

THE

Harbinger of Light.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL

DEVOTED TO

ZOISTIC SCIENCE, FREE THOUGHT, SPIRITUALISM
AND THE HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY.

"Dawn approaches, Error is passing away, Men arising shall hail the day."

No. 3.

NOVEMBER 1st, 1870.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

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ONE of the most interesting features of Modern American Spiritualism is the establishment and progress of the children's progressive Lyceums. The plan of these institutions was first brought under notice by A. J. Davis, who, in the course of his examinations and investigations into the nature of the after life, met with associations of children in the summer land, being educated and developed by wise and loving teachers. The musically harmonious and successful plan on which these institutions were based, at once commended itself to his reason as applicable to the requirements of the rising generation on earth; and induced him to bring the matter under the notice of several prominent Spiritualists; who, in conjunction with him, succeeded in establishing the first Lyceum in New York, January 25th, 1863. The success of this induced the formation of a second and so on, until, at the present time almost every town of importance has its Lyceums, the moral and religious effect of which will, no doubt, exercise a salutary influence on the rising generation of Spiritualists and freethinkers. The idea upon which these institutions is based is, that the child's intuitions are originally and naturally pure, and only require favorable circumstances to expand and develop in harmony with Nature's law. On page 5 of the Lyceum manual under the heading, "An idea of true education" we read, "the divine image is *within*." It is the end of true education to develop that image, and so truly, too, that the child's individuality and constitutional type of mind shall not be impaired, but rather revealed in its own fullness and personal perfection. "Be ye perfect, even as the Father in heaven is perfect," is an injunction of sublimest import. Every faculty and every function of the individual is amenable to that heavenly principle. Everything has a glory of *its own*. "The highest aim of education is to reveal the life and the form of that in-

dividual perfection which Divine Wisdom has implanted in the human spirit." On page 6 and 7, the true method of Spirit culture is thus described:—"Children are social. The ties of friendship are the ties of divine love. The life of the infinite God flows through the social affections. There is no life, where there is no love. Heart touches heart in the sphere of heavenly friendship. The lips grow rosy and dewy with tender and eloquent words of wisdom, under the magic influence of unselfish affection. The tongue and the eye are the true organs of instruction. *Conversation*; it is the heavenly method of teaching. The intuitions and the thinking faculties are touched and strengthened by living words. The fields of nature lend endless charms to the quickened intelligence. The realms of science, philosophy, literature, art, and music, belong to the spirit. The youthful heart is full of aphorisms. The infallible words of God's truth, on the wings of genius, come forth when the right questions are lovingly put. Forms and strict routine are required only for the external and fleeting purposes of education. Austere text books and solemn teachers are adapted to schools, where children are to be instructed and "finished" for an outward work in the busy world of things and sense; but, we are reminded that "wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness." "True education is addressed to the reason, through the social affections; whereby the child-nature is made to grow in goodness, and to bear the fruits of righteousness." In the arrangement and conduct of these institutions, there is much to attract and attach the scholars to them. Firstly, the conductors and leaders being voluntary officers, they are generally prompted to accept office, by motives of philanthropy, and a sincere desire to expand the youthful mind to a knowledge of those Spiritual truths from which they have personally derived happiness; hence, the genuineness of their efforts, impress, and attract the youthful mind to them, and gives them greater influence. Next, the symbols embodied in the colours, badges, and designations of the several groups, afford an inexhaustable fund for interesting thought and that ideal aspiration which is so natural to the youthful intellect. In a complete Lyceum, the children are classified in twelve groups, called—Fountain, Stream, River, Lake, Sea, Ocean, Shore, Beacon, Banner, Star, Excelsior, and Liberty group.

The following will illustrate their suggestiveness of poetic imagery and picturesque views of truth and progress:—

From a primal "Fountain" all things flow.
The "Stream" of Love flows onward for ever.
The "River" of Truth shall eternally roll.
Heaven is reflected by the peaceful "Lake."
We safely sail over Life's throbbing "Sea."
The tide of Love's infinite "Ocean" never ebbs.
Truth's golden sands are on the "Shore."
Wisdom's "Beacon" lights our upward pathway.
Beautiful is the "Banner" of Righteousness.
Reason is the guiding "Star" of the soul.
"Excelsior" is the watchword of eternal progress.
The love of "Liberty" is sacred and eternal.

Each group is provided with its appropriate banner, the colors signifying degrees of Love, viz., No. 1, Red, opening Love; No. 2, Pearl, Reciprocal Love; No. 3, Orange, Constructive Love; No. 4, Lilac, Expanding Love; and so on through the series. Each banner bears a painted illustration, expressive of its significance, for instance, the No. 1 Banner represents a "fountain," gushing from irregularly massed rock indicating the unformed character and impulsiveness of childhood, and the others have similarly appropriate illustrations. In connection with the instruction, there is a system of light gymnastics, with musical accompaniment; and, another attractive feature is the Silver chain recitations, which consist of appropriate pieces of poetry and hymns of aspiration, the leader and pupils reading or singing alternate lines. Each Lyceum has its annual festival day, when other Lyceums are invited, and tableaux, plays, &c., are performed, and prizes distributed to the members, it has also its anniversary picnic; which, appears from the description given of them in the American papers, to be very successful, and well conducted. Space forbids our giving a fuller description of these really admirable institutions, we shall probably continue the subject in a future number, meantime those who desire to know more about it, will find the whole system in a concise form, in "The Manual for Children's Progressive Lyceums," by A. J. Davis, copies of which are obtainable in this city.

MR. NAYLER'S LECTURES ON SPIRITISM.

Our old friend, Mr. B. S. Nayler, has again taken the field in the cause of Spiritualism, and commenced the campaign with a most interesting lecture, which he delivered at the Town Hall, St. Kilda, on the 19th, Forester's Hall, Fitzroy, on the 20th, and Freemason's Hall, Melbourne, on the 26th of October. The lecture was a direct appeal to the reason of the audiences and free from all theological bias. Mr. Nayler's previous efforts as a lecturer on Spiritualism, have, through the unpopularity of his religious opinions, to which too great a prominence was unfortunately given, left an unfavorable impression on the minds of the many whose views were opposed to his. The present lecture was remarkably exempt from anything of a doctrinal or controversial character, or what could reasonably be objected to by any Christian. The lecturer pointed out that, notwithstanding the majority of the civilized inhabitants of Christendom treat Spiritism with either stolid indifference or marked contempt, yet, as thousands of the most eminent men in divinity, physic, and law, as well as thousands of the most celebrated literati, and scientists, are its confessed converts and avowed advocates—maintaining that Spiritism, and *Spiritism alone*, gives PROOF of a future existence, while sacred books only propound it,—Spiritism is not a fitting subject to be pooch-pooched by any one capable of rational enquiry. He quoted Lord Brougham (after that eminent statesman and

thinker became a Spiritualist), who evidently foresaw the expansion of the Spiritual belief in his characteristic allusion to the Little Cloud, the following were his Lordship's words—"Is Spiritism foreign to our materialistic manufacturing age? No! for amidst the varieties of mind which divers circumstances produce, are found those who cultivate man's highest faculties; and, even in the most cloudless skies of scepticism, I see a raincloud no bigger than a man's hand—it is MODERN SPIRITISM!" And despite all opposition Spiritism he believed would now go on, and on, progressing from age to age, until it shall cover the face of the earth, as the waters cover the bottom of the great deep.

Spiritism, he defined to be a belief and declaration of the practicability and actuality of Spirit-intercourse between this world and the next; and all men, women, and children, who were participators in this intercourse, were Spiritists. He objected to the commonly received idea that the Spirit manifestations originated with the Fox family in 1848, and pointed out several notable instances of earlier manifestations. Spiritists he said, did not cast the Bible behind their backs, as they have been falsely accused of doing; but they endeavor to interpret the Scriptures by the light of Reason; for, as Butler, the pious Bishop of Durham, wrote—Reason *can*, and it *ought* to judge, not only of the meaning, but also of the *morality* and *evidence* of Revelation.

Dr. Arnold maintained—"The gift of Reason is God's original revelation of Himself to man." The lecturer also quoted Bishop Marsh, and the present Archbishop of Canterbury to the same effect. He reminded his hearers that all new doctrines were invariably condemned by the unreasoning many, as heterodox. Even Paul was spoken of in his time as a pestilent fellow and sower of sedition. He cited as instances of the popular prejudice against anything new or novel, the introduction of vaccination by Jenner, of phrenology by Spurzheim and Gall, the steamship by Henry Bell, Gas, the electric telegraph by Wheatstone, and railroads by Gray, the men who introduced or strove to do so, all these great facts, were denounced as visionaries, fools, or madmen. Under these circumstances it was not to be expected that Spiritism would meet with any better reception, but being as great a fact as any of those alluded to, it must inevitably be acknowledged as such. The Lecturer next examined and ably disposed of the three principal objections to Spiritism, viz., Fraud, Self-delusion, and The operation of some undiscovered natural law, and proved these to be inadequate to account for the numerous and varied manifestations which were reported on unimpeachable authority to have taken place in Melbourne and suburbs. The only hypothesis that would fully cover the facts was Spirit agency. He pointed out that the most incredulous and acute scientific investigators while adhering to their disbelief in Spiritism, frankly, confess that several of the manifestations cannot be accounted for by any known law, and he appealed to the public to investigate for themselves regardless of what has been said or written for or against Spiritism. He instanced several notable cases of materialists brought to a belief of immortality through Spiritism, and pointed out the inconsistency of believing ancient and recorded Spiritism, and rejecting the demonstrable Spiritism of the present day. He expressed his regret that Melbourne Spiritists should keep their meetings and communications so much to themselves, and thought that were they to appear as *what they were*, their moral character and standing in society would give an impetus to Holy Spiritism, which would quickly raise it in the appreciation of the public, and silence the scoffers of God's best gift to man. The Lecturer read some interesting extracts from the investigations of several eminent investigators of the Spiritual phenomena, and in conclusion said—"Whatever others may say or write concerning Spirit intercourse, or Spirit influence, I wish it to be clearly understood by my respected hearers, that the Spiritism I profess tends to make its votaries wiser, better, happier. And that it is in strict accordance with the teachings of the Chief of Spiritists, Jesus of Nazareth, who spake as never man spake!"

To Correspondents.

Communications for insertion in this Journal should be plainly written, and as concise as possible.

"Ignotus."—*To publish your letter would necessitate a lengthy reply. We think our answer to your last, sufficiently clear and definite for our readers generally, and believe our time and space may be more profitably occupied than entering into a metaphysical argument for your personal edification.*

We had intended to insert an ably written Article, from the pen of Mr J. W. Thomson, entitled "Bigotry and Free Thought," but from the length of the article, and delay in its reception, we are precluded from doing so.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

DEAR SIR,—With your kind permission, I proceed to state the Scriptural argument against modern Spiritism. I shall do this as precisely and concisely as I can; and, should any remark which you might consider offensive escape me, be assured it is an inadvertence for which I shall always be willing to apologize.

At the outset allow me to say that, from the very first, I have never doubted the fact of man's ability to commune with the Spirit world, nor the manifestations which usually take place at Spiritual seances. Of course, self-delusion and humbug have been occasionally mixed up with these matters; but I have never doubted that, as a rule, the phenomena of Spiritism were due to the intelligent powers of another sphere.

I think my argument will be best defined by the following propositions:—

1. The practice of modern Spiritism is contrary to the law and will of God, as revealed in the Old and New Testaments.

2. There is ground for suspecting that the present intercourse with Spirits, is but preparatory to the "strong delusion" spoken of by Paul—(2 Thess. 2, xi.) and to the latter day operations of those "seducing spirits," who will yet mislead the world by false doctrines—"doctrines of demons"—as intimated by the same apostle in 1 Tim. 4, i.

Now, if the first proposition can be fairly established, you will see at once that all who regard the Bible as the rule of faith and life, must, as in duty bound, keep aloof from, discountenance, and denounce the practice in question. But since all true Christians are Spiritists in one sense, inasmuch as they believe in and apply to the One Great Spirit, it will be necessary to define exactly what we mean by "the practice of modern Spiritism" in contradistinction to the ordinary practice of Christians. We define it then to be—the application to, and habitual communication with the spirit world, AS SUCH, APART FROM, AND INSTEAD OF GOD HIMSELF. That this is the regular practice of Spiritists is proved by all their works; a fair sample of which is given in "The Glow-worm" No. 1, which prescribes "for beginners," that a loo table, not very large nor very heavy, shall be charged with electricity by the hands of six, eight, or more persons, placed in a certain manner upon it; and, that when charged direct application shall be made to the Spirit world by the question—"Is any Spirit present?" Such is the practice with very little variation, all the world over. Every possible facility in the way of silence, gloom, temperature, and so forth, is given to the Spirits for making their presence heard, seen, or felt; facilities which would be needless if the Almighty Himself were invoked, since he can act independently of all these little arrangements. The argument then will stand thus:—

PROP. 1. The application to, and habitual communication with the Spirit world, as such, apart from, and instead of God Himself, is not countenanced in either the Old or New Testament.

This proposition is sustained by the following facts:—

All the Spiritual communications recorded as of Divine

Authority and approval, fall under one of the following heads:—

1. They are made by God Himself in various ways, as by personal presence, by voice, fire, cloud or smoke; dream or vision; as to Adam after the fall (Gen. 3, viii. 19), to Noah (Gen. 6, xiii.), to Abraham (Gen. 17, 18; xxii, i, ii.), to Isaac (Gen. 26, ii.), to Jacob (Gen. 32, 24, 30; xxxv. ix. xv.), to Moses (Exodus 3 and 4, 19, 9, 11, 18, 19; xxxiii. xi.), to the elders of Israel (Ex. 24, ix. x), to Samuel (1 Sam. 3, 4, xiii.), to Solomon (1 Kings 3, 5, ix. ii.), to Daniel (Dan. 2, xvii. xix.), to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and to many other prophets, seers, and people of God at so many times that it would be impossible in a letter like this, to enumerate them.

2. They are made by God through angels, directly commissioned by him; as to Lot (Gen. 19, 1; xii. xiii.), to Daniel (Dan. 9, 20, 23; x. ix. xii.), to Elijah (1 Kings 19, v. vii.), to Zechariah (Zech. 1, xii. xiii.), to Zecharias (Luke 1, xi. xix.), to Peter (Acts 12, vii. x.), and so on.

5. They are made by God through the divinely appointed Urim and Thummim—(Numbers 27, xxi.; 1 Sam. 23, 9, 12; xxx. vii. viii.)

These are the divine and orderly communications of Scripture; and to such Divine and Holy Spiritism it would be impious to object, it being from first to last, of and from the Divine Being Himself. It is in nearly every instance declared, and always understood to be so.

But such are not the communications of modern Spiritism; there are just as entirely of the creature as the others are of the Creator. Therefore, the cases cited from Scripture afford no example of, and give no countenance to the practice of modern Spiritism; and thus the terms of proposition 1 are established.

PROP. 2. All other communications than those recorded as above are condemned throughout the Scriptures.

This is proved by the fact that all such communications are designated by the general terms divination, sorcery, and witchcraft; and are never mentioned but with condemnation, except in the case of Joseph, before Moses' law was written. Take Lev. 19, 31; xx. vi. xxvii; Deut. 18, 19; xv; 1 Chron. 10, xiii; 2 Chron. 33, vi; Acts 16, xvi. They are simply communications between the creature in the flesh and the creature in the Spirit, God himself being no party in the action. And here only modern Spiritism meets with its analogue—just such it is, and as such is condemned as unauthorised and disorderly. Therefore, the first part of the argument is established, namely, that:—"The practice of modern Spiritism is contrary to the law and will of God as revealed in the Old and New Testaments."

In my next I will, with your kind permission, take up the second part of the argument, and wait any remarks both letters might elicit, and reply to them in my third.

I remain, dear Sir, with every respect,

Yours,

TAU BETH.

OCT. 8, 1870.

COMMUNICATION FROM W. J. FOX.

WITH great pleasure do I answer your kind summons, and would that you had called me before. It is a moment of no small pleasure to me to return to earth and meet again with those in whose company I have been, and whose ears have listened to my words; and because they have contained the principles of Truth, I feel still a pleasure in the recollection of those days now numbered with the past. Truth is Heavenborn, and the soul of man absorbs the Divine influence from all nature. Everything beams with glowing Truth. As the flower looks up to the sun and feels the influence of its warm and vitalizing ray, so does the soul of man (the Divine Being materialized), gaze upon the centre of its being, the all-powerful attraction, 'Truth with Love combined.' As a man on earth, my inmost desire was for Truth. I found water for my thirsty soul in the beauties of the

universe, and as the bee gathers honey from every simple flower, so did I find pleasure in every research in Nature's garden. My spirit "progressive in its nature," had but little opportunity to expand while bound within the limits of my tabernacle of dust, and still more did I experience the coldness of those whose ears to a certain extent I had to please. If I had known while in the body, all that I have learned by my experience here, how joyfully would I have spoken to the people of the glorious abodes of the future. My thoughts often return to the scenes of earthly days, and with pleasure I ponder over the words I have uttered, and my happiness is increased when I find that much of what I expressed was impressed upon my mind by Spirits whose experience and knowledge were indeed beyond mine. Since last I had the pleasure of communicating to you I have made rapid progress, and am at present preparing for a still greater change. I have the same earnest desire to be a communicant to man, through some medium, and I doubt not the time is not far distant when I shall have the great pleasure of recording my experiences in the Spirit world.

W. J. FOX.

Poetry.

A DEAD MAN'S MESSAGE.

(Paraphrased from Arabic verses, quoted by Mogreeth, at Bahrein.—See *Palgrave's Arabia*.)

He who died at Azau sends
This, to comfort faithful friends.

I.

Faithful friends! it lies, I know,
Pale and cold, and still as snow:
And you say, "Abdullah's dead!"
Weeping at its feet and head;
I can see your falling tears,
I can hear your sighs and prayers,
Yet I smile, and whisper this,
"I am not the thing you kiss;
Cease your wail, and let it lie,
It was mine. It is not I!"

II.

Sweet friends! what the women lave
For its last bed in the grave,
Was a net which I was quitting,
Was a garment, no more fitting;
Was a cage, where from, at last
Like a bird, my soul hath passed.
Love the inmate, not the room,
The weaver, not the garb—the plume
Of the eagle, not the bars
Which kept him from the splendid stars.

III.

Loving friends! be wise—and dry
Straightway every weeping eye;
What you lift upon the bier,
Is not worth a single tear;
'Tis a simple sea-shell, one
Out of which the pearl is gone;
The shell was nothing—leave it there—
The pearl, the soul, was all, is here!
'Tis an earthen pot, whose lid
Allah sealed, the while it hid
That treasure of his treasury,
A mind that loved him: let it be!
Let the shards be earth's once more
Since the gold goes to his store.

IV.

Allah glorious! Allah good!
Now thy world is understood!
Now the long long wonder ends,
Yet you weep, my foolish friends:
While the man you say "is dead,"
In unspoken bliss instead,
Lives and loves you: lost, 'tis true,
For any light that shines with you;
But in the light you do not see,
Raised to full felicity;

In a perfect paradise,
And a life which never dies.

V.

And this blessed life I see,
Is not dream nor phantasy.
We have meat, and we have drink,
Far more truly than you think:
Drain from dazzling goblets wine,
Feast upon a food divine;
But food and wine together pour,
One mystery, of many more,
From the same source, for both are pressed
Pure Heaven—milk, from a maiden's breast.
If you can hear me, can you take
My meaning's shadow? for the sake
I speak of two, or may be one,
The rest will also learn anon.

VI.

Farewell friends! yet not farewell!
Where you are, I too shall dwell:
I am gone beyond your face,
A moment's march, a single pace.
When you come where I have stepped,
You will wonder why you wept:
You will see by true life taught,
That here is all, and there is nought.
Weep awhile, if you are fain,
Sunshine still must follow rain.
Only, not at death—for death,
Now I see, is that long breath
Which our souls draw, when they enter
Life, that is of all life centre.

VII.

Be ye certain, all seems love,
Viewed from Allah's seat above,
Be ye stout of hope, and come
Bravely onward to your home;
From its happy gate, my ken
Sees you, struggling souls, not "men."
All for nameless joys decreed,
Which your wills may stay or speed;
But not one, at last, to fail,
Since at last love must prevail.
"La Allah illa Alla,"* yea!
Thou Love Divine! thou Lord alway!
He that died at Azau gave,
This to those who made his grave.

EDWIN ARNOLD.

SPIRITUALISM THE ALL-EMBRACING RELIGIOUS FAITH.

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN A MODERN SPIRITUALIST AND A CALVINIST.

BY CALEB S. WEEKS.

(From the *Banner of Light*, July 23rd.)

SCENE—In a store in New York, where, having no customers to wait on just then, a conversation was started on religious faiths, which of course soon brought about an allusion to Spiritualism as the most dangerous form of infidelity or unbelief now working in society.

SPIRITUALIST (who had entered a few minutes before).—I perceive that you greatly mistake the character of Spiritualism, as is usual with those who look at it from a distance, and through theological prejudices.

ONE OF THE COMPANY.—Are you a Spiritualist?
S.—Yes.

FIRST SPEAKER.—Tell us wherein I mistake its character.

S.—In supposing it to be a system of unbelief or skepticism. It is not negative in its character—denying faith, but positive—affirming the vital truths of all the religious systems which preceded it, and adding to them a great new one, which sheds such light upon the old as to show more clearly their beauty and grand proportions

*There is no God but God.

F. S.—Does it not deny the truth of inspiration and revelation?

S.—On the contrary, it affirms the naturalness and universality of inspiration—that revelations are constantly coming to every age, people and individual, as full and perfect as they can receive.

F. S.—It rejects the Bible, does it not?

S.—By no means! It accepts it as an important portion of the records of the great natural revelation as it came to past generations; containing like all the others some errors, but withal some of the grandest truths, and much of the religious experience of one of the most religious of the ancient nations, and the thoughts and expectations of its seers.

F. S.—Then you admit that Spiritualism does not regard it as the word of God?

S.—There are many different meanings attached by different persons to the phrase—"word of God." I think, however, that I discover *your* standpoint and your meaning; but if you will tell me whether or not you are a Church-Christian, and if so what denomination and faith, it will enable me at once to clearly understand what you mean by this, and any other questions.

F. S.—I am a Presbyterian. I hold to the Calvinistic faith—not to predestination, which, if correctly understood, cannot, I think, be successfully controverted.

S.—I understand your question then. You mean by speaking of the Bible as "the word of God" *not* that its truth in common with all other truth is his word, but that it is the *only* word he has given to the world—is miraculously inspired—an infallible revelation of his will and of all the truth essential to man's spiritual welfare.

CALVINIST.—Yes, that is my meaning! Spiritualism denies that, does it not?

S.—Yes; Spiritualism, in affirming real faith, of course denies all dogmatic assumptions which oppose it. Not only does the Bible make no such claims for itself, but only the Romish Church *professes* to have such a miraculous connection with and inspiration from God as to know whether or not *it* is his especial word; and that church *admits* that a knowledge of its divine origin is not obtained from the book, but from the miraculous revelations of the fact given by direct inspiration to the church—that the claim has no foundation except the church's authority. In rejecting church authority, therefore, and asserting the supremacy of individual judgment in religion, you (the Protestants) have at least deprived yourselves of all grounds of making any claims for the Bible further than *it* makes for itself. The attempt to do so can only weaken faith in such beautiful truths as it teaches. Only the Romish Church can consistently with its own professions claim infallibility for its creeds and sacred books, in connection with its "miraculously inspired teachings;" and with that church such claims are no part of the *real* faith. It does not spring from the inspirations or convictions of the *religious element* of society, but is the arbitrary and groundless assumption of the ecclesiastical functionaries, whose chief aim is to build up and strengthen a religio-political power to gratify their own selfish ambition. Other churches, in attempting to do the same, but practice on the Popish lessons they have not yet unlearned. Such a course is *not aiding but hampering* faith in its attempted flight, first darkening its atmosphere with dogmatic mists, then entangling its wings in the dense accumulations of the cobweb fabrics of fanciful folly which ecclesiasticisms weave. It is not strange to me that faith, thus generally blinded and hampered, flutters through a feeble zigzag course, but rather wonderful how she maintains her efforts, and pursues her course as well as she does.

C.—Your language is unintelligible to me; please explain what you regard as *real* religious faith.

S.—I will endeavor to make it apparent to you. I see faith to be the soul's real confidence in universal truth; that *even* when its external consciousness is *thus* darkened and obstructed, the intuitions will partially break through and grasp *somewhat* of its natural supplies, and though mingling with it much of old error, will gradually separate it from the truth and leave faith more free to act, till it breaks at length the old ecclesiastical clog. But when broken, its fragments generally unite and form a new one, similar in character, but weaker

from the lessened cohesive power of the old decaying materials. Thus the newly organized religious societies retain the *real* faith of the old ones; not so far freed from the unnatural vestments as to allow it to act freely and make its true character and beauties known, but still enough to enable it more easily to cast off its new ecclesiasticisms.

Without going further back in religious history than "the Catholic Church," we find that despite the enthroned dogmatism it imposed on its votary's outer-consciousness as a faith, that the interior consciousness, the truly religious element of that church, clung to the *real* article of faith first revealed to man's religious senses by the Nazarene—the paternal and childhood relation of God and humanity. Dogmas inconsistent with this faith, authoritatively forced upon them, its adherents gave outward assent to, and strove to reconcile with it, and thus came contradictory representations of the Divine character. This theology, compounded of pagan fancies and hierarchical ideals by ambitious ecclesiastical functionaries, taught that his fatherly affection was subordinate to his regard for the church, disinheriting, and giving over to a malignant enemy and to eternal misery all of his children who were not obedient to its authority, but still that he was intensely desirous that they should be so obedient to his church, that his haughty dignity could *consistently* give them his fatherly favor.

The church, of course, was *like* its God. Inspired by such an ideal, it became *like him in character*. It was impelled by his earnestness to save human souls from the clutches of the devil, who was constantly outwitting the Father by leading the children into such disobedience as to array the morally weak and selfishly powerful side of the Father's nature in unperishable wrath against them.

But faith, though entangled in such a cobweb fabric of error, at length broke far enough through it to emerge into the Calvinistic idea that a supremely wise creator must have designed all final results of his creation—predestination. This newly discovered article of faith, though distorted by the errors clinging to it, *nevertheless* took its disciples out of the Romish Church, but took the *real* faith of that church with them, stripped of some of its dogmatic creed-vestments. The fatherhood of God was still believed in, and he was seen to be too intelligent and powerful to allow a devil to permanently thwart his designs. Hard, harsh, unlovely, repellant to the better feelings of our nature, more hideous even than the Romish adulteration of faith with paganism, as was the new one with its plumage all disheveled by breaking through its old entanglements, and its truths incongruously mixed with the broken fragments of the old creeds, it nevertheless helped to reform the loose morals and excite logical thinking in religious society, till the more advanced religious minds could receive the new article of faith revealed in Methodism—the truth that God's fatherly grace is free to all.

Methodism advanced till, despite the prejudice which its combative zeal against hell-predestination produced in Calvinists, it has finally put its faith into the souls of most of them, who are now inspired by and preaching "free grace." Thus inspired through the intuitions, religious faith rapidly grew and unfolded its senses, till "predestination" and "free grace" recognized in each other counterpart-truths—true natural partners. There they doffed the old rags, donned the new garments and married, becoming Universalism. Then ascending the highlands of the religious world, *it* soon so far emerged from the remaining fog as to discover that "God's grace" was natural, coming through his natural laws, predestined, yet spontaneously free—the natural method of its manifestation so complete as to render miracles forever impossible and needless—that religion is not an exotic in the human soul, but its natural product. This was Naturalism, first clearly taught by Theodore Parker.

True faith *never repels but always attracts* other true faith. It was not the Calvinistic *faith* of predestination that so shocked the Methodists' benevolent sensibilities. It was the hell of the thing, *not* the thing itself. Coming at them hell-end foremost, without a free fire escape attached, no wonder they could not see and receive the truth contained in Calvinism. Yet the fact that they

could never answer the argument that an infinitely wise God must have foreknown and therefore designed all final results of his creation, was to them the most troublesome feature of Calvinistic preaching. It was the fact that even with hell clinging to it, the Calvinists recognized, faithfully stood by and logically demonstrated this faith which made their preaching exulte into sputtering fiery fury the Methodists' zeal for their faith of "free grace," which they thought must be preserved in its hell-covered condition, if at all. Yet neither the Methodists nor Calvinists ever attempted to gainsay the real point of the other's faith, but practically though unconsciously assented to it, even in arguing against the other's dogmas. To the Methodists' preaching of "free grace" the Calvinists could only affirm their own faith—God predestined all results, while the Methodists could only deny that he had predestined any to hell. But while each fancied he had refuted the other's faith, he more than half felt that it must be more effectually refuted or else accepted. Hence they must continue to try again and again.

Throughout all the progress of faith it has been gaining, and not one of its genuine articles has ever been lost. Points intimately connected with a newly unfolding truth often escape the notice of its disciples in the dim-dawning twilight, but once seen have never been rejected.

Naturalism at first did not perceive that spiritual manifestations were a part of the universal order of natural Providence, and finding that "miracles" were impossible as a negation of God and his laws, doubted that such manifestations ever occurred, while dogmatism used the fact of such manifestations in the past, assuming them to be miracles, as its only telling weapon in its struggles against naturalism.

But the fuller unfolding of naturalistic faith has come in what is now termed Spiritualism. It includes all the real faith of all the older religious societies, thus stripped of the dwarfing, deforming, fantastic habiliments it once wore. It receives the Catholic article of the parental relation of God, including the truth of a Divine motherhood, also, which that church saw dimly, through its atmosphere of theologic mists, as divided between the church—*Christ's spouse*—and the immaculate Mary. It accepts Calvinism's predestination and Methodism's free grace; and, as both strip off the Pandemonian tatters and array themselves in the glorious wedding-garments of rationality, it blesses the bans which proclaim the universalistic marriage. Retaining all the others, it reveals and demonstrates the new article of faith. It shows that communion with spirits, being natural, is common to every age and people; that God's revelations come direct to every soul, the fullness only limited by the soul's receptive capacity; that "all Scripture" (not merely the Jewish and Christian) "is given by inspiration of God," "and" (though containing errors and absurd fancies gathered from the defective mentality of the seers, nevertheless) "is profitable for doctrines, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," &c.

This most advanced system, while preserving and presenting all the truths of past ones, does not even destroy the old outworn theologic habiliments, but removes them and places them in the museum of history, as interesting relics of the childhood conditions and fancies of the religious mind. Such is Spiritualism; not a destructive, but a conservative and constructive principle—not a mere negative unbelief, but the positive, all-embracing religious faith.

WHAT IS COMING.—The Paris correspondent of an influential journal reports:—

"The Pope has been much disturbed by an emphatic declaration from the eminent and eloquent preacher Père Hyacinthe, at a public meeting of the Peace Society, that 'there are three religions—the Jewish, the Roman Catholic, and Protestant, all of which are equal before God.' Such a declaration, emanating from so distinguished an ecclesiastic, has necessarily created considerable commotion among those who believe in Papal infallibility."

Is it not notorious that Roman Catholics, who generally concede the rank of "a religion" to Judaism, deny it to "Infidel Protestantism;" and that Protestants, who cajole "unbelieving Jews," fulminate damnation against "idolatrous Papists?"

HOW TO FORM SPIRIT CIRCLES.

An experimental trial at home, among family friends and relatives, often gives the most satisfactory evidence of the reality of Spiritual phenomena. At the same time, as no fully developed medium is present among those who have never obtained manifestations before, the probability is that there will be no results. Nevertheless, it is a very common thing for striking manifestations to be obtained in this way at the first sitting of a family circle; perhaps for every one successful new circle thus started without a medium, there are six or seven failures, but no accurate statistics on this point have yet been collected. When once manifestations have been obtained they will gradually increase in power and reliability at successive sittings. The following is a good plan of action.

1. Let the room be of a comfortable temperature, but cool rather than warm—let arrangements be made that nobody shall enter it, and that there shall be no interruption for one hour during the sitting of the circle. Wet, damp, and foggy weather is bad for the production of physical phenomena.

2. Let the circle consist of four, five, or six individuals, about the same number of each sex. Sit around an uncovered wooden table, with all the palms of the hands in contact with its top surface. Whether the hands touch each other or not is usually of no importance. Any table will do, just large enough to conveniently accommodate the sitters. The removal of a hand from the table for a few seconds does no harm, but when one of the sitters breaks the circle, by leaving the table it sometimes, but not always, very considerably delays the manifestations.

3. Before the sitting begins, place some pointed leadpencils and some sheets of clean writing paper on the table, to write down any communications that may be obtained.

4. People who do not like each other should not sit in the same circle, for such a want of harmony tends to prevent manifestations, except with well-developed physical mediums; it is not yet known why. Belief or unbelief has no influence on the manifestations, but an acrid feeling against them is a weakening influence.

5. Before the manifestations begin, it is well to engage in general conversation or in singing, and it is best that neither should be of a frivolous nature. A prayerful, earnest feeling among the members of the circle is likely to attract a higher and more pleasing class of Spirits.

6. The first symptom of the invisible power at work is often a feeling like a cool wind sweeping over the hands. The first manifestations will probably be table tiltings or raps.

7. When motions of the table or sounds are produced freely, to avoid confusion, let one person only speak, and talk to the table as to an intelligent being. Let him tell the table that three tilts or raps mean "Yes," one means "No," and two mean "Doubtful," and ask whether the arrangement is understood. If three signals be given in answer, then say, "If I speak the letters of the alphabet slowly, will you signal every time I come to the letter you want, and spell us out a message?" Should three signals be given, set to work on the plan proposed, and from this time an intelligent system of communication is established.

8. Afterwards the question should be put, "Are we sitting in the right order to get the best manifestations?" Probably some members of the circle will then be told to change seats with each other, and the signals will be afterwards strengthened. Next ask, "Who is the medium?" When Spirits come asserting themselves to be related or known to anybody present, well-chosen questions should be put to test the accuracy of the statements, as Spirits out of the body have all the virtues and all the failings of Spirits in the body.

Possibly, at the first sitting of a circle, symptoms of other forms of mediumship than tilts or raps may make their appearance. Information respecting the many kinds of mediumship will be found in Mrs. Professor De Morgan's book, *From Matter to Spirit*, published by Longmans; and this is a good book to read before trying to start a new circle.

There are in England several very interesting circles for physical manifestations, where the Spirits speak with audible voices, but, unfortunately, total darkness is a necessary condition. Non-spiritualists who are inquiring into the subject should have nothing to do with dark seances, which should be held only by those who know each other, since they offer so many facilities for fraud. When any circle regularly obtains powerful physical manifestations, they may desire to sit for the voices. The very slightest glimmer of light must be excluded from the room, while the members of the circle sit round the table in the ordinary way. One or two paper tubes, each twelve or eighteen inches long, with an orifice about an inch-and-a-half in diameter, should be placed on the table. They may be readily made by rolling up a piece of music and trying a few pieces of cotton round the rough tube thus formed. In the early stages of a voice-circle these tubes are necessary for the use of the Spirits, but afterwards they may be dispensed with ex-

cept when the weather and other conditions are unfavourable. When first trying to obtain the voices the Spirits may not be able to lift the tubes from the table, afterwards they often get them up in the air a foot or two and let them drop again. When they get full control over them they can carry them about up to the ceiling and to all parts of the room, and they talk to the members of the circle often while floating about above their heads. Very beautiful luminous phenomena are sometimes shown by the Spirit at dark circles. While sitting for the voices, the Spirits will tell by the ordinary table signals how they are progressing in their work of getting control of the tubes.

A NEW RELIGION.

The Jews, from whose creed sprung at least two of the most important religions of the world, Christianity and Mahometanism, cannot fail to be interested to learn that a new creed, also evidently springing from Judaism, has taken root during the last quarter of a century in the East, which was the fertile cradle of the three ancient religions which we have mentioned. This new faith is a sort of Pantheism; it was founded in Persia by MIRZA MUHAMMED ALI, a young man who is said to have been (like the founder of the Christian faith) of strikingly beautiful person, and who appears to have been a man of original and enthusiastic character and considerable genius. For a highly interesting and graphically written account of the rise and progress of this new faith, we refer our readers to last week's number of our able contemporary, *All the Year Round*, the journal conducted by CHARLES DICKENS. MIRZA took the names of BAB, or BAUB, a word meaning "Gate," indicating that he was in himself the gate of faith. The text book of the religion is a compilation called the Book of Precepts, and which contains some maxims which are redolent with the gentle and merciful precepts by which Judaism is so remarkably distinguished. Strange to say, the BAB interdicts or urgently moderates the employment of corporal punishment; this interdiction or moderation, as we unhesitatingly stated in our last number, is in direct accord with the principles of Judaism. BAB, who like MAHOMET and JESUS, was earnestly supported in his efforts by the co-operation of a woman, was, with his followers, exposed to furious attacks from the Persian Government, and was at last killed. His adherents took refuge at Bagdad, across the Persian frontier, where they appear now to be flourishing. It appears that MIRZA, the BAB, was acquainted with the teaching of the Jews, including cabalistic Jews, and of that of Protestant Missionaries; and his doctrine is a singular combination of the monotheistic and love-inspiring creed of Judaism with the incarnation dogma of Christianity. The Divine incorporation, according to MIRZA, resides in no less than nineteen persons! But the Pantheistic doctrine, which is not absolutely anti-Judaic, is its main feature. Another remarkable and substantial feature of this new creed is the regard and respect which it pays to women. In this it differs greatly from the doctrines of Islam, which suppose that women have no souls and never go into Paradise; but it copies the doctrine of Judaism, according to which, as is evident from the Bible, women always held a high place; seeing that MIRIAM and HULDAH were prophetesses, DEBORAH a judge in Israel, and Jael a heroine; while two books of our sacred Scriptures are named after women—RUTH and ESTHER; and as we know, even in that great portion of our service we designate home worship, the house-mother is the chief actor. It is true that Christians, who cannot be supposed to know much on the subject; and even, we fear, some very silly Jews; imagine that women play an inferior and unrecognised part in Judaism. But really it was reserved for Christianity (and the idea was developed and amplified by Mahometanism) to reduce womankind, to a state of inferiority and subjection. JESUS reproved his mother for her maternal love, and MARTHA for her womanly cares. PAUL, the real founder of developed Christianity, bid women subject themselves to their husbands. But the inspired MOSES, the most glorified and favoured of all mortal beings—anxious, as it would seem, that woman should have her honoured place in the home—took occasion once, in promulgating the blessed precepts taught

to him by Heaven, to place the mother's name before the father's.

What may be the issue of this new Eastern faith we cannot tell; but its very existence is a sign of the times. The world is tossed at this crisis in a stormy sea of restless belief, lack of belief, and search for belief. The old landmarks are submerged. Rocks and shoals, never seen before, lie in the ancient tracks of ancient, though—comparatively with Judasim—very modern creeds. But Judaism stands as a stalwart and lasting beacon in the fretting tempest. May the guardians of the lighthouse be ready when shipwrecked mariners turn their eyes to the one unfailing light!—*Jewish Chronicle*, May 27, 1870.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT SPIRITUALISM.

BY A RECENT CONVERT.

DURING the last twelvemonth the writer has been pretty continuously occupied in investigating, for his own satisfaction, the teachings and phenomena of this most important revelation of modern times. Twenty years ago, to have avowed what I now do—a full belief in the supernatural character of Spiritualistic manifestations—would have covered me with ridicule, or the reputation of being a disreputable charlatan. But time works wonders. What would have been thought, a quarter of a century ago, of one who asserted his belief in the possibility of men conversing through an unseen agency that conveyed questions and answers from London to Calcutta in a few minutes? Upwards of thirty years ago Dr. Lardner concluded a lecture delivered to the British Association, in Liverpool, by arrogating to himself his having therein demonstrated the utter impossibility of ships steaming to America. Fifty years since what would they have thought of the *London Daily Times*—the *History of the World* for one day—being printed by steam at the rate of *one thousand copies a minute*? "Simply impossible," would have been the complacent comment on the proposition. So it is that we are ever prone to bring our estimate of all possibility to be gauged by the measure of the little knowledge we have already attained to. Ferdinand Mendez Pinto, the Portuguese traveller, was branded throughout Europe as a liar of the most distinguished atrocity, for having written, some three hundred years ago, that there were roses in the lands of the East which bloomed once a month. This was seen at once, by the light of the floricultural experiences of the period, to be absolutely impossible. I will confess to having shared prejudices as stupid, as blind, and as obstinately adhered to as any of these, in my first and long regard of Spiritualism. The grotesqueness of the grosser, or what may be termed mechanical phenomena, and the pointless commonplace of the written communications, for a lengthened period encouraged a belief that modern Spiritual mediums were quacks or fanatics—the mountebanks or Cagliostro's of the present age. It may seem strange, but if I rightly analyse my reasoning on the subject, (and please do not here confound reason with reasoning), I have been far more influenced to regard Spiritualism as truthful from examining the attacks of its opponents, than from dissecting the statements of its supporters. The evidence advanced by the Spiritualists in establishment of the truth of the facts they rest on, is so abundant and irresistible, and is supported by arguments so clear and valid, that it has provoked, in my instance, a desire to know what has been said on the other side of the question. The astounding shallowness, frivolity, and doggedly affected dulness (not to speak of gross and impudent misrepresentation), which characterise the assailants of the believers in Spiritualism, have gradually served to convince me that its reality is unassailable. "If you cannot command the services of the Spirits to point out the whereabouts of lost explorers, to tell the exact spots where big nuggets yet await to be unearthed, or to picture some useful information about the war, what is the use of them?" This is the sort of triumphant interrogatory with which you are met by persons who are merely asked to examine the evidence of the truthfulness of supernatural mundane communications. "They (the Spirits) move chairs, but not half

so well as day laborers and porters," asserts a scientific simpleton, curiously departing from the question at issue. And, says the *Saturday Review* of Mr. Coleman, "He may be a trustworthy person, and above all suspicion as to his good faith, but the voices of twenty attesting witnesses to anything he might depose to, would add no weight to his testimony. There are certain alleged facts in favor of which all the evidence, however supported by the good faith and respectability of the witnesses, is not worth a rush. The facts quoted from Mr. Coleman's narrative are of this nature; and there is an end of the matter." This light and airy nonsense the reviewer knows to be so much trash, but he has nothing better to say. It is surprising to what contemptible disingenuousness some periodicals of high literary reputation will stoop under such circumstances.

I have before me the review of Mr. Disraeli's *Lothair* in the *Quarterly*. In this novel two ladies are spoken of as wearing "tilted hats," which are moreover mentioned as worn to screen their eyebrows. The writer in the *Quarterly* pretends not to understand what is meant by a tilted hat, and affects to suppose "tilted" to be a misprint for "titled," as the book contains so much about the peerage. Now, when the pitiful witting wrote this absurdity, he did so in full consciousness that he was penning a lie. So much for reviewers.

Some time ago a statement was given to the public purporting to come from a distinguished manufacturer of philosophical apparatus, and setting forth that he had made a vast quantity of instruments and mechanism to assist the apostles of Spiritualism in aims at deception. This statement, on reaching the knowledge of Mr. Falconer (the gentleman referred to), was by him contradicted in the completest manner, and characterised as a groundless and malicious fabrication. In like fashion, there are continually appearing in the newspapers scandalous assertions and garbled accounts, whose unfairness being speedily detected, instead of doing harm to the cause of Spiritualism, merely serves the good purpose of stimulating enquiry. Of course impostors have arisen among the professing adherents of the new faith, just as rogues and impostors have been continually discovered in the Pulpit, the Senate, or the Law Courts; but I have been astonished at the very trifling amount of trickery that has been detected in the practice of the mediums, and also at the enormous superstructure of misrepresentation that has been based upon it. There appears to me one signal source of continued wonder in the fact that physical manifestations of Spiritualistic order, similar in general character to those of the present day, should have been known in China at least five centuries ago, according to the most reliable records such as those of the Abbé Huc, Rubruk the French ambassador, Mr. Medwin, and others, and yet have caused no enquiry among the philosophers of Europe. However, the testimony of the last twenty-five years has been so abundant, consentaneous and convincing in respect of this matter, and has borne the test of such searching and intelligent examination, that nothing now can abate the ardour of rational enquiry, or hinder the advancement of a glorious truth.

COLONUS.

A LETTER TO THE MEMBERS OF THE OECUMENICAL COUNCIL.

(Reprinted from "The Fortnightly Review.")

CONTINUED.

The result of these teachings is a moral code which may be thus summed up:—Adoration of God, and faith in Christ, as the necessary intermediate to our salvation; renunciation of every natural desire; abdication of every aim of social transformation; indifference to every earthly good; resigned acceptance of every existing evil, either as a means of expiation, or of imitation of the sufferings of Jesus; war to the body and to the senses; submission to the powers that be; exclusive importance given to the work of internal purification, especially to the realisation within ourselves of faith in heavenly grace.

The holy nature of Jesus's own mind diffused a breath of love over the whole of his teachings, and generated a spirit of charity and disposition to good works in his hearers; but it was the love of men who, despairing of vanquishing the evil existing in the world, sought only to alleviate the more immediate sufferings of individuals. Christian charity was rather a means of purifying one's own soul, than the sense of a common aim, which it was

God's will that man should realise here below. It did not overpass the limits of benevolence, and led the believers in the new religion to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and heal the sick with whom they came in contact; but to no attempt to destroy the causes of human hunger and misery. Even as the earth itself was despised, so were all the good things of the earth to be despised as a perennial source of temptation, and the gifts to the poor and to the Church testified to this belief. Poverty itself was preached by the majority of Jesus's followers as a blessed mortification of the flesh, and regarded by all as an incontestible necessity. Love of country, and that love which embraces the generations of the future, and is devoted even unto sacrifice for their sake; that love which will not tolerate the brand of inequality or slavery on the brow of a brother man, was unknown to Christian morality. The true country, the real home of Christian freemen and equals, was heaven; every man was bound to direct his course thither; and the greater his sufferings on earth, the stronger the hope he might entertain of his soul's future, and of celestial joy. The world was abandoned to Satan. Religion taught man to renounce it; religion, which was alike his isolation and his refuge; it imposed no mission of earnest and resolute struggle, and of slowly progressive, but certain victory.

Such was, such is, your Moral Code. Solitary contemplation and monastic life were its first logical consequences. At a later period, when you were triumphant, when the necessity, which all religions undergo, of transforming society in their own image, compelled you to mingle in social and political life, you frequently (with immense advantage to civilisation) obeyed that uncertain and instinctive sense of right and equality which lies at the root of your religion; but it was simply as a fact, not as a doctrine, and did not in any way alter the educational principle of your Moral Code; which was incarnated historically, in the dualism of the temporal and spiritual powers—the Papacy and the empire. The greatest of your Popes, Gregory VII., attempted to crush this dualism beneath the omnipotence of moral force; but he failed, and died in exile. The greatest of your philosophers, Thomas Aquinas, attempted to destroy the antagonism between the soul and the body, through a definition of man borrowed from Aristotle; but it was too late: not even the decrees of your Council of Vienna, in support of his attempt, could transform a moral code which had been identified with the Christian Conception of Life for thirteen centuries.

Your religion was the religion of individual man. It did not—it could not, at its origin, contemplate collective humanity. It aspired towards the ideal, the divine, and would, had it been possible, have sought to realise its ideal on earth. But the instrument failed it. The short, imperfect life of the individual (beyond which this conception did not extend) is incapable of its realisation. Your religion, as if to avenge its own impotence, cried anathema upon the terrestrial world, and referred the solution of the problem to the world of grace—to heaven.

Herein lies the secret of all you have achieved, and of all you have failed to achieve.

Christianity is the religion of individual man. The vast religious synthesis through which we are gradually advancing towards the realisation of the ideal, is resolved like an equation containing an indefinite number of unknown quantities. Every religious epoch disengages one such unknown quantity, and classes one more term of the problem among the known quantities, never more to be disputed. Two grand primary epochs—the gigantic Aryan religions of the East—concentrated their intelligence, inspiration, and labour upon the two terms—God and Nature. But in both these epochs, the ideal man (crushed by spiritualist or materialist pantheism) was absent. While Mosaism elaborated the idea of the divine unity, and preserved the sacred deposit for futurity by incarnating it in a people, a third great epoch assumed (in Europe) the office of disengaging the human unknown—beginning with the individual—and adding it to the number of known quantities. As the human individual manifests life under two aspects, personal and relative—represented by the two terms liberty and equality—so that epoch was divided into two long periods.

In the first period, polytheism affirmed the individual, and elaborated his emancipation within certain narrow limits, evolving—in the Greco-Roman world—the idea of liberty. During the first labour of elaboration, however, and in the intoxication of rebellion against Oriental pantheism, the conception of the Divine unity was broken up into fragments, and all basis of durability was thus destroyed.

In the second period, your religion, having inherited from Moses its belief in the Divine unity, replaced the deity at the apex of the pyramid, and fulfilled its mission with regard to the problem of the individual, by defining his relative life, proclaiming the equality of souls, and declaring all men the children of one Father.

Such was the historic mission of Christianity; nor was it possible that the epoch, when—as it invariably happens—it deduced its political and economic constitution from its religion, should advance beyond the limits of the doctrine of individual, and the two terms (liberty and equality) by which that doctrine is represented. When the Protestant sects—moved by the corruption of Catholicism—sought to recall the multitudes to initial Christianity, they were unable to discover any other criterion of truth than individual conscience. The great political and social revolutions which, towards the close of the last century, attempted (knowingly or unknowingly) to realise the Christian principles in practical life, summed up their whole labour and endeavour in a declaration of the rights common to every individual, and prefixed as sole governing law of the development of the double life—moral and material—of mankind, the insufficient rule of liberty.

God—God and Nature—God, Nature, and Man:—three cantos of the gigantic religious Epopea which has the ideal for its subject, and the generations for its poet. Wherefore do you pretend that

God and the generations shall now be dumb? Wherefore should we bury in your sepulchre an inspiration inseparable from life itself, and silence the new canto rising to the lips of creation, which has for its theme—God, Nature, Man, and Humanity? Wherefore should not the new heaven, of which we already have dim prevision, be represented by a new earth? the new dogma, by a new Moral Code?

VI.

The earth is of God; it cannot be accursed. Life, like the God from whom it springs, is One and everlasting; it cannot be broken up into fragments, or divided into periods of a character radically opposed. There is antagonism between matter and spirit. Matter gives forms to thought; symbols to the idea; means of communication between being and being. The body, given by God as the earthly tenement of the individual, and the means of communication between his life and that of the external world, is not the seat of evil or temptation. Evil and temptation, wherever they do exist, exist in the Ego; the body is the instrument which translates either good or evil into action, according to our free choice. The dualism between the temporal and spiritual power is an immoral conception, without any basis in the nature of things. The moral law—once recognised and accepted—ought to be supreme; and the mission of the temporal power is its application to the civil and economic realities of life. Wherever such is not the case, either the moral law is—as yours is at the present day—the corpse or lying phantom of law, or he, whose duty it is to translate it in action, is false to it, and is immoral.

The earth is of God. It is a step upon the infinite ascent that leads us to heaven: our sojourn during one of our existences, wherein we are bound to prepare ourselves for the next. It is neither a dwelling of expiation nor an arena of temptation. The necessity of purification from sins committed, and the temptations to evil which are conditions of our free will, exist in ourselves; and will accompany us in every ulterior evolution of the life of the Ego. The earth is the sphere wherein we have an appointed mission to perform, with instruments of labour furnished by it; and we are bound to regard it with love and reverence, as the seat of our possible sanctification. In the ascending series of worlds, separate stages of the long pilgrimage of the Ego, the earth also has its appointed place; it also is—within prescribed limits—the cradle of the ideal; an incarnation—in time and space—of the eternal world; a note in the immense concord which harmonises and embraces creation; an essential link of the chain which unites the universe with the throne of God.

Life is a mission: human existence that portion of it which we have to accomplish here on earth. To discover, comprehend, and intellectually to master that fragment of the divine law which is accessible to human faculties, to translate it in action (as far as human powers allow) here, where God has placed us, is our aim, our duty. We are each and all of us bound to strive to incarnate in humanity that portion of eternal truth which it is granted to us to perceive; to convert into an earthly reality so much of "the kingdom of heaven"—the divine conception premeating life—as it is given to us to comprehend. Thus doing, we are slowly elaborating in man the angel; failing to do this, we shall have to retrace our path.

The moral code deduced from our dogma preaches therefore to man:

Seek not to isolate yourselves: imprison not your soul in sterile contemplation, in solitary prayer, in pride of individual purification, in pretending to a grace which no faith not realised in works can enable you to deserve. Be not deceived by the doctrine that salvation may be achieved in spite of, and in opposition to, the earth. You can only achieve it through the earth. You can only save yourselves by saving others. God asks not, what have you done for your soul? but, what have you done for the brother souls I gave you? Think of these: leave your own to God and to His law. Labour unweariedly for others' good: such action is the holiest prayer. In God, thought and action are one. Seek to imitate Him from afar. Aim not at contemplating God in himself: you cannot do it. Contemplate Him in his works. Say not in dismay, the works of God are great, and I am nothing. God, by breathing into you a breath of his life, has decreed that you also are of worth. His works are your teachers; were it not so, would He have spread them around you? Seek in them his design, a syllable of the conception which is the soul of creation. Study that conception without foolish pride or hypocritical modesty, in the history of collective humanity, throughout which He gradually reveals to us the law of progress prefixed by Him to life. Study Him—purifying your heart as a sanctuary from every base passion, guilty desire, or idolatrous superstition—in the secret aspirations of your own soul; in those instincts of truth which spring up within you in supreme moments of devotion or affection; then when you have mastered that syllable of the law, caught that ray of the divine conception, rise, calm in conviction, and strong in will, priests and apostles of that which you know to be the aim of life. Let every word speak faith in it, every act represent it. All that is in harmony with it is good; all that tends to divert from it, evil. Help the first earnestly, combat the last openly. Avoid alike the vanity that makes display of duty, and the resignation that shrinks from its fulfilment and submits to evil. Evil is here to be fought against; that we, who have free choice, may deserve. When victory is impossible, count martyrdom a benediction of God. The angels of martyrdom and of victory are brothers; both extend their protecting wings over the cradle of your future life.

Hold in honour your body, your faculties; and the material forces that surround you in nature. Instruments given to you by God for the discovery and fulfilment of your appointed aim, they are good or evil according as they are used for others' benefit, or for your own; for egotism is the root of all evil, as sacrifice is the

root of all virtue, and he who cries anathema on them, cries anathema on God.

Say not that wealth and material power are of Satan. Wealth is blessed when employed to relieve sorrow and suffering; accursed, when employed to minister selfish passion, pleasure, or pride; blessed, when it emancipates a people; accursed, when it builds up the dominion of a single man, and denies God's law of progress. All that exists is given for use and aid, and you sin equally by neglect or misuse.

You are bound to endeavour to transform the earthly dwelling assigned to you for a time into a visible temple of the law: a gem of the crown the worlds are fashioning for the Eternal; and each of you may do this according to his sphere, if he look beyond the limited horizon of self. Look from the family to the commune; from the commune to the nation; from the nation to humanity; from humanity to the universe; from the universe to God. Let every act be such as if accepted as the rule by the whole generation would increase the actual sum of good, or decrease the actual sum of evil; and be you an unlettered peasant or a ruler of men, your merit will be equal, and your tomb the cradle of a new life higher upon the scale of progress than your own.

Love God in your fellow-men: men in the progress to be achieved for them and with them. Hold as offensive to God all that offends the dignity of the human being bound to worship Him; all that hinders the intellectual development of the being bound to comprehend Him gradually through his design; all that violates the liberty of the being bound to attune his life to that design; all that contaminates by corruption, materialism, superstition or falsehood, the being destined progressively to incarnate the ideal itself. Combat such evils by example, word, and deed, and call upon your brother men to combat with you. Evil is not eternal; but the battle against it must be a crusade, for the conquest of the ideal demands the effort of entire humanity, the sum of all the faculties vouchsafed to it by God. Develop these faculties by association as intimately and widely as possible. Association, the sole method of progress, is—substituted for charity—the religious word of the epoch. Let help, given to individual suffering and consolation to him that weeps, constitute for you the joys of life. Let the sorrows of those who suffer afar off be equally sacred; be your life's duty a watch in the night. Your battle is not with the effects, but with the causes of evil: whosoever those causes are sustained by law or opinion, whosoever you behold upon God's creature the stamp of inequality or slavery, there is the sign of Satan; and be that sign on the brow of the negro, the working man, or the woman, you are bound to raise, with deeper meaning than of yore, the old Hussite cry, 'The Cup for all!' and either conquer or die, that others may.

The earth's hymn to God can only be worthily sounded by the lips of freemen united in a common aim. Wrest from Satan the kingdoms of the earth with which he tempted Jesus; then may you stand erect in conscious duty done and raise that hymn. Let the banner of the new faith, God, Progress, Humanity, head the crusade. God, the origin and end of all; progress, the law He gave to life; humanity, the interpreter, in God's own time and throughout all time, of that law. Deduce your rule of action from that faith, combat for the earth on the earth, but with eyes raised to heaven. Be your love the love that gives and receives support upon the ascending path of life. Hate the sin, but never the sinner: he bears within him (though stifled now by egotism) germs of the same virtues that are in yourselves, and destined yet to be developed. Love in him your brother in the future. Punish not: protect the society in which you live, and educate the erring members of it. Preach not, labour not in the name of rights which do but represent the individual; but in the name of duty, which represents the aim of all. You have no rights save as the consequence of duties fulfilled; they may all be summed up in one right, that others should fulfil towards you the duty you fulfil towards them. Say not the sovereignty is in us. The sovereignty is in God. The will of the people is sacred only when it interprets and applies the moral law. It is impotent or null when it departs from it, and represents naught other than tyranny.

Transform not yourselves from believers into idolaters, by accepting any privileged interpreters between yourselves and God. The sun of God shines on us all, the Word of God must illumine all. Earth's mists arise between you and the sun, and clouds of error, superstition, and egotism intervene between the human soul and God; but you can chase those clouds from the soul by educating it to religion, sacrifice, and love, and between you and God extend the links of the long and sacred chain of martyrs of thought and love, who still remember and love the earth wherein they accomplish a mission.

Be your priests and counsellors in all the doubts and agitations of conscience those whom long years of tried virtue, and study of things eternal, have proved worthy to be such. Prophets and guides upon the weary pilgrimage of humanity are the men upon whose brow God has set the seal of genius sanctified by virtue; but forget not that the Divine element exists also in yourselves, never yield up the liberty of your immortal souls into the hands of your brother man. Love, honour, and follow, but serve not. Respect in yourselves that human unity which is a reflex of the unity Divine. The false philosophy of the day has, in the absence of a religious faith, broken up that unity by parceling it out into faculties of reason, sentiment, and sensation, and some have worshipped one and some another of these faculties; but remember that neither thought, aspiration, nor economic fact constitutes life: they are but the instruments of life, equally necessary and equally sacred when united in action towards the realisation of its aim, the progressive incarnation of the ideal; and respect alike the inviolability of thought, the sanctity of aspiration, and the organised development of the material faculties, without which the development of the rest is impossible.

"Let labour be the basis of civil society, and let the distribution of its fruits be according to works. Let him who will not labour possess naught."

"Hold sacred the religious faith which unites the millions in a common part of love and action, but hold sacred also the heresy wherein, it may be, lies the germ of the faith of the future. Represent the first in your rites and fraternal associations, but fail not to protect the second from all intolerance."

"You owe to all men education founded upon your religious synthesis, but forget not that the supreme conception of that religion is progress, and let the last words of that education be these: we have made known to you the moral law, in the name of which the brothers amongst whom you are called to live and labour, are associated; but remember that life is given to you in order that you may endeavour to improve the society in which you live, to purify and enlarge its faith, and to urge forward on the path of eternal truth the men who surround you and who will bless your work."

You may cast your dying anathema on this moral code, but, humble individual as I am, I declare to you that the time is not far off when it will take the place of that which you, while daily violating it in your actions, proclaim eternal.

VII.

No; the Book of God is not closed. And you who blaspheme against the Omnipotent by declaring yourselves the depositaries of its last page, give the lie to the sublimest provisions of Jesus, to the prophetic words recorded in the divinest of your four Gospels, words which alone would suffice to constitute the superiority of Christianity over all anterior religions.

"God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."—JOHN IV. 24.

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever."—*Ibid.* XIV. 16.

"Even the Spirit of truth; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."—*Ibid.* 17.

"I am the true vine and my Father is the husbandman."—*Ibid.* XV. 1.

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."—*Ibid.* 2.

"It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you."—*Ibid.* XVI. 7.

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot hear them now."

"Howbeit when he the spirit of truth is come, he will guide you unto all truth; for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak; and he will show you the things to come."—*Ibid.* 12, 13.

All the greatest thinkers, from Promethens to Socrates and Plato, and from them down to our time, have prophesied the fall of one belief and the rising of another. None had prevision, like Jesus, of the characteristics of the future faith. One of those rare intuitions, which make of Him a type hitherto unique amongst men, inspired the words above quoted, linking his own faith to the faith to come. It seems as if the symbolic forms of religion, the transformatory work of time upon them, the sanctity of universal tradition, and the continuous revelation of the Spirit of God through humanity, were all foreseen by Him, on the eve of the sacrifice He had accepted; when the darkness of the future was illumined by the immense love He bore to his fellow-men. You are no longer capable of love or sacrifice, and, therefore, those words have no meaning for you; unintelligible as the warning at the banquet of Belshazzar.

You will die, then—fate so wills it—but instead of dying in love, like Jesus, and invoking the coming of the Comforter to mankind, you are doomed—as I formerly declared to you—to die the saddest of all deaths, with curses on your lips.

The Book of God is not closed. The coming generations are not disinherited; they who preceded Jesus were not accursed. Children of God all of them, identical in faculties and tendencies, they transmit from each to each, in brightness growing with the growth of time and their own endeavour—the lamp of life kindled by Him, and fed and nourished by his Spirit. Revelation, which is, as Lessing says, the education of the human race, descends continuously from God to man; prophesied by genius, evoked by virtue and sacrifice, and accepted and proclaimed from epoch to epoch, by the great religious evolutions of collective humanity.

From epoch to epoch the pages of that eternal gospel (which Italians, neglected by us and persecuted by you, were the first to fortell) are turned; each fresh page, disclosed by the ever-renovating Spirit of God, indicates a period of the progress marked out for us by the providential plan, and corresponds, historically, to a religion. Each religion sets before mankind a new educational idea as its aim; each is a fragment, enveloped in symbols, of eternal truth. So soon as that idea, comprehended by the intelligence, and incarnated in the hearts of mankind, has become an inalienable part of universal tradition, even as the mountain traveller on reaching one summit beholds another rising above him, so is the new idea or aim presented to the human mind, and a new conception of life, a faith, arise to consecrate that idea, and unite the powers and activity of mankind in the fulfilment of that aim. Having accomplished its mission, that religion disappears; leaving behind the portion of truth it contained, the unknown quantity disengaged by it from its symbol, a new immortal star in humanity's heaven. As the discoveries of science have revealed, and will reveal, star upon star, until our knowledge of the celestial system, of which the milky way is zone, and the earth a part, be complete, so the religious faculties of humanity have added, and will add, faith to faith, until the entire truth we are capable of comprehending be complete. Columns of the temple which the generations are building to God, our religions succeed and are linked with one another, sacred and necessary each and all, but having each and all their determinate place and value, according to the portion of temple they sustain. You who seek to support God's temple on a single column seek the impossible. Could mankind follow you in the insane attempt, column and temple would fall together.

The world is athirst of God, of progress, and of unity. You sub-

stitute for God an idol, an infallible Pope. You oppose to progress the impotent, barren negations of your canons. You impede unity by accepting—on condition that a fraction of the State be preserved to you by force—the dualism between the temporal and spiritual power, represented by the Papacy and monarchy. The hideous idolatry will be answered by God, the destroyer of all idols, past, present, and to come. Your wretched negations will be answered by humanity, which will look upon you, smile, and pass on. The dualism you perpetuate will be answered by the people—the sole power destined to increase—who are hourly acquiring that consciousness of their own strength, which alone is useful for their victory.

The epoch of individuality is exhausted. The epoch of association has begun, and is destined—perhaps through the very Rome you desecrate and profane—to sweep away monarchy and the Papacy together.

I remember vaguely, while I write, a short poem of Byron's called "Darkness." Amid the ruins of a world expiring in icy cold, two beings alone are left. They also are doomed to perish, but they persist in struggling against the approaching dissolution. Groping amid the darkness, they reach the ashes of an expiring fire, and strive, with all the anguish of one who seeks to prolong existence, if only for a day, to revive it with their breath. When at last they succeed in raising a feeble flame they turn to gaze upon each other, to discover, with rage and terror, that they are enemies!

I know not what idea inspired those lines to Byron; but my thoughts, as I recall them, turn involuntarily to you. The last, doomed representatives of a world, from which all life is withdrawn, you, Papacy and monarchy, having sought to dominate humanity more surely by dividing it in twain. Conscious of your incapacity of re-uniting it; and yet jealous in your impotent ambition of each other, you have striven to find an impossible alliance between the powers you have disjoined, and from time to time have embraced each other upon the tomb of some once free and dreaded nation; but hating and despising each other in your hearts, and seeking to injure each other so soon as freed from any imminent danger. Now groping onwards, solitary and suspicious, amid the darkness, and vainly seeking to rekindle the fire irrevocably consumed, you bend your dying gaze upon each other in rage and fear.

Descend into the tomb you have dug for yourselves. Had you loved, forefelt the future, and adored in time the Spirit of truth announced by Jesus in dying, you might have made of that tomb an altar. It is now too late. The Angel of Death will inscribe upon that tomb the condemnation you have forgotten:

"And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."—MATT. XII. 32.

JOSEPH MAZZINI.

THE A. B. C. OF SPIRITUALISM.

By SIGMA.

I THINK it is Butler who in his analogy draws a forcible and comforting parallel between the instinct which prompts the bird to build its nest as against a future contingency, and the instinct, or rather that inherent element of man's mind which urges him to live as in preparation for the Great hereafter. With equal truth and with equal fairness, I may pursue the like example in reference to Spiritualism. We all know the lines of Byron about Ghosts, and these seem to me to embody precisely the same argument, whether it is the savage crouched upon skins in the dim recess of his primitive wigwam; or, the voluptuary surrounded with all those elegancies which wealth can offer to luxury, the voices of the night are weird or startling. Every man, no matter what his temperament position or education, feels a tremour at the mysterious noises of the darkness. With all, the thoughts fly back to that region of the supernatural where Spiritualism begins, and thoughts of the departed, or of supermundane agencies spring naturally and always first and strongest, as the explanation. From this the mind again turns upon itself seeking shelter behind its education, rather than in the interpretation at once offered by its natural promptings. Here is the same instinct and the same inherent mentor that Butler pointed out—with this difference that in the Spiritualistic sense, it is invariably felt amongst all nations and peoples while in the sense in which it is adduced by this keen logician, the sphere of the application is comparatively partial. That pervading influence with which the nature of man is saturated, has proved its existence in the uncouth Baron of mediæval times—the tool of the church and of priestcraft—the unlettered serf and the more refined scholar. The feeling that beaded with sweat the Herculean warrior whose sport was war that startled and appall'd the wily plotter, is but the development of the same intuitive perception which recognises Spiritualism amongst us to-day.

It appears to me that whether minds are trained or untrained, they seek by as almost an instinctive feeling

to look for the wonderful, threading the phenomena of Spiritualism. It would appear that, that which cannot be understood is with much more readiness referred to this cause than to the operation of those laws; which, by a tortuous mode of twisting may be made somehow to bear a *mon mundane* interpretation, and this, I take to be the reason why some of the non startling phases of Spiritualism occur. If Spiritualism means anything, it must have for its object the work of conviction, and since the writing of the media fails or may be explained away, we have as well those non wonderful manifestations of direct Spirit interposition with which all Spiritualists are well acquainted. Indeed, I am prepared to go farther and say: that if the evidence of disembodied spirits existence or presence stopped short at those phenomena which might by some far-strained reasoning be twisted into conformity with known agencies, such development would be useless and unfit for the great work which the operation of some natural law is now permitting, a circumstance which in itself would be at variance with all natural law—such law as established by God being ever complete and perfect: and therefore, ever fitted to attain the object of its establishment.

Those who have closely pursued the article written by Dr. Crooke in reference to his preliminary investigation into Spiritualism, will be impressed with this gentleman's desire to be convinced through his organ of wonder rather than by the mental process which would guide a differently constituted mind. Of the ability as well as the exact training of Dr. Crooke in a scientific point of view, no one will hazard a doubt; but, it does seem strange that a man of his calibre and position, should admit in his preface remarks that he has seen phenomena which can be accounted for by no known natural law of the occurrence, of which he says he is as convinced as he is of the most elementary fact in chemistry, and yet, he wants the 1000th part of a grain deposited on the pan of his balance when the case is locked. I imagine that if the requirements of this latter test were complied with a thousand times, he could but simply remain in the conclusion which he asserts he has arrived at already, viz., the occurrence of phenomena "which can be accounted for by no known natural law." But so it is, the training of the mind in a certain direction towards materialism means its education against a belief in occurrences which the narrow law-grooves of science do not span. It is precisely the same with churchmen as with the scientific. The latter rail against such because their researches into the arcana of nature are at variance with the Biblical history. When it was declared, after the conviction had been fermenting and brewing for years, that the world was not created in seven days, the pulpits of Christendom poured forth their indignant abuse at that grim growing merciless—pyramid of science, that dared to overshadow their most cherished doctrines. Yet it was but the other day, when the head of the Anglican Church in Victoria gave the geologic interpretation to the "seven days" and surrounded one of those silent outworks that have been long deserted. From many there is not a parting shot discharged—the ramparts are unmanned and the flag of science is firmly planted. But there is the great safe strong hold behind them that churchmen will not see any city of refuge for them, but Spiritualism! Why is this? Simply because its acceptance requires too much of them. Naturally, they do not like destroying their theologic gods and travelling into this far country, though it is a land that is not weary, and where the shadows of great rocks ever lie cool in the brazen glow of sunlight. Though it is a land where the sounds of trickling waters are, where the atmosphere is clear and the vision carries the gazer straight on across the banks of the silver river, and away beyond the dark valley of the shadow. The panorama lies unfolded then that aching eyes can see, and where aching hearts may read their title clear—so plain the writing that they who run may read. Priests will none of it, because the creed that ropes in their flocks around them, would pass away for ever. The serfdom and autocracy of religion would be gone, and the liberty wherewith man is indeed made free, would arise in its stead. I avow my belief that I cannot regard the present orthodox opposition to Spiritualism as at all wonderful; rather I think, would it

be wonderful if these men could cast behind them much that to the natural man is most dear, and proclaim their faith in the coming of those greater works which Jesus Christ said would follow the Faithful at once, as a token and a test. The admission of Spiritualism means much, much that those who do not give it deep consideration, cannot see. It means at the least, a fusion of the churches from their present bitter differences and the rigid conservatism of orthodoxy, to the one grand brotherhood where are none of those who "pass by on the other side." This aspect and most inevitable outcome of the spread of the belief will account for much that may be difficult to understand just now; but, the heaven is laid by a mighty hand and the world will learn its power. Rather, say the churches in effect, will we bear with materialism, rather see its cold metallic wedge stagger us from the most cherished entrenchments of our belief than admit the reality of spirit communion and spirit teachings, which saps those man-made doctrines that obscure the sublime teachings of Jesus. He with the muck rake would not see the corn; the astronomer who studied the heavens in the reflection of the puddle, would not look overhead and orthodoxy though the vista be spread out far beyond the border land—refuses the landscape as of the devil. It matters not that the beckoning hands of angels call them, that they show there is no darkness upon the "ferry"—not being the angels of the orthodox, they will have no part with them. The mother or the widow might find comfort there, the void of death and the distance of the long journey might be removed; but the doors of the churches are slammed against it, and they read of that Spirit land and of those Spirits in the records of the past which are about and around them even now. Carry it back 1,800 years, and the churches will receive it gladly, but present it to their contemplation as a sun rise that has not set in red splendor in the apostolic days, and they close their eyes to the light—rather the stars in the puddle than the bright stars of Heaven.

There is much said concerning the internal evidences of Spiritualism, and concerning Spiritualists themselves, which I not only admit to be true, but fully endorse. I allude to the many inane communications received, and to the readiness with which men of culture prostrate their reason before them. Some of these possess such an absurd family likeness as to give ample grounds for the popular belief that the character of the teaching does not vary. When I see the signature of Bacon, or Newton, or Shakespeare attached to some writings but little removed, in point of quality, from the ability of a schoolboy, I not only regret that the deception is successful, but that there are found believers thoughtless enough to flourish such communications before the world as the veritable utterances of those implied. I look upon this feature, which at the present time is opening to be a characteristic of some Spiritualistic literature, as one of the most influential militants against its reception by the thinkers of the day.

A high order of communication is still comparatively rare amongst the writing media, and for this I think they have in a great measure to thank themselves. A contentedness with what would be mediocrity amongst ourselves will not induce the condition of receptivity necessary for those exalting messages which indeed are like angels' visits. Nevertheless, when they are received amongst those so favored, the influence is never lost. They point the life-course onward, as the arrow of the sleeping Indian indicates the morrow's path on the prairie. Some of my readers will ask how it is that writings of such a low order are received, and that such deception is practised and successful? I answer, that there is much here and there that is inscrutable at the present time; but this I do draw to my comfort, as I trust many others do to theirs, that departed friends, whom we knew and cherished, write as of old when the brink from whence the last launching was taken was far removed from their pilgrimage, and when the full vigor of health and intellect was theirs. It is these, and not the effort by great names evincing intellectual failures, that point to the reality and win to the belief. It is those who, holding intercourse by modes other than mere writing, lift up the veil to the tattered pilgrim, and show "Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood."

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THE

"HARBINGER OF LIGHT,"

A NEW MONTHLY JOURNAL,

PRICE 6d.; SUBSCRIPTION, 5s. per annum, payable in advance. Country, 6s.

W. H. TERRY, 96 RUSSELL STREET, MELBOURNE.

Printed by E. Purton & Co., at their Office, 106 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, for the Proprietor, W. H. Terry, and published by him at 96 Russell Street, South, Melbourne.

THE Harbinger of Light.

A
MONTHLY JOURNAL

DEVOTED TO

ZOISTIC SCIENCE, FREE THOUGHT, SPIRITUALISM
AND THE HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY.

"Dawn approaches, Error is passing away, Men arising shall hail the day."

No. 3.

NOVEMBER 1st, 1870.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

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ONE of the most interesting features of Modern American Spiritualism is the establishment and progress of the children's progressive Lyceums. The plan of these institutions was first brought under notice by A. J. Davis, who, in the course of his examinations and investigations into the nature of the after life, met with associations of children in the summer land, being educated and developed by wise and loving teachers. The musically harmonious and successful plan on which these institutions were based, at once commended itself to his reason as applicable to the requirements of the rising generation on earth; and induced him to bring the matter under the notice of several prominent Spiritualists; who, in conjunction with him, succeeded in establishing the first Lyceum in New York, January 25th, 1863. The success of this induced the formation of a second and so on, until, at the present time almost every town of importance has its Lyceums, the moral and religious effect of which will, no doubt, exercise a salutary influence on the rising generation of Spiritualists and freethinkers. The idea upon which these institutions is based is, that the child's intuitions are originally and naturally pure, and only require favorable circumstances to expand and develop in harmony with Nature's law. On page 5 of the Lyceum manual under the heading, "An idea of true education" we read, "the divine image is *within*." It is the end of true education to develop that image, and so truly, too, that the child's individuality and constitutional type of mind shall not be impaired, but rather revealed in its own fullness and personal perfection. "Be ye perfect, even as the Father in heaven is perfect," is an injunction of sublimest import. Every faculty and every function of the individual is amenable to that heavenly principle. Everything has a glory of *its own*. "The highest aim of education is to reveal the life and the *form* of that in-

dividual perfection which Divine Wisdom has implanted in the human spirit." On page 6 and 7, the true method of Spirit culture is thus described:—"Children are social. The ties of friendship are the ties of divine love. The life of the infinite God flows through the social affections. There is no life, where there is no love. Heart touches heart in the sphere of heavenly friendship. The lips grow rosy and dewy with tender and eloquent words of wisdom, under the magic influence of unselfish affection. The tongue and the eye are the true organs of instruction. *Conversation*; it is the heavenly method of teaching. The intuitions and the thinking faculties are touched and strengthened by living words. The fields of nature lend endless charms to the quickened intelligence. The realms of science, philosophy, literature, art, and music, belong to the spirit. The youthful heart is full of aphorisms. The infallible words of God's truth, on the wings of genius, come forth when the right questions are lovingly put. Forms and strict routine are required only for the external and fleeting purposes of education. Austere text books and solemn teachers are adapted to schools, where children are to be instructed and "finished" for an outward work in the busy world of things and sense; but, we are reminded that "wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness." "True education is addressed to the reason, through the social affections; whereby the child-nature is made to grow in goodness, and to bear the fruits of righteousness." In the arrangement and conduct of these institutions, there is much to attract and attach the scholars to them. Firstly, the conductors and leaders being voluntary officers, they are generally prompted to accept office, by motives of philanthropy, and a sincere desire to expand the youthful mind to a knowledge of those Spiritual truths from which they have personally derived happiness; hence, the genuineness of their efforts, impress, and attract the youthful mind to them, and gives them greater influence. Next, the symbols embodied in the colours, badges, and designations of the several groups, afford an inexhaustable fund for interesting thought and that ideal aspiration which is so natural to the youthful intellect. In a complete Lyceum, the children are classified in twelve groups, called—Fountain, Stream, River, Lake, Sea, Ocean, Shore, Beacon, Banner, Star, Excelsior, and Liberty groups.

The following will illustrate their suggestiveness of poetic imagery and picturesque views of truth and progress:—

From a primal "Fountain" all things flow.
 The "Stream" of Love flows onward for ever.
 The "River" of Truth shall eternally roll.
 Heaven is reflected by the peaceful "Lake."
 We safely sail over Life's throbbing "Sea."
 The tide of Love's infinite "Ocean" never ebbs.
 Truth's golden sands are on the "Shore."
 Wisdom's "Beacon" lights our upward pathway.
 Beautiful is the "Banner" of Righteousness.
 Reason is the guiding "Star" of the soul.
 "Excelsior" is the watchword of eternal progress.
 The love of "Liberty" is sacred and eternal.

Each group is provided with its appropriate banner, the colors signifying degrees of Love, viz., No. 1, Red, opening Love; No. 2, Pearl, Reciprocal Love; No. 3, Orange, Constructive Love; No. 4, Lilac, Expanding Love; and so on through the series. Each banner bears a painted illustration, expressive of its significance, for instance, the No. 1 Banner represents a "fountain," gushing from irregularly massed rock indicating the unformed character and impulsiveness of childhood, and the others have similarly appropriate illustrations. In connection with the instruction, there is a system of light gymnastics, with musical accompaniment; and, another attractive feature is the Silver chain recitations, which consist of appropriate pieces of poetry and hymns of aspiration, the leader and pupils reading or singing alternate lines. Each Lyceum has its annual festival day, when other Lyceums are invited, and tableaux, plays, &c., are performed, and prizes distributed to the members, it has also its anniversary picnic; which, appears from the description given of them in the American papers, to be very successful, and well conducted. Space forbids our giving a fuller description of these really admirable institutions, we shall probably continue the subject in a future number, meantime those who desire to know more about it, will find the whole system in a concise form, in "The Manual for Children's Progressive Lyceums," by A. J. Davis, copies of which are obtainable in this city.

MR. NAYLER'S LECTURES ON SPIRITISM.

OUR old friend, Mr. B. S. Nayler, has again taken the field in the cause of Spiritualism, and commenced the campaign with a most interesting lecture, which he delivered at the Town Hall, St. Kilda, on the 19th, Forester's Hall, Fitzroy, on the 20th, and Freemason's Hall, Melbourne, on the 26th of October. The lecture was a direct appeal to the reason of the audiences and free from all theological bias. Mr. Nayler's previous efforts as a lecturer on Spiritualism, have, through the unpopularity of his religious opinions, to which too great a prominence was unfortunately given, left an unfavorable impression on the minds of the many whose views were opposed to his. The present lecture was remarkably exempt from anything of a doctrinal or controversial character, or what could reasonably be objected to by any Christian. The lecturer pointed out that, notwithstanding the majority of the civilized inhabitants of Christendom treat Spiritualism with either stolid indifference or marked contempt, yet, as thousands of the most eminent men in divinity, physic, and law, as well as thousands of the most celebrated literati, and scientists, are its confessed converts and avowed advocates—maintaining that Spiritualism, and *Spiritism alone*, gives proof of a future existence, while sacred books only propound it,—Spiritism is not a fitting subject to be pooch-pooched by any one capable of rational enquiry. He quoted Lord Brougham (after that eminent statesman and

thinker became a Spiritualist), who evidently foresaw the expansion of the Spiritual belief in his characteristic allusion to the Little Cloud, the following were his Lordship's words—"Is Spiritualism foreign to our materialistic manufacturing age? No! for amidst the varieties of mind which divers circumstances produce, are found those who cultivate man's highest faculties; and, even in the most cloudless skies of scepticism, I see a raincloud no bigger than a man's hand—it is MODERN SPIRITISM!" And despite all opposition Spiritualism he believed would now go on, and on, progressing from age to age, until it shall cover the face of the earth, as the waters cover the bottom of the great deep.

Spiritism, he defined to be a belief and declaration of the practicability and actuality of Spirit-intercourse between this world and the next; and all men, women, and children, who were participators in this intercourse, were Spiritists. He objected to the commonly received idea that the Spirit manifestations originated with the Fox family in 1848, and pointed out several notable instances of earlier manifestations. Spiritists he said, did not cast the Bible behind their backs, as they have been falsely accused of doing; but they endeavor to interpret the Scriptures by the light of Reason; for, as Butler, the pious Bishop of Durham, wrote—Reason *can*, and it *ought* to judge, not only of the meaning, but also of the *morality* and *evidence* of Revelation.

Dr. Arnold maintained—"The gift of Reason is God's original revelation of Himself to man." The lecturer also quoted Bishop Marsh, and the present Archbishop of Canterbury to the same effect. He reminded his hearers that all new doctrines were invariably condemned by the unreasoning many, as heterodox. Even Paul was spoken of in his time as a pestilent fellow and sower of sedition. He cited as instances of the popular prejudice against anything new or novel, the introduction of vaccination by Jenner, of phrenology by Spurzheim and Gall, the steamship by Henry Bell, Gas, the electric telegraph by Wheatstone, and railroads by Gray, the men who introduced or strove to do so, all these great facts, were denounced as visionaries, fools, or madmen. Under these circumstances it was not to be expected that Spiritualism would meet with any better reception, but being as great a fact as any of those alluded to, it must inevitably be acknowledged as such. The Lecturer next examined and ably disposed of the three principal objections to Spiritualism, viz., Fraud, Self-delusion, and The operation of some undiscovered natural law, and proved these to be inadequate to account for the numerous and varied manifestations which were reported on unimpeachable authority to have taken place in Melbourne and suburbs. The only hypothesis that would fully cover the facts was Spirit agency. He pointed out that the most incredulous and acute scientific investigators while adhering to their disbelief in Spiritualism, frankly, confess that several of the manifestations cannot be accounted for by any known law, and he appealed to the public to investigate for themselves regardless of what has been said or written for or against Spiritualism. He instanced several notable cases of materialists brought to a belief of immortality through Spiritualism, and pointed out the inconsistency of believing ancient and recorded Spiritualism, and rejecting the demonstrable Spiritualism of the present day. He expressed his regret that Melbourne Spiritists should keep their meetings and communications so much to themselves, and thought that were they to appear as *what they were*, their moral character and standing in society would give an impetus to Holy Spiritualism, which would quickly raise it in the appreciation of the public, and silence the scoffers of God's best gift to man. The Lecturer read some interesting extracts from the investigations of several eminent investigators of the Spiritual phenomena, and in conclusion said—"Whatever others may say or write concerning Spirit intercourse, or Spirit influence, I wish it to be clearly understood by my respected hearers, that the Spiritualism I profess tends to make its votaries wiser, better, happier. And that it is in strict accordance with the teachings of the Chief of Spiritists, Jesus of Nazareth, who spake as never man spake!"

To Correspondents.

Communications for insertion in this Journal should be plainly written, and as concise as possible.

"Ignotus."—To publish your letter would necessitate a lengthy reply. We think our answer to your last, sufficiently clear and definite for our readers generally, and believe our time and space may be more profitably occupied than entering into a metaphysical argument for your personal edification.

We had intended to insert an ably written Article, from the pen of Mr J. W. Thomson, entitled "Bigotry and Free Thought," but from the length of the article, and delay in its reception, we are precluded from doing so.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

DEAR SIR,—With your kind permission, I proceed to state the Scriptural argument against modern Spiritism. I shall do this as precisely and concisely as I can; and, should any remark which you might consider offensive escape me, be assured it is an inadvertence for which I shall always be willing to apologize.

At the outset allow me to say that, from the very first, I have never doubted the fact of man's ability to commune with the Spirit world, nor the manifestations which usually take place at Spiritual seances. Of course, self-delusion and humbug have been occasionally mixed up with these matters; but I have never doubted that, as a rule, the phenomena of Spiritism were due to the intelligent powers of another sphere.

I think my argument will be best defined by the following propositions:—

1. The practice of modern Spiritism is contrary to the law and will of God, as revealed in the Old and New Testaments.

2. There is ground for suspecting that the present intercourse with Spirits, is but preparatory to the "strong delusion" spoken of by Paul—(2 Thess. 2, xi.) and to the latter day operations of those "seducing spirits," who will yet mislead the world by false doctrines—"doctrines of demons"—as intimated by the same apostle in 1 Tim. 4, i.

Now, if the first proposition can be fairly established, you will see at once that all who regard the Bible as the rule of faith and life, must, as in duty bound, keep aloof from, discountenance, and denounce the practice in question. But since all true Christians are Spiritists in one sense, inasmuch as they believe in and apply to the One Great Spirit, it will be necessary to define exactly what we mean by "the practice of modern Spiritism" in contradistinction to the ordinary practice of Christians. We define it then to be—the application to, and habitual communication with the spirit world, AS SUCH, APART FROM, AND INSTEAD OF GOD HIMSELF. That this is the regular practice of Spiritists is proved by all their works; a fair sample of which is given in "The Glow-worm" No. 1, which prescribes "for beginners," that a loo table, not very large nor very heavy, shall be charged with electricity by the hands of six, eight, or more persons, placed in a certain manner upon it; and, that when charged direct application shall be made to the Spirit world by the question—"Is any Spirit present?" Such is the practice with very little variation, all the world over. Every possible facility in the way of silence, gloom, temperature, and so forth, is given to the Spirits for making their presence heard, seen, or felt; facilities which would be needless if the Almighty Himself were invoked, since he can act independently of all these little arrangements. The argument then will stand thus:—

PROP. 1. The application to, and habitual communication with the Spirit world, as such, apart from, and instead of God Himself, is not countenanced in either the Old or New Testament.

This proposition is sustained by the following facts:—

All the Spiritual communications recorded as of Divine

Authority and approval, fall under one of the following heads:—

1. They are made by God *Himself* in various ways, as by personal presence, by voice, fire, cloud or smoke; dream or vision; as to Adam after the fall (Gen. 3, viii. 19), to Noah (Gen. 6, xiii.), to Abraham (Gen. 17, 18; xxii, i, ii.), to Isaac (Gen. 26, ii.). to Jacob (Gen. 32, 24, 30; xxxv. ix. xv.), to Moses (Exodus 3 and 4, 19, 9, 11, 18, 19; xxxiii. xi.), to the elders of Israel (Ex. 24, ix. x), to Samuel (1 Sam. 3, 4, xiii.), to Solomon (1 Kings 3, 5, ix. ii.), to Daniel (Dan. 2, xvii. xix.), to the Apostles on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and to many other prophets, seers, and people of God at so many times that it would be impossible in a letter like this, to enumerate them.

2. They are made by God through angels, directly commissioned by him; as to Lot (Gen. 19, 1; xii. xiii.), to Daniel (Dan. 9, 20, 23; x. ix. xii.), to Elijah (1 Kings 19, v. vii.), to Zechariah (Zech. 1, xii. xiii.), to Zecharias (Luke 1, xi. xix.), to Peter (Acts 12, vii. x.), and so on.

5. They are made by God through the divinely appointed Urim and Thummim—(Numbers 27, xxi.; 1 Sam. 23, 9, 12; xxx. vii. viii.)

These are the divine and orderly communications of Scripture; and to such Divine and Holy Spiritism it would be impious to object, it being from first to last, of and from the Divine Being Himself. It is in *nearly* every instance *declared*, and *always understood* to be so.

But such are *not* the communications of modern Spiritism; there are just as entirely of the *creature* as the others are of the *Creator*. Therefore, the cases cited from Scripture afford no example of, and give no countenance to the practice of modern Spiritism; and thus the terms of proposition 1 are established.

PROP. 2. *All other* communications than those recorded as above are condemned throughout the Scriptures.

This is proved by the fact that *all such* communications are designated by the general terms divination, sorcery, and witchcraft; and are never mentioned but with condemnation, except in the case of Joseph, before Moses' law was written. Take Lev. 19, 31; xx. vi. xxvii; Deut. 18, 19; xv.; 1 Chron. 10, xiii.; 2 Chron. 33, vi.; Acts 16, xvi. They are simply communications between the *creature in the flesh* and the *creature in the Spirit*, God himself being no party in the action. And *here only* modern Spiritism meets with its analogue—just such it is, and *as such* is condemned as unauthorised and disorderly. Therefore, the first part of the argument is established, namely, that:—"The practice of modern Spiritism is contrary to the law and will of God as revealed in the Old and New Testaments."

In my next I will, with your kind permission, take up the second part of the argument, and wait any remarks both letters might elicit, and reply to them in my third.

I remain, dear Sir, with every respect,
Yours,

TAU BETH.

Oct. 8, 1870.

COMMUNICATION FROM W. J. FOX.

WITH great pleasure do I answer your kind summons, and would that you had called me before. It is a moment of no small pleasure to me to return to earth and meet again with those in whose company I have been, and whose ears have listened to my words; and because they have contained the principles of Truth, I feel still a pleasure in the recollection of those days now numbered with the past. Truth is Heavenborn, and the soul of man absorbs the Divine influence from all nature. Everything beams with glowing Truth. As the flower looks up to the sun and feels the influence of its warm and vitalizing ray, so does the soul of man (the Divine Being materialized), gaze upon the centre of its being, the all-powerful attraction, "Truth with Love combined." As a man on earth, my inmost desire was for *Truth*. I found water for my thirsty soul in the beauties of the

universe, and as the bee gathers honey from every simple flower, so did I find pleasure in every research in Nature's garden. My spirit "progressive in its nature," had but little opportunity to expand while bound within the limits of my tabernacle of dust, and still more did I experience the coldness of those whose ears to a certain extent I had to please. If I had known while in the body, all that I have learned by my experience here, how joyfully would I have spoken to the people of the glorious abodes of the future. My thoughts often return to the scenes of earthly days, and with pleasure I ponder over the words I have uttered, and my happiness is increased when I find that much of what I expressed was impressed upon my mind by Spirits whose experience and knowledge were indeed beyond mine. Since last I had the pleasure of communicating to you I have made rapid progress, and am at present preparing for a still greater change. I have the same earnest desire to be a communicant to man, through some medium, and I doubt not the time is not far distant when I shall have the great pleasure of recording my experiences in the Spirit world.

W. J. FOX.

Poetry.

A DEAD MAN'S MESSAGE.

(Paraphrased from Arabic verses, quoted by Mogreeth, at Bahréin.—See *Palgrave's Arabia*.)

He who died at Azau sends
This, to comfort faithful friends.

I.

Faithful friends! it lies, I know,
Pale and cold, and still as snow:
And you say, "Abdullah's dead!"
Weeping at its feet and head;
I can see your falling tears.
I can hear your sighs and prayers,
Yet I smile, and whisper this,
"I am not the thing you kiss:
Cease your wail, and let it lie,
It was mine. It is not I!"

II.

Sweet friends! what the women lave
For its last bed in the grave,
Was a net which I was quitting,
Was a garment, no more fitting;
Was a cage, where from, at last
Like a bird, my soul hath passed.
Love the inmate, not the room,
The weaver, not the garb—the plume
Of the eagle, not the bars
Which kept him from the splendid stars.

III.

Loving friends! be wise—and dry
Straightway every weeping eye;
What you lift upon the bier,
Is not worth a single tear;
'Tis a simple sea-shell, one
Out of which the pearl is gone;
The shell was nothing—leave it there—
The pearl, the soul, was all, is here!
'Tis an earthen pot, whose lid
Allah sealed, the while it hid
That treasure of his treasury,
A mind that loved him: let it be!
Let the shards be earth's once more
Since the gold goes to his store.

IV.

Allah glorious! Allah good!
Now thy world is understood!
Now the long long wonder ends,
Yet you weep, my foolish friends:
While the man you say "is dead,"
In unspoken bliss instead,
Lives and loves you: lost, 'tis true,
For any light that shines with you;
But in the light you do not see,
Raised to full felicity;

In a perfect paradise,
And a life which never dies.

V.

And this blessed life I see,
Is not dream nor phantasy.
We have meat, and we have drink,
Far more truly than you think:
Drain from dazzling goblets wine,
Feast upon a food divine;
But food and wine together pour,
One mystery, of many more,
From the same source, for both are pressed
Pure Heaven—milk, from a maiden's breast.
If you can hear me, can you take
My meaning's shadow? for the sake
I speak of two, or may be one,
The rest will also learn anon.

VI.

Farewell friends! yet not farewell!
Where you are, I too shall dwell:
I am gone beyond your face,
A moment's march, a single pace.
When you come where I have stepped,
You will wonder why you wept:
You will see by true life taught,
That here is all, and there is nought.
Weep awhile, if you are fain,
Sunshine still must follow rain.
Only, not at death—for death,
Now I see, is that long breath
Which our souls draw, when they enter
Life, that is of all life centre.

VII.

Be ye certain, all seems love,
Viewed from Allah's seat above,
Be ye stout of hope, and come
Bravely onward to your home;
From its happy gate, my ken
Sees you, struggling souls, not "men."
All for nameless joys decreed,
Which your wills may stay or speed;
But not one, at last, to fail,
Since at last love must prevail.
"La Allah illa Alla,"* yea!
Thou Love Divine! thou Lord always!
He that died at Azau gave,
This to those who made his grave.

EDWIN ARNOLD.

SPIRITUALISM THE ALL-EMBRACING RELIGIOUS FAITH.

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN A MODERN SPIRITUALIST AND A CALVINIST.

BY CALEB S. WEEKS.

(From the *Banner of Light*, July 23rd.)

SCENE—In a store in New York, where, having no customers to wait on just then, a conversation was started on religious faiths, which of course soon brought about an allusion to Spiritualism as the most dangerous form of infidelity or unbelief now working in society.

SPIRITUALIST (who had entered a few minutes before).—I perceive that you greatly mistake the character of Spiritualism, as is usual with those who look at it from a distance, and through theological prejudices.

ONE OF THE COMPANY.—Are you a Spiritualist?

S.—Yes.

FIRST SPEAKER.—Tell us wherein I mistake its character.

S.—In supposing it to be a system of unbelief or skepticism. It is not negative in its character—denying faith, but positive—affirming the vital truths of all the religious systems which preceded it, and adding to them a great new one, which sheds such light upon the old as to show more clearly their beauty and grand proportions.

*There is no God but God.

F. S.—Does it not deny the truth of inspiration and revelation?

S.—On the contrary, it affirms the naturalness and universality of inspiration—that revelations are constantly coming to every age, people and individual, as full and perfect as they can receive.

F. S.—It rejects the Bible, does it not?

S.—By no means! It accepts it as an important portion of the records of the great natural revelation as it came to past generations; containing like all the others some errors, but withal some of the grandest truths, and much of the religious experience of one of the most religious of the ancient nations, and the thoughts and expectations of its seers.

F. S.—Then you admit that Spiritualism does not regard it as the word of God?

S.—There are many different meanings attached by different persons to the phrase—"word of God." I think, however, that I discover *your* standpoint and your meaning; but if you will tell me whether or not you are a Church-Christian, and if so what denomination and faith, it will enable me at once to clearly understand what you mean by this, and any other questions.

F. S.—I am a Presbyterian. I hold to the Calvinistic faith—to predestination, which, if correctly understood, cannot, I think, be successfully controverted.

S.—I understand your question then. You mean by speaking of the Bible as "the word of God" *not* that its truth in common with all other truth is his word, but that it is the *only word* he has given to the world—is miraculously inspired—an infallible revelation of his will and of all the truth essential to man's spiritual welfare.

CALVINIST.—Yes, that is my meaning! Spiritualism denies that, does it not?

S.—Yes; Spiritualism, in affirming real faith, of course denies all dogmatic assumptions which oppose it. Not only does the Bible make no such claims for itself, but only the Romish Church *professes* to have such a miraculous connection with and inspiration from God as to know whether or not *it* is his especial word; and that church *admits* that a knowledge of its divine origin is not obtained from the book, but from the miraculous revelations of the fact given by direct inspiration to the church—that the claim has no foundation except the church's authority. In rejecting church authority, therefore, and asserting the supremacy of individual judgment in religion, you (the Protestants) have at least deprived yourselves of all grounds of making any claims for the Bible further than *it* makes for itself. The attempt to do so can only weaken faith in such beautiful truths as it teaches. Only the Romish Church can consistently with its own professions claim infallibility for its creeds and sacred books, in connection with its "miraculously inspired teachings;" and with that church such claims are no part of the *real* faith. It does not spring from the inspirations or convictions of the *religious element* of society, but is the arbitrary and groundless assumption of the ecclesiastical functionaries, whose chief aim is to build up and strengthen a religio-political power to gratify their own selfish ambition. Other churches, in attempting to do the same, but practice on the Popish lessons they have not yet unlearned. Such a course is *not aiding but hampering* faith in its attempted flight, first darkening its atmosphere with dogmatic mists, then entangling its wings in the dense accumulations of the cobweb fabrics of fanciful folly which ecclesiasticisms weave. It is not strange to me that faith, thus generally blinded and hampered, flutters through a feeble zigzag course, but rather wonderful how she maintains her efforts, and pursues her course as well as she does.

C.—Your language is unintelligible to me; please explain what you regard as *real* religious faith.

S.—I will endeavor to make it apparent to you. I see faith to be the soul's real confidence in universal truth; that *even* when its external consciousness is *thus* darkened and obstructed, the intuitions will partially break through and grasp *somewhat* of its natural supplies, and though mingling with it much of old error, will gradually separate it from the truth and leave faith more free to act, till it breaks at length the old ecclesiastical clog. But when broken, its fragments generally unite and form a new one, similar in character, but weaker

from the lessened cohesive power of the old decaying materials. Thus the newly organized religious societies retain the *real* faith of the old ones; not so far freed from the unnatural vestments as to allow it to act freely and make its true character and beauties known, but still enough to enable it more easily to cast off its new ecclesiasticisms.

Without going further back in religious history than "the Catholic Church," we find that despite the enthroned dogmatism it imposed on its votary's outer consciousness as a faith, that the interior consciousness, the truly religious element of that church, clung to the *real* article of faith first revealed to man's religious senses by the Nazarene—the paternal and childhood relation of God and humanity. Dogmas inconsistent with this faith, authoritatively forced upon them, its adherents gave outward assent to, and strove to reconcile with it, and thus came contradictory representations of the Divine character. This theology, compounded of pagan fancies and hierarchical ideals by ambitious ecclesiastical functionaries, taught that his fatherly affection was subordinate to his regard for the church, disinheriting, and giving over to a malignant enemy and to eternal misery all of his children who were not obedient to its authority, but still that he was intensely desirous that they should be so obedient to his church, that his haughty dignity could *consistently* give them his fatherly favor.

The church, of course, was *like* its God. Inspired by such an ideal, it became *like him in character*. It was impelled by his earnestness to save human souls from the clutches of the devil, who was constantly outwitting the Father by leading the children into such disobedience as to array the morally weak and selfishly powerful side of the Father's nature in unperishable wrath against them.

But faith, though entangled in such a cobweb fabric of error, at length broke far enough through it to emerge into the Calvinistic idea that a supremely wise creator must have designed all final results of his creation—predestination. This newly discovered article of faith, though distorted by the errors clinging to it, *nevertheless* took its disciples out of the Romish Church, but took the *real* faith of that church with them, stripped of some of its dogmatic creed-vestments. The fatherhood of God was still believed in, and he was seen to be too intelligent and powerful to allow a devil to permanently thwart his designs. Hard, harsh, unlovely, repellant to the better feelings of our nature, more hideous even than the Romish adulteration of faith with paganism, as was the new one with its plumage all disheveled by breaking through its old entanglements, and its truths incongruously mixed with the broken fragments of the old creeds, it nevertheless helped to reform the loose morals and excite logical thinking in religious society, till the more advanced religious minds could receive the new article of faith revealed in Methodism—the truth that God's fatherly grace is free to all.

Methodism advanced till, despite the prejudice which its combative zeal against hell-predestination produced in Calvinists, it has finally put its faith into the souls of most of them, who are now inspired by and preaching "free grace." Thus inspired through the intuitions, religious faith rapidly grew and unfolded its senses, till "predestination" and "free grace" recognized in each other counterpart-truths—true natural partners. There they doffed the old rags, donned the new garments and married, becoming Universalism. Then ascending the highlands of the religious world, it soon so far emerged from the remaining fog as to discover that "God's grace" was natural, coming through his natural laws, predestined, yet spontaneously free—the natural method of its manifestation so complete as to render miracles forever impossible and needless—that religion is not an exotic in the human soul, but its natural product. This was Naturalism, first clearly taught by Theodore Parker.

True faith *never repels but always attracts* other true faith. It was not the Calvinistic *faith* of predestination that so shocked the Methodists' benevolent sensibilities. It was the hell of the thing, not the thing itself. Coming at them hell-end foremost, without a free fire escape attached, no wonder they could not see and receive the truth contained in Calvinism. Yet the fact that they

could never answer the argument that an infinitely wise God must have foreknown and therefore designed all final results of his creation, was to them the most troublesome feature of Calvinistic preaching. It was the fact that even with hell clinging to it, the Calvinists recognized, faithfully stood by and logically demonstrated this faith which made their preaching excite into sputtering fiery fury the Methodists' zeal for their faith of "free grace," which they thought must be preserved in its hell-covered condition, if at all. Yet neither the Methodists nor Calvinists ever attempted to gainsay the real point of the other's faith, but practically though unconsciously assented to it, even in arguing against the other's dogmas. To the Methodists' preaching of "free grace" the Calvinists could only affirm their own faith—God predestined all results, while the Methodists could only deny that he had predestined any to hell. But while each fancied he had refuted the other's faith, he more than half felt that it must be more effectually refuted or else accepted. Hence they must continue to try again and again.

Throughout all the progress of faith it has been gaining, and not one of its genuine articles has ever been lost. Points intimately connected with a newly unfolding truth often escape the notice of its disciples in the dim-dawning twilight, but once seen have never been rejected.

Naturalism at first did not perceive that spiritual manifestations were a part of the universal order of natural Providence, and finding that "miracles" were impossible as a negation of God and his laws, doubted that such manifestations ever occurred, while dogmatism used the fact of such manifestations in the past, assuming them to be miracles, as its only telling weapon in its struggles against naturalism.

But the fuller unfolding of naturalistic faith has come in what is now termed Spiritualism. It includes all the real faith of all the older religious societies, thus stripped of the dwarfing, deforming, fantastic habiliments it once wore. It receives the Catholic article of the parental relation of God, including the truth of a Divine motherhood, also, which that church saw dimly, through its atmosphere of theologic mists, as divided between the church—Christ's spouse—and the immaculate Mary. It accepts Calvinism's predestination and Methodism's free grace; and, as both strip off the Pandemonian tatters and array themselves in the glorious wedding-garments of rationality, it blesses the bans which proclaim the universalistic marriage. Retaining all the others, it reveals and demonstrates the new article of faith. It shows that communion with spirits, being natural, is common to every age and people; that God's revelations come direct to every soul, the fullness only limited by the soul's receptive capacity; that "all Scripture" (not merely the Jewish and Christian) "is given by inspiration of God," "and" (though containing errors and absurd fancies gathered from the defective mentality of the seers, nevertheless) "is profitable for doctrines, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," &c.

This most advanced system, while preserving and presenting all the truths of past ones, does not even destroy the old outworn theologic habiliments, but removes them and places them in the museum of history, as interesting relics of the childhood conditions and fancies of the religious mind. Such is Spiritualism; not a destructive, but a conservative and constructive principle—not a mere negative unbelief, but the positive, all-embracing religious faith.

WHAT IS COMING.—The Paris correspondent of an influential journal reports:—

"The Pope has been much disturbed by an emphatic declaration from the eminent and eloquent preacher Père Hyacinthe, at a public meeting of the Peace Society, that 'there are three religions—the Jewish, the Roman Catholic, and Protestant, all of which are equal before God.' Such a declaration, emanating from so distinguished an ecclesiastic, has necessarily created considerable commotion among those who believe in Papal infallibility."

Is it not notorious that Roman Catholics, who generally concede the rank of "a religion" to Judaism, deny it to "Infidel Protestantism;" and that Protestants, who cajole "unbelieving Jews," fulminate damnation against "idolatrous Papists?"

HOW TO FORM SPIRIT CIRCLES.

An experimental trial at home, among family friends and relatives, often gives the most satisfactory evidence of the reality of Spiritual phenomena. At the same time, as no fully developed medium is present among those who have never obtained manifestations before, the probability is that there will be no results. Nevertheless, it is a very common thing for striking manifestations to be obtained in this way at the first sitting of a family circle; perhaps for every one successful new circle thus started without a medium, there are six or seven failures, but no accurate statistics on this point have yet been collected. When once manifestations have been obtained they will gradually increase in power and reliability at successive sittings. The following is a good plan of action.

1. Let the room be of a comfortable temperature, but cool rather than warm—let arrangements be made that nobody shall enter it, and that there shall be no interruption for one hour during the sitting of the circle. Wet, damp, and foggy weather is bad for the production of physical phenomena.

2. Let the circle consist of four, five, or six individuals, about the same number of each sex. Sit around an uncovered wooden table, with all the palms of the hands in contact with its top surface. Whether the hands touch each other or not is usually of no importance. Any table will do, just large enough to conveniently accommodate the sitters. The removal of a hand from the table for a few seconds does no harm, but when one of the sitters breaks the circle, by leaving the table it sometimes, but not always, very considerably delays the manifestations.

3. Before the sitting begins, place some pointed leadpencils and some sheets of clean writing paper on the table, to write down any communications that may be obtained.

4. People who do not like each other should not sit in the same circle, for such a want of harmony tends to prevent manifestations, except with well-developed physical mediums; it is not yet known why. Belief or unbelief has no influence on the manifestations, but an acrid feeling against them is a weakening influence.

5. Before the manifestations begin, it is well to engage in general conversation or in singing, and it is best that neither should be of a frivolous nature. A prayerful, earnest feeling among the members of the circle is likely to attract a higher and more pleasing class of Spirits.

6. The first symptom of the invisible power at work is often a feeling like a cool wind sweeping over the hands. The first manifestations will probably be table tiltings or raps.

7. When motions of the table or sounds are produced freely, to avoid confusion, let one person only speak, and talk to the table as to an intelligent being. Let him tell the table that three tilts or raps mean "Yes," one means "No," and two mean "Doubtful," and ask whether the arrangement is understood. If three signals be given in answer, then say, "If I speak the letters of the alphabet slowly, will you signal every time I come to the letter you want, and spell us out a message?" Should three signals be given, set to work on the plan proposed, and from this time an intelligent system of communication is established.

8. Afterwards the question should be put, "Are we sitting in the right order to get the best manifestations?" Probably some members of the circle will then be told to change seats with each other, and the signals will be afterwards strengthened. Next ask, "Who is the medium?" When Spirits come asserting themselves to be related or known to anybody present, well-chosen questions should be put to test the accuracy of the statements, as Spirits out of the body have all the virtues and all the failings of Spirits in the body.

Possibly, at the first sitting of a circle, symptoms of other forms of mediumship than tilts or raps may make their appearance. Information respecting the many kinds of mediumship will be found in Mrs. Professor De Morgan's book, *From Matter to Spirit*, published by Longmans; and this is a good book to read before trying to start a new circle.

There are in England several very interesting circles for physical manifestations, where the Spirits speak with audible voices, but, unfortunately, total darkness is a necessary condition. Non-spiritualists who are inquiring into the subject should have nothing to do with dark *séances*, which should be held only by those who know each other, since they offer so many facilities for fraud. When any circle regularly obtains powerful physical manifestations, they may desire to sit for the voices. The very slightest glimmer of light must be excluded from the room, while the members of the circle sit round the table in the ordinary way. One or two paper tubes, each twelve or eighteen inches long, with an orifice about an inch-and-a-half in diameter, should be placed on the table. They may be readily made by rolling up a piece of music and trying a few pieces of cotton round the rough tube thus formed. In the early stages of a voice-circle these tubes are necessary for the use of the Spirits, but afterwards they may be dispensed with ex-