pain of a desolate outcast, cares for a homeless waif, minister to the sick and sorrowing, feeds a starving tramp, lifts the cloud of despair from a creed-bewildered slave, and helps the spiritually blind to see, beyond the mists of superstition, the beautiful agreement between Infinite love and justice and bask in the sunshine of eternal goodness, does more to replenish his lamp with the oil of righteousness and light the way to the kingdom of heaven than all the dogmatic assumptions of spiritual authority can accomplish in a lifetime.

It is the proud umpires of the rights of man, who measure Divine Justice by their own deficiency, and enforce their religious blindness upon the conscience of the people, that steal the poor man's oil from the lamp of life. The dogma of endless misery darkens all ideas of the Divine character, and hardens the hearts of those who unquestioningly accept it, until the sweetness of love turns to bitterness, and selfishness and cruelty rule out the tender emotions which the great Teacher inculcated. Shall we ask bread of those who can only give us a stone?

Did it ever occur to you that the picture you present of the coming doom reflects against the character of God? If "God is love" and "his tender mercies are over all his works," and he "will not cast off forever," and "doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men," why should we permit any interpretation of prophecy to represent Him as treating those who learn wisdom slowly with cool contempt, and shutting them out as strangers because they were not wise before they had time to mature? Such renderings are dishonoring to the Divine character.

It does not improve our moral perceptions to worship a God whose attributes are inferior to our own; and any interpretation of prophecy that is not consistent with infinite goodness and tender mercy cannot be correct.

But crises come in the order of nature. Evolution has climaxes. The strata of theological errors that have been hardening over the loveless teachings of the son of man for eighteen centuries are now crumbling at the touch of a new dispensation. The old dogmas that have so long proscribed religious sentiment and put out the fires of faith and love are melting away before the quickened conscience and inspired reason of a new civilization which is beginning to sense the "new commandment . . . that ye love one another" as an essential part of the "saving ordinance." Christian countries with their standing armies and disgraceful gallows are all following the light of the old barbarism, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"—"life for life and blood for blood"—in defiance of the law of love laid down in the gospels.

But the last fifty years—since the commencement of this "second advent," as foreseen by Miller—have inaugurated revolutionary reforms on every page of human history. The murder of heretics, the burning of witches, the justification of human slavery as a divine institution, cruelty to children, savage treatment of helpless women by authorized masters of their bodies and souls whose marital ownership had the sanction of religion and law, cruelty to animals, barbarity toward imbeciles and lunatics, and all the train of diabolical abuses justified by the dogmas of theology, are passing away under the beneficent influence of larger mental liberty and a closer communion with the spirit of truth—indicating the nearness of the pure life of heaven as it shone in the transfiguration when Moses and Elias communed with the son of man.

There is to-day a livelier sympathy for all who suffer, a broader charity, a deeper reverence, and a higher regard for human life than at any previous time. As the old bondage of creedal authority loosens its hold, and the new light tinges the gloom with rainbow hues, the spirit of fraternity thrills the world. The "second advent" is already come. The Bridegroom is in our midst opening up the light of life—the living Christ, the oil of salvation in our spiritual nature; the marriage feast of love, justice and truth is for all mankind. None will be looked out, or treated as strangers by the Prince of Peace. There are no calamitous prophecies to be fulfilled, except such as inevitably come in the order of evolution, and the awakening of the higher nature to declare the law of righteousness and banish idolatry, now so abundant in all the conflicting sects of Christendom.

Let us not repeat the old mistake of the Jews, and deny the Lord at his coming. We may know him by the love that leads us out of the bondage of fear; not by the "awfulness" connected with this climax "as seen through the shadows of mythology, and weird imaginings of an angry and savage God! We have no right to attribute to the Infinite any characteristics or conduct that would disgrace the name of a man; and any prophecy or interpretation that ascribes cruelty, ambition, vengeance or injustice to God, is a slander against the Most High. Let a perfect God as the maker of destiny be the key to all our interpretations. Fredonia, N. Y. LYMAN C. HOWE.

Awake, glad morning dawneth;  
Its light comes on apace;  
Be up! reflect its glory—  
Inspire the human race.  
  
There is no time to idle,  
To loiter by the way,  
For God, good men and angels  
Bespeak the coming day! J. E.

Higher Views of the Bible.

An English Congregationalist, Rev. R. F. Horton, who is called a man "of great learning and high standing," lent his aid, at the Grindelwald Conference in Switzerland, to a discussion of the inspiration of the Bible.

Mr. Horton represents the views known as the conclusions of the "Higher Criticism." After explaining the new view and discussing the authorship of the Old and New Testaments, he showed how, to his mind, the real value of the Bible as a book of religious guidance is now impaired, by the processes of criticism, and he showed how the newer views would aid Christian unity. The whole gist of the new view of the Bible, he said, is, spiritual, toward a truer faith, a greater certainty, a religion that is not open to the crippling criticism to which religion is at present so pliantly exposed and subjected. "The Bible," said he, "as it has been understood since the Reformation, has not been a means of uniting Christians. It has had an opposite effect rather. If said he, you find one set of brethren one time, you will find another set of brethren another time, who will not eat bread with the others. But he ventured to foretell that in future, men will not think of going to found their systems on the Bible; because they will understand that the Bible expressly refuses to give them a system or a theology. All the discussions now going on appear to take the course in which this mistake's view seems to follow. The scriptures of living humanity are being uplifted above a mere book."



## The Spiritual Postum.

THE SPIRIT-SPHERES ATTACHING TO THE EARTH,  
And the Mission of Modern Spiritualism to  
Humanity, as Affecting all Institu-  
tions and Classes of Society.

An Inspirational Lecture by  
W. J. COLVILLE.

We are glad the questioner has limited his desires for knowledge, concerning the spirit-world, to the planet earth and its environment, as the immediate influx of spiritual influence now felt by mankind certainly does proceed from those states of spiritual being which are intimately connected with the earth itself, and indeed nearly all the communications of average interest received from the spirit-world reach you through such intermediary minds as, by reason of their proximity to your own mental states, can easily play upon your sensibilities, and conduct their thoughts through the channels of your brains. The law of sympathy, or, as it is sometimes called, affinity, is the one great and sovereign law which renders spiritual communion possible; and neither on earth nor in the spirit-world can there be any communion or intercourse between spirits, unless they are in some sense kindred minds.

You all know that sympathy, or spiritual affection or union, is not dependent upon external associations, and is not governed by laws relating to earthly consanguinity. The very fact of marriage with one who is not a member of your own family circle, and the possibility of loving your wife or husband more than your brother or sister, even more than your parents, is a proof that there are ties of spirit deeper than any unions of sense. In alluding to a true and happy marriage, we are saying nothing whatever concerning those unions which are for time only, and exclusively of the senses. We mention the true marriage union as the highest, closest, holiest and most enduring of all; and all other unions, true friendships and intimate acquaintanceships, which are consummated in oneness of mind and thought—these are all practical exemplifications of the sublime fact of spiritual relationship and lasting accord.

Upon the earth the spirit is perpetually hampered and fettered by purely physical limitations, and thus scarcely any one appears as he really is. Death is the great revealer and emancipator in all instances; it strips you completely of your assumed robes, which you are often compelled to wear in the transaction of earthly business; for is there not a disguising of the true character, which cannot properly be called deception or hypocrisy? Are there not veils which you are obliged to throw over your inmost feelings, lest you should wound and annoy those around you; and does it not happen frequently that perforce you must labor at uncongenial tasks, for you are dependent upon the labor of your own hands for the bread which sustains your bodily life?

Now, the great difference between material and spiritual life is this: on earth, while in the body, you have to be actuated constantly by purely material considerations. You must have shelter, food, clothing, and money with which to purchase these things. The labor market may be in such a condition that your talents are not recognized, and the work you can best perform is not in demand. Thus very often a poet works in a coal mine, a philosopher drives a coach, a born politician is a waiter at a hotel, while persons of scarcely any qualification for the offices they hold are drawing large salaries and filling responsible positions, because of personal or party influence unduly exerted in their favor. One of the most painful and distressing anomalies of earthly existence is this crowding to the front of persons who have nothing but cheek and cunning to recommend them; while the noblest, the purest and the most talented are, in numberless instances, kept in the background.

Were it not for disclosures from the spiritual side of life, life would not be worth living to at least half the population of the globe; and so strongly is this conclusion emphasized by the experiences of the race, that we find millions upon millions of Orientals protesting that they want no immortality. Consciousness after death is not what they desire; they prefer to contemplate annihilation of individuality, for in the cessation of conscious being can they alone find rest from the troubles and woes of existence.

This condition of mind is morbid and unhealthy, and is not in accordance with Oriental philosophy at its highest and best. It is the pessimistic hope of those who have had no experiences calculated to make them optimists. Life to them has been one long, unintermitted round of prosaic drudgery, toiling for material necessities only, finding no enjoyment except in sleep or indolent repose. Possessed of constitutions not naturally robust, subject to the enervating influences of a trying and unhealthy climate, they very naturally desire no prolongation of life, as they understand it. The view they take of life is, perhaps, the only one they can take, as they have no spiritual insight into the life beyond, and their religion is so mystical in its allusions to the hereafter, that, though it may satisfy a metaphysician, it offers no consolation to the ordinary toiler in life's vineyard, who from day to day is doomed to the same humdrum round of labor, in which he evinces no interest, and which, in the very nature of things, is not calculated to inspire him with a sense of the value or beauty of life.

Some persons are, phenomenologically speaking, incapable of looking upon the bright side of nature, or taking a hopeful view of affairs in general, unless radical changes, most difficult to accomplish, are effected in their mental development; while, so long as the spirit dwells within the body, the condition of the physical frame has a great deal to do with the feelings of the individual; on the mission and purpose of his existence. A sound mind needs a sound body, just as a good performer needs a good instrument on which to display his powers; and in order to so revolutionize society that the world shall be as close a pattern of the higher spiritual spheres as possible, it is high time that workers in the spiritual vineyard endeavored to afford better conditions for a brighter display of spiritual light, by improving, as far as they are able, the tools and instruments which the spirits have to use in their communications with mankind.

Up to a certain point, Spiritualists and secularians can and ought to work together. Secularism maintains the necessity of physical culture and mental improvement. Many secularians are striving earnestly to better the moral as well as the intellectual and physical condition of those around them, and it is anything

but spiritual liberalism to refuse the right hand of fellowship to any honest toiler in the vineyard of reform. If there is to be a great spiritual awakening in all parts of the world, and that shortly, the abolition of slums and rookeries, the cleansing of filthy alleys, the sweeping away of dens of infection and infamy, the taking of sanitary precautions against disease, the study of physiology, and the equalization of mankind, that there be no longer unjust and flimsy distinctions claimed between race and race, class and class, or man and man—all these are works in which persons of widely different religious views may unite; and setting aside all difference of opinion on other points, it should be the steadfast aim of all noble souls, intent upon benefiting mankind, to set about the work of the reconstruction of society, in accordance with the best methods they can devise, and aided by the highest inspirations they can receive.

Spiritualism is a revelation. The facts it reveals are great and most important discoveries; but Spiritualism does not create or invent the spirit-world, or bring its denizens to earth from far-off realms in space, where they would forever remain disconnected with the earth were it not for the evocatory power of Spiritualists.

Mediumship does not call up spirits from the vasty deep, or summon them from distant heavens; though it is true there is a kind of mediumship which does possess a summoning and attractive power, but that mediumship is not confined to those who go into trances, hear mysterious sounds, or see spiritual visions. You may have no mediumistic power whatever, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, and yet be a greater medium, in every practical sense, than those whose clairvoyance, or any other acknowledged spiritual gift, is a household word wherever they are known; and it is to this intuitive, impressional mediumship that we wish to turn your especial attention, when dwelling for a few moments upon the evocatory power and nature of desire, and the ability of thought and will to hold communion with the unseen spheres.

Thought-reading is now the latest craze in fashionable circles. Almost every popular newspaper devotes a considerable amount of its space to discussing the pros and cons of the theory. Mental telegraphy is admitted by many of the greatest scientists of the age, who, while they will not compromise themselves with Agnostics by admitting Spiritualism, are quite prepared to avow their belief in some subtle means of thought-transfer, which traveling thought-readers and conjurers bring into prominence before the public. Of course such men are acting very foolishly when they attempt to destroy the people's faith in spiritual communion, by their clumsy feats oflegerdemain. Even when some of their tricks are cleverly performed, they do not touch the borders of genuine spiritual manifestations, as there can be no proof or test of spirit-power unless there be a display of intelligence.

When these conjurers and pretended exponents of Spiritualism undertake to counterfeited genuine spiritual phenomena, they render themselves ridiculous in the eyes of all who know anything of genuine Spiritualism. Let all who endeavor to unmask their own ignorance on spiritual matters remember that numberless spiritual manifestations have stood the closest scrutiny of eminently-scientific and highly-qualified observers, who could not possibly have been taken in by so silly and clumsy a subterfuge; and when it is remembered that persons are satisfied only with something which appeals to their inner nature, when they have solid grounds for their confidence in spiritual communion, the evidence against the conjurer as an exposé of Spiritualism becomes stronger and stronger with every fresh investigation, until at length he is forced to retire from the field, ignominiously defeated, or become himself a convert to Spiritualism, and explain to his audiences how his own performances have compelled him to relinquish his former untenable premises.

Thought-reading is the entering wedge, the partly-opened door which leads to a knowledge of spiritual science. If it is not a trick, then what is it? If it is an evidence of the power of minds to communicate with each other without the aid of the ordinary senses, then it goes a long way to prove the communion of minds with one another, independent of the physical organism.

Thought-readers are of two classes. One class may be said to be composed of adepts, the other of mediums. Adepts are really mediums, but they are persons of unusual strength of will, and, though under the influence of spirits, they are not controlled to the same extent that persons of weaker will are; thus there is a difference between them, as between mesmerist operator and subject, or psychologist and sensitive. No operator is so positive that he can be operated upon by no one; still he may be beyond the reach of the mental power of his audience and their surroundings; thus, though under spirit-control himself, he is controlled by beings of greater will-power than those in attendance upon persons whom he can subject to his will.

Spiritual science must be added to material science. The supra-material sciences are as natural as the material. Theology is as natural a science as geology; and until the public at large is willing to consider the claims of spiritual science, as it deals with Astronomy or Botany, Spiritualism will never be fairly treated, and the invisible world will never be intelligently understood, as a natural, objective, substantial, real world, in which force there does duty for matter here; and force is only a higher and more potential condition of being than matter. Both force and matter are emanations from spirit, and both force and matter are at length resolvable into spirit; as spirit, self-conscious, self-intelligent and eternal, is the only primal, absolute and ultimate existence or substance in the universe.

It is customary to speak of things as real or substantial, to the extent that they are discernible by the external faculties of man. In the spirit-world what is visible on earth is invisible, and what is invisible on earth is there visible. Thus the lens is completely reversed, and to a spiritual body matter offers no resistance; just as, to a material body neither force nor spirit offer resistance.

In a recent number of *Morning Light*, a Swedenborgian weekly, the editor, while admitting that we have said many things, both useful and suggestive, concerning correspondence and the work and illumination of Swedenborg, charges us with having unduly confounded the natural with the supernatural. We spoke of the Solenoid of Correspondence as a natural science. The editor of *Morning Light* says it is not a natural science, but a divine or spiritual science; and to him all things spiritual are supernatural.

It is clear to any thinker that a great deal of such quibbling is only verbal. We think all Swedenborgians are willing to allow that there is but one God, and that everything has been created, and is being upheld by his divine power. Then, if there be but one God, and the earth and the physical body are parts of his work, why make a distinction without a difference, and assign part of the universe to one class of laws, and another part to totally different laws? The law of God is the law of nature; there is but one law, as there is but one God, and the sooner the oneness of the universe is admitted, and the oneness of the laws that govern it, the better both for science and religion, which will always be opposing instead of friendly and allied powers, so long as things spiritual and physical are spoken of as though one were divine, and the other something quite the reverse.

No more favorite mode of dealing with death is extant in orthodox circles than that which represents the "last great change" as one which completely and forever dismembers the spirit from all connection with the earth. And yet Jesus, whose resurrection, according to Christianity, brought immortal life to light, promised to be ever with his people, so that whenever two or three were gathered in his name, they might enjoy communion with his spirit. "Prepare to meet thy God!" is reiterated so constantly in connection with man's passage from earth to spirit-life, that people are all unconsciously accustoming themselves to the belief that the future life is so entirely different from the present, that many deem it positively sacrilegious to speak of the spirit-world except as some golden Rome or Heliopolis transferred to the unseen spheres, where hallelujahs are to be shouted eternally by the redeemed in glory, ransomed through the blood of the lamb, from all pain and penalty forever.

This investment of the spirit-world with such a degree of unnaturness as to make it appear unreal and even uninviting to the majority of aspirants for immortality, is one of the most prolific sources of doubt and denial in the present day. The step from orthodoxy to infidelity is a very simple one. To give up the idea of a heaven, never more than vaguely realized, to lose faith in records and traditions, and to treat the testimony of the ancients as a myth, is easy to many minds. Thus, from extreme orthodoxy to hopeless infidelity many pass without having realized that they have really given up much that was worth preserving. The heaven of orthodoxy is so deeply shadowed by its hell, that unbelief is a positive comfort to many deeply sympathetic natures. A God who cannot save all cannot be Almighty; a God who will not if he can, is unworthy of our love; and the thought of spending an eternity with such a being, even though under his smile, is awful rather than satisfying to the deepest longings of the human heart.

Spiritualism has done what neither Theism, Unitarianism, nor Free-Religion could accomplish: it has effectually naturalized the spirit-world, and has made countless human hearts rejoice in living realization of an immortality which is theirs here and now. Its phenomena appeal to the senses, while its philosophy satisfies the astute intellect; and we need a combination of phenomena and philosophy to reach different sections of mankind, and solve the great problem of man's nature and destiny adequately to the comprehension of all.

We regret a tendency among Spiritualists to exalt one phase of spirit-communion above another. This tendency is no doubt natural, and is easily accounted for and explained, but it is not healthy, neither is it calculated to promote harmony or unity among common believers in the cardinal virtues of the modern spiritual revelation. One person will visit London and write to a newspaper underrating physical phenomena, and, perhaps, over-estimating the importance of philosophical addresses; another person speaks coldly, almost alightingly, of what appeals to the intellect, and exaggerates the importance of sensuous demonstrations. All such comparisons are mischievous, invidious and unfair. They are, moreover, hasty and short-sighted, and do not evidence a well-balanced mind.

The needs of human nature are so varied that all the different modes of spiritual operation now extant are essential to the reaching of all classes of intellect, and the satisfaction of every type of inquirer. Rivalry, jealousy, these cursed tempters, are utterly out of place in a movement where all true workers help each other. Every honest medium helps every other honest medium, and those poor sensitive who are too weak to resist temptation, and so pliant that they echo the thoughts of all around them for the time being, instead of being held up to ridicule, execration and reproach, should be so kindly and tenderly dealt with that they be induced not to err or fall in future as they have done in the past.

We have often heard and read the remark, that when a medium has once been caught in deception, he should be abandoned to the mercy of the cold world. Spiritualists should refuse him countenance, turn their backs upon him, show him the cold shoulder, write against him in the papers, and straightway commence vilifying him among all their acquaintances and warning the public against him. How suicidal must such a policy be to the best interests of truth and rectitude! If you throw an easily-tempted sensitive upon the merces of an unscrupulous world, and do nothing whatever to shelter, reform and uplift him, you are not destroying an evil, ridding society of a nuisance, or removing a stumbling-block or rock of offense out of your neighbor's way. Unkindness never reforms, unmerciful punishment never uproots iniquity. Those you trample under foot remain the sinners they were; they are not strengthened or reformed by your cruelty and cowardice, but become an easier and easier prey to the wiles of those unprincipled hoaxers, who are ever ready to make use of tools for the accomplishment of their own unworthy ends. And is it to be wondered at, when earth is constantly pouring into the spirit-world troops of liars, thieves and blacklegs, that these unreformed characters should still hang round their favorite haunts on earth, and as dwellers on the threshold, or earth-bound spirits, continue to infect those neighborhoods and places of assembly where they perpetrated their crimes and follies while in the material form? Every infirmity, which is but an infirmity of the flesh, is overcome when the body dies; the weaknesses incident to an imperfect body, and the manifold temptations to which you are unwillingly exposed, are shaken off at the entrance to the immortal world. But desire is fulfilled, and wherever there is aspiration toward any state of existence, links of affinity bind you to that state, and you are, as Swedenborg has said, a denizen of hell, only, if you choose hell instead of heaven.

The notions of Swedenborg, and those of Dante, need not be called in question, because the Lutheran and Roman Catholic dogmas of eternal punishment is set aside. Swedenborg was brought up a Lutheran, and Dante a Catholic. Their ideas of the everlasting perpetuity of evil were modified by spiritual revelation, but not overcome, as there are states of existence beyond the grave which temporarily answer to every mortal conception of the hereafter. The sensualist finds his haven in the invisible world, and as the Koran states, the places filled on earth by women are there filled by paradisaical angels. Mohammed was a seer, but he saw those heavens which only answer to human avarice and lust. He dreamed a voluptuous dream which chorced well with the voluptuousness of the Orientals among whom he dwelt, and to whom his religion most forcibly appealed. The heaven of Mohammed, however, becomes a hell eventually, for those who go out from earth with no higher aspirations than those which, if fulfilled, will gratify the senses, find that at length all libertinism cloy upon the spirit, and safety, not satisfaction, is the ultimate of sordid dreams of animal enjoyment.

The sensualist may hover round the earth, and still engage in midnight revelry and song. Troops of spirits, who on earth led dissipated lives, may be witnessed by clairvoyants in every haunt of gaiety and dissipation. There are their worlds; their spheres are within the atmosphere, on earth. If they have not intentionally wronged their fellows, then they are numbered among the frivolous and vain, and while their lives are most woefully empty and unsatisfactory to the higher nature, they are not in torment, neither do they experience that loneliness and depression which those must undergo whose selfishness has been such that they have never bestowed a thought except upon themselves and their own advancement.

Would that the misers and egotists of the earth could see what we have seen of the darker side of spirit-life! Such revelations would surely lead them to repent of their follies ere it is too late, and sow, while here on earth, something better than wretched tares for their reaping at the harvest hour of mortal dissolution. But those who live entirely on the plane of the senses are so steely against warnings of every kind, that should visions ever so startling be shown to them, they would dismiss them from their minds as quickly as possible, refusing to accept the teaching they conveyed. We have known many who have had countless spiritual experiences, and have attributed them all to ill health or over-excitement, and have taken ardent spirits and sleeping-draughts, and all kinds of physic, to prevent a recurrence of those unwelcome disturbers of their peace. Among those who determinately refuse to give heed to messengers from the unseen world, no matter how vividly they make their presence known, are to be found the nineteenth-century brethren of a modern Dives, to whom it would be useless to offer a revelation, as they would not repent though one rose from the dead.

There seems reluctance to send a messenger, on the part of Abraham, in the story of Dives and Lazarus, but a close analysis of the allegory will let us see that its author intended to convey was the existence of states of mind to which spiritual truths could only make a useless appeal, and because of the fruitlessness of the task it was not undertaken. The mistake is only in supposing that the task would be eternally fruitless, whereas the condition of a spirit or mortal at any given time when he may be interviewed is no just criterion of the state he will be in say a century, or even a year, from now.

The Hindus, who said there were fourteen spiritual spheres, of which the earth was one, correctly located the earth-bound sphere within the atmosphere of the earth itself; though, if they inferred that there were seven degrees of spiritual existence below the earth they were astray in their calculations, so far as human spirits are concerned; for there is no retrogression in nature, and no spirit really deteriorates when passed from the body, though apparent deterioration may result from the inability of a spirit to withstand new temptations, by which he has been hitherto untried.

Spiritualism may apparently prove the deterioration of some minds in the hereafter, but in all cases where deterioration seems evident, one of two explanations will serve to show how baseless may be the assumption. There are many on earth who live outwardly respectable but hypocritical lives. They pass current in society as virtuous, but their virtue consists in nothing more than conformity to certain external requirements of a superficial state of society: polished manners, a smooth tongue, a little easy, affected charity, some degree of attention paid to religious observances, and the world caresses you with its sweetest smile. You may be a calumniator or detractor if you will, you may blacken reputations without mercy, you may amass wealth in ways that will bear no honest investigation, but so long as you keep within the bounds of the letter of human law, you are free from censure, and are indeed accounted a most exemplary member of society.

Now, in spirit-life, everything goes by motive, intention, desire, thought, will; these are the realities which go to make up character; and by interior standards are you judged in the hereafter. Some one may have been badly born, scarcely educated at all, allowed to grow up like a weed without any culture. When a child he may have been surrounded with a whole host of adverse circumstances, and the power of evil pitted against his feeble strength, may have been so overpoweringly great that it was impossible for him to withstand the force of so great temptations. He may have striven a million times to resist; he may have succeeded, over and over again, but the world only knows when he has fallen. It chronicles his failures, it makes capital out of his mistakes, it holds up its hands in holy horror when the name of so great a culprit is mentioned, and yet if those who pride themselves on the easy, negative, automatic, fashionable "virtue" they think so praiseworthy had been subjected to a hundredth part of the temptation their "fallen" brother has endured, they would have sunk unmentionably lower than he in the pit of degradation.

Your young men and women who have never been away from home, and have known nothing of the world's seductions, are in no position to offer contrasts to those who have fallen into sin, when exposed to temptations the mere names of which the carefully-nurtured and vigilantly-protected may have never heard. It is for no man to judge his brother, and if there be one vice more hateful in the eyes of angels than another, it is that spiritual pride which so often goes, before the deepest and most disgraceful falls.

In the spirit-world every circumstance of earthly life is taken into account. When the old Egyptians graphically painted the scene in the Judgment Hall, before Osiris, they were not at all astray in their conception of the true spiritual judgment, when they weighed the actions of the departed from earth in scales adjusted with accurate nicety. But, after all, the acts are not so important as the motives; and yet from pure motives, pure acts must ever spring, so the outward and inner life must to some extent correspond; but as all have not equal light, and many sin in ignorance, the command is lawful—Judge not, that ye be not judged.

We have never yet come across any one who was healthy who enjoyed idleness, and we are certain no healthy child likes to be doing nothing. No picture of heaven can be more disheartening than that which paints it as a world of monotonous ease and listless indolence. The incessant music of heaven must be a figure of the incessant motion and activity of those who are in heaven. True music is harmony, and the perfect harmony of life within and without must ever constitute the bliss of the celestial world.

Many persons seem to think that Spirit Spheres are arbitrarily located around the earth, within a certain radius of its circumference, and though there are earth-bound spirits who are thus confined, spirit spheres, properly speaking, are strictly individual. Spirits travel in their spheres. If their spheres are bright and comfortable, then, wherever they may be, they are in happiness and peace. If their inward condition is dark and doleful, then can they rest nowhere; and should they dwell where others are in bliss, the contrast to their own condition would but add misery to their already pitiable state.

Take, for a moment, the condition of a man on earth who owns a thousand acres of ground, possesses a stately mansion, superbly furnished and decorated; has horses and carriages at his command, and, in a word, everything the eye or ear or any of the outward senses can desire. He may be afflicted with some distressing malady, which baffles the skill of the ablest physician. He may have some secret sorrow pressing upon him, he may possess a cheerful and happy nature, which forbids him to enjoy. Of what use are all his fair fields to him? Can his money make him happy? He who wears a diadem, surrounded by every sign of prosperity, may be far more wretched than the beggar on the roadside, who sleeps on a door-step or in a hay-loft, and dreams of angels, to wake refreshed for another day's wearisome search for bread, with an eye open to the beauties of all around him. No place or rank can make happiness. Could mortals enter heaven through the intercession of Christ; could Peter be induced to open the gate of heaven and let the suppliants in, they would not know heaven from hell when they got there, unless they developed heaven-mindedness while passing through the gate.

Christ went to paradise, to hell, to prison all at once. He went among the dark and wretched sufferers in the earth-bound sphere, who needed his preaching and his sympathy. Could he be unhappy on a holy mission of self-denying love? Could he be thinking of the darkness and the gloom while divine light was welling up within him and shedding its celestial radiance on all around? The glow-worm is never in the dark; it carries its own light with it. If your heaven be within, if your happiness depends upon what you yourself are, and not upon where you are, then you travel in heaven, and heaven travels in you, and your constant enjoyment springs from the fact of your shedding brightness wherever you go; so that if your mission be among prisoners and the distressed, you are not partakers of their misery, while you are lighteners of their woe. You are perfectly happy just so soon as you are perfectly absorbed in works of beneficence. When the spirit really awakes to a true sense of its condition, it sees around it the results of its own labors, and for every tear that it has caused, it must needs shed one; while for every joy it has conferred, it must needs feel within itself an answering echo of pure content.

We have now just a minute in which to express our views upon the true relations of Spiritualism to all existing institutions. That there will be a coming religion and a coming church we do not doubt; but Spiritualism, as a sectarian movement, we are convinced will never prosper if the advocates of sectarian Spiritualism desire simply to add another to the numberless divisions into which the religious world is already unhappily divided.

There are Protestant, Jewish, Mahometan, Parsee, Confucian, Zoroastrian and numberless other heavens near the earth, and the influx from these upon receptive minds tends to build up those earthly institutions which are counterparts of those invisible spheres. With the advancement and liberalization of the spirits forming those societies in the spirit-world, they blend into common fellowship and become organized into communities of kindred souls, where, seeing truth from a higher standpoint than that of any of these sectaries, they mingle till they become universal in their sympathies and regard.

When Spiritualism shall have swept away the dark accumulations of error and bigotry from the churches and colleges of earth, then will come a day when all schools will blend in amicable union. Some may prefer the plainness of the Quaker meeting-house, others the sumptuousness of St. Peter's at Rome; but eventually every temple of religion, of art, of philosophy, of science, will become a SPIRITUAL TEMPLE, and Spiritualism will be the agent employed by the angel-world in bringing about that much-needed and longed-for reconciliation which will at length make all religions, languages and peoples one.

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Thanking its regular subscribers anew for their continued kindness, THE BANNER's publishers desire that this—the veteran journal of the spiritual movement—shall receive its share of support from the new comers into our household of knowledge. With this hope the above offer is made.

## A Word to Our Readers:

We express in type, rather than by letter, our thanks to an esteemed correspondent, a long-tried and true friend of THE BANNER, for a recent letter advising us of a certain covert attempt on the part of some more recent converts to Spiritualism to misrepresent the position and aims of this paper, and who, in their zeal to compass certain ends, lose sight of the facts of history and the true basis of all spiritualistic progress.

THE BANNER is no makeshift, playing fast and loose with the work of the spirit-world for selfish ends of whatever character. It has for more than the lifetime of a generation been sincerely and unselfishly devoted to the propagation of the truth as revealed by incarnate intelligences and to the defense of well-established phenomena, honest mediums and what thousands now believe, or know to be, a sound philosophy of continuous life. It numbers among its friends and supporters on the earth-side-to-day, as in the past, an army of veteran Spiritualists—men and women of ripe experience in the things of the spirit, true and tried under the hottest fires of persecution, standing firm under a long and bitter social ostracism, engendered and fomented by fashionable credulism and such of its adherents as claim exclusive seats in the high councils of a creedal God, the custodians of His secret purposes and the exclusive teachers of His will. To this day these deny that Deity employs any of the forces in His universe, except those which have been disclosed to man during the earlier periods of history.

The advent of incarnate spirits into this mortal realm with their mission of light and knowledge, and their consoling presence to mortals, set the whole credal world in a ferment of opposition; pulpits thundered anathemas in whatever latitude or longitude a spirit found a medium through whom to manifest either as a force or an intelligence. The religious and secular press, like a pack of excited hunters, gave voice, and mediums, investigators and disciples, all were falsified, abused and traduced without stint. Honest men and women with the courage of their convictions, who became pronounced Spiritualists then, have been the veterans since.

THE BANNER OF LIGHT was then born to its mission, and has remained in it unmoved by doubt or fear, and unswayed by favor. It has seen its advisers and staunch supporters melt into the spirit-life, only to return in the spirit with a constant hail and greeting, hearty blessings and promises of undying support. It occupies the same position to-day. It is a messenger of the spirit-world, the defender of its revelations, the advocate of its wise plans, the disseminator of its teachings, and the follower of its wise counsels.

Its initial, but now veteran editor—of acknowledged clear brain, remembering everything and forgetting nothing touching a sacred cause which is still enshrined in his heart, himself attuned by mediumship to his onerous position—still obeys the orders of the advancing spirit-hosts who continue to plan the battle and lead its aggressive forces.

The work of the spirit-world in the mundane has been unique. It has differed from the ordinary routine methods of all other disciplines and ethical, religious or social aggregations of peoples. It has been and still is a philosophy without a school tyrannized over by professors and masters; a religion without a visible church, and a discipleship without a dog-

matic creed. It develops all the latent powers of a true man and womanhood by individualizing men and women, placing them independently upon their own feet, to live their own lives and develop their own characters for an eternal existence, under the personal influence of spirit-presence. It enlarges the phenomenal field as fast as the evolved brain and heart of the world is prepared to comprehend and accept. In every advance, every new manifestation or revelation, there has been a general concurrence of spirit-teachings throughout the civilized world.

It is spirit-forces which have led and directed; the BANNER OF LIGHT, true to its mission, has followed, learning by experience that it is always safe to follow where our immortal friends lead. THE BANNER occupies the same position to-day. It is not moved by the clamors of aspiring would-be leaders and managers on the earth-side, because satisfied that when the true directing forces of this greatest revolution of all the historic ages have their work in readiness, they will sound the call for a fresh advance in their own way, along original lines, and not become the copyists of old religious despotisms, which have heretofore exalted the few and oppressed and burdened with taxation the many.

THE BANNER is for "organization," if the spirit-world desires it, is ready for it and directs it; if not—not! It was gratified when the resolution of Mrs. Dr. Sheehan was introduced into the Chicago assemblage and so unanimously substituted for the previously prepared program then in the wrangling whirl of debate more marked by its impassioned utterances than for cool and judicial temper and consideration. In providing for a temporary organization, limiting the experiment to one year, time was given for the practical solution of the real questions: Is the Cause in this country ripe for a permanent organization? Do the spirit-guides of the work wish it? Are the old forms of organization to be copied, or will the wiser spirits indicate what shall be its form or character? The veteran Spiritualists desire instructions upon these vital questions, and calmly wait; not upon limited, earthly judgment, so easily shaded by self in some form, but upon the wisdom guides who have been and still are in the lead of the whole movement. Some of our enthusiastic friends who have not been personally taught in the school of adversity and failure, as have the veterans in the Cause, seem to lose both their charity of temper and speech. With the great conservative mass of veterans who have repeatedly suffered, and seen the Cause suffer and receive staggering blows through the zeal, inexperience, or even ambition of others, THE BANNER waits for orders from our spirit-leaders, and will give those orders both welcome and cheerful obedience.

In the development of Spiritualism thus far there has been small opportunity for the display of personal ambition in leadership, or the assumption of superior wisdom and skill in management on the part of its mortal disciples. The directing headquarters still remain on the immortal side of life, from whence the power to win all victories proceeds. There it must remain, or human vanity, pride and ambition will give the Cause an adverse blow which will send it reeling backwards, only to gather fresh forces under better material conditions.

Concreted wealth has not yet adorned or cursed this great movement, as it has cursed other organizations, notably the Christian Church, greatly to the spiritual detriment of its membership and its unit movements. The large majority of our people are in the middle walks of life—bread-winners, both intelligent and generous, but who are forced to count their little surpluses of production over consumption, and when the balance is upon the other side, receive aid from the spirit-friends, generally through their more fortunate but benevolent brothers and sisters. A very few are rich, in the parlance of the world. The majority are poor. The lot of THE BANNER has been, of choice, cast with the poor and their interests. It does not look favorably upon systems of taxation for success in morals or ethics—those old methods through which tyranny and oppression have found voice through all past history; providing the high purposes and plans of the spirit-world can be accomplished without resorting to its exercise, and of that the spirit-world is the best judge.

But this and all other matters pertinent to organization can be left for the present to the practical outcome of this temporary experiment which was inaugurated at Chicago. The columns of THE BANNER are open for the temperate but limited presentation of all sides of the question, while its editorial staff will see to it that its readers will, as in the past, be kept fully advised of all items of interest relating to the subject.

In the meantime, let not the zeal of the convert seek to destroy the wisdom of the experienced; the ambition to become leaders lead to still another spiritualistic "Bull Run" of useless defeat; nor self-esteem be inflamed into an obstinacy which will consume that kindly spirit of charity and personal respect for others and their equal rights which makes all human associations possible or even tolerable.

## The Abolishment of War.

That the direct and increasing tendency of civilized nations is toward peace and a consequent system of disarmament is, we think, sufficiently assured by the facts in the case, which can be judged of all persons. Art and literature, no less than commerce and trade, bear out the assertion with a peculiar emphasis. The powerful realistic novels of Tolstoi, Suttor and Zola constitute the most effective affirmations of a fact so entirely grateful to humanity at large, as do also the harrowing canvas pictures of such well-known artists as Detaille, De Neuville and Verestchagin. All alike represent war, not as it was pictured to the imagination and the eye at the beginning of the present century, but in all its real repulsiveness and horror, with little or no national regard to victors or vanquished. It is this terrible fidelity to nature on the illuminated canvas that sets the dreadful character of the actual fact before us in its true light, and creates and leaves the only right impression.

The considerations of a practical nature that strongly favor the decay and ultimate dissolution of the war spirit are the extending democratic spirit visible among men, the increasing sense of brotherhood among nations as the result of modern civilization, the marvelous development of the means of destruction for armies and navies, and the standing example of our own favored country in the face of the heavily-burdened nations of the world. It ought indeed to be a serious question

whether we have not reached a stage of civilization sufficiently advanced to warrant the abolishment of war! Whether it is not time to address ourselves to the solution of the problem in earnest. Whatever may still be said about the necessity of war, and about a worse condition confronting us if it were abolished, the real and grouping of the dread statistics of war should be more than enough to stamp it as a relic of barbarism, to be got rid of at the earliest day possible. It is stated that the cost of the support of the armies and navies of Europe for 1892 was nearly two and a half thousand millions of dollars; and the cost to the same nations from 1790 to 1880, a period of ninety years, was over fifteen and a quarter thousand millions of dollars. It cost more than six thousand millions of dollars to carry on our late civil war, beside the thousand and a half millions of dollars for pensions from 1863 to 1893. Add to this enormous aggregate the untold millions of dollars lost by private individuals.

Then look at the loss of human lives by war, a truly appalling estimate. In the ninety years already named, Europe lost 4,470,000 human lives from war, an average of over fifty thousand lives a year. In our civil war, the total loss of life was over nine hundred thousand persons, to say nothing of the three million who were wounded. Wellington lost over twenty-three thousand men at Waterloo; and the total loss at Sedan was more than twenty-one thousand. The reports of the Eastern Penitentiary of Pennsylvania for 1886 show that during the last three months of the year the influx of prisoners was unusually large, nine-tenths of them having been more or less incapacitated and demoralized by an apprenticeship to the trade of war. The report of the Western Penitentiary of the same State records that after the close of the late war the number of prisoners increased so rapidly as practically to annul the methods of labor. During the year 1879, eighty-five percent. of all the convicts received there had served in either the army or the navy. The commissioners of the Massachusetts State Prison report that the commitments increased so rapidly after the close of the war that it became necessary in 1867 to provide additional room. The report of the New York City Prison at Blackwell's Island for 1886 states that the number of prisoners rapidly increased after the close of the war; in 1864 the number confined was 921, and in 1865 1,670. Here is to be plainly seen the moral effect of war.

As a forcible writer pungently puts the case: "War pauperizes the people, fills the jails, makes countless widows, orphans and cripples, and returns to them nothing that could not be satisfactorily obtained by the establishment, under a general judiciary department, of a world's supreme court." As to its pauperizing a nation there is no longer any doubt, in view of the present enormous public debts. Eight European nations owe nearly nineteen thousand millions of dollars, or over seventy dollars per capita of their population. Of course, each of them maintains a large standing army and navy. Our own public debt in 1890 was fourteen billion dollars and a quarter per capita of our population, and we have scarcely any standing army to speak of, and only a small navy.

These enormous standing armies of the nations of Europe are kept up at the expense of the laboring people who are not yet in them, and these oppressed wage-earners, who have no voice whatever in the matter, feel the weight of the burdens imposed on them with a daily and hourly pang of pain and suffering.

To terminate this state of civilized barbarism, it has been suggested that the President of the United States invite the nations of the world to appoint commissioners to meet at a stated place with a view to the formulation of plans for universal peace. We should then have, if this were done, a general judiciary department of the world—the world's supreme court, composed of one associate justice from each nation, who should be chosen by the chief executive to serve for life. It would constitute the grandest body of legal talent ever assembled on the face of the earth. All international questions that could not be amicably settled by the various diplomatic corps would here be heard and adjusted on the merits of the case, instead of by the physical power of the nation affected.

## Whale, White Shark, Jonah, and the Presbyterians.

Dr. Briggs, the martyred Presbyterian heretic, has recently been addressing the Young Men's Hebrew Association of New York. In the course of his address he remarked that biblical criticism was "sifting the rubbish" in the Bible, and proceeded to illustrate his point thus: "In the case of Jonah, after a desperate contest, the anti-critics will eventually come over to the position of the critics, that Jonah is an inspired work of the imagination, a beautiful religious story, and so escape the storm of historical criticism in the safe harbor of the higher criticisms." The Book of Jonah has long been accepted by the existing church as a historical narrative of actual events. Hence Dr. Briggs's interpretation pulls up another ancient landmark of faith, and convicts him of still another abominable "heresy."

One of the prosecuting committee of Dr. Briggs, Dr. Robert F. Sample, is reported as having said in an interview on the subject, that, in accordance with the church's teachings, he believed the Book of Jonah historically accurate in all its details. "Most assuredly I believe," said he, "that Jonah was swallowed by some great fish, and lived in it three days and three nights. Tradition says that he was cast up on the coast of Assyria, between Tyre and Acre. I had the exact traditional spot pointed out to me when I was in Assyria some years ago. The Bible does not say that Jonah was swallowed up by a whale, but by a great fish. There is a fish in the sea to-day which has a throat large enough to swallow Jonah! I looked the matter up, once, and I think the fish capable of swallowing a human being is a white shark." The inquiry was put: "What will you do if the history of Nineveh has no place for Jonah?" Dr. Sample thought it indicated a desire of Dr. Briggs to have the support of profane history as to Jonah, and that he was unwilling to accept what the history of the times would not sustain.

Another of Dr. Briggs's prosecutors, Rev. Dr. John J. Stevenson, said concerning Dr. Briggs's interpretation of the Jonah story: "There is nothing new in this. He is at liberty to say anything he pleases about Jonah." He said he had no feeling against Dr. Briggs; "he is a good fellow." When he finished work on the prosecuting committee, he "finished with Dr. Briggs." Possibly he thinks he finished him likewise!

Dr. Stevenson agreed that the Book of Jonah

was received by the church as a historical narrative, and classed it with "the received truths of the Bible." Rev. Dr. Parkhurst declined to commit himself to an opinion on the Book of Jonah, but allowed that the Presbyterian church accepted it as a historical narrative, but that many in the church believe as Dr. Briggs does. But he did not himself think it necessary for any practical person to bother his head about the question of the whale story. The conservative element of the church, however, he said, would of course accuse Dr. Briggs of another heresy.

Now here is a "pretty kettle of fish" indeed! A whole church, boasting of its learning, its wealth, its catechism creed, its distinguished divines and elders, stirred to its very depths by the "heresy" contained in the belief that the Bible story of a whale's swallowing Jonah, and disgorging him after having given him three days' and three nights' hospitality, is an "inspired imagination," instead of a historical narrative of an actual event! And even at that, a church doctor fishily substitutes a "white shark" for a "whale," because he "knew how it was himself"—was it by actual measurement? Why is not his opinion as to the kind of fish involved just as much a "heresy" as Dr. Briggs's opinion of the whale narrative?

## A New Step for Human Rights.

Mr. Gladstone's most welcome announcement to the House of Commons that the government had determined to interpose its offices for the immediate adjustment, or at least the temporary accommodation of the great "coal strike" of the English miners, was naturally received with hearty applause. The happy result of that interference is already well known. According to the arrangement concluded between the miners and the mine owners, the former immediately resume work at the old rates, and continue to obtain those rates until the first of February next, after which time a Board of Conciliation, made up of fourteen mine owners and fourteen delegates of the miners, is to decide what reduction, if any, shall be made.

Lord Roseberry, representing the government, was selected as the arbiter or umpire in the matter, though only nominally so, since his whole duty consisted in an official offer of assistance to both parties in arriving between themselves at an early settlement. Both sides were invited by the government to send representatives to a conference of which Lord Roseberry was to be the Chairman. Mr. Gladstone stated to the Commons that it appeared to the government that advantages might accrue from a free discussion of the points at issue between the parties, under the chairmanship of a member of the government who might not be unacceptable to either side.

The result more than vindicated the hopes expressed for the proposed movement. This coal strike has proved to be one of the greatest and most serious strikes ever witnessed in England. It has brought scores of thousands of miners, with their dependent wives and families, to the verge of famine, greatly increased the price of coal, spread untold suffering among the poor all over England, and seriously obstructed and retarded the whole machinery of industry. Lord Roseberry, while not attempting to disguise his sympathy for the striking miners, nevertheless was able by his position and influence to persuade the owners of the collieries to make the concessions necessary to reach a mutual agreement. The mine-owners were stubborn at first in their refusal to yield the ten-per-cent. reduction in wages for which they contended, but they were finally persuaded to yield, undoubtedly hoping to carry their point in February. They rest their position on the statistics of the mining industry for the past eight years, which certainly furnish them with strong ground.

But no matter now about the exact right or wrong of the matter; it is enough to have succeeded in taking an advance step in the adjustment of the disputes arising between labor and capital, between employed and employers, in so signal an instance, for the first one, as is furnished by the memorable coal strike in England. The result may have been the more readily reached in view of the threatened suffering of such a vast body of the population during the winter now close at hand, but that cannot be held too great a price to pay for the conversion of two large bodies of men, representing the most powerful social forces, to a proposal that begins and ends in reason and signally conserves the rights of each and all. These boards of conciliation have already been approved and advocated by THE BANNER on numerous recent occasions, as preliminary aids to the discussions that were to follow and preparations for a more or less certain adjustment of labor disputes. We cannot refrain from the expression of our sincere satisfaction at this manifest triumph of reason and fraternal feeling in so notable a struggle before the world. May it contain the full promise of still better things!

## The Cruel Check-Rein.

President Angell of the Cruelty to Animals Society writes to the Boston Globe that the agents of his Society had just secured the conviction of a man in Brighton for abuse of his horse by the use of a needlessly tight check-rein. The case was brought before one of the judges of the municipal court of Boston, who imposed a fine of five dollars upon the accused for the alleged offense. President Angell adds a statement of his belief that this is the first conviction in the world for this offense. And we may add that if the cruel and torturing practice is continued, we sincerely hope it is not to be the last.

There is positively no reason or excuse for a practice that has grown out of man's thoughtless, unintelligent vanity. Merely to show off his horse as a high-headed animal, as if that were evidence of his spirit, the owner will rein him up so that he cannot turn his head to the right or the left, and is handicapped with the cruelest of heavy obstructions in his attempt to climb a hill or draw a load. The man who now uses a check-rein on a horse gives open evidence to everybody of one of two things: either that he remains inexorably ignorant of the animal's anatomy, and therefore of the use of his powerful neck and chest muscles, or else of the possession of cruelty whose display deserves an exemplary punishment.

The horse is the noblest and truest friend to man in the entire animal family, and the dog is next; any comparison between them is now inappropriate. But both are such companions as add vastly to the sum of his happiness and greatly increase the range of his practical sympathies. To choke the horse with the torturing check or curb-rein is not only a cruelty, but a positive injury to the animal. And so we are

prompt in expressing our satisfaction that an intelligent and truly humane judge has given a corresponding interpretation to the modern statute by properly fining the first offender brought before him.

Now let the good work thus begun go on until the abomination known as the check-rein is torn from the head-stall worn by the horse and thrown into the rubbish heap of unused mistakes and vain relics. What can be finer than to view a horse using his head as if he were really conscious that his arched neck is "clothed with thunder"? He wants all the freedom of action he can safely have, if he is to perform the service we require of him in the easiest, because the natural, way.

## Thanksgiving.

One day in the three hundred and sixty-five days that make our rolling year is customarily dedicated by official recommendation and established habit to the fullest expression of domestic and individual happiness and enjoyment. It comes this week, and THE BANNER accompanies it with its heartiest wishes to all people, whether Spiritualists or not, for the gratification of their deepest and warmest home and social happiness. The first thought of every one on this annually recurring occasion ought to be one of gladness, let our measure be running over or only partially filled; gladness for our matchless gift of existence on this earth, which has once more yielded its bounties for the common sustenance and good; gladness for our escape from the visitation of great calamities and the continuance of the general health; gladness over the reflection that the grand family of the nations has assembled around our board and remained our fraternal guests for half the year; gladness for home, for friends, for health, for hope, for the present heaven which it is in the power of us all to make and enjoy.

The usual custom that crowns our national—once local and provincial—Thanksgiving is the making of family feasts. It is a good one, because appropriate to the ending of the year of production and the gathering in of the harvest. Such a feast promotes the real family feeling more than almost any other observance could do, and becomes the more interesting and important because the family in our country of freedom constitutes the unit of the State. A well-spread board, laden with the substantial that cheer and sustain, is a happy sign and token of grateful contentment; and its framework and setting of happy faces, with attending good spirits and kindly mingling sentiments and sympathies, furnishes a picture of home happiness such as none other can supply which the imagination of man is able to create. Home sentiment is as deeply and truly religious as any sentiment can be in this world. All happiness on earth begins and ends at the home hearth and the home table. And our happy inspiration of an annual Thanksgiving celebration springs naturally from it, and therefore deserves the widest, most serious and sincerest observance.

## Our "God's Poor" Fund.

As the inclement season of the year is at hand, it behooves all good, sincere Spiritualists to aid THE BANNER in dispensing financial assistance to those who are the most in need.

Calls are coming to this office from various quarters which we are unable to meet as in past years, as our Poor Fund is greatly reduced—even to the verge of exhaustion. Therefore, we ask for contributions from those in our ranks who are able to do so. We make this call at the earnest request of our humanitarian spirit friends. We have recently aided an old invalid lady Spiritualist in Maine, who has just acknowledged the amount sent with the deepest gratitude. We also desire to render further aid to Mrs. Annie Lord Chamberlain, and we have a call to assist pecuniarily Miss Lottie Fowler, now in Chicago, who is in distressed circumstances. Shall we call in vain?

## The Spirit Spheres.

Attention is called to the lecture on our second page by the guides of W. J. Colville. Although originally published some years since by James Burns, 15 Southampton Row, London, W. C., it is eminently in touch with present-day life, and is certainly one of the finest efforts of Mr. Colville's guides, giving the reader an insight into what is called spirit-spheres. It is replete with information, and contains advice to maligners of mediums that they can profitably peruse and ponder over.

An interesting letter on current topics has been received from Professor Alexander Wilder, and will appear in THE BANNER next week.

## A Pleasant Reminiscence.

"J. O. C.," writing for the weekly Notes and Queries in the Boston Transcript, briefly narrates a very pleasant characteristic of the well-known Rev. Dr. Daniel Sharp, a Baptist divine of Boston in its old days, showing how truly human and liberal a man of that time could be in matters of religion. Speaking of the old church edifice located in School street (just north of the BANNER OF LIGHT building), in which the Rev. Hosea Ballou preached for several years as the father of Universalism, and which occupied the site of one that was erected by the Huguenots in the early part of the last century, he takes occasion to observe that Dr. Sharp, who was one of the true saints of his day and generation, seems to him to have acted consistently in serving as a pall-bearer at the obsequies of Father Ballou. It is to be borne in mind, he says, that Dr. Sharp was an English, not an American, Baptist, and was not, therefore, in the full sense of the term a Calvinist. He was, in fact, very moderately, if at all, such. He was evidently possessed of the idea, carried out in after years with such brilliant success by the lamented Phillips Brooks, that heaven must be in man before man can be in heaven.

Therefore turning aside from the doctrines of Calvinism, he directed his pulpits-teachings to the promotion of a good life in all who listened to his instructions. The parish, observes this correspondent, that sustained a man like Dr. Sharp in his long pastorate must have been, for a Baptist parish, one of exceptional intelligence as to religious things. He, therefore, in paying his last tribute of respect to the memory of Rev. Hosea Ballou—a man who probably did more than any other man of his era to eradicate the doctrines of Calvinism from the popular mind—did not act at all inconsistently.

Miss Roxalana L. Grosvenor, the veteran Spiritualist and author, after lying for seven weeks in an entirely helpless condition (she can move only her hands), is still unable to be moved, and her case appeals to the sympathy of all. This method is taken of answering the many inquiries of friends in Boston, and elsewhere.

An article in memory of the late Mrs. Nellie Richardson Kittredge has been received from Willard J. Hull, which will appear in the next issue of THE BANNER.

Read Mrs. Merrill's appeal for the Children's Lyceum, sixth page.



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Mrs. Georgia D. Fuller, Vice-President and Corresponding Secretary; Woodbury C. Smith, Secretary; Edgar P. Hoar, Treasurer. Lectures at 2 and 7 P.M. Children's Progressive Lyceum at 12 M.



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