

Very little is known of the Friends in the West Indies. The most was done at Barbadoes. They were subject to persecution, however, as elsewhere. We find that one great reason of their being persecuted was on account of their refusing to bear arms and take oaths, both of course were directly contrary to their principles of right and wrong. And military achievements were much thought of in those days, and to refuse to carry arms was defying the law. It no doubt seems to many of us younger ones at least that the old time Friends put themselves in the way of persecution. Let us not judge, however. We do not understand what their surroundings were. Let us be thankful that we live in the enlightened age, believing also that there is room for more enlightenment.

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SPIRITUALISM VS. MATERIALISM.

In religious parlance these words are flippantly used to either glorify or stigmatize a faith or a character of the persons or parties to whom the one or the other may be ascribed. It is not uncommon to hear such remarks as he or she "is so spiritual," or entertain such spiritual views in the way of complimentary comments; or "he is a materialist," as a disparaging estimate of the person or of his sentiments.

In using such terms the superficial, uncritical censors assume to sit in judgment over a question of which they are ignorant and incompetent to express an intelligent sentiment. They have but a confused conception and by no means accurate ideas of the meaning of the words they use in attempting to define the thoughts or acts of those whom they designate by the terms spiritual or material. The grouping of certain mental, emotional or temperamental qualities of a person into an idea which they call spiritual is a misnomer in which some critics like to

indulge. This abuse of words is too often tolerated till the mistake becomes popular and the truth misrepresented, which has led to serious evil.

The word spirit, or spiritual, has a significance of its own, and, when properly understood, can not be confounded or substituted for matter, or the material; in any intelligent, scientific sense.

To wrest it from its own proper place in metaphysics as an abstraction, a thought, and use it to define the temperament, the emotional, the reverent, the devout, or for the peculiar, sensitive or devotional idiosyncrasies of a person, is to degrade the word and make invidious comparisons detrimental to justice, and maliciously injurious to society.

Such use of the word—spiritual—should be discarded by all sensible, honest people.

Persons who spend their time in meditating on the invisible and inscrutable, in reading religious literature, or in humiliating, devotional engagements, are not spiritual, but are simply subjects or victims of an abnormal, morbid activity of the emotional or passional, inherited tendencies of these peculiar constitutional traits.

It is merely the action of their nerves on the physical or material organism, producing a phenomenon that has nothing more to do with spirit or the spiritual than has dyspepsia or the headache.

The freedom that has been taken with the word spirit has led people into a wilderness of abuses and follies in its name that have been a disgrace to our human nature.

Spirit as a term to express an abstraction, the anti-thesis of everything material, has been personified by fanatics, as the ancient Greeks did their demons, into an active, subtle, material force, an invisible personality, taking possession of individuals, impelling them to deeds and instigating thoughts, often ridiculous and sometimes fatal or pernicious to every personal interest. In these morbid, mental reveries, this