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A Straightforward Statement, 1890-03-15

Joseph Peace Hazard

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Recd from Luther Colby
of "The Beacon of Light", Boston,
March 20th, 1890

Banner of Light.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, MARCH 15, 1890.

"A Straightforward Statement"

Appears from the editorial pen of a Western contemporary, in which the writer speaks in the first person singular of his past work for the cause of Spiritualism, and of his alleged grand achievements in purifying its ranks and in elevating mediumship.

It is a gratification to learn from a perusal of this important article that such a regenerating and helpful work has been performed in the quarter mentioned. It is interesting to be told that "the wide-spread awakening, the increasing moral sense, the grand reformation in the ranks of Spiritualism, now clearly discernible from the Atlantic to the Pacific, is full justification" to the course which this editor has pursued in attempting to belittle and traduce the work of nearly every public medium that the spirit-world has chosen as its mouthpiece and instrument!

In the opening of this candid statement the writer says, referring to the commencement of his editorial career:

"I realized the stupendous importance to the world of a knowledge of the phenomena, philosophy and ethics of Spiritualism, and had quite clearly-defined ideas of what our Cause needed in order to develop its tremendous potencies for good, and to destroy, or at least to reduce to their minimum, the maleficent agencies which were eating at the very vitals of the movement. I soon began a vigorous effort to place Spiritualism as far as possible on a scientific basis, as to its central claim. To do this it was necessary to analyze the claims made by persons assuming to be mediums, to point out how and where observers had been and were being misled, to expose fraud and deception wherever found and however strongly fortified with prestige, influence and general credence."

Starting out in his journalistic career with the idea that it was *his* mission to purify Spiritualism, to place mediumship on trial, and to lead the world in its progressive search for a spiritual standard of life, this gentleman, who now writes so grandiloquently of his purposes and his achievements, at once began a crusade against the instrumentalities employed in its God-appointed work for humanity by the Spirit-World, such as the world had never known in its experience with would-be reformers and idiosyncratic hobbyists who have longed to carry the entire globe upon their shoulders.

In season and out of season the persistent course of our contemporary has been pursued, as with irreverent step he has rushed in where "angels fear to tread"—or if they do so they come with bated breath as to the sanctuary of holiness, so affected are they by the purity and nobility of honored and active mediumship—crying, "Strip the garb from their lives; they are all swindlers; expose the fraud! Oh, what a great man am I!" And without reference to the hundreds of testimonials from respectable people of good judgment, who have carefully tested the mediumship of most of these sensitives whom *he* condemns upon the mere say-so of some few prejudiced or inexperienced investigators, this gentleman with a mission has, time and again, brought reproach to the Cause and suffering to the innocent by his readiness to be a swift witness on the other side. But no word of this appears in the "Straightforward Statement" from his pen, an article written for the purpose of calling upon the Spiritualists of this country to form a stock company for his paper, with a capital of fifty thousand dollars, through the agency of which he may be enabled to press on with *his* peculiar method of elevating Spiritualism. But he tells us this production of his is to show his readers how his journal

"May be rated as a great success, a powerful educational and reformatory agent, with potent influence in the Spiritualist ranks, and commanding the respectful attention of the secular press and the world at large, how it may be all this, with a splendid record behind it, a present healthful strength and a future full of glorious promise, and still need your assistance and coöperation in a work which is as much yours as mine."

It is refreshing to the ordinary Spiritualist, to the heart that has been comforted by tidings of great joy from loved ones gone before, through the mediumship of some of those very ones whom this censor has condemned, and to the minds of those who have toiled early and late for the dissemination of truth as brought by heavenly messengers from on high, to learn in this way of the mighty help that this journalist has been, and is, to the Cause of Spiritualism. No doubt this news will strengthen the faithful, and willing-to-be-maligned, worker in his or her arduous labors for humanity.

But a further consideration of this remarkable statement we cannot give, as lack of space and inclination forbid. Nor do we desire to show the world where we stand in relation to the achievements and results that Spiritualism and mediumship have wrought in human life. We are content to humbly walk our path, trusting to the angel-world to choose its own instrumentalities, and to fulfill its mission to earth, without display of oratory or eloquence in our own behalf.

We have never sought to condone fraud or to defend tricksters, when persons are proved to be such. We believe all who assume the cloak of mediumship for selfish purposes will in time be overthrown by the powers of *Truth*. In spite of the asseverations of this Western contemporary, in the same issue of his paper that contains the statement mentioned, that we have confederated with "fakirs" and false mediums in their nefarious work of deceit, no man can put his finger on a single instance where we have knowingly abetted *any* trickster, or commended the wrong-doing of any medium; and we are willing that the world should judge. Our establishment is also mentioned by the said contemporary as "the fraud-condoning concern known as the *Banner of Light*," all because we have recognized the sensitive susceptibility of mediums to adverse influences, in, as well as out, of the body, and been slow to condemn those who at first sight seem to be guilty of wrong-doing, lest we should misjudge the innocent. But we are not dismayed. We know that Justice rules at last, and that Truth and Honor will win the field against every foe.

