

A DISCUSSION
OF THE
SOCIAL QUESTION,

BETWEEN
JULIET H. SEVERANCE, M. D.

AND
DAVID JONES,

Editor of the "Olive Branch."

PRICE, 15 Cents.

MILWAUKEE, WIS.
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GILLET N. SEVERANCE, M.D.

DAVID JONES

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TO MY FRIENDS AND THE THINKING PUBLIC GENERALLY:

I HAVE felt called upon to present to you, in this pamphlet, the following facts and arguments, pro and con, in the interest of truth, for the reason that our Spiritualist papers are not yet emancipated from dogmatic sectarianism on the one hand, and fear of the public censure on the other, so that a fair statement of facts and principles on both sides can have a hearing.

Happening to stop over at Cato, N. Y., on my return from my eastern lecturing trip, I chanced to find the last number of the Olive Branch (an appropriate name, I thought) and to my amazement in an editorial entitled "Lake Pleasant Camp Meeting," found the following:

"It is well-known that certain side issues have been saddled upon Spiritualism, and the noble men and women, in the ranks, who have labored hard, for the upbuilding of the cause in the land, have been made to bear the odium which rightly belongs to a few persons, who perhaps from their natural tendencies to evil, prefer to defy law, to ignore the claims society has upon them; who clamor for freedom of speech, freedom of thought, and freedom of action, and who boldly proclaim the right of every woman to choose who shall be the father of their children, changing the parentage of their children as often as their unholy lusts may demand. This damnable doctrine has been fastened to Spiritualism by a few individuals, and though discountenanced by the great body of Spiritualists, yet no opportunity is ever lost, but what their vile and lecherous interests, are intruded upon the public, to the contempt and disgust of every true

man and woman, be they Spiritualists or Christians. As a destroying element in society, free love as taught by Mrs. Dr. Severance, has no equal. For a number of years this woman has intruded her vile dictums into the various camp meetings which she has attended; and so far as we know of the practices of that class who advocate these doctrines, they are ever to be found hand in hand with every disorganizing element which may spring up. Hence we were not disappointed when we found those who were opposed to the action of the directors, shaking hands with the few advocates of free love, who have still enough of brazen impudence left, to force themselves upon the attention of law-abiding citizens. But when the people spoke by their endorsement of the action of the directors, we read clearly the doom of free love upon these grounds."

I immediately wrote to Mr. Jones, the editor, the following letter:

CATO, *September 4th, 1883.*

MR. DAVID JONES.

Sir:—Having seen in your paper a shameful allusion to myself, and my "vile dictums," I have decided, that I have borne such misrepresentations and abuse from certain parties long enough. You very well know, sir, for you have heard me lecture on the subject, that I advocate none but the purest and elevating doctrines; and I well remember when I gave my lecture in the tent to that large and enthusiastic audience, Mrs. Jones, was among the first to grasp my hand, and thank me for it. Now, because I consider Bundy beneath my contempt, even, and do not notice what vile allusions he may make, is no reason why others can do the same. His slander and abuse, I consider far more complimentary to me than his praise would be. I have now concluded to let those who make charges against me, prove them. I am a native of this state, have lived for years within twenty miles of Utica, and have friends who know me the country over; and I know very well you can prove

nothing derogatory to my character, as an upright and moral person. I have nothing in my life (as most of my assailants have) that needs hiding from public gaze; and the kind of dishonest managing that carried the day at Lake Pleasant, would not be tolerated in a court of justice. One of the ablest lawyers of New York will conduct my suit free of charge, so indignant is he, at your dastardly course. Now unless you choose to retract your libelous charges against me at once, you may expect legal action.

It seems strange to me that you should so far forget all principles of honesty and justice, as to charge me with being the one to force the social question upon the Camp, for you well know that Bundy, Mr. Daily, Mrs. Fletcher, Maud Lord and Dr. Bailey, made violent and abusive speeches against social freedom, in which they misrepresented our views, claiming that we advocated vice and licentiousness, which they knew, if they knew anything of the matter, were falsehoods of the blackest dye. Then from the platform for the first time, I stated the principles I advocated, and challenged any one, to meet my positions with arguments like men, and cease their dirt-throwing. No one responded but Dr. Bailey, who denied having opposed my views, being evidently ashamed of it. Now under these circumstances, how dare you make the statements you do. You know since the first year, (when I spoke from the tent), I have received very courteous treatment from the officers, until this season; and Mr. Beals, said to friends of mine, that I had one of the most logical, sound minds he ever met. Last year I was called to the platform to speak, by the presiding officer, as soon as I entered Camp. All the trouble this year was caused by Bundy, who is, I believe, intent on ruining Spiritualism, but whose course will not be much longer tolerated, by right minded people. I have been a lecturer on Spiritualism and general reform for twenty-five years. I am at present one of the board of directors of the Iowa State Conference of Spiritualists, that have run a very successful camp meeting this summer. Am vice-president of the Na-

tional Liberal League, an organization with two hundred and forty-eight auxiliary Leagues scattered over the United States. Have been president of three State Spiritualist associations, three years each, and only by refusing to act on account of interference with my professional duties, was some one else elected in my stead; and I can truly say that at no time or place, would it have been possible for a person to have called a speaker a liar, upon one of our platforms, without receiving what it is the duty of any presiding officer to administer—a severe rebuke, instead of being invited on the platform, and introduced to the audience, as was Bundy by Beals; but I rejoice that an indignant audience refused to hear him. Had Mr. Roberts done the same thing that Bundy did, he would have been arrested, no doubt, as a disturber of a public meeting, as he should have been. I say shame upon such conduct. I left Lake Pleasant, to fill an engagement at the seventh annual camp meeting of the Michigan State Association of Spiritualists and Liberalists. Then returned to attend the Free Thinkers' Convention at Rochester, and next Sunday am engaged at Pittsburg, at a State meeting; then in Ohio, Michigan and Chicago, being engaged constantly until the last of September. I speak of this to show you how truthful is the statement of your contemporary Bundy, that in the West I am unemployed, and only one place East, where I can "browse around."

Now I wish a reply to this at once, if you wish to do me justice without recourse to the courts, which I am sure would compel it. Direct to Pittsburg, Pa.

Yours for justice,

JULIET H. SEVERANCE, M. D.

I received the following reply:

OLIVE BRANCH OFFICÉ, Sept. 6, 1883.

MRS. DR. SEVERANCE:—

Dear Madam:—I received a letter from you, post-marked Cato, N. Y., in which you charge me with injustice towards

yourself, and threatening a libel suit. Now I wish to state my position, so that there need be no misunderstanding. I have read the article referred to, but do not find wherein I have assailed your private character. I referred to the advocacy of Free Love doctrines by you. Now the facts are these: So far as your private life is concerned, it is none of my business, nor have I made it my business. But as you have stated that you were a Free Lover—this was done publicly in the large tent, two or three years ago—and as you stated at the reception tendered you at Mrs. Sylvester's cottage that you would abrogate all marriage laws; such reply, I thought, was out of place in a person occupying the position you do before the public. Now, you know as well as I do, that to throw down the gates erected for the government and preservation of morality among the masses, would be the destruction of thousands of homes, and give to certain men and women the right to wander whithersoever their lusts might lead them. Society is none too strictly governed now, with the laws we now have upon our statute books, nor can we be too guarded in our public utterances relative thereto. You may be pure as an angel, for aught I know; I prefer to think such is the case; and free love as you interpret it, may be all right, if every one could look upon it as you do; but they do not. To the masses, it is a license to cohabit with whom they please, provided both parties are agreed; therefore I consider it a dangerous doctrine to advocate in public; and it was to that end my article was directed. I am aware that in your remarks on the public rostrum at the Lake, you said you advocated the purest morals; but does the advocacy of free love tend in that direction? I think not; the masses do not think so, and the greatest stigma Spiritualism has to bear is free lovism. I, for one, am tired of having to defend the cause from attacks of this character, and was very sorry to hear that you said what you did about abrogating all marriage laws. My informants of what was said on that occasion, was Mrs. Pierce and Mrs. Fletcher, as it was

one of them who asked you the question. Under the circumstances, believing as I do, I did what was for the best interest of the cause of Spiritualism, to let the people know that such doctrines were not a part of the Spiritualism advocated at Lake Pleasant. If I have wounded you feelings, I am sorry for it; but as it was the principles advocated, and not the person, which was made the subject of attack, you will see that no personal injury was intended. Your doctrines will not harm me. They will not harm anyone, with an evenly balanced head; but, they would, if accepted by the public in its present state of development, prove injurious. A standard may be reached in time, when it will be safe to teach free love; but that time is not the present; at least I think so. As far as Mr. Bundy's action, I did not approve of it, yet the course taken by Wheeler was uncalled for, and evidently premeditated. Men and women do many things in the heat of passion that they would not do upon reflection. Such, I think was the case with Bundy. Dr. Beals did not invite him onto the platform. He asked the right to say a word, and followed the request by stepping onto the rostrum. As for Dr. Bailey, I know very little of him, having never met him at a meeting before, and knew nothing of his life, private or public. I trust at next year's meeting, these questions will not be brought forward; but that all will agree to work together for the general good, and let all pet theories and hobbies rest, until the time has arrived for their presentation. Mrs. Jones says she will be disappointed, if she does not see you at Lake Pleasant next year, and I hope you will pardon anything that you feel is of a private character, as none was intended.

Respectfully yours,

D. JONES.

I then wrote him as follows:

PITTSBURG, *September 9th, '83.*

MR. JONES—

Sir:—Yours in reply to my letter received, and contents noted. You claim to believe me a pure woman, and you

certainly have no reason to believe otherwise. You admit my views might be properly advocated in a more advanced state of society. I claim they would, if understood, raise society to a higher plane than it now occupies. Now, because of difference of opinion between us, probably honestly entertained by both, you have sent out to the world an accusation against me which is utterly and totally false, and calculated to injure my reputation, and my work, for the elevation of humanity. You accuse me of "forcing my dictums upon meetings," which is false; of "teaching damnable doctrines"—untrue; you refer to us (social reformers), as persons, who from their natural tendencies to evil, "are advocating the right of women to change the parentage of their children *as often as their unholy lusts may demand, etc.*" All these accusations I pronounce libels upon the doctrines I advocate. I am willing to leave the case to the verdict of the public—prejudiced as it is by reading such articles as the one referred to—if you will publish my views, in your paper, where they will be read by those who read what you wrote against them. Now, if you desire to be just, you will certainly not refuse to do that. You, of course, reserving the right of fair and honest criticism, which I always court. I send you my lecture on the subject, which contains the gist of the matter, and ask you to publish the portion marked, if you wish to settle the matter that way. You have no right to interpret Free-love by what its enemies say of it, nor attribute to it actions its enemies alone indulge in. The advocates of Free-love are the most pure in their lives of any class of people I know. Now if ignorance misinterprets it, making it mean something low and vile, that is no reason you should accept and perpetuate such misinterpretation.

If you publish this, which no fair minded person can refuse to do after what you have published, I will leave the verdict with the public, instead of a jury in a libel suit.

Please reply at once, informing me of your decision. Direct to Cleveland, O.

JULIET H. SEVERANCE, M. D.

Not receiving any letter at Cleveland, after my return home, I wrote a postal, asking if any letter was sent me at Cleveland, to which the following reply was received:

OLIVE BRANCH OFFICE, *Sept. 22, '83.*

Dear Madam:—I wrote you at Cleveland, stating that I would publish the part of the lecture indicated, with the right to give what I consider fair and honest criticism; but as my October number was filled, I would publish in November, and send you a copy. Such publication and criticism to end the matter, as far as I am concerned.

Respectfully yours,

D. JONES.

The November number contained the following:

SOCIAL FREEDOM.

It is seldom that we discuss matters in the columns of the OLIVE BRANCH, not pertinent to the cause of Spiritualism, therefore we must crave the indulgence of our readers for this deviation from our established rules and customs, for the following reason: In the September number we gave a report of certain matters, which occurred at the Lake Pleasant camp meeting, in which we referred in rather strong terms to the advocacy of free love doctrines by Mrs. Dr. Severance. The lady whose name was mentioned took exceptions to our position, charging us with doing her a personal injury. The matter has been finally adjusted between us, we agreeing to republish in our columns a portion of her lecture upon this subject; reserving to us the right to make what we deem fair and honest criticism of the same. We consider this subject in no way associated with Spiritualism, but something that has been foisted upon it to its injury. For this reason we have craved the indulgence of our many readers. Mrs. Severance in her lecture says:

I wish to consider the question of all questions that now agitate the public mind, and which will not down at our

bidding, which is being "cussed and discussed." I mean the Social Freedom question.

The fear of the discussion of this subject manifested by many spiritualists does not speak well for their confidence that Truth will always in free combat with Error come off conqueror, but rather shows the cropping out of the old sectarian fear of any new or unpopular truth.

Chas. Bradlaugh, the grand champion of Freedom in the old world, has truly said: "Without free speech no search for truth is possible; without free speech no discovery of truth is useful; without free speech progress is checked and the nation no longer marches forward toward the nobler life which the future holds for man. Better a thousand fold abuse of free speech than denial of free speech; the abuse of it dies in a day; but the denial of it slays the life of the people and entombs the hope of the race." Then let this and all other subjects receive careful, thorough and impartial discussion and analysis. In this way we will show ourselves scientific investigators instead of bigoted ignoramuses.

Social freedom declares every person has a right to live in his social relations according to the dictates of his own conscience and reason, the same as he has religiously; and government should protect him in that right from all interference from others, the same as it now does religiously. People must differ in their ideas of social life, the same as they do on religious matters, and for the same reason, their different degrees of growth; and the man who would try to force another to his views and practices in this respect, is as truly a tyrant as the one who would try to force another to his religious views.

There are a great variety of opinions extant as to what is the highest life between the sexes. We find as we go among the least advanced in civilization, women treated as slaves, beasts of burden, or articles of merchandise; parents selling their daughters for wives without regard to their wish or choice. We have progressed from one step to another in recognizing her humanity, until we have some

among us who believe woman should reign as queen in the realm of the affections. Social freedom recognizes the right of the Shaker to believe in celibacy and practice the same, but does not seem to be very fearful that all men will of course become celibates if they are recorded that right. If they did, it would be worse for the world than promiscuity, of which some are so fearful. It recognizes the right of the Catholics to marry according to the rituals of their church, but knows all will not choose that method. It recognizes the right of persons to live in polygamy if they choose, or in complex marriage as the Oneida community does, or the right of the varietist to live in a dual relation.

A person may be a believer in social freedom, and be either of these, or neither; and yet, if he recognizes the right of others to choose for themselves as best they may, as he would wish to do for himself, he is a believer in social freedom. To assume that a person is a Shaker, a polygamist or a Free-lover because he advocates social freedom is as unjust as it would be to assume a man to be a Materialist or a Jew, because he believed in religious freedom. We have not social freedom guaranteed to us by the constitution, as we have religious freedom, hence we find people more frequently interfering with our rights by passing laws trying to force all kinds of people to one mode of life in this respect, just as some people would force others to their religious views if they had the power.

We hear the same outcry against the terrible over-turning of society if social freedom should obtain, that we once heard of religious freedom, and have so very recently heard against freedom for the blacks.

“ Let agitation come, who fears,
 We need a flood; the filth of years
 Has gathered round us; roll then on,
 What cannot stand had best be gone.”

We are told wives would desert their husbands, husbands wives, our daughters would be debauched, and general

promiscuousness and prostitution would result. This, my friends, is only a picture of what actually does exist now, under our most stringent marriage laws. It is the same old cry that was set up against the liberation of the blacks—the wail of the ignorant tyrant. Do our laws prevent these evils? We can hardly take up a newspaper without seeing a list of elopements, desertions, debaucheries, child-murder and atrocities against decency and order; enough to make the “very stones cry out in judgement against us;” and yet our opponents say these things will come of social freedom. They have come, good friends, without it. We have all these conditions now, and have never had social freedom. We have laws now which make woman man’s slave, owned by him, soul and body, and “wives submit yourselves unto your husbands in all things” has been dinned into the ears of woman until she has failed to learn the diviner lesson, “obey the principles of your own soul.” Laws have been enacted by men with no voice of woman’s, making him the owner of her property and her person; and he can recover damages from any other man, if she, of her own accord, have sexual relations with him, she being his property.

If we had no guarantee of religious freedom it would not hinder people differing in religious views, but with penalties annexed to all differences it would hinder honesty of expression; so in social life our laws prohibiting all sexual relations, except in legal marriage, have not prevented people from having different views on the subject, and giving expression to them in acts, on the sly; but I will tell you what it has done; it has converted what might have been an honest promiscuous man into a promiscuous hypocrite, thus doubling the crime, if it be one, instead of preventing it; it has licensed men to debauch women in the marriage bed until the most fearful consequences have resulted, and diseases the most appalling, often resulting in life-long misery, or premature death. I could relate cases coming under my professional observation, that would equal in sickening details and horrors the debaucheries of Southern slaves, and

yet people object to hearing this subject discussed. With such persons, I think their ears are the nicest part of them.

We can hardly talk understandingly of monogamy, we know so little about it. If it is the highest condition of love—and I believe it is—there are evidently few people grown to that plane. Our marriage system from the time of wise old Solomon and Godlike David down to our modern saints like Beecher and Tilton, has been a strange mixture of polygamy on the one hand and monogamy on the other, and it will remain so until we recognize the equality of man and woman in marriage, and the sovereignty of the individual over all institutions.

Can we talk very loudly of monogamy when we have a quarter of a million of prostitutes in the country, supported largely by men living in this professedly holy marriage relation, the sanctity of whose portals they fear will be invaded? They fear, rather, the grinning, ghastly skeletons will be brought to light which are behind the curtains of respectable homes, sepulchres of buried hearts.

What changes would social freedom make in society if guaranteed to the people? It would help to harmonize the world by recognizing individual rights. It would not alter the belief of people, only as it gave them better chance for growth, by comparing ideas in free discussion. The Shaker would still believe in and practice his celibate life until he had learned the grand lesson of the higher uses of sexuality. The Polygamist would live in accord with his faith until the growth of his understanding would make him demand a different life, in which he would recognize woman's equality in all relations, and instead of making her his slave place her by his side as an equal with equality of rights in every department of life. The Catholic would marry according to the doctrines of his church, and believing in no divorce, "would fight it out on that line;" and every sect would live as they believed to be right. The only persons that would be specially affected by this, would be the most advanced, who have become a law unto themselves, the same as free

Religionists; and there is the same necessity for different views and different forms in social life as there is in religious life, and I only hope to inaugurate a better condition in social life by education and growth, the same as in any other department of being.

There would be no overturning of society as is predicted by the conservative croaker, and as was predicted of the liberation of the Southern slaves, but the recognition of the right of human souls to be protected against all encroachments from others; would give greater facilities for growth and happiness, and would do away with this everlasting prying into and meddling with other people's business, recognizing the ability of each to look after his own.

It is by education and by experience, which is the greatest of all educators, that we can expect to reach greater heights of knowledge in any department of life; and how can we educate ourselves and others except by free discussion? We should insist that virtue is not necessarily feminine, but that man as well as woman should be expected to be pure in their lives, and that virtue consists in living true to organic law in every department of being; that a person may be "not virtuous" just as truly by unnatural repression, as by excessive indulgence; that both should be avoided. That we cannot legislate morality into people, any more than we can intellectuality; both are conditions dependent upon organization and culture. I think I have made myself clearly understood in my definition of social freedom; that it does not mean any special form, but says live your highest life and allow others to live theirs.

I am not only a believer in social freedom, but I am a believer in Free love; and that word Free-love, signifies to me the most exalted condition ever reached by mortal or angel. *Freedom*, the very soil of growth and progress, and *Love*, the highest attribute of the Gods. The two grand principles combined forming a name that in the coming future will be honored more than any other name, and its martyrs will receive a brighter crown of glory.

There is really but one question in the matter, which is this: "Shall mutual love (as is proposed by Free-lovers) or selfish lust (as it exists to-day in and out of marriage) be the basis of the relations of the sexes? If you reply that mutual love should be the basis, then you are a Free-lover. If you reply it should be lust, you are in sympathy with the present laws and customs of society, in which purity of life for woman becomes an impossibility.

I claim the only law that should, or will hold together persons of an advanced humanity, will be the mutual law of attraction. That love, and love alone, will decide when the sexes shall mingle; that when two persons are drawn together by reciprocal love and mutual desire, that is a true union, and all the laws that men can frame cannot make it unholy or immoral. But, cries the objector, if everyone believed that doctrine, every man would at once become promiscuous, and prostitution would become general. You are now presuming upon the old, worn-out idea of total depravity; you are libeling your own wives, sisters and mothers; besides, there could not be any such thing in Free love as prostitution, because prostitution is entering into the sexual relation for a consideration.

Now, when a woman sells herself to a man for his gratification for five dollars a night, or for a position and a home for a lifetime, or for any consideration except love, she at once becomes a prostitute. In the one case unfit to associate with respectable women, but suitable to consort with their husbands; in the other case, a legal, respectable prostitute, moving in the first circles in society; but morally speaking there is no difference in the two; and every time a man forces an unwilling wife to his embrace, he debauches that wife, and the consequences of such debauchery is everywhere to be seen in our sickly, passion-killed wives, and still-born and half made up children.

A Free-lover raises the sexual act on which is based all of physical and spiritual life, from the mud and filth with which the ignorance of the past has slimed it over, and ele-

vates it to the very highest pinnacle of the temple, recognizing the sacredness of its mission, as not alone the generator of all physical life, but of spirit life also. As a wrong sexuality is the most debasing of all conditions, sapping the very foundations of life physically and morally, so a rightly adjusted and harmonized sexuality is the most health-giving and spiritualizing of all the relations people are capable of entering.

What would be the effect of Free-love upon the people? In the first place a promiscuous person could not be a Free-lover, for no promiscuous person will pretend that he bases his sexual relations upon reciprocal love and mutual desire, but for self-gratification. Such persons are incapable of understanding Free-love in its true significance. They may believe in social freedom, but not in Free-love, as they have not grown to comprehend it. Free-love would have the same effect upon people as Spiritualism has religiously. We could not afford to wrong ourselves and others in this relation, because we know the consequences are sure to follow; that if we sin we must surely suffer.

Look at a man and woman living on the beautiful plane of Free-love. Knowing as they do that love is the only bond that holds them together, how careful they would be to draw out, by every power within them, the love of their companion by making themselves the most noble, lovable and grand beings they are capable of becoming. They would see that no excess or abuse should cause repulsion, that every demand in their natures was supplied, that perfect justice was accorded to each, and that kindness and tenderness was the spirit ever pervading the household.

From such homes of peace and love, would be evolved angels here on earth, beings as much in advance of those born in our present unloved relations, as those of to-day are above savage life. Is it not then a part, a very important part of Spiritualism to so enlighten and develop the people that they will beget better children, a higher grade of humanity, as well as to help reform those who are now begotten

in our unequal, inharmonious relations, which we call marriage?

Who are the opposers of Free-love? There is a class of persons who from misrepresentations of others, and never having heard it explained, honestly think that it means licentiousness; but a far greater number are those who are living lives that they are anxious to cover from the public gaze, so they cry out "stop thief" to turn attention from themselves. The opposers are either ignorant or are hypocrites.

As there are persons who are converted to Spiritualism who have not fully outgrown their old notions, and bring many of the absurdities of their past belief with them, making an incongruous mixture of folly and wisdom, who are pointed at by cavilers as specimens of Spiritualists, so we have those who are just growing into a comprehension of freedom, who bring with them the selfishness and love of conquest that belongs to the old conditions, and are pointed at as objectional in their lives. They are striving for the light and will surely reach it.

We are in earnest in this work of reform, and will never cease our pleadings until every woman in the land shall stand side by side with man, his peer in every relation of life. Until all are purified from sensuality and lust, with every faculty and passion fully developed and attuned to divinest harmony; until sickness, want and crime, shall be banished from the earth; until undesired maternity shall forever cease; until marriage becomes the most exalted sacrament, within whose sphere no impurity can come; until home shall be to every heart what the poet has painted it, a haven of peace and love, and motherhood be recognized as the divinest mission of humanity.

Then what though bigotry frowns and ignorance sneers; what though prison walls loom up before us, or even death stares us in the face, we will, with the strength of the angel hosts, who are helping us in this grand work, press steadily onward until victory shall crown our efforts, and the glad

song of freedom shall echo the grand earth round. Finally, as Fenelon said to Louis XIV, "The truth must be spoken. Woe to those who comprehend and speak it not, and woe to you if you are not worthy of hearing."

JONES' CRITICISM.

One of the first things we find in this lecture is a demand for free speech. If we were living in the absolute instead of in the practical, there could be no such thing as our rights in any direction being questioned; but living in the practical, and dealing with the practical things of this world, as well as with the impractical, the judgment of the best minds in this country, and in all countries, is now and has been, that laws are absolutely necessary for the government of people and nations; and the laws under which we are living to-day do not in any sense, abridge the rights of any individual in the exercise of speech, so long as the welfare of society is not imperiled by it; and hence, this loud appeal for free speech, is proof positive, that the person or persons, making such appeal, desires to say something they know they have no legal right to say, and hence this appeal is equivalent to a demand for the repeal of statute laws—throwing open the sluice-ways for evil speaking, as well as for the more pure and soul elevating.

In the demand made for free speech, no restrictions are asked for to be put upon the most vile and brutal semblances of humanity. If the law must be repealed, or so modified as to allow one person the right to express themselves, in any manner they may choose, and upon any topic or subject they please, the same right must be extended to every one. The thugs of New York, and other cities would have the same right to give utterance to their vulgarities, as the more refined and cultured would have. Because one person is law-abiding and would work for the best interests of humanity, is no reason that all restrictions upon the rights of speech should be removed. Even with the laws which are now in force it is a difficult task to hold in check

the lower stratas of society. Repeal all laws bearing upon this subject, and what would be the result? In our opinion we should have about as complete a hell as the wisest brain could conceive.

We hear a great deal said about free speech; one would think to listen to some of the so-called liberalist lecturers, that they were in some manner deprived of their rights in this respect; but so far as our knowledge extends, they say what they please, upon any subject, in their discussions. No one has been interfered with yet; no officer of the law has ever arrested any one in their lectures for advocating their views, and they never will be arrested, so long as they do not advocate what is immoral. Then why this bugbear? Why be continually prating and asking for what is already granted to every one? The church or Christians may raise objections to the advocacy of any line of thought not in keeping with their ideas, but they are powerless before the law to prohibit, or punish, what are termed heresies. Colonel Ingersoll can speak in any town or city in the United States, without being legally molested, and so can Mrs. Severance. What more is wanted? We believe in free speech, and we also believe in having laws enacted and enforced for the protection of the people from the effects of evil and unwise speakings, and we are glad to know that we have a code of laws which limits speech within the boundaries of refinement and morality. There may be those who have so far progressed as to be a law unto themselves in all things, but if they are such, they are isolated cases.

The second point we desire to notice is where it is claimed that social freedom declares every person has a right to live in his social relations according to the dictations of his own conscience and reason, the same as he has religiously; and government should protect him in that right from others, the same as it does religiously. It is a well known fact that a person may change his views every day in the week if he choose, if he can find what suits him better for the time, and he is protected in it; but changing one's religious views is

simply a change of belief; only the individual is concerned in this matter. But on the other hand, unlimited freedom is claimed for action; if this is not advocating prostitution and licentiousness, then we ask what the author of these strange words does really mean? One of the things in which we offended Mrs. Severance, was in charging that free-loveism proclaimed the right of every woman to choose who shall be the father of her children, changing the parentage as often as their unholy lusts may demand. What, we ask, is the difference between what we then stated and what is claimed in this lecture? It is estimated that there are some six hundred forms of religious beliefs in the world, and according to the principles laid down by the advocates of social freedom, a man or woman has a right to change their material or sexual relations six hundred times a year, if they choose, and that the government should sustain and protect them. In the September number we said the doctrine was damnable. Language is inadequate to express the disgust and abhorrence that every pure minded person must feel when they consider for a moment what must be the consequence should such infamous doctrines ever be accepted and lived. In plain terms it seems to us like an attempt to make of this grand and beautiful country a national brothel, constituting the legal heads of all departments of justice as keepers and defenders of the same. But perhaps the person who delivered this lecture may say that we are carrying things to an extent not possible ever to be reached by the American people. We can only judge from the condition of things now existing; the most stringent laws are enforced to protect the weak from the strong, and to protect the chaste and virtuous from assault by the low born and vulgar. We do not say that Mrs. Severance would delight in seeing such a state of affairs. But why ask for unlimited freedom? We are not living in an ideal age, though it may be well for everyone to have their ideals; but would not the debaucher have as just a claim for his or her ideal, as the lady lecturer has for hers? And we all know from experience

what kind of an ideal a vile person would be. If there are any doubts upon this subject, we will state that a person's ideal is what is most prominent in their minds. The ideal of the pure will be an elevated type of manhood and womanhood. The sensualist will delight in an ideal that will pander most to his or her passions; and they are known to propogate their species more abundantly than the opposite side; at least the statistics of the country give this as the result of careful investigation.

We believe there are people who live pure, chaste lives, never refusing to obey laws made binding upon them. They are pure in thought and action because it is their nature to be such. The law is to protect the pure and true from insult and attack from the more crude portions of society. We know the conditions as they exist to-day, but what would have been the conditions of society with no laws but self-constituted enactments? We shudder at the thought of what would have been. We regard the law which defines how the sexes shall commingle a just and equitable law, and the person, who by voice or pen, advocates the abrogation of those laws, we regard as an enemy to the human race. It is a rare case that law abiding citizens are heard clamoring for greater freedom than they now enjoy. They are satisfied with the freedom of speech and action guaranteed to them.

It would seem by reading this lecture that the interest of woman was only safe in the hands of these so-called social reformers. If such was the case, well might woman pray to be delivered from her friends. The truth of the matter is this, in so far as civilization advances, the condition of woman is elevated. We do not believe that these social reformers can point to an instance where, by the acceptance of their doctrines, the condition of a single woman has been benefited. But there are thousands of instances where woman has been benefited under the conditions that now exist. To elevate the race, you want to elevate the brains, and not pander to their animal passions. The lady says, "Social freedom recognizes the right of the Shaker to believe

in celibacy and practice the same. Also the right of the Catholics to marry according to the rituals of their Church." How magnanimous these freedomites are? Just as though it would make any difference should they object. But she says they also recognize the right of persons to live in polygamy if they choose, or in complex marriage as the Oneida Community did, or of the varietist to live his life with those of his kind, or the monogamist to live in a dual relation.

It is well known that under the Noyes reign, the female members of the Oneida Community were made to drudge in the fields side by side with the male members of such community; and any one who ever visited that place, could not fail to notice the downcast, dejected appearance of every woman belonging to it; and only by long indulgence were the practices allowed to be continued; and, but for the law, we should be still breathing in the foul emanations of corruptions issuing from that once corrupt cesspool of human depravity. And yet these social reformers would not interfere to stop such practices. They would lend a hand to help their sister-women to rise above the bestial conditions in human life. What a noble work of reform this social freedomism is! Mrs. Severance says, social freedom "recognizes the right of the varietist to live his life with his kind." What is that but recognizing prostitution? For the man or woman who could be classed as a varietist in sexual relations would be nothing more or less than living lives of prostitution. And this is just the opinion we have held in regard to Social Freedom, that their reformatory professions were simply a demand for greater license for every person to do as they pleased, regardless of the welfare of society, regardless of the offspring, the result of such license, and the effect such license would entail upon future generations.

We are glad to see that Mrs. Severance admits that a person may be of either of the classes before mentioned, and yet be a believer in social freedom; what more plainer admissions could be expected from anyone? And if the lady

considers herself a practical worker in her so-called field of reform, then she should not blush to take the hand of the varietist, or associate with the lowest specimen of human kind; for they are members of her party, and believe in the doctrines; the only difference may be in demonstrating the work. Mrs. Severance may be pure as an angel, but another equally as demonstrative in demanding unlimited freedom of action may live the life of a debauchee. In the first instance we should say that Mrs. Severance did not believe in the practical workings of social freedom theories. While in the other case we see clearly where these things lead to when brought into practice.

The lady says we have not social freedom guaranteed to us by law as we have religious freedom, hence we find people more frequently interfering with our rights by passing laws trying to force all kinds of people to one mode of life. In this respect just as some people would force others to their religious views if they had the power. Is there anything wrong or arbitrary in a law which demands all people to live pure lives? Are not such laws safeguards for the protection of future generations against social freedomites? Instead of abrogating one of these laws now in force, let us enact more stringent laws, seeing that only by law can woman be elevated and man held accountable for his violation of law. We say give us more law, and less social freedom, such as is demanded by these would-be reformers.

In the next paragraph Mrs. Severance says, we are told wives would desert their husbands, etc. If this is a picture of things as they exist under the law, what might we not expect if there was no law? No one claims that man has reached his highest yet. The great mass of mankind are living on the animal plane, hence the necessity of law. We see no comparison between the cry raised against the liberation of the black race and that uttered against social freedom. Men do not hold their wives as property. Every wife in the land has her rights before the law as much so as her husband. A man cannot maltreat his wife with impunity,

while the slaveholder had the law in his own hands or had the right to do as he pleased. The cry raised against the liberation of the black man was by the owners of the black man. They knew the liberation of their slaves was in many instances bankruptcy to them. A few Northern dough-faces joined in the cry, and added to it the theory that the black man was incapable of caring for himself; but the facts prove how false were the cries of these men. We have brought the black man under law, and he is making his way up in the scale of human unfoldment. There are frequent accounts of elopements, but what are the causes of them? Lust and demand for social freedom. Just what is demanded by social freedomites. If a man finds himself mated to a woman unequal to him there is a way to render this even, and protection granted to the children of such unhappy union; but without law this world would be filled with fatherless children. Social freedom in our opinion would only increase the evil instead of being a remedy for it. Another charge is that we have laws now which make woman man's slave, owned by him soul and body. This is false in every particular. We would like to ask the lady if she is owned soul and body by Mr. A. B. Severance, yet she is living under the same laws as the rest of American women are; if she is not thus owned, others are not. The sayings of Paul in regard to women are not regarded as binding in this age. We have gone beyond that, without the aid of social freedomites. There is no such thing as property in person, and the lady knows it as well as we do. The marriage contract is equally binding upon man and woman, and any violation of that contract renders the party offending liable for the injury done to the person or beliefs of the other party. Should social freedom obtain, there would be no redress other than personal, and instead of our papers containing occasional accounts of murders, if there was no law to which the injured could appeal, murders, suicides, and not law, would prevail among all classes of society.

It is natural as the minds of men unfold that they should differ in matters of a religious character; but these differences are in beliefs say, not in deeds. The majority of the people have but one mind in regard to monogamic marriages, though as the lady says "some do act on the sly not in keeping with their professions." We should say they were at heart social freedomites. We never saw an honest promiscuous man. Perhaps the lady can give us the name and address of such a one; we would like to open correspondence with him. But why confine this matter to the male sex alone, for thus far the term man has been used in a generic sense, and if there be honest promiscuous men, then there must be promiscuous women who are equally honest. Where shall we find them? Would the lady think she was an honest woman if she were to practice promiscuity? Let us bring this subject home, that is the best way to test the matter. Words are the cheapest article of merchandise we have. There is a great deal of this kind of property given away for nothing; it is acts which determine character.

Mrs. Severance says we can hardly talk understandingly of monogamy, we know so little about it. (We are sorry for her, and hope she will make it a study.) She says, if it is the highest condition of love—and I believe it is—there are few people grown to that plane. We are pleased to have her commit herself to the justice of our position, for we believe monogamic marriages to be the only true condition in which the sexes can live. But we disagree with her in regard to the numbers of people who have reached that plane. We believe there is a great deal more of good in the world than evil; we do not believe in the doctrine of total depravity. The world is fast growing better, and the indications of this growth are apparent in an increased knowledge in reference to ourselves, obtained through the study of nature's law. It is very impolitic for the lady to throw stones at such characters as the godlike David, and wise old Solomon, for they were genuine practical social freedomites and Free-lovers; they were varietists, promiscuous men, and the lady

has admitted that such people had a right to live their own lives. Don't throw brick-bats, sister, you may break windows when least expected. If we remember rightly there was a strong effort made to class Mr. Beecher as a social freedomite, and Free-lover, but the attempt was a failure; but had it been done, we do not think the names of Beecher and Tilton would have been mentioned in this lecture, but rather would they have been held up to the world as the patron saints of the social freedom movement.

We can talk just as loudly of monogamy if there were a million of prostitutes in the country; yes, more strongly. The greater the existing evils, the more necessity for stringent laws. We do not believe that the quarter of a million of disreputable women are largely supported by men professedly living in holy marriage relation. This is the plea we often hear from disreputable persons; being evil minded, they imagine every other person must be like unto themselves. Without doubt there are cases of this kind, but they are the exception and not the rule. To form an estimate of the standing and character of men and women, we must become familiar with their lives; we must know them; one married man seen in such company would, by a profligate man or woman, be multiplied to a hundred. Very true, we cannot legislate morality nor intellectuality into a person, but we can punish them for immoral practices; we can throw around the innocent, safeguards to protect them from the machinations of evil doers, and by holding their debased propensities in check, give their intellectual faculties opportunity to unfold. Evil thrives upon evil practices; restrain the individual and the evil will not propagate itself. But on the other hand make the pathway to evil and the gratification of passions easy, and the evil will grow, and the little good there is in the individual must die.

Mrs. Severance says, "I think I have made myself clearly understood in my definition of social freedom; that it does not mean any special form, but says live your highest life and allow others to live theirs." Then if social freedom does

not offer any special form or method for the elevation of the race, it is not a reformatory movement; for there must be an incentive to induce the lower stratas in society to work up to the higher plane of unfoldment. A movement in society without a plan of action is just as apt to work one way as the other. But we think a plan has been laid down in this lecture, and it is a free and easy plan. The lady says she is not only a believer in social freedom, but is a believer in Free-love, and has given her definition of the terms; but if she had used the term true love, we should say her definition was a correct one. We did not know before that there were any martyrs to the cause of social freedom. If certain ones have attempted to advocate a doctrine at war with the best interests of society, and met with opposition on every hand, we fail to see wherein they have been made martyrs of, for a doctrine so repugnant to every honest, candid person, should convince them that the best thing to be done would be to acknowledge their error and turn their attention to other subjects, and feel that they were engaged in a work that would benefit the race; then they might reasonably expect a crown of glory, and not otherwise.

There is really but one question in this matter, says Mrs. Severance, which is this: "Shall mutual love (as is proposed by Free-love), or selfish lust (as it exists to-day in and out of legal marriage) be the basis of the relation of the sexes?" There are as many kinds of love as there are shades of complexion. Free-love, as we regard it, does not imply true love, and the lady has given before what she considers to be the basis of free-love; to hedge now is too late in the day. It is false that under the present laws and customs of society, purity in woman becomes an impossibility, and the charge is a direct insult to every true mother, wife, sister and companion in the land; and any person making such a sweeping charge is either a lunatic or in a fair way to become one. "The mutual law of attraction" is the only law the lady recognizes to hold together man and woman, and this law as demonstrated in human life when not governed

by a deeper and profound respect, is liable to change at any hour; there may be mutual attraction between one man and a number of women, and *vice versa*. Then according to this doctrine they must all mingle promiscuously, and when the charm is gone find mutual attraction somewhere else.

It is a very important matter to be able to determine the difference between psychology and love. There is a great deal of the former mistaken for the latter, and through that source, are traceable many of the so-called unhappy marriages. True love grows stronger as time moves on. Free-love is free to be made merchandise of. Mutual attraction does not imply love; men are attracted by a pretty face and figure; women are attracted by a manly form and winning manners. Two of these mutual admirers may chance to meet and marry; but the pretty face may grow wan and pale, the form lose its perfect proportions, the manly form may be bent by disease, and the individual become morose and dejected; the attractive qualities are lost to one of the parties, the other may fade and show signs of decay; but if there be not something stronger than mutual attraction, to bind these two together, the dream of heaven proves to be a hell indeed. True love and principles of honor alone can bind man and woman, and make them one. Again, the lady says, where two persons are drawn together by reciprocal love and mutual desire, that is a true union, and all the laws that men can frame cannot make it unholy or immoral. This is but a feint to cover the real point of attack; reciprocal to-day may not be reciprocal to-morrow; a little jar, a little stronger reciprocal love in any other direction, may break the first bonds, and if it be the woman who is deserted, unless there be a law to protect her in her rights, she and her probable offspring must fight their way through the jungles of human life alone, while the husband and father is reciprocating the lavish attentions of some more free-loving female. We are not a believer in the idea of total depravity, but know something of the practical work-

ings in human life; and know that until man has reached by gradual steps the plane of individual responsibility, he must be kept within certain boundaries. That there are evils in society no one can deny; but to charge that prostitution is the result of restrictive law, is false. Mutual attraction sometimes brings men and women together. The woman wants a home, and the man desires a companion, and yet both live true lives; there may not be that depth of love which is apparent in others, but the charge that such a woman is no better than she who makes of her body merchandise, for no other reason, than being too indolent to labor for an honest living, is an assertion too sweeping, and one that cannot be substantiated by proof. Arguments of this character, only show the weakness of the position assumed. If the world needs reforming, and there are those who feel that they have a mission in that direction, let them show that they are reformers by word and deed.

The lady asks what would be the effect of Free-love upon the people? In the first place, a promiscuous person could not be a Free-lover. Let us go back and see what was said upon this subject. In the fifth paragraph of the lecture, Mrs. Severance says social freedom recognizes the right of persons to live in polygamy if they choose, or in complex marriage, as the Oneida Community does, or the right of the varietest to live his life, or the monogamist to live in a dual relation. She says in connection with the preceding, that a person may be a believer in social freedom, and be either of these or neither. A polygamist, if not a promiscuous person, what is he? So it does seem, after all, by the lady's own statement, that a promiscuous person can be a social freedomite. But there is an attempt made here at hair splitting; in this paragraph an attempt is made to show a difference between social freedom and Free-love, before they have run together. Social freedom, the lady has defined, to be the right of every person to live in his social relations according to the dictates of his own conscience;

that is, the right to change sexual relationship is held in reserve by the individual. As we understand it, Free-love means the same thing. If love, or attraction grows stronger in an opposite direction from what it had been, the right to change is embodied in the will of the person. We remember hearing a story told of two men and two women, living in a western state; their loves changed, and a mutual exchange was effected. The wife of Mr. A., went with Mr. B., and the wife of Mr. B., accepted Mr. A. This we consider a clear case of free love.

There are other points we might consider, but our space is limited and we must bring the matter to a close; but before we do so we want to say that any subject, no matter how unsavory it may be, can by a skillful artist be made to appear beautiful. Mrs. Severance is a very fair word painter; she may be honest and think she is really doing a reformatory work, but we fail to see it in that light. This social freedom theory has been a curse to the country from its first conception; and why it is considered by any one belonging to Spiritualism is a mystery we cannot fathom. If laws are to be repealed, the political arena is the place to work for such repeal. If woman is the slave, as these freedomites would have us believe, she is then to go among these slaves and do good work there. We have no slaves in Spiritualism; every Spiritualist recognizes in woman his equal, so far as her opportunities have favored her. Spiritualists are a law-abiding people: their religion is a religion of law and order; their philosophy is based upon law, and they do not wish these laws repealed. They are monogamists and are content to live in accord with nature's laws, one man and one woman. Let these would-be social freedom reformers herd by themselves. There is no occasion for any one of them becoming martyrs; the conditions of the world are changing as rapidly as it is best for them to change. A jump from the cruder conditions of life into the angelic would be too hard a strain on the nerves of most of us; far better go slow and clear all the weeds out of the path we travel.

Among these social freedomites we hear much said about the enslaved condition of woman, and they charge that the church is accountable for all the ignorance, and a large portion of the crimes perpetrated upon communities; this is a mistake. The church has always, or at least for the past half century, taught strictly moral principles. If the church has not kept pace with the advanced thinkers of this generation, they at least exert a moral influence in communities and are entitled to respect for the good it has done and is doing. The Catholic church wields the most arbitrary power ever the people of any religious organization, and we hear less scandal coming from that source than from any other, according to numbers. But ever since this Free-love doctrine has had an existence, it has been a curse to everything religious, social or political where it has been introduced; and because a few who professed to be spiritualists have embraced these doctrines, Spiritualism has been cursed by it until it is almost impossible to get an acknowledgment from the better classes in society of their convictions. Advocates of social freedom may hurl the epithet coward at these people, and with brazen impudence defy the opinions of the public: but impudence and a disregard for the good opinions of our fellow men must not be taken for bravery. Truly brave men or women never boast of their powers; they do their work, and let others decide whether they are noble and true, or false and selfish.

We have no doubt but what Mrs. Severance is, as she says, in earnest in what she deems a work of reform; but in our opinion her methods are faulty. Teach the people to respect law and order; teach the young the results of vice, and they will shun it; but to give greater freedom for vice and crime to increase and propagate itself is in no sense a mark of reform; and as we understand the matter, it is wholly evil and should be frowned upon by every married woman who has the welfare of humanity at heart. We have not intended to say anything reflecting upon the private character of Mrs. Severance. We have given our honest thoughts in refer-

ence to the position she assumes in her lecture, and will leave it for the public to discern which of us has the welfare of the people most at heart.

We challenge Mrs. Severance or any one advocating her views of social freedom, to show us a single instance where, by the acceptance of the doctrines of social freedom, one fallen woman has been restored to the ranks of virtue and honor. We challenge her to cite a single instance where a man of brutal instincts has been raised above the natural propensities of his debased nature by becoming a convert to social freedom doctrines. We challenge the advocates of this doctrine to prove that they have been instrumental in changing the social, religious or political status of woman for the better in a single instance; and we would be pleased to have them send us a record of the number of once happy homes destroyed by it, children made worse than fatherless and motherless. If this is reform, the less we have of it the better will it be for society at large."

After reading the above I wrote a reply, but before sending it, sent the following postal to Mr. Jones:

You have asked questions and made challenges in your criticism of my lecture; will you publish a reply?

To which I received the following answer:

Dear Madam:—Your card received. This matter so far as I am concerned is ended. I stated in one of my letters to you that the publication of your lecture with my criticism would end the matter, therefore must respectfully decline opening the columns of the *Olive Branch* for a discussion of this character.

Respectfully yours,

D. JONES.

I then sent him the following letter:

MILWAUKEE, NOV. 6th, 1883.

MR. JONES:

Dear Sir:—Your refusal to publish my reply to your charges and challenges received. I am sorry to be compelled

to conclude that you—as well as some others—are willfully and maliciously misrepresenting the views of social reformers. You call upon me, or others holding the same views, to answer certain questions, and then refuse opportunity for a reply, thus conveying to the minds of your readers the idea that they were unanswerable. In the first place, if you did not desire any discussion of the subject why did you begin it by your misrepresentations and inuendoes? Why did you not keep silence on a subject you considered tabooed? It is a trick of dishonest editors to crouch behind the editorial, their coward's castle, and keep up a continuous fire upon those differing from them in opinion—a course most despicable. Did you for a moment suppose I was the person that would quietly allow my name, and the principles of personal liberty dearer to me by far, to be thus slandered without rising in their defense? You ought to have known me better; and let me now notify you, or any other villifier of the principles of personal liberty and self-ownership that I am endeavoring to teach, that I will try and make it lively for you so long, as you wish to keep up the fusillade.

I have decided the best I can do at present is to put this whole matter as it has appeared in your paper, with our correspondence, and the reply to you that you refuse to publish, in a pamphlet, under the title "A Discussion of the Social Question between Juliet H. Severance, M. D., and David Jones, of the *Olive Branch*." In this way it will reach not alone your readers, but we can scatter them broadcast, thus letting the people read both sides of the subject, enabling them to judge of the merits of each, and thus make it an educator. Of course this will meet with your approval as it will give people opportunity to read your very logical, "just and fair criticism."

Yours for freedom,

JULIET H. SEVERANCE, M. D.

P. S. If you would like to make any changes or additions to your side of the question, before its publication, send the

same to me at once. Also any orders for pamphlets.

J. H. S.

The following response was received:

OLIVER BRANCH OFFICE,
Utica, N. Y., Nov. 9th, 1883.

MRS. DR. SEVERANCE:

Dear Madam:—Your letter bearing date November 6th, is received. As you are your own master, you have the right to publish whatever you choose, and in any form you may deem most advisable; but I do not intend to insult my patrons with any more social freedom or Free-love trash. My business is not to attempt to corrupt the morals of the people, but to awaken a deeper love for the pure, noble and true. These sentiments I do not find embodied in the doctrines advocated by the champions of social freedom and Free-love. The people will judge of these matters, as many have already rendered their verdict in favor of my position. As a matter of courtesy I will send you the price of one of your pamphlets as soon as I learn what they will be. As this letter forms a part of our correspondence, please give it space in your anticipated publication.

Respectfully yours,

D. JONES.

To which I replied:

MILWAUKEE, NOV. 17th, 1883.

MR. JONES:

Dear Sir:—Your letter received. I do not know whether it is what I have written, or your effusion, that you designate "trash." Your "business is not to try to corrupt the morals of the people." I hope that is true; but allowing my doctrines are demoralizing in their tendencies, as you intimate, what better plan could be devised than to place them side by side with your "pure and true" ones, and let the people judge for themselves.

My views of the best methods for elevating the morals of the people (for I am as earnest in my desires for, and as

energetic and self-sacrificing in my work to bring about that result as you can be) and yours of course differ widely. Now, if we are really earnest and honest we would be willing, it seems to me, to discuss candidly and fairly the whole subject, with no other feeling than to arrive at the truth, at the same time admitting the possibility that we were in error. If I can not by solid logic sustain my position against any arguments made against them, I am anxious to know it and accept the truth whatever that may be. A cause is always a bad one that must be sustained by vituperation and misrepresentation; and any position that can not be sustained in a fair discussion shows its inherent weakness, and should be abandoned.

If you really believed the morals of the people would be enhanced by adopting your views, as against mine, how could you better serve humanity than by showing these contrasts? For you must certainly agree with me, if you are posted, that society is honeycombed with social disorders and corruptions that need a remedy; and in presenting our different methods of curing the evils, thought would be evolved that would benefit the world; and certainly if people as you claim have already rendered their verdict in your favor, I should think that in a series of articles thoroughly discussing the subject, you would expect to entirely rout me in my position. I did not ask you in my last, nor intimate the possibility of your publishing anything farther, so your refusal was a little "previous," for it was only fear of the law, that you seem to recognize as the only rule of action, that caused you to put in the quotations you did from my lecture, and not any sense of justice. Your letter will certainly appear, as I believe in giving an opponent fair play. I will send you some pamphlets gratis, when published, as reward for the matter you have furnished.

Sincerely,

JULIET H. SEVERANCE, M. D.

The following is the reply to Mr. Jones that he refused to publish:

ED. OLIVE BRANCH:

In your very strange and unjust criticism of the portion of my lecture published in your last issue, you made statements and asked questions to which of course you will allow a reply.

In the first place you show that it would be very unwise to allow free speech, because ignorant people and "the thugs of New York" might say bad things. Now you very well know that free speech means the discussion of all subjects. It does not mean indecent methods, nor was it ever so interpreted; and the fact that only those who desire to do so hear any subject discussed, is the regulator in that matter; for if none wished to listen, certainly the speaking would soon cease. But if the "thugs" called out a class of their kind that none others could, what an excellent opportunity it would present, to show how very bad are their doctrines, whatever they might be, by contrasting them with others more elevating.

Milton truly expresses the feelings of every intelligent, honest person, when he says: "Give me the liberty to know, to utter and to argue freely, according to my conscience, above all other liberties. Let truth and falsehood grapple; who ever knew truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?"

In the next place you proceed to show that we have free speech everywhere. Have you never heard of the various reformers being mobbed or imprisoned in this country? Was it not for free speech that Lovejoy was mobbed and his press destroyed? Was it not for free speech that Garrison was dragged through the streets of puritanic Boston with a rope around him, and finally lodged in jail? Was it not for free speech that Moses Hull was mobbed by the president causing the band to play at Lake Pleasant, when he was attempting to speak at a time and place where it was announced any one had a right to ten minutes time? of which action Mr. Beals said last summer, "It was not par-

liamentary, but it was effective," the same as might be said of any mob, not legal but effective.

Was not Col. Ingersoll prevented from speaking at Delaware because he was a blasphemer? Have I not been in a convention speaking on anti-slavery when brickbats and rotten eggs were the solid arguments used by our opponents? Woman suffrage, temperance, and in fact every reform movement, even Spiritualism, has had to contend with this lack of recognition of the right of free speech. Would you say all right to this because we were advocating things that were illegal? Was there ever a reform that was not a battle against existing laws? Certainly not. My first reformative work was denouncing the law that murdered a man, because he had murdered one—called capital punishment. Did that mean I wanted license to kill somebody as would be inferred by your conclusions on other subjects? My next labor was battling against a law that gave one man the right to own another—chattel slavery. Was it a shame to oppose the law in this instance? Slaveholders thought so, and would not allow free speech; but even then, at the risk of their lives, some noble souls went to plead among the slaveholders for justice to the slaves. Should they have confined their labors to the slaves, as you recommend me to do in the instance of the women, and was it a shame to advocate liberty because it was illegal? My next work in reform was opposing the law that made it incumbent upon Northern people to hunt slaves for the South; and I did it effectually, keeping an underground railroad station—a crime for which the penalty was imprisonment; and opponents to my work would talk then, very much as those that are opposed to social freedom do now; and often I have had this wise remark (?) hurled at me, "I s'pose you want to marry a nigger." At the same time that I was working for the liberation of the negro, I was also using my voice and pen against the law that disfranchised half the people of the country for no other reason than that they were of the female sex. I call such laws infamous, and demand

their repeal. I am also opposed to the laws that allow \$400,000,000 (four hundred millions) valuation of church property to be exempt from taxation, and that in various ways favor the Christian religion above any other kind in a country that declares for religious freedom.

I am also opposed to laws that recognize man's superiority to and ownership of woman as in our marriage system, and will do all in my power against it, as I have against other unjust laws that I have mentioned. You say you consider the laws that define how the sexes should commingle as just and equitable. Let us examine this:

The laws give man what is called "marital rights" and under these rights a brute can outrage his wife no matter how often and she has no legal redress, no appeal but death. Let her go to any lawyer and ask for a divorce on any such ground and he would laugh at her. Does woman own her own body? Let her assert that and act accordingly, if contrary to her husband's "marital rights" and she will soon find out to whom her body belongs. Children are born continually, the result of relations not founded upon mutual love and desire, but the result of rapacious lust and tyranny on the one hand and disgust and servile submission on the other or else hatred and resentment; and this is legal. But in your classic language it is "damnable."

You seem to think it a terrible thing to assert that a woman should choose the father of her child. Will you please inform us who is more competent or has a better right? If woman only had children when she wished—was the controlling factor in the case as she should be, how many children think you would most women have, and would they be the result of frequent changes of fathers, or of unholy lust? I wonder what kind of women you have met that you judge them so lustful. I have found them just the reverse of this, and their lack in this respect has been the excuse that men have made for outside relations—they having greater demands, and in many places have licensed houses of prostitution because of this claim. What an argu-

ment you then make against my position that every one should be free to choose his social life the same as he is his religious life. "There are about six hundred forms of religious beliefs in the world, and according to social freedom a man or woman has the right to change their marital relations six hundred times a year if they choose." What logic! Query: Would that be much harder on a man than to change his religious convictions as many times a year? and was ever a man known to have believed in every form of religion, even if he have the right? How ridiculous the assumption that a man will do anything the law allows him to. Have we no intellectual or moral natures to control us in these matters, or are we merely machines run by law-makers whom we elect for that purpose? I have a legal right to drink whisky, tea or coffee, to use tobacco, eat pork, sausage and every other abomination that most of our people indulge in. Why do I not do it? Because I know it is not conducive to my health and happiness. If I thought they would benefit me I would use them, if there were ever so many laws against it. Other persons think differently, do not know them to be injurious, and they have to learn by experience and suffering; but would it be wise to compel them by law to abstain from any or all of them? I think not, and I fear even so great a believer in the saving power of law as yourself would object to some of them. You say men do not hold their wives as property. I say the laws so recognize them. *There are parties that live above the laws, and in consequence of this fact we have some happy homes.* To the question, "Is the lady owned soul and body by A. B. Severance?" I reply legally I am. And if I were to associate with any other man sexually, he could sue said man for damages, not to me but to himself, I being his property, while I could not sue any woman for associating with him, because I do not own him; and to prove this, let me quote a late decision of Judge Dodge, of Ohio, in the case of a woman, Mrs. Judge Seney, suing another woman, Mrs. Bowman, for alienating her husband from her, and associating

with him. In the Judge's decision these sentiments are expressed: "A husband has a pecuniary, a property interest in his wife, father in his children. A father can recover damages against a man who seduces his daughter. *but a mother can not.* She has not property in her, is not entitled to her wages. The father is the head of the family, the husband is the head of the wife, *but the wife does not own the husband,* the child does not own the father. I hold the child can not sue for an injury to the father, nor the wife for an injury to her husband; but he can sue any one who takes her away from him, who harbors her or injures her, because she is his own. The husband enforces his claim to his wife by striking down every one who interferes with his right to her. The law protects him in holding her. The law gives courage to his heart, strength to his arm, in defending his possession, but the wife looks to the husband. The law does not permit her to go forth to smite the seducer of her husband, nor the man or woman who entices him away." And he dismissed the case.

Has every wife in the land as much right before the law as her husband? It seems you and the judge differ in this. And even in your state, a man has the legal right to will away on his death bed an unborn child, or transfer its guardianship and care to any one he pleases, and the mother can not help herself. Does the wife anywhere have the same property rights in case of his death as does the husband in case of hers? In fact are they equal in any thing? Mrs. Stanton has given the best definition of wife I have heard. "An upper servant without wages."

We are living in a world where man has supreme control. He has made our religion, in which woman is represented as an afterthought of the Creator and made for man's benefit alone. Our laws are framed by him with no voice of woman's and our customs conform to our creeds and codes, all being based upon the assumed inferiority of woman. Slowly the work of reformers, battling against established laws and customs, and the law of evolution, have bettered the condi-

tion of woman, yet every step of advancement has been marked by the footprints of the blood stained feet of those who, for love of their kind, have dared to make new paths for future generations to walk in. Each step forward in every department of life has been met by the same apprehensions of evil as those you raise against Free-love. A wise man, when asked what was the cure for the evils of liberty, replied, "Greater liberty!" It is only in the atmosphere of freedom that morality and virtue can grow. *If the forcible prevention of crime constitutes morality, then our most moral people are in our penal institutions. There can be no such thing as virtue or morality without opportunity for the opposite, and, as a matter of choice, not compulsion.*

We can have no true marriage until based upon the equal rights, privileges and responsibilities of man and woman, and founded upon reciprocal love. I am not without eminent authority in my opinions in these matters. Robert Dale Owen, whom most Spiritualists admire, in a work of his on "Moral Physiology," quoted and endorsed the following definitions given by his father, Robert Owen, known as an able thinker and writer:

"Chastity—Sexual intercourse founded upon love. Prostitution—Sexual intercourse without love." Verily, where do we find our chaste people, and where our prostitutes? Let every person look into his own heart and answer himself. Henry C. Wright, one of our fearless Spiritualistic lecturers, and one beloved by all blessed with his acquaintance, when asked, "How long will a true marriage last?" replied, "Just so long as love lasts, and no longer." Margaret Fuller, whom the literati of all countries honor, many years ago wrote this: "It is the fault of marriage and the present relation of the sexes, that the woman belongs to the man, instead of forming one with him. Woman, self centered, would never be absorbed by any relation; it would be an experience to her as to man. It is a vulgar error that love is to woman her whole existence. She is born for truth and

love in their universal energy. Would she assume her inheritance, Mary would not be the only virgin mother."

You feel sad, dear brother, that I know so little about monogamy and advise me to study it. I have, and that is what is the matter. Now, I venture you do not know even the definition of the word you are making such an outcry in favor of. Nor do you believe in monogamy yourself, Webster, I suppose, you will accept as authority, he defines monogamist "one who disallows second marriages." Are Spiritualists monogamists, and do we find many grown to that plane? You challenge me to show where Free-Love has restored one "fallen woman to the path of virtue and honor." "Fallen women" and fallen men do not believe in *Free-Love*, which I defined as sexual relation founded upon mutual love; they do not pretend any such thing. With them it is a matter of selling and buying favors, and not a question of love at all. "A brutal man" with woman free could not exercise his brutality, but now he can marry a woman and she is his for life, or he can hire her for any given period. Such men are not in favor of freedom or having love alone decide in such matters. This is very like our Christian opponents asking "where has Spiritualism converted and saved a murderer, or how many horse thieves or gamblers has it transformed into useful members of society?" Such persons do not take to Spiritualism, nor to advanced social views; it is only persons of thought and growth that can receive them. I have never known a case like the one you referred to occurring out West, but if it did, I do not see whose business it was but their own, or who was injured thereby. The harangue about happy homes destroyed and children deserted by Free-lovers, is all "buncombe." Cite a single case of any professed believers in Free-love ever deserting their children. Don't bring up cases of our opponents, for they are numerous, and we wish to be excused from taking their sins upon our backs. Show me any case of those who have advocated Free-love who have ever neglected child or wronged anyone, and you will permit

my eyes to behold what I have never yet seen or known. The Oneida community was bitterly opposed to Free-love, but believed in complex marriage, as they called it, and as a religious principle. Allow me to correct the statement that the law broke them up, for it is not true. Spiritualism and its light upon the questions of religion and love, that came among them, did it, as I know from parties interested. They were a people respected by their neighbors, and were not, for many years, interfered with by law at all.

You say the churches teach moral principles, and exert a moral influence. This like most of your statements is not founded on facts. Two years ago, statistics tell us, there were in these United States seven hundred ministers in our penitentiaries.

The average of criminals of the whole people is two and a half per cent. Of the ministers there are thirteen and a half per cent convicted criminals. The great majority of the inmates of our prisons are believers in Christianity, while the majority of our population are unbelievers, proving most conclusively that it is untrue that the churches exert a moral influence.

Your criticism is full of self-contradictions and misrepresentations. You have no right, after careful definitions, to assume a different one, and then proceed to show the evils of your own imaginings and call them my doctrines. It is exceedingly strange that a man, with even less intellectual acumen than you possess, cannot see the difference between social freedom and Free-love, as one would expect any body could see the difference between religious freedom and Spiritualism. If we did not have religious freedom, the majority would compel the minority to their mode of worship, and Spiritualism would not be tolerated. But are they identical? Because under the religious freedom the sun worshiper could erect his temple and conduct his service according to his belief, would that give any sane person the right to assume all religious freedomites were sun worshipers? If social freedom means, as I define it, the right of the individual to live

his own life so long as he interfered with the life of no one else, (in spirit the same as religious freedom,) how can any just person claim it means Free-love any more than that religious freedom means sun worship or Spiritualism. Free-love (the relation of man and woman based on love alone) can not exist to-day, except under the ban of law, for the reason we have not social freedom; the same as Spiritualism could not exist but for religious freedom, except under the ban of law, and for the same reason—the majority are opposed to it. There are persons who are believers in religious freedom who are not Spiritualists, so there are persons who are believers in social freedom who are not Free-lovers but being just persons, they are willing that others should have the right of private judgment and of living according to that judgment; the same right they ask for themselves. The only limit to liberty being the encroachment upon another's liberty.

Morality must come as a result of organization and development, and not by legal enactment. You may pass as many laws as you please against stealing, and the born thief will act out his nature just as surely as a born humanitarian will his, and the hope of the world lies in a thorough understanding of the laws of heredity, the laws of sexuality, upon which this is based, and the proper culture of the individual. Legislation can have nothing to do with these, except to stand in the way of investigation. A law punishing a person for inheriting scrofula, the result of ante-natal conditions, is as just as one punishing a thief or a licentious person for their inherited conditions. All our unfortunate organizations, manifesting themselves in sickness, crime and misery, are the results of our ignorance of the laws that govern parentage; and the world is groaning with untold agonies in consequence; and yet you and your like stand ready to crucify anyone who dares agitate this question. And how are we to educate except through agitation?

There is nothing that will exalt manhood and womanhood equal to human love. It makes woman angelic and

man Godlike. It develops justice, goodness, and wrongs no one. It is free in its action. It loves when it wills, and where it must. It will have its own, that which belongs by natural law to it, no more nor any less, and with this it is conscientiously content in the heaven of its own harmonies.

Yours for universal liberty,

JULIET H. SEVERANCE, M. D.

TO THE
LIBERAL PUBLIC.

Having been a student of the sciences myself in the
year 1810, for many years, and a frequent lecturer
on the subject of a country, I have been called upon to
write and deliver many parts of the present discourse
to the day. The liberal public were present, and the
author was beloved, in many parts of the country, and
I have collected in my own private library, and
I have now much to show to you, I trust.

The Protection of Life in Earth and Sea, London.

The Industrial and Financial Principles.

The new Method of How to Live a Century.

Philosophy of Disease and How to Cure the Sick
Without Drugs.

Religious, Political and Social Science.

And many other works, which I have in my own
possession, and which I have the pleasure to
show to you.

WILLIAM SMITH,
Author.

TO THE
LIBERAL PUBLIC.

Having been a Student of the problems involved in Human Life for many years, and a practicing Physician for over a quarter of a century, I have been called upon to write and lecture upon most of the practical questions of the day. The following Lectures were prepared with care and have been delivered in many parts of the Country, and I have consented to put them in pamphlet form, in order that they may reach those who cannot hear them.

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