

The Hermitage,
Parkstone,

L837

March 14th 1892

Dear Mr. Owen

Dear

I did not get in to County Council and am not particularly sorry though I think I could do some good there as I am well I am doing in the Post Office Council, Socialism is in the air everywhere, we had the question of "Housing the Working classes" before us last week & a strong party in favour of erecting model dwellings & letting them at 2/6 a week

Though it is supposed private enterprise cannot do it at a less figure than if we have defeated it in committee & no doubt shall now be able to do so at the council meeting I am just writing to Liberty & Property Defense League for any literature on the subject.

I enclose you a cutting from the Northampton Observer, it is a letter written by O'Brien in opposition to Mrs. Besant who lectured here a week or two back, it does seem strange that a man of O'Brien's ability & soundness from a Liberty & Philosophical standpoint should have any difficulty in getting employment at the very very modest wage he requires, such a champion of the rights of property, a very fair speaker certainly a forcible one, I think

The Liberty Property League ought to engage him as a
lecturer in London, considering the wealthy men
there are connected with the League if news change
that so little should be done, In the last election
for London County Council you see the so called
professionals had it all their own way. I saw a
letter from Mr. Herbert Spencer in which he ~~spoke~~
wrote of being highly pleased with O'Brien's
writings.

If you would care for any help
I can give as to the new building you talk
of putting up at Rushmore I shall be pleased
to come up at any time, if it were not on
account of fire danger I wd suggest as the season
is now rather far advanced (you wouldn't I presume
care to have workmen there & materials all over the
place when the band has commenced playing) building
it of frame work & shecco the outside, the whole
of building by this method id be prepared at Bock
Mansford or wherever you decided & then taken to
Larmer & erected in a week or so, If not done in
this way I should build it of chalk which you id
probably excavate just behind & burn all the time
necessary close by.

Yours obedtly
W. Carters

Sir,—“If a man die shall he not live again?” “Assuredly he shall,” reply most of the religions of the world, Theosophy among the rest. Yet as a rule the theories about another life are hazy and indistinct. You are going to live somewhere and in some way, either happily or miserably, but beyond this little is supposed to be known. From that bourne no traveller returns. There may be—though who shall dogmatize?—life is not and death is not: only “eternity’s stillness.” The Theosophist however rushes in where angels fear to tread: he speaks, if not with greater authority than others, at least with greater definiteness and precision. This vulgar assurance is the way of every superstition. The Theosophist not only promises that you shall live again: he describes the precise conditions of that life, and the mode in which it is to be obtained. Nay, he goes further. You not only will live again: you always have lived, and can never die. You may not remember that you were alive before you were born; and you may forget this present life after your body is dead; yet, so says the Theosophist, it is a fact that you are an immortal being, a never dying person. Moreover, your moral conduct here and now determines the character of your condition in the next stage of your existence. If you are very moral in this life you will build up a pure ethereal body, which will receive your soul when this present mortal body dies, and, after remaining quiet for a time—say 20 thousand years—will sooner or later re-animate another mortal body, causing the life passed in this last to be purer and better than it would otherwise have been. This is not all. Out of the life passed in this new mortal body, again may arise (through the practice of still higher virtue) a still purer ethereal body, which, after a period of rest, will again take to itself a new mortal body, and so on, *ad infinitum*. Now this passing of the ethereal body into a new mortal body is called by the Theosophist *re-incarnation*; the Theosophist argues that the same soul is constantly re-appearing in bodies and at different times *on this earth*. “History repeats itself” says the proverb. “Yes,” adds the Theosophist, “and that is because the same individuals are constantly re-appearing under different names and in different bodies to carry on the game.” There is a certain degree of startling sensation in all this if there is nothing else. To day, for example, you may be a shoemaker or a chimney sweeper: in 10 thousand years—that is, after your ethereal body has been put to bed for a time—you may become the King of the Cannibal Islands. To-day you may be Jane Shore: to-morrow, or say in a million years or so (in order to give your ethereal body a sufficient spell of rest), you may re-appear as Mrs. Annie Besant. Though it does not follow that the same soul shall always re-appear in the same sex: Julius Cæsar might come again in the body of Joan of Arc. So that in unlimited time you may live through every possible character, passing through each in turn, with an interval of rest between each; and when you have got to the last, beginning with number one again. For according to Theosophists you cannot die. In this never-resting circle of bodily deaths and re-incarnations, this perpetual jumping out of one character into another, like a player who takes every part of the piece in turn, there is not left even the sweet peace of annihilation as a last refuge for the solitary pain of a soul that suffers here. It is a terrible and gloomy creed, a nightmare from purgatory or some lower region, and how any person can claim to find consolation in it, is impossible to understand. But then tastes differ. For my part I prefer that grand old stoic piety which leaves eternity to fate, trusts where it cannot know, and makes the best of now. Theosophy is but a superstition of spirits, persons, times and occasions. There is a greater, vaster, deeper fact than any person or any spirit, however mighty. Eternity, and what dwells therein, cannot be represented in terms of time, in terms of consciousness, or in terms of personality. We are not left at the mercy of spirits. At best, and even admitting their existence—a large concession—spirits are but forms, and there is an infinite reality which is more than any of the forms contained in it. On this rock we may stand firm and unconquerable. This, and not any person or spirit; this ultimate, eternal and inscrutable reality alone determines our fate, even as it determines the fate of all persons, however potent. We will bow to no lesser power. We will sink or swim with the infinite. Without this we cannot live, and if we have the sense of this in our lives we shall need the assistance of no sensational superstition. The future does not lie in our power or in that of spirits. We cannot tell whether we shall die for ever or, live for ever, or whether we shall pass into that eternal stillness which is perhaps better than either life or death. All this rests with the infinite and eternal reality which makes both past, present and future, and against which no finite power can contend, neither in the heavens nor on the earth. The wise man therefore will ignore persons and spirits and place his sole trust in this reality, reconciling himself to whatever fate it puts upon him, seeing that the part exists only for the sake of the whole, and that what is best for the whole is best for the part, be it eternal joy or eternal pain, eternal life or eternal death. This is the only creed that gives peace, the creed of men to be. The wise man will rejoice in the little truth he is now permitted to see; he will envy none, hate none, fear none; he will find his happiness by learning to know and obey the great laws within and without him; he will shirk no truth, however bitter; he will not attempt to hide his ignorance under high sounding words and audacious theories; he will face all things, and endure all things; and at last will pass peacefully into the silence, saying to the eternal and inscrutable reality, in the spirit if not in the words of one who was a true stoic, “Not my will, but Thine be done.”