

AN ENEMY TO SPIRITUALISM.

JAMES BURNS

AND HIS

SPIRITUAL INSTITUTION

*Being Two Letters from MR. THOMAS WALKER to the
Spiritualists of Great Britain, in reply to certain
statements published in the Medium and Daybreak
by MR. JAMES BURNS.*

. "You bore,
Till forbearance ceased to be a virtue."
LIZZIE DOTEN.

LONDON :

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1880.

LETTER I.

—o—

I REGRET that there should be any need, or that circumstances should have called forth this letter, before my departure from England, in justice to myself, and to expose the conduct and character of one who is, I sincerely believe, the greatest foe that Spiritualism can possibly have; because, like a snake, he poisons the bosom that gives him warmth and stings the hand that gives him food. Readers of his paper will have repeatedly seen his underhanded attacks upon me and his uncalled-for sneers at my work. Whilst I have been in England, many who do not know me and know still less of Mr. Burns, have been influenced by his paragraphs to think ill of me, and there can be no doubt but that, to some extent, he has succeeded in throwing suspicion on my character and labours. Feeling convinced that what he will unjustly do towards me he will do towards others, and having observed the disgrace and contempt he is bringing upon our cause, I deem it important, on behalf of others whom he has wronged, of those he would yet wish to make his pliant and contemptible tools, and on behalf of Spiritualism itself, to let the British Spiritualists who do not know it already, know who those are whom he “puffs” and who those are he endeavours to crush. Briefly put, then, he puffs for *pay* and vassalage, and he endeavours to crush all who exhibit a spirit of independence and desire to stand or fall upon their own merits—in short, he condemns all who do not directly or indirectly bring the grist to his mill. Hence, since I gave him to understand on my arrival in England that I would not pay for my portrait and for puffs in the *Medium*, and since I ignored all his printed begging letters, and since I informed him I had brought no money home with me, and lastly, since I had the audacity to tell him what I thought of his conduct—after all this, he has done all in his power to deprive me of success. He has done so most persistently and maliciously through the paper over which he has sole control. He has mutilated reports sent to him speaking of my services, has sneered at those he was obliged from deference or debtorship to others to insert, and has put in, from time to

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time, paragraphs insinuating that I was dishonest in my pretensions and implying that I was unworthy of confidence or employment.

A five pound note, or even a lesser sum, placed surreptitiously, or otherwise, into his grasping hand would have produced a very different tune indeed from his dishonest fiddle. In fact, there was fair promise of this when first I came, for before he had heard a word said in my favour in England, he gave through his paper a few notes of laudation, but after having received numerous reports speaking well of my lectures, without receiving in addition thereto donations to his private residence and shop (the Spiritual Institution), he changed the key, and strung out, ever after, the basest condemnation.

Lest it might be thought that this letter is alone the result of his treatment to me, it might be well to state a few things that I know about him. First then, as I have intimated, his Spiritual Institution, to which Spiritualists are so repeatedly and contemptuously entreated to subscribe, is neither more nor less than his place of residence and business; his book shop, cellar, sitting rooms, and bed rooms, at 15, Southampton Row, London. Is this honest? The Spiritualists of Britain are actually asked,—the poor hard working men and women, believing in Spiritualism,—are urgently besought to send a portion of their earnings, gained by the sweat of their brow and perpetual toil, to pay the rent, taxes, and boarding expenses, not to mention the other incidental expenses, of his place of business, where he alone is benefited. If the Institution belonged to the Spiritualists, and for their financial outlay in supporting it, they, some day or other, were to receive a dividend, one would understand his unparalleled “cheek” displayed in his weekly begging articles. But when he receives all the money he can for the purpose alone of making the Spiritualists pay for his family’s board, clothing, and house rent, and when in reality the Spiritual Institution *is* his family’s board, clothing, and house rent, the support, therefore, of which ought to be taken out of his business receipts, then one begins to suspect “there is something rotten in the state” of the Spiritual Institution, or rather, in the man who so christened it! If everything is as he represents it, and all the money he receives from subscriptions is spent for the benefit of Spiritualism, why dare he not publish a balance sheet? Have not the Spiritualists a right to know how the money they give to him is spent? Does he ever show how a half-penny of the

money he receives from year to year goes? Where is the printing press that was to belong to the Spiritualists on his receipt of £500 to purchase it with, some little time ago now, and which was to print his paper on his own premises? We ask again, Where is the printing press, and the evidence that the Spiritualists of Britain own it or ever have owned it? Thirty pounds of this money he received from one town alone—Preston, in Lancashire. Is the *Medium* now printed at the so-called Spiritual Institution? He may, and no doubt will say something about this, but will he answer the questions I have asked?

Again, Does he acknowledge the receipt of all the money his subscribers send to him? Will he tell us in what way he acknowledged the receipt of £50 from Mr. Layley, of Victoria, Australia? Did he do it otherwise than by sending a cabinet portrait of himself, with "Yours truly, J. Burns" written upon it? Did he ever inform the English Spiritualists of the receipt of that sum? Is it not a fact that he received money from Dunedin, N.Z., for books, and that he neither returned money nor books? And have there not been similar cases to this from Australia? Have there not been similar cases in England? In Ashington for instance? Has he returned them either the money or the books they ordered, though they have written to him several times about the matter? Dare he tell how he stands with the *Banner of Light* Publishing Company, Boston, U.S.? Is it not true that they will not supply him with any more of their goods on credit, though they once did?

We know that Mr. Burns can plead poverty, hard times, and anything but his own inability, mismanagement, or something worse for his poverty. But if he has to be running continuously into debt to the danger of his creditors, to be constantly borrowing money to pay off old loans, and perpetually begging from those whose burdens are already too hard to bear, would it not be better, more honest, more manly, and more straightforward, if he would step out of the ranks and allow *The Spiritualist* and *Spiritual Notes*, papers whose leading articles are not upon the poverty of their Editors, and which do not seem to stand in need of exhaustless contributions, a chance of enlargement and extended circulation? If he cannot make his paper succeed by fair means and in a business-like way, let him give it up! Better be honest with his creditors and tell them that he cannot pay them, than to go on incurring greater liabilities. Better to fail with the debts of to-day, than

to wait for the greater ones of to-morrow. It may be asked what business is this of mine? I speak in the interests of Spiritualism, and of those he has wronged. Can it be right to borrow over a hundred pounds from a gentleman in Preston, and to give his life policy as security, and then to tell that gentleman that if he got considerably over a hundred more he could see his way clear to make the *Medium* and Institution *self-supporting*, and upon such fair assurances to induce the gentleman to give up the policy, so that a new loan might be contracted with it? Can it be right to get my friend to give up all security for the money he has lent, to never attempt repayment, though the loan should have been repaid long ago, and finally, to have begging letters in his paper nearly every week since the new loan was made, and strong appeals from time to time, to send in subscriptions to the amount of £500? He got the policy and the new loan by assurances that afterwards the *Medium* should be self-supporting! Almost the following week he begs for monetary assistance! No opportunity has been lost since then to touch the heart, excite the pity, stir the generosity, anything—to get the money—more money—ever more! By what name should this conduct be called?

All this in the way of his business with the Spiritualists of this country. It may be thought that towards *individuals* connected with the cause, he is more just and honourable. Not so! What was his treatment of Dr. Peebles whilst in this country? Did he pay him his wages earned through months of labour, when he, Mr. Burns, had charge of them? What about the books sent for to America, in Dr. Peebles's name, getting that veteran's signature in order to get credit, whilst the Pilgrim became responsible for the payment? Is it not true that such was the case? And how about the treatment of poor Lambelle? Seduced by fair promises Mr. Lambelle left his home in the North, and went to live in London, as an assistant to Mr. Burns, where he was treated more like a slave than anything else, who ought to work without pay for such a *Spiritual* master. Dare Mr. Burns tell *the truth* about his treatment of the gentleman in question? Did he fulfil all the promises he made and pay all the money he owed him? And could not Mr. Morse tell a story if he were actuated by a spirit of revenge, or believed in returning evil for evil? But enough, though the list of individuals he has wronged might be considerably augmented.

Whilst he has disgraced Spiritualism by the mean, servile, and miserly epistles on the poverty of his Institution, he has weakened the power of Spiritualism to do good by condemning every organisation or individual effort, that did not just meet with his idea, or bring the coins to his pockets. Only last week he eked out his vituperation and vented his spleen—the results of spite—against the best organised, the most prosperous, and the best regulated provincial society of Spiritualists in England—the society that paid him £8 for a single lecture—the society at Newcastle. And all this because he cannot be Pope there, and make the society and its honoured president his tools! Trumpery seances at the Institution, where he has an interest in the admission fee, are praised to the skies, but a lecture which would educate the people is fit only for a subject to sneer and throw out slurs upon. He has divided the house against itself, he has set society against society, and put man against man. His policy has been that of the house of Medici, to produce as many divisions as possible in the state! He has made his paper, a public journal existing for the purpose of supplying the Spiritualists with news, an engine to injure those who might have been his friends, a power to throw dirt at those whom his jealous eye mistook for rivals, a means of ventilating his *private* quarrels, and of doing *public* injury to those against whom he had any private grudges. Can the man who does all this be a friend to Spiritualism?

The issue of his paper for last week contains a paragraph which, for meanness and downright determination to do me an injury, I have never seen equalled, even in those papers whose avowed object is implacable hatred to Spiritualism and its advocates. The paragraph in question has for its foundation a quotation from the *National Reformer*, stating that a lecture which I delivered on the French Revolution is, with slight alteration, a repetition of the words of Mrs. Besant's lecture on the same subject. Did Mr. Burns satisfy himself that this was a fact before inserting it in his columns? Will he inform his readers *which* lecture of Mrs. Besant's it is a repetition of? Will he be kind enough to print any paragraph of my lecture and the corresponding paragraph in Mrs. Besant's? The truth is, Mrs. Besant has delivered several lectures on the subject—six or seven I believe—and I want to know which *one* is *the* lecture I have repeated. Certainly Mrs. Besant has lectured on the same subject, has given the same facts, and in the same order, and has gone to the same source for her authorities.

Where my lecture, then, will appear most like hers I can prove that hers are most like Buckle, Carlyle, Lamartine, or Michelet! Where two lectures are upon the same subject, and the facts—especially historical facts—are to be stated in the order in which they occurred, and their connection to be shown, and if to a great extent the view is the same in both lectures, it is impossible to escape a considerable degree of similarity. But that I have repeated one of Mrs. Besant's lectures I emphatically deny, and defy anyone to prove! It must be remembered, also, that the whole of my lecture was not published; that there were quotations from Burke, Lamartine, and other authors *direct*, which the reporter (Mr. Henry Pitman, of Manchester) omitted, to save space. These quotations, which can be produced from the reporter's notes, I can confidently affirm, without fear of contradiction, are neither in Mrs. Besant's lectures, nor in any other lectures delivered on the same subject.

But, it may be asked, why should the paragraph be put in the *Reformer* if not strictly true? It was owing to a correspondence in the Preston papers in reference to a lecture which I was advertised to give there, under the auspices of the Liberal Association. Advertisements appeared in the papers stating that I should deliver a political lecture on a certain date. When, however, the Liberals of Preston ascertained that I was a Spiritualist they refused to have the lecture and got another in my place. One or two correspondents then complained of the conduct of the Liberals, and made certain accusations against them, to the effect that whilst they would not allow a Spiritualist to lecture for them they had helped to pay the expenses of the Secularist lectures; had advertised Mr. Symes as the Reverend Mr. Symes, and that they were then granting a room rent free to the Secularists. Immediately after these accusations appeared, the Secularists received bills for the expenses of their meetings, and had to commence the payment of rent. Of course, I was made the bone of the controversy, though it was exceedingly distasteful to me, and undertaken without my knowledge. When the correspondence was sent to the editor of the *Reformer* it called forth the paragraph of which Mr. Burns makes capital. Now, there is every possible excuse for the editor of the *National Reformer*; and, though it injures my reputation for honesty, I cannot but believe that the accusation against me was made with perfect sincerity and conscientiousness. I only wish he was editor of a Spiritualist newspaper instead of the one he is. I know of his public

career and cannot help but respect the man, however much he may feel inclined, from conscientious motives, to insert damaging paragraphs against me. If I can avoid it, by hook or crook, I shall never quarrel with him; for I know the good work he is doing in freeing the minds of men from all kinds of superstition, and in liberating the people of this island from political bondage. And how can Mr. Burns be excused? How can he consistently *rejoice* that I have been accused of dishonesty? Is he the man who ought to be *thankful* that I am alleged to be a plagiarist? The editor of the *Reformer* is an entire disbeliever in the theory of "Inspiration." Mr. Burns is an advocate for it. The consistent condemnation of the unbeliever is inconsistently quoted as a contribution to "Spiritual Science," by no less a person than James Burns, O.S.T., editor of the *Medium and Daybreak*, and sole proprietor of the Spiritual Institution!

But Mr. Burns goes further. He makes accusations of his own. He cudgels his irritable brain to add to the charge, and so continues:—"Mr. Walker travelled to Australia with Dr. Peebles, at the time the latter was busy with 'Darwinianism,' hence the 'Inspiration' of Mr. Walker in his lecture at Cardiff, on the 'Origin of Man.'" The implication is, that Dr. Peebles has *taught* me the lecture, or that the lecture is one of his. How will Dr. Peebles fare in this? If my Inspiration is from Dr. Peebles, from his tuition, from the Inspiration of the training *he* has given me for the purpose, where is Dr. Peebles' honour? But I can prove that I gave lectures on the Darwinian theory in America, *before* I went to Australia with Dr. Peebles. But how does Mr. Burns account for it, that Dr. Peebles does *not* believe in the Darwinian theory, whilst I do? His lectures condemn Darwin's views—mine support them. Reconcile this contradiction if you can, Mr. Burns! I have now in my possession a paper written inspirationally on the Pacific Ocean, on my way to Australia, which Dr. Peebles, so much liked for its treatment of the subject, that he wanted me to publish it, and even asked me for it, that if I would not publish it, he might. Surely master and pupil stand in curious relationship here! Some of the ideas Dr. Peebles received through me on the subject during that voyage, I am sure, from my knowledge of the man, he will not be ashamed to acknowledge he has since made use of. It may not be known to Mr. Burns that every other day, or nearly so, Dr. Peebles came into my cabin during that voyage, to gain information through *me*

on the subject on which he was then busy. That I have learned much from Dr. Peebles it would be ingratitude to deny; but that he has ever "crammed" me to give a lecture, he himself will disown. Mr. Burns can, if he likes, in fact as he has done, call any lecture of mine on "Geology" or "Darwinianism" a "stock" lecture, but there is one comfort—it is one lecture in stock more than he has. I could, I dare say, if I had been trained in his school, have had only one string to my fiddle, and only able to play one tune upon it with all kinds of carping variations; but thank goodness my "Inspiration," let it come from where-so-else it may, does not come from 15 Southampton Row.

I make the following assertion confidently, and defy Mr. Burns to contradict it and make good that contradiction—that I have lectured on a greater variety of subjects than any other man living at my age. I know this is egotistical, but I make the assertion in my own defence. I can furnish the proof at any time from my literary scrap book, where I have preserved the reports of my lectures. So let Mr. Burns talk about "stock" lectures as he pleases, he must at least admit I have a large "stock." And how have I acquired the stock? I was twenty-two years of age, on the fifth of last month—February (which I know many doubt, but any one can have the proof of the statement on reference to the Registrar at Preston; and I have a copy of the certificate of birth in my own possession). I have spent a large portion of my time driving horses, following the plough, and in the usual occupations of the farm; the schoolmasters where I received my education are living in Lancashire, and can testify to the fact that my "schooling" at the "National Schools" was comprised in a knowledge of the three R's. How then have I acquired my stock? In England I have lectured upon subjects Historical, Scientific, Ethical, Political, and Spiritualistic. I do not boast of this, because I am arguing for the theory of Inspiration, and not to sound my own praise; but I do ask, if I, at twenty-two years of age, comparatively without education, can acquire such a stock of lectures, and am what Mr. Burns would have others believe—what becomes of the theory of Inspiration? Where is Mr. Burns's inspired man after this? There is no shirking the conclusion—If I am not inspired, there is no proof of Inspiration among the Spiritualists. So whilst Mr. Burns is cutting the ground from under my feet, he is also hacking at the foundation of Spiritualism itself! This is self-evident, for there is not

a single argument which can be used to prove the inspiration of the other speakers in our cause, but can with equal force be applied to me, and there is no argument which cuts against me but will with equal force cut against all others. Mr. Burns condemns me as an impostor! Where then is his genuine man? Is it the person whose "puffing" simultaneously commenced with the acknowledgment in the subscription columns of the reception of half-a-crown? Again I ask, where is the genuinely inspired in the cause of Spiritualism if I am fraudulent? Let those who have heard me be the judges. If Mr. Burns will undertake to prove that my inspiration is a farce, then I will undertake to use his own arguments, and prove that *all* inspiration in connection with Spiritualism is equally so. Thus, whilst I am reasoning in defence of myself, I am doing the same in defence of Spiritualism. It is the cause of Spiritualism I am pleading at this time, when my own is made identical with it.

Nearly two years ago, on the 17th of May, 1878, Mr. Burns inserted the following in his paper:—

"MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA.—The *Harbinger of Light* for March has come to hand. The leading theme is the success of Mr. Thomas Walker's *impromptu* orations in the Prince of Wales's Opera House, which is now crowded, though the press have engaged in a conspiracy of silence to prevent the popularity of the speaker. Mr. Walker was announced to debate with a rev. gentleman for six evenings."

The six evenings were extended to nine. I have put the word "*impromptu*" in italics. He had no private spite against me then. My "stock" lectures were then "*Impromptu Orations*," and I was thought a foeman worthy of the steel of a reverend gentleman!

Now all that I have said is rendered all the more forcible, when it is remembered that he has *never heard me* give a single lecture. I am condemned unheard.

I will not do more than allude to the conclusion of the paragraph with which I have been dealing. His calling me "Little Tommy," and saying it is wise I am going "among the Zulus," is beneath contempt, excepting for the fact that I am going to the Zulus at the invitation of one of Mr. Burns's best friends, Mr. Berks T. Hutchinson, of Cape Town. Mr. Hutchinson had sent orders for books to me which I need not, unless I choose, forward to Mr. Burns. The books were to be sold or given away at my meetings in Africa. I *did* send to

Mr. Burns the orders, and yet his base ingratitude to his friend in Africa is so great, that he writes so contemptuously as he does of my intended visit there. Can it be possible he is afraid of my influence in that quarter and so gives me the stab?

I have now stated my side of the question. No doubt Mr. Burns will have something to say in reply, but if he condemns me through his columns, will he have the manliness to open those columns to myself and friends for the purpose of vindication? He knows I am to leave England next week, and so has made the statements he has when he thought I had no means of contradiction. My engagements were nearly concluded. I should soon be where reply was impossible. His columns were closed to me. I had apparently no means of redress for the wrongs he had done me. Knowing all this, can his conduct be construed otherwise than as cowardly?

And now, O Spiritualists of Britain! I appeal to you with all sincerity and with all the fervour of my soul to do what you can to remove this moral stigma from our cause. His paper is a disgrace to us, his conduct is worse—it may prove our curse. His selfish ends first!—Spiritualism (to get them) after! No man, however pure or genuine, however enthusiastic or devoted, is safe from his abuse, unless he be willing to *pay* for his just rights: to offer bribery for what is justly his due. Lecturers are to be his agents or victims; Mediums, his taxpayers or his enemies. All must be beneath his paws, or his fury knows no bounds. The cause which is growing great on the broad continent of America and on the lovely Islands of the southern seas, is in England converted into an agency for supporting a sort of workhouse for him and his minions. Every one who knows what he is, shares his guilt by helping to preserve his power. I feel sure that this cannot last long. He must come down from the post he occupies ere, at least, many years have sped. Those who, by refraining to support him, help to bring him to his level and his senses,—who help to take him from the position he is not qualified to fill,—will be doing a service to Spiritualism—nay, to humanity itself.

Let me, just before closing, ask you to view this hasty letter with some charity; I have had to write it hurriedly, as my time was short in England. Its composition may be faulty, but it aims at doing good, at defending the truth, exposing injustice, and at opening the eyes of those too trustful to the cruelty, hypocrisy, and hatred which can emanate from him who makes

the highest pretensions of any in our cause. Read it, and ponder over it, but give it not into the hands of our foes. I leave the rest to your judgment.

Yours truly,

THOMAS WALKER.

BLACKBURN, *March, 8th*, 1880.

LETTER II.

SINCE I wrote my previous letter, and gave it into the printer's hands, Mr. Burns has treated his readers to another abusive article headed, "Advertisement. Master Thomas Walker, Boy Orator." It is full of base insinuations, and abounds with "Spiritual Institution" charity. His reason for writing the article he takes especial care to inform us is, "Master Walker is about to leave us; and, as I do not approve of speaking behind backs, I think it best to make my statement now." One cannot but feel thankful that he tells us this, for had he not done so, we should have gathered from the tone of his article that the reason why he felt it necessary to throw "Spiritual Institution" mud at me was because he felt that my visit to England had "injured" his Institution by diminishing the annual subscriptions.

But let us take the version he gives us, and see if he has afforded us a good illustration of "not speaking behind backs." Let us see how far short of "speaking behind backs" his article comes.

I. The *Medium* was published on Friday. I left England on the following Tuesday. Therefore three days were allowed for me to reply! But how? Through the spiritual press? I could not do this, for the first publication after the issue of his article would be on the following Friday, and then I should be

away from England on my voyage to Africa ! I say, even if the columns of his paper had been open to me, I had no means of replying to his charges whilst I was in England. So the effect is the same as though the article had been written a week or a month after my departure, for I could then do what I am doing now—send my letter home for publication. Is it not then tantamount to speaking behind my back ?

II. I had concluded all my engagements but two. I had only to lecture in Burnley and London after the article was written. I had no means, therefore, of verbally replying to his production. Had he written this abuse three months ago, I could then have paid visits to all the provincial towns and have given my version of his conduct, which I can so substantiate by living witnesses, that I should have left those his enemies whom he sought to make mine. But he left his abuse until the very last week, when if I even wished to write letters to my friends I could not, when, so far as he knew or thought to the contrary, there were *no possible means of replying*. It was impossible to revisit the towns the *Medium* would reach, and impossible to write to them. If slandering a man after he is gagged (to use a metaphor) is not to all intents and purposes speaking behind one's back, what is ? The course he has taken is just as cowardly as though he had waited until I had got away before he had spoken ; indeed, it is impossible to conceive anything more cowardly ! With the *Medium* as a weapon and protection, as his castle and torpedo, he waits until he thinks his enemy completely disarmed, and then he begins his work of destruction. I have heard it said, "There is honour among thieves," but there doesn't seem to be any among slanderers—at any rate, if Mr. Burns be taken as a specimen !

But his conduct is even more than cowardly. There is something in it which the casual reader will not be able to see. There is a *meanness* which facts alone can explain. Let us look at them. I am going to Africa. Mr. Burns has a most excellent friend there, one who, to my knowledge, has assisted Mr. Burns to the full extent of his abilities. He has sent him money as subscriptions for the Institution, and has been a constant purchaser of books, &c. He was, and still may be, a most *valuable* friend to Mr. Burns. Now, the idea of Mr. Burns was, that if I got to Africa with a good character, I might influence Mr. Hutchinson, as I flatter myself I have done others, to look upon Mr. Burns as otherwise than a martyr and

a saint. By my statements of facts I might open Mr. Hutchinson's eyes, and so prevent him being duped by such a hypocrite. "Thus conscience does make cowards of us all!" His fear in this direction dictated his epistle. To prevent me being believed he must send my published character along with me. He must, forsooth, give me "gratis" a published statement of my phrenological peculiarities. Says Mr. Burns to himself, I suppose, "If I send Master Tommy to Africa with a bad character nobody will believe him when he tells the truth about me. Not a bad idea! The same ship that takes him shall take his character for malicious dishonesty along with him, and since I have the credit of being a phrenologist, I can manufacture just such a one to my liking." And so he did; and, to make doubly sure of his plan, he shows the bold face, the face that knows not now the blush of shame, and bombastically writes, "He (myself) will no doubt admit its truthfulness (the article's) in every particular. Should he not do so, I have only to say that *every* statement which he may have to make derogatory to me *is an unmitigated falsehood.*" Is not this enough to make a puritan smile? Mr. Burns is immaculate! Nothing truthful can be said against him! Go ye into oblivious gloom, ye saints, and hide yourselves for shame, ye embodiments of the virtues of the past! Go hide yourselves as do the stars before the glorious sun! Now march up, gentlemen! come and see the only man living so immaculate, so chaste, so charitable, so honest, so kind to his enemies, so forgiving, so unselfish, so obliging, so innocent, so devoid of malice that he never told a lie in his life, so fond of poverty that he would rather have it than riches, that he is a perfect paragon, warranted to surpass Socrates or any other such trash; the only man alive who can put his hand upon his heart and say, 'Every statement made derogatory to me is an unmitigated falsehood!' Admission—1½d a week for the *Medium* and a small annual subscription to the Spiritual Institution!!!

To me such a statement made by any man would appear so ridiculous that I could scarcely help having a laugh at it; but when made by James Burns, O.S.T., my friends must excuse me if I cannot help but show how ridiculous the statement is. Mr. Burns says he does not want to be a Pope, but he claims to be immaculate and infallible, and that is more than any Pope in Europe ever claimed. So much then for his object and his cowardice in writing the letter.

Let us now proceed to analyse the statements he makes.

After mentioning my arrival in England, and the first meeting I had, which was at the Spiritual Institution, he says, "I was unable to make a report, but a *friend* made an *excellent* one, which appeared in the *Medium*, and on the following week it was rather ungratefully commented on by Mr. Walker." I have put two words in italics. Is Mr. Chapman a *friend* of Mr. Burns? He was then, I admit, for he was helping to get Mr. Burns a security for a loan, but does Mr. Burns acknowledge him as a friend now? That friend, having served Mr. Burns's purpose, has been turned adrift, and is now treated as an enemy. Deny this, if you can, Mr. Burns. It will be gathered from reading the paragraph I am now quoting from, that Mr. Burns was too unwell to be present at the meeting. He was not present. How, then, does he know that his friend made an "excellent" report? If he had heard the lecture he might be excused for saying so, but he did not. I have no doubt but that he thought so, for he wrote to me characterising it as such, and informing me that he could spare a number of copies of the *Medium* with it in. I wrote back to him saying I could not take extra copies of that week's *Medium*, as I could not send it away, inasmuch as it contained many inaccuracies. I wrote a letter to the *Medium*, making what I felt were absolutely necessary corrections. For instance, it was stated in the report that I met warm friends at Brabazon! Well, Mr. Brabazon was one of the *friends* whom I met at Auckland, N.Z.! Other mistakes of a like nature I simply corrected. And this is what Mr. Burns calls "ungrateful commenting." Was I to let the report go to the world with what many of my friends know was untrue in it? Of course such statements as it contained, if fathered by me, would be deliberate *untruths*; but, if corrected, they would simply be mistakes on the part of the reporter, who did not take a single note during the lecture, but had to put it together afterwards from memory. Was it not my absolute duty to make the corrections? Yet Mr. Burns is so accustomed to let mis-statements go to the public that he calls me ungrateful for making necessary corrections!

The article continues—"I had a good deal of talk with him about his work and development. He showed me his rings, studs, and other pretty play-things, and I was quite pleased to see them." What, Oh, James Burns! pleased with seeing *play-things*? Come, we are on a level for once! If he was pleased to *see* them, what must he have been to have had them?

Now, I should not have noticed this part of his article, had

it not been that I take it as an insult to those who have given me such tokens of their good will to me, as Mr. Burns is pleased to call play-things! *A la* Mr. Fox, "The grapes are sour." Not the intrinsic value of a ring, a stud, a watch, an album, or a writing-desk do I value, but I do value the spirit which prompted every gift I have received. Each one reminds me of an absent friend, and brings back to my memory the kindness I have received from strangers in other lands. Each one takes me back again into the presence of those who, in spite of my own unworthiness, have ever done all in their power to make my visit amongst them happy, friendly, and prosperous. Thus, the presents and testimonials I have received are sacred to me. They are keys that unlock the doors of pleasant memories, and awaken all the dearest associations of the past. They are charmed things by means of which, as by the magic rings of the Arabian tales, or the lamp of Aladdin, we bring into our presence again that which we most love or desire. They constitute the visible tribute of friendship: they are the magic mirror looking into which we can once more see the friendly face of the absent giver. However much accustomed, therefore, Mr. Burns may be, to regard any gift he may have received (given by some friend he may have had as a token of esteem) as a mere play-thing, I cannot be guilty of such ingratitude and worldliness.

Now comes a few sentences by means of which Mr. Burns strives to make me my own accuser. He insinuates that I am dishonest under the guise of perfect frankness. He states facts, the conclusions from which he would appear to be ignorant of, but hopeful that his readers will do what he does not do here, viz., conclude that I am quite able to do all Mr. Burns says, and have, in fact, been educated for it. He says, "He had been studying under a tutor, a step which I warmly commended, and that he hoped to drop the 'trance,' and enter upon the open-eyed method of public speaking, upon which point I also commended his resolution." Now, the natural inference from this is that I have virtually admitted to Mr. Burns that the "trance" has been a sham, and that I am anxious to "drop" it. Well, if it has been a sham, and I am anxious to "drop" it, Mr. Burns must admit I am growing more averse to shams, and more honest as I get older. That is more than can be said of him! Thanks, Mr. Burns, for this testimony in my favour. You give your readers to understand that my "trance" has been a farce, and now you say I want to

get out of it, and be honest and honourable! "But," it will be asked, "had I a tutor in Melbourne, and did I tell Mr. Burns that I was anxious 'to drop the trance'?" Yes, it is true. Mr. Burns tells the truth for once, though in a bad way. I had a tutor for a little over three months in Melbourne, and was learning how to parse and conjugate, how to reduce a decimal to a vulgar fraction, and how to construct an equilateral triangle on a given line A B! Yes, I actually thought so little of getting up my Sunday lecture, that I had spare time on my hands, and that I would employ it in cultivating my mind. If I had stayed in Melbourne, I should have continued to do so. I hope to be able to do so in Africa. Why? Because I believe it is our duty to do all we can for ourselves, to fill our minds with as much useful information as possible, and not be ignoramuses all our lives, simply because we happen to be mediums. "The gods help those who help themselves." I believe also that the better cultured my mind is, the more readily, and with better effect, can it be used for the purposes of mediumship.

But did you tell Mr. Burns that you wanted to "drop the trance"? What I did tell him, and what I have often told others, was, that it was my ambition to speak with my eyes open, and to grow into the higher phases of speaking. I told him that one of the objects I had in coming home was to bring about that result. I felt that the "trance" did not correctly describe my condition, for it implied that I was entirely unconscious, whereas, every lecture I gave, I was becoming more and more conscious. Was it not honest in me, therefore, to want to dispense with the incorrect term "trance," and adopt the more correct one of "Inspirational"? I have, since I began to feel interested in the work that circumstances have thrust upon me, always yearned for the time when I might give a lecture above suspicion, when people should think me honest whilst delivering it, and when I might add the weight of my own earnestness and testimony to the matter advanced. I have prayed for this and, I thank the angel-world, my prayer is answered. I have wanted to grow out of the "trance" in the same manner as you might conceive a child, only able to stand by the help of its parents' hand, ambitious to commence to walk by its own efforts. Besides, I have been anxious to be able, *at all times*, to defend our cause; not only when I was on the platform, but when I was off it. My work is that of the missionary. I have to take the "glad tidings" of immortality

into foreign lands, and often do I meet in my travels those who are inclined to sneer and falsify. Is it not a laudable ambition to want to be able at all times to defend Spiritualism from the ruthless attacks of its enemies? Must I simply depend upon "Mediumship," which is governed by such subtle conditions often not procurable; or must I use, and so improve, the intelligence that God has given me? If I have wanted to "drop" the "trance," it has only been that I might throw away the scabbard, and so keep the sword of truth more constantly in my hand.

Do not suppose me to be despising the assistance of the spirit-world, or to be undervaluing it, because all that I can justly boast of in this world I owe to Spiritualism; but I do say that mediums should not be "nonentities," that they should do all *they* can, and, after they do their utmost, then leave the rest to the spirit-world.

Mr. Burns makes it appear that at first when I came to England I wanted him to take a hall for me, and place me before the public as he had done Mr. Tyerman and others. I never asked him to do any such thing. I did, however, ask him for advice about going to London, and he wrote to me saying that if I wanted to come to London I must get some private friend to help me, when he knew I had no private friends. When I urged that, in his advertising columns, asking for subscriptions to the Spiritual Institution, he professed to furnish advice, and quoted the very paragraph which stated that he did furnish advice, he replied to me, "The Spiritual Institution is not necessarily an agency for itinerant professionals."

I afterwards complained of his coldness to me in his paper, and made bold to ask him if it was because I had not sent in donations; and the letters I received from him after that were, without doubt, the most insulting I ever received in my life from anyone. He complains of my letters to him. Doubtless they were not the most mild, cringing, and submissive letters that might be written, but I don't believe in cringing to a tyrant, even though he possesses unlimited means of doing me mortal injury. When I feel that I am in the right I fear no one, and will yield to no one. And every harsh word that I said to him, not publicly mind you, but in my letters to him, was provoked by his letters to me. He spoke of "the over-reaching selfishness of my exactions," and sneeringly contrasted my conduct with pretensions to being a "spiritual hero," when I had made no such pretensions. He accused

me of being conceited, selfish, uncharitable, and all the rest ; and I threw his phrases back at him, and I found that when they went home again, they fitted the first sender a little too well for his comfort. The cap he had made for me fitted him a little too tightly; his glass house was injured by the stones he himself had thrown. Speaking of my letters to him, he says—"I was astonished to receive letters from him of a most impudent and unfriendly nature. . . . The last letter I received from him I returned unread, and put a paragraph in the *Medium* to the effect that I could receive no further communications from him unless he tendered me an apology through some respectable person." Now, I again say his letters were more "impudent and unfriendly" than mine, and were the first to be so, and my "impudence" consisted in retorting the phrases he himself had constructed to wound my feelings. During the quarrel I asked him if he could look over the matter, and let bye-gones be bye-gones ; but no ! nothing would satisfy him short of an abject apology on my part. I must say I was very sorry for all I had done, but to make an abject apology, would be to admit that I was altogether in the wrong, and he altogether in the right ; whereas, I felt it pretty much the other way. So I wrote to him that I might just as well ask him to apologise to me, as he ask me to do so to him. I felt I had right on my side, and I would not yield. I had offered to forget his insults to me—for so he knew I considered them—had offered him the hand of friendship—to forget the past, to forgive, what I considered, his wrongs to me. But no ! this was not sufficient. I must place testimony in his hands that every charge he had made against me was just and true ; admit, in short, that I was an ignorant, selfish, conceited professional. Well, if Mr. Burns has no principle within him, I flatter myself that I have enough to prevent me willingly prostrating myself in the dust to a petty tyrant. He never wrote to me again after I had given him to understand that I was willing to forget everything, but never to apologise for that which I believed to be right. A short time went past, and I thought it possible he might have changed his mind. I thought if he had a conscience at all it would have pricked him, and he would have relented a little ere that. So I again ventured upon writing to him asking him to make peace, and concluding with asking him the price of some books which I wanted, and was willing to purchase from him. Lo, and behold ! the letter returned to me.

Where, in the world, was Amy Ivi, the wonderful clairvoyant? A letter with an order for books returned from the Spiritual Institution! It was an event unparalleled in the history of that world-famed establishment? And the next week there appeared a paragraph in the *Medium* to the following effect—"T. W. We return your letter to you unopened. The nature of our duties renders it necessary that we should guard against *evil* and annoying influences. If you have advances to make to us, you must do so through some respectable person." I am not quite sure that I quote verbatim as I quote from memory, but those who have read the paragraph will know that it is not far wrong. When I got the letter back I read it to several of my friends to let them see the kind of *evil* and annoying influence Mr. Burns was guarding himself against. I have the letter yet with the stamp mark on it and date, so that it can be produced at any time as evidence of the truthfulness of what I say. Well, do you know, kind readers, after I had that letter returned to me, I lost *all* faith in the Spiritual Institution! If Amy Ivi's "Daisy" with such an eye to business could not decipher a letter with an order for books in it, and if all the spirits kept for subscription seances at the Institution, mistook such a letter as I wrote, for something evil and annoying, I thought the "stock" "inspiration" of the Spiritual Institution must be of a very poor sort indeed?

Mr. Burns has still the idea that he can bring me to my knees. He mistakes my disposition to forgive an injury as a desire on my part to covet his aid, because I asked him somewhat distantly when I sent to him the order for books received from Cape Town, if I should call for them whilst I was in London. He had an idea that he could force me to come and call on him in such a way as would exculpate him and convict me of everything that was base and mean. I would have called on him whilst I was in London if he had not written his last nasty articles, and if he had intimated that he would see me. This not because I wanted to solicit his friendship, but because Mr. Hutchinson, of Africa, had written to me requesting it; and because I was anxious not to stand in the way of his friendship with others, even though he had quarrelled with me. I say that what I intended for "charity" he mistook for servility, and so with a vanity common to him he writes, "If my young friend likes to call with a couple of witnesses approved by me, and express his regret at the injury he has tried to do me, I will forgive him heartily and destroy his

calumnious epistles before his eyes." If Mr. Burns waits until I call with two witnesses to see my letters destroyed before my eyes, he will live to be a very old man, I'm thinking! Besides, I think it best that he should keep them, for I also have kept copies, and his may be very good for the purposes of comparison and verification some day. If he thinks I am afraid of their publication he is greatly mistaken, and I now challenge him to publish *every* letter, mine and *his*, from the very beginning, *in extenso*! Not one here and one there, a sentence from this and a sentence from that, but every one just as it was written and received. If he attempts it piecemeal, I shall publish the whole correspondence myself with those letters appended which he returned to me. No, Mr. Burns, you cannot frighten me or blackmail me into your serfdom! My spirit is far too independent for that!

I have been not a little amused by comparing one part of his article with another. In one place he says that if I will apologise he will "forgive him (me) heartily," and in the concluding paragraph he says, "Though the unjustified imputations spread by Master Walker have been a great injury to me, yet I thank God that the youth is my opponent, not my co-worker." He "thanks God" that I am his opponent, and yet he is willing to forgive me "heartily." Now don't forgive me, oh! noble inventor of the O.S.T.'s, or you will have nothing to thank God for. And if it is a matter for such congratulation that I am your opponent, don't make it appear that you are so annoyed or angry at it. What you claim to be thankful for you should not rebel against.

Here is something else amusing. "In this cause, dear friends, we do not so much want garrulous youths who work for themselves in public and the destruction of well-known men in private, as we want substantial, well-intentioned, honest men and women." Why don't you forsake the cause then, Mr. Burns? What pretensions can you make to stay in its ranks? Are you substantial? Are you well-intentioned? Are you honest? Do you never work for yourself in public? Do you *never* work for the destruction of well-known men in private? Certainly not; Mr. Burns could'nt do it, he "is so humble."

At the commencement of this letter I made allusion to the phrenological description of my character, and that I may do Mr. Burns a good turn by advertising his skill, I will quote his estimate of my abilities generally.

"Phrenologically he has got an excitable temperament,

great gush of words, little restraining power, good perception, and a shallow intellect. With such an organisation no spirits are needed to enable him to talk away on any subject more than spirits are needed to aid in ordinary conversation. It is possible for a speaker to talk freely and even intelligently on a 'subject chosen by the audience,' and yet give no light thereon. The lecture on the 'Origin of the Human Race,' reported in the *Medium*, was a case in point. The body of it, taken from books, was all right, but the logical arch-stone, which real inspiration would have supplied, was not there, so that the structure falls to the level of the earth, earthy." Good! I am glad to find that I have qualities that are by no means despicable. Even though my intellect is "shallow," it is such as to enable me, according to the description, "to talk freely and even intelligently on *any* subject chosen by the audience!"

Be careful, Mr. Burns; you will put me above your own level directly. Now, he has taken special care to show that I have powers to talk—the organs necessary to be used in giving a lecture. Now, Mr. Burns, for your Spiritualism. If I had *not* the organs, could a spirit use them to give a lecture? Your own theory to your rescue! Did you ever know an inspirational speaker totally devoid of the organ of language? Have you not in your paper, in a lecture of your own, borne testimony to the fact that the ablest inspirational speakers were those with the best normal organisation, and, in their leisure moments, paid the most attention to the improvement of their natural talents? Have you not even mentioned the honourable name of Mrs. Tappan in this connection? Deny it and I will produce the *Medium* with the proof of what I say from your own pen and lips! But now it serves you to play upon the ignorance of the uninformed and to make use of the prejudices of outsiders for the sole purpose of condemning me! Oh, honest and consistent Mr. Burns! You speak of my lecture at Cardiff again. You say the body of it, taken from books, is all right. Thank you. I am glad some of it suits you. But if even spirits state facts upon any subject they are asked to speak upon, must they not state that which is found in books? If you asked the infallible control of Amy Ivi how many two and two made, would that control say otherwise than four? Perhaps it might, for there is a very peculiar kind of calculation in vogue, I believe, at the Institution. But would any other control? And would you sneer at it because the question you had asked might be found answered in a penny arithmetic

or a halfpenny book of tables? Oh no; especially if it were to your financial interest not to sneer.

But what is this "logical arch-stone which real inspiration would have supplied"? Why did you not get the "stock" medium of the Institution to supply it, and add it in a note to my lecture, that your readers might have the benefit of it? Perhaps it is what you have constantly been pouting about; that tantalisation of spirits not telling exactly where the first man came from? Every time you have seen a notice of my lecturing on such a subject you have thrown out the sneer that it was very funny that spirits did not tell exactly where men came from, and that they left us just where we began. Well, Mr. Burns, such poor mortals as we are, not being proprietors of Spiritual Institutions, may feel the need of more light, but surely you cannot feel such want? All you have got to do is to ask "Daisy." Now I challenge you to give the "logical arch-stone." I challenge you to get your "spirit controls" to aid you and give to the world an indisputable account of the "Origin of the first man." Where, when, and how did he come? Now don't shirk it. Get all the Institution spirits to your aid and let us have proof conclusive that, at least, at *your* shop there is such a thing as "real inspiration." Such a thing would be a grand contribution to science, and would carry your great name, with O. S. T. at the end, down to an admiring posterity. Let us not, then, die in ignorance. Since we have not the result of "real inspiration," supply us with it. But you cannot, Mr. Burns; and you know you cannot. If I had been on friendly terms with you, and had paid you well for your sham friendship and blighting patronage, that lecture would have been an excellent one and full of the evidences of Inspiration. I know it is impossible to tell just where, when, and how the first man came, and so I speak so positively; for even you, Mr. Burns, must admit that the first man was the only one there at the time, and you must admit he would have to possess a most extraordinary memory to remember all the circumstances till now. As a slight proof of this, just sit down, Mr. Burns, and try and recall the circumstances of your *own* birth, and then try and recall the circumstances of your father's. You have no inspiration about you if you cannot.

Now I have pointed out that Mr. Burns says at the beginning of his article that everything I may say derogatory to him will be "an unmitigated falsehood." Yet he knows he has told unmitigated falsehoods in the very article in which he accuses

me. I like to have proof for all I say, and I happen to be able to furnish proofs for this assertion. He says, "Notwithstanding this contention, I published every notice respecting his work that came to hand." He knew this was false when he wrote it, for scarcely has he inserted a single notice of my work as it was sent to him. Those he has put in as they were sent he has been *obliged* to insert, as they were sent by persons to whom he was indebted in some way or other, and then he has put the sender's name to the report to show that he did not father it, and as much as to say, "This is so and so's opinion." But there have been reports sent to him which he has never inserted at all. One from Macclesfield especially. Noticing his conduct to me, the friends in Macclesfield held a meeting at which they passed certain resolutions to the effect that I was fit to take my place amongst the public representatives of our movement. These were sent to all the papers and were signed by Mr. Rogers, president, Mr. Hammond, treasurer, and Mrs. Woollam, secretary. Did Mr. Burns insert these resolutions in his paper? No! On the contrary, the following week after he received them there was a short article, insulting both me and the friends at Macclesfield. I quote from memory, since, being on the ocean, I cannot get at the *Medium* in question, but he said, "We are frequently receiving 'puffs' of people in the talking trade." He said they found their way to the waste-paper basket, and he implied that some he had received were drafted by the hand of the person they were intended to puff, and he gave his reasons for not inserting such "puffs" in something like the following language: "We see no more reason why we should puff such people, than why we should advertise dealers in butter, or treacle, or any other luscious article." Did he put in the Wigan, Edinburgh, Gateshead, and Ashington reports as they were sent? Did he even insert an advertisement sent to him of my Manchester meetings? No! And yet in spite of all the proofs I can bring to the contrary, Mr. Burns says, "I published every notice respecting his work," etc. How much short of "unmitigated falsehood" is this, Mr. Burns?

I think now, dear reader, I shall have wearied you sufficiently, and had Mr. Burns had sufficient discretion to keep quiet I should never have troubled you at all; but I deemed it necessary in justice to myself, and for the cause of Spiritualism, that I should let you know how vile a man my maligner is. I have undertaken to expose his conduct not so much because

he has most wronged me, but because I can best afford to take the consequences. Those he has persecuted hitherto have found it to be their policy to keep quiet, and not to fight an editor armed with such powers of slander, whilst they, comparatively speaking, were without weapons. But I have youth and determination on my side, and I would rather go to prison for libel and let the people know of his meanness, than let him go on unarrested in his reckless career of tyranny and extortion. What I have said, I admit with considerable personal feeling, I have said because I believe it to be to the interest of Spiritualism that I should say it. The man is completely devoid of principle, and he is doing all he can to impress his character on Spiritualism. Shall we, who love our cause more than individuals, suffer him to inflict his ruthless wounds on such a fair breast? Now that I am away he will without question have much to say against me; but let him be cautious, for it is at present only my intention to be away from England a few months, and if he does too much "behind my back" he "may do that he will be sorry for." All the energies of my being I am determined to devote to letting the world know what he is, if his mean conduct goes any further. He may think light of my warning, but I mean it.

There is one hope with which I close, and that is that when I return to England a few months hence the *Medium* will be *non est*. Let every earnest Spiritualist anxious to see our cause prospering help to start a large weekly paper, something after the style of the American *Banner of Light* or *Religio-Philosophical Journal*. Such a plan is on foot, I believe, and already a number of shares are taken. But more are needed, and let us do what we can to procure the necessary funds for making a new paper in every way a success. Mr. Dawson Rogers, of London, will be able to supply you with all necessary information. To work, then, and let us have the honourable for our guides, the honest for our editors, the truthful for our representatives, and the heavens shall smile their blessings upon us and success be eternally ours.

I remain, etc.,

THOS. WALKER.

Madeira, *March* 23, 1880.