

# RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNAL

ARTS, SCIENCES, LITERATURE

NOTED  
L. PHIL.

ROMANCE AND GENERAL REFORM

Truth Seeks no Mask, bows at no Human Shrine, seeks neither Place nor Applause: She only asks a Hearing.

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JNO. C. BUNDY, Editor.

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NO. 17

## Questionings.

BY MRS. F. O. HYZER.

I ask, when Christmas chants and songs,  
And joyous bells awake the morn,  
How many of the praiseful throngs  
Who sing his birth, know Christ is born?

How many souls who reverent claim  
His life the ransom for our sin,  
Have felt the sacrificial pain  
Or his "redeeming grace" within?

How many who adoring trace  
His sacred birth-star in the East,  
Have given him the highest place  
At festival, and fast, and feast?

Who of the throngs whose feet have trod  
Far distant lands his tomb to find,  
Have felt the living Son of God  
Entranced within the soul and mind?

Have found that flesh and blood must be  
Incarnate of his heavenly grace,  
Till in each other we shall see  
The true Redeemer face to face?

Would not earth's children all be blest  
Could they awake some morn to see  
Unfolded on her mother-bosom  
A real, living Christmas tree?

A tree whose roots should interlace  
The deepest strata of our sphere,  
'Neath every people, class and race,  
Nation and kingdom far and near;

Whose fruit should be impartial love—  
The Golden Rule each branch and bough—  
Each leaf a testament to prove  
The sweet fulfillment of God's vow,

That a Redeemer should be given  
Unto our lovely mother-sphere,  
Bringing to her the peace of heaven,  
And wiping off her every tear;

A tree on which all sects and grades  
Of worship, in whatever form,  
Could wave in changeful light and shade  
Fed by one vital love-pulse warm,

As gracefully as buds and flowers,  
And fruits unfold upon one tree,  
In sunbeams, zephyrs, dews and showers  
In beauty, use and harmony?

Then the great Teacher's words of peace  
And pardon—"Go and sin no more,"  
Would be fulfilled, dread war would cease,  
And justice rule from shore to shore.

Then Christmas bells might chime and ring,  
And Christmas carols greet the morn,  
And men and angels join to sing,  
"Praise unto God! Our Christ is born!"

Baltimore, Md., 1878.

## CHRISTMAS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNAL:

The day celebrated throughout Christendom as the birthday of Jesus Christ, is not without its reverent associations to all liberal Spiritualists, however aloof they may be from any sect called Christian. That the religion of Christ was something very different from the various "evangelical and orthodox" forms of the so-called Christian religion, there can be little doubt. The high probability is, that if His history could be stripped of all that is extraneous, exaggerated or fictitious; if His words, written down long after they were uttered, could be given to us as He gave them to His audience, He would appear to us as a highly gifted medium, possessed with the God-idea and with a full knowledge of immortality, mediately exercising extraordinary spiritual powers, and full of high religious enthusiasm and reforming zeal.

The supposition that there never was such a person as Jesus Christ, is now rejected by the best scholars, whether Christian or anti-Christian. A critical study of the four gospels, coupled with many collateral proofs, has left the conviction that Jesus really lived; and, further, that he manifested a character which has few or no parallels in history. No one who regards historical evidence will deny that such a person was put to death in Judea, and that he gave rise to a new system of religion.

Under the view that Jesus was mediately gifted as few men have ever been—that His pure, exalted and sensitively receptive nature made Him the spokesman and the agent of a high order of theistic spirits—it may be fairly admitted that His unique character really affords an evidence that His mission had more of divinity in it than that of any moral teacher or religious founder with whom we are acquainted. Not that we believe Him infallible; for there is that in His teachings which is open to moral criticism; even His sermon on the mount is not without its flaws; but how far His language was altered by those who, long after its delivery, reported it, is a problem, which perhaps the advanced intelligence of the Spirit-world alone can solve; and taking into account all that may be criticized in His sayings as reported, there is still abundant evidence that he had as-

simulated nearly all the moral wisdom of antecedent ages, and was the select instrument for proclaiming it in new and pithy forms to mankind.

Jesus was an enthusiast, a revolutionist and a reformer. He followed the rest of his countrymen in believing that one part of the office of the Messiah was to restore the throne of Israel; but the character of prophet and teacher seems to have agreed better with his temper and habits of thought. He opposed the dogmas of the Scribes and Pharisees, disregarded their interpretations of the law and traditions, and set the example of appealing freely to the mind's natural and independent dictates.

He taught that religion consists in the internal purity of the thoughts; in charity, justice, fidelity to trusts, in active benevolence, and in the general practice of a lofty, spiritual morality, rather than in the performance of rites and ceremonies, and a cold acquiescence in arbitrary creeds. These ideas were not new, but the state of the public mind in regard to spiritual realities called for a re-proclamation and re-iteration of them in new and impressive forms. And for the service He rendered to humanity in this work, he is entitled to the reverent gratitude of every earnest Spiritualist.

It must be well for those, who, rejecting all that is unessential or impertinent in the interpretations put upon his life, or upon the words attributed to Him, perhaps erroneously, can yet kindle their souls into religious life and light at the high and generous example He set of trust in God and immortality, of faith in ultimate good, of antagonism to all injustice and oppression, of a benevolence embraced all humanity, and could see the signet of the Divine beauty even in the lowest and most depraved of human beings.

It was Timothy who claimed for Jesus that he had abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light. Jesus is not reported as claiming this for himself. The doctrine of immortality had gradually gained ground among the Jews from the date of the Captivity, and, in the time of Jesus, was held by the whole nation, excepting the Sadducees. Jesus, therefore, does not lay down this doctrine as peculiar to himself. He introduces it as one well-known to those whom he addressed. The duty and the beauty of that faith in God, that unlimited benevolence, that progress towards moral perfection, that shall qualify us for immortality, and cause the spiritual resurrection, to be within us, is what He chiefly preaches. Even the sublime doctrine of man's relationship to Deity was not peculiar to Christ's teachings; it was a leading feature of Judaism, even as immortality was of Platonism. Christianity, with all its perversions, has helped to invest these doctrines with the authority of established principles, and thereby contribute much to the moral advancement of the race. Spiritualism gratefully accepts all that is good and true in it, but rejects the excrement of the system. It denies what is assumed by many ignorant theologians, that any rejection of the especially divine origin of Christianity throws doubt upon the question of a future state.

It is said: "If Jesus was not seen after he was risen, we no longer see immortality brought to light." Spiritualism replies: "Not so; that Jesus manifested himself in a materialized form to his disciples after his physical dissolution, is not improbable, as our phenomena abundantly prove. But we are not dependent upon ancient and doubtful historical narratives for the sublime assurance of a future life. Manifestations of daily occurrence bring the fact home to every patient, earnest investigator, and immortality is brought to light even now and here."

What, then, does Spiritualism give us that is not given in the supposed evangel of Christ? It gives us this: the present proof that the fundamental declaration of that evangel—the declaration without which all else would have little efficacy in influencing human character,—namely, the immortality of the soul, is true; and it adds the assurance that such high apostles, commentators, compilers and priests, have grafted on to Christ's message, is not true, but impertinent, unessential and false.

It declares to us, furthermore, that every son of man is, like Christ, a son of God; and it trains us to see in the universe itself a Son which tells of a Divine Father, and in all the natural beauty, the intellectual charms, the artistic grace and the moral excellence which meet us in the world, "an ever-present Logos, proclaiming the wisdom and the love of its invisible source." It declares to us most unequivocally that virtue produces the highest happiness, whether for this or for another sphere of being; and that there does really exist "an encircling mysterious Intelligence," which, as it appears to manifest its energy in adaptations and arrangements conducive, for the most part, to the general welfare of the creation, must insure a provision for all the real interests and reasonable aspirations of man.

This is what Spiritualism gives us, and this is what advancing science corroborates; and until Spiritualists shall realize it, and set up to it, they live in ignorance of the grand inheritance, which Christ appreciated, and to which they have been admitted; and they shut their eyes to the spiritual treasures which it is in their power to appropriate.

Only a pure and lofty religious element, like that abounding in the temperament of Jesus, can give vitality and fruitfulness to

any form of belief having reference to the destiny and future state of man; and Spiritualism can never be a power for good in the world until this element becomes an impelling force in the minds of all who have been really enriched with a knowledge of their immortality.

If the meditations appropriate to Christmas can help us to rise to these important truths, well will it be for Spiritualism and for Spiritualists, and through them for all mankind. Without a recognition and appropriation of these truths, Spiritualism must fail of its just authority—must languish and be retarded—exercising, while the apathy lasts, little more influence in the education and elevation of the race than might be contributed by a new invention in mechanics, or the discovery of a new planet.

## CHRISTMAS.

### A Holiday Worthy of Commemoration.

BY A. J. DAVIS.

In the beginning let us understand one another, and thus avoid mental discord and the consequent strife of words.

While wishing for your unconditional emancipation from superstition, I would not deprive you of anything that is truly and essentially sacred. We have too few holidays; too many days of servitude and despondency.

I would make your life more sacred and I desire that every day should be a Sabbath full of freedom and full of joy. Law a custom give us fifty-two Sundays per annum. But I would authorize mankind to enjoy at least two hundred Sundays a year, and would urge the final adoption of every day as sacred; thus giving three hundred and sixty-five holidays during the time the earth consumes in revolving once around the Lord of heaven, the ineffably glorious Sun.

But what shall I say of special days? Are there not certain days more bright, more lovely, more sacred, more memorable than others? Verily, there are such days in the life of the individual; also in the mighty life of the human world. And, presently, we will proceed to consider this fact.

Millions of Christians accept Christmas as the anniversary of the birth of the Savior of the world. But this fact of the existence of the event, of which the day is the anniversary, is quite another. There was no such day known among Christians until the beginning of the second century. Not until the fourth century was there any agreement concerning the birth of a personage called the savior. The Christian leaders grew more definite, more certain, and more dogmatic and legislative, the farther they receded from the event or holiday which they resolved to name and celebrate. About four hundred years after the event, the chief scholars and theologians of the churches in the East and in the West, held a convention—after much investigation into the traditions and histories of times and places—and at last they unanimously resolved that the savior of the world was born in the manger, about midnight, on the 25th of December, and accordingly we have what is universally denominated *Christmas*. But so uncertain were the early fathers concerning the fact (of such a birth) that the festivities were frequently appointed in the months of April and May. Ultimately, however, it turned out that men who knew the least about the facts assumed to know the most; and thus the religious world moved onward.

The churches of the differing sects in America celebrate Christmas with the austere solemnities bequeathed by the stern Puritans, who frowned down the gladsome merriments, the gambols, and carols, the evergreen ornaments, and the boisterous celebrations, which originated and were long popular in both Germany and England. In England it was generally believed that, inasmuch as the Savior was born in the manger, and accordingly we have his Lord went down upon their knees on every Christmas eve. In pictures of those days were represented an ox and an ass in suppliant attitude; because these domestic animals were believed to have been present at the event of the birth in the manger. This superstition has been fruitful of examples, if we may judge by the long line of unreasonable believers who have assisted to perpetuate an event, concerning which not a human soul ever had, or ever can have, the least particle of absolute knowledge.

The truth is plain, namely: To the literal-minded believer the 25th of December (Christmas) is a literal religious fact; while, to the spiritually-minded, the event called "the birth of a Savior," is a possible internal fact; an event that may happen, and which ought frequently to happen, in the inmost history of the individual heart.

To one class in every community, to the Christians of every sect and shade, the recorded physical manifestations said to have occurred at the birth—the astounding wonders seen in the heavens above and upon the earth beneath—were the ocular proofs of the miraculous origin and supernatural claims of Christianity. On the other hand, to another class in every cultured community, the true and only possible Christmas is that day and hour when a new uplifting truth, when a saving principle, is unfolded suddenly, it may be, in the private life, or in the heart of the life of the whole human-

ity. Such a Savior, when fully born, brings a true Christmas into the spirit. Such a Savior sanctifies forever all private and public life, and constitutes the only sure and steadfast foundation upon which may be erected the eternal temple of a true Spiritual Religion—the everlasting Church of *Arabul*.

"Christmas" is the name of the day imagined by the early Christian theologians when the Lord of heaven made his first appearance among men. But, after a lapse of nearly two thousand years, a new alarm is sounded. Materialistic Christians not long since assembled themselves in one of our richest temples, which is dedicated to the service of "the meek and holy." These erudite gentlemen arranged a new, or revived an old, plank in the Christian platform, namely:—The second appearance of the Lord of heaven and earth, in perfect bodily and fleshly form, in the clouds (unless it should prove to be a cloudless day) with great power and with great glory. A large party of purely evangelical believers, an extremely aristocratic and thoroughly college-bred party, has recently come to the front with this soul-harrowing announcement.

Now, why is it that the coming of a gentle son of the Most High is universally dreaded? Why dread the advent of the eternal Master of universal love and good will to man? We would naturally expect such premonitory signs as the cessation of strife between opposing political parties; the rapid subsidence of all animosities between neighbors, and the sudden development of affection between long-time enemies, and the immediate abolition of all prevailing differences between sects in Christendom.

Instead of such signs, however, we are told by gentlemen (who really know nothing about it) that the Lord's second appearing will be heralded by a series of the most horrifying and soul-thundering transformations. We know that there are a goodly number of Bible-students who obtain relief from the fear of these physical catastrophes by reading a figurative or spiritual meaning into the letter of the Testaments. But such readings do not liberate the great multitude of Bible-believers, who say: "God gave us his words and promises in plain language, so that he who runs may read."

Taken at its word, then, it would seem that the Lord cannot even think about revisiting this unhappy planet a second time without causing forthwith a series of the most terrific natural disturbances. A succession of shocking earthquakes has been ordered to signalize the Lord's very first step in this direction. The thunders of immensity are to be set at liberty; and the lightnings of countless batteries will instantly leap into consuming fire. (For it is written: "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," wherefore we would sincerely counsel everybody to keep as far as possible from those hands.) And the Lord's second step out of heaven, and earthward, will be accompanied by the groaning and belching forth of all the long slumbering volcanoes. Haste again, with the soft flames of gentleness and infinite love burning in his bosom, and lo! the foremost of all the Bible-believing nations will straightway over-shadow the heathen with a horrible slaughtering war. We dread his next step, earthward. For will not his fourth step be immediately accompanied with the breaking out (among devout Christians, too) of the destroying pestilence; which will suddenly dissolve and desolate loving families, and blight beautiful cities, as by famine and flame.

But there is yet a balm in Gilead for the horror-stricken Christians. According to the prophetic conference and best readings of the "Second Appearance" evangelists, in all probability, the Lord has not yet started on his pilgrimage to this earth. There is, however, cold, cold comfort in this assurance, for the same gentlemen say: "He may come at any moment!" Therefore everything is wrapped in uncertainties. Now it is unsupportably horrible to imagine a millionth part of the disturbances that we dread attend the Lord's coming. This of the scene: The Lord of hosts coming in a bodily shape, fully materialized, and in broad daylight, with great powers, and surrounded with angels, straight through the clouds—this has always been an event, a scene, too overwhelming for the coolest Christian to calmly contemplate. Astronomers could not endure it. The makers of geographies would lose their bearing; for "there shall be a very great valley, and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south;" and thus the local geologists, too, will be utterly confounded. Indeed we may ask: "Who shall abide the day of his coming?" And again: "Who shall stand when he appeareth?"

Spiritualists, who are ever-fond of materialistic "standards," if any people can, for they always want another "manifestation" to drive home the various evidences involved in the last satisfactory "test."

Earthquakes, volcanoes, tidal waves, tornadoes, cyclones, wars, famine, plague, pestilences, lack of work, small pay, defalcations, demoralizations—these various and conflicting "manifestations" of the Lord's first steps toward a second bodily materialization, are well enough, and convincing as far as they go; "but does not your first-class materialistic Christian, just like your best materialistic Spiritualist, look for a 'test' of the Lord's personal presence that cannot be gaudied by the philosopher and the critical scientist? It is to such minds simply horrible, yet unspokeably fascinating, to

look forward to some stupendous unparalleled phenomena in the heavens. "Behold, the day cometh, that burns as an oven!" Astronomers will be dumbfounded to behold the rolling together of the expanded sky like a scroll, and the sudden transformations among the sun and moon and planets, will astound all mankind! One could almost pray that the Lord of hosts would once more change his mind, and finally conclude to omit his second appearing altogether, because of the universal disturbances which his bodily materialization would inevitably create!

But we have dwelt already too long on these idle imaginations. My sole purpose, dear reader, has been to picture to your reason the utter absurdity of such an event.

There is nevertheless a holiday for you that is worthy of commemoration. Your Christmas day, my sincere friend, comes truly and only when a new redemptive truth is born in the heart of your reason, which heart is called intuition. A savior is born unto you, over whose modest nativity the pure angels sing and rejoice, whenever you plainly perceive and feel a principle which frees you from all fear and superstition. Yea, believe me, all true saviors are born in and of the spirit, and the birth of each of these holy ones brings you your true and only Christmas. And the day and the hour thereof should be remembered and suitably commemorated by you, for it is your true and beautiful holiday. To the truly religious, to those who are pure and spiritually-minded, the show of the power to work miracles is as chaff compared with a conscious possession of truth. The birth of a savior meant and means the sudden, or the gradual, unfolding in the recesses of the spirit of an exalted, heaven-freighted, angel-blessed God-inspired truth.

This sublime even when it may occur in your deepest spirit, forthwith materializes itself in truer thoughts and nobler deeds. A new life, of personal truthfulness, of usefulness, of love, of justice, of gentleness, of industry, of good will to all men—this is the evidence of the birth of a true savior in you; whose influence will bring you daily gladness, great joy of spirit and a blessedness of feeling which no language can express.

Begin this new life at once. Do not wait for your friend to join you. To-morrow will never come. Now is the time to begin your better experience. Let no mere theory of life cloud your reason and weaken your will, and above all, away with your religious superstitions—away with your horrible fears and educational uncertainties concerning the physical advent of a theoretical personage called the Lord. And away with your increasing appetites for materiality in your spiritual seekings. Let a universal light shine into your spirit; let the perfect liberty of the sons of God be born into your reason and intuition—and lo! unto you is born a savior who is your true Christ; and this event is your true Christmas.

## Note From the Lecturer, Milton Allen.

To the Editor of the Religious-Philosophical Journal:

No fifteen of the *RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNAL* is full of good things, but the two leading editorials—the first on "The Irrepressible Conflict," and the other on the important question, "Whence the Apathy"—are especially important at this time and are worth the price of the paper for a year. You truly say: "We cannot reconcile Spiritualism and Materialism: the life of the one is the death of the other; in idea, method and spirit they have very little in common."

No truer word has been spoken on this subject. The very thought of the one is antagonistic to the other and the sooner Spiritualists see this in its full force and meaning, the better it will be for the cause of both. And farther, when you say, "If spirits come to us from the higher realms of the eternal life for any purpose it is to vanquish Materialism and to banish the skeptical Sadduceism of our age." You utter another great truth which must be understood and accepted if we expect to progress into a real live and healthy condition. Again, I quote: "Do our speakers and writers see this vital truth clearly, and feel it earnestly? Do they teach a spiritual philosophy, and interpret the facts of spirit-intercourse in its own light?" Very important questions, are they not?

And on a truthful answer to these questions, the usefulness in the world of those who are counted as Spiritualists, depends. These articles need no endorsement of their merits, but I feel that I must give my earnest testimony to their value.

MILTON ALLEN.

Between vague, wavering capability and fixed, indubitable performance, what a difference! A certain articulate self-consciousness dwells dimly in us; which only our works can render articulate and decisively discernible. Our works are the mirror wherein the spirit first sees its natural lineaments. Hence, too, the folly of that imposable precept, *know thyself*, till it be translated into this partially possible one "know what thou canst work at."—*Carlyle*.

If we cannot lay the foundation, it is something to clear away the rubbish; if we cannot set up truth, it is something to pull down error.—*Mason*.



FRAGMENTS FROM MY EXPERIENCE.

BY EMMA HARDINGE-BRITTON.

Erna Sames... deal of speculation... By that word is meant the taking possession of the mind and body of the medium...

Once while sitting in a circle at the home of the venerable Dr. Underwood, I was for a time in an almost unconscious trance state; and recognized the presence of many Indian spirits...

In a visit recently to a prominent insane asylum, I was thoroughly convinced... Impressibility, or mediumship is a certain physical and spiritual state...

action. All limit of sense... of forces. All forces come...

Question: Since sensations are transferred, external forces, are they so transformed in the nervous mechanism as become utterly like what they were ere they become sensation?

Evidently not: For if so, they could not take with them into sensation any hint or suggestion of a previous state or condition...

What hallowed recollections cluster around the word Christmas! With what pleasant memories, with what soulful reminiscences...

Even here in this far-off Austral land, ominous mutterings reach me, significant of a prevailing impression that I have "forgotten my American friends"...

I quote the remarks conveyed to me in sundry communications from the ever-remembered West, but at the same time repudiate every insinuation as far wide of the mark...

I must not omit to say, that Thos. Walker is giving magnificent lectures at Melbourne, the Association having with much difficulty, and at a shamefully high rent, secured for him the Princess Theatre...

One is gentlest when one is strongest in a resolution. —Richter.

Good Spiritualists are to be found everywhere; but combined action is the much-needed desideratum, for the want of which our cause languishes...

First—The nerves of the body are the medium of sensation, which translate, or enable the mind to translate, the facts of the external world into facts of consciousness.

Second—These nerves are automatic, which yield no result except under the action of external forces—“are as automatic as any machine, in which before a given action can occur, a certain spring must be touched, viz., the eye yields no sight except under the impressions of light; the ear, none except under the waves of sound, etc.

Power may be “indestructible,” because it is eternal, unitive, simple, infinite; but those specific forces, which are now shown to be only modes of motion, mere local manifestations of power, which are actually transmuted into each other, cannot be confounded with power out of which they arise, and into which they sink again.

Nobody will deny that objects impress forces. A rock impresses its shape and color, in light motions and thus comes into consciousness characterized. Now, to impress is to stamp into. Into light, rock stamps its form, color, life, etc.

This will be clear enough if we consider that rocks are not eternal self-existent entities, but products of active forces. Whether at first igneous or sedimentary, rocks are produced by forces. Forces are modes of motion.

The whole solar system is a form of forces. The nebular hypothesis proves it. The shapes of planets, orbits of mountains, or continents, of seas, oceans, rivers, streams, rocks, trees, fruits, animals, men, angels, are the forms of their producing forces.

Since the world is known to us only in terms of force in sensation, only force can be known to us in sensation. Aboriginal stuff, power, essence, does not enter us through this channel.

Let us all for the coming year so speak and act that the “good time coming” towards which mankind have for thousands of years been anxiously looking, shall be hastened in its advent...

Christmas Thoughts. BY WILLIAM EMMETTE COLEMAN.

At Christmas play, and make good cheer, For Christmas comes but once a year. —Thomas Traher.

Peace on earth, good will to men. —Gospel of Luke.

What hallowed recollections cluster around the word Christmas! With what pleasant memories, with what soulful reminiscences, is this festive-day associated!

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A Clergyman's Response--Comments.

From the many letters received in response to our article addressed to the clergy, we select for notice at this time, the following, written by a talented and liberal gentleman, a Congregational clergyman, who deserves a wider field of usefulness, than is afforded by his present charge.

To the Editor of the RELIGIO-PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNAL: The question you ask the clergy in your issue of the 30th ult., whether the so-called spiritualistic phenomena are proper subjects for scientific investigation, is a fair one, and should have a fair answer.

It seems to us that Mr. Caverno's legal training obtained by a successful practice in years past, is now held in abeyance by his theological predilections, else the objection stated in his kindly letter, would not have been so illogical.

Does Mr. Caverno hold Protestantism responsible for the crimes and base acts of Henry VIII, John Calvin, or John Knox? We do not. Because different Methodist ministers have disgraced their calling and ruined the happiness of many families, is Methodism to be tabooed? Not at all.

An old, highly honored and deeply revered bishop of the Episcopal church, is discovered to have been recreant to his sacred vows, and dies in disgrace from his country; yet, Spiritualists do not claim that Episcopalians are immoral because of their belief.

Spencer, the villain who made a savings bank fail for an immense sum, bringing ruin and distress into thousands of frugal homes, was very orthodox and much given to prayer, even insisting upon offering prayer when calling at the house of his affianced.

But we feel constrained to declare in all frank and friendly sincerity, that it is not for him or for any clergyman or layman, to say that "when Spiritualism will wash its garments of the immoralities that stain them, I think it will be found that orthodoxy will be ready to investigate its facts."

In the old anti-slavery days, Whittier wrote his powerful rebukes of the pro-slavery clergy, who used the Bible to defend that institution.

"Perverting, darkening, changing as they go, The sacred truths of God."

Yet he ever said that Christianity was the gospel of freedom.

Martin Luther mourned the low morals of his Protestant disciples, and asked well-nigh in despair: "Must we go to the Catholic church for pure lives?" Yet we do not hold the Reformation a failure.

We have seen a fearful "black list" of some four hundred fraudulent and wicked clergymen; yet we do not think the sixty thousand men of that class in this country are depraved. We know some of them are saintly and sincere. The spiritual mediums of this land would not suffer in character or honesty by comparison with the clergy, and the great body of Spiritualists are quite as good and true, and wise as the great body of orthodox church-members.

No doubt there are Spiritualists who talk and live in a way which shows that they consider themselves entitled "to violate the fundamental principles of morality in this world." So there are orthodox people who deduce like conclusions, and enter like bad practices from the doctrine of the vicarious atonement, and from election, reprobation, etc., and so become, as his neighbor said the deacon was, "About right God-ward, but mighty trilateral man-ward."

The old-line Swedenborgians seem to be disturbed at seeing Modern Spiritualism working out for itself an independent theism, in which all that is rational and good in all religions and philosophies is included as part of the supreme truth.

That belief in human immortality may be entertained independently of any belief in God, is quite true. That it may be so entertained logically and rationally, is a wholly separate question, into the discussion of which we do not propose at this time to enter.

We discover in the universe a physical and moral order, an intelligence, and a will. How do we discover it? We discover it through a study of facts which science has admitted. If any one will take the trouble to read Dr. Von Hartmann's "Philosophy of the Unconscious," he will see many of these facts skillfully co-ordinated and correlated.

That veteran reformer, Wm. Lloyd Garrison, is a Spiritualist. The sisters Phoebe and Alice Carey were confirmed Spiritualists, as some of their finest poems show. Elizabeth Barrett Browning was a Spiritualist, and her poems glow with the pure light of her inspirations.

Spiritualists are a body of unorganized thinkers, with no formulated creeds, but the morals and the spiritual culture taught by their standard writers can be put beside the church creeds and bear the full light of comparison fearlessly.

Mr. Heinsohn says of Hartmann's famous book: "Edition after edition places this work in all circles and classes of society, and the materialists are in terror and despair."

At this point, then, we have arrived:—There is a moral and physical Order, an Intelligence, and a Will in the universe. And this we arrive at independently of Spiritualism.

We reply to the foregoing candid letter thus fully, because in a gentlemanly way it presents an objection widespread and founded in error. We are not surprised that those who only know of Spiritualism through the secular press or other equally unreliable source, should honestly treasure prejudice; but our correspondent's objection is irrelevant to the main question.

We respectfully ask you to give your views on the questions here raised; and to show us why, if our phenomena are genuine, as we hold them to be, investigation into the laws accompanying them, and the deductions legitimately drawn from them, should not be prosecuted with all the zeal and diligence we can give to a subject so fraught with the most momentous issues?

We claim that a spirit can return and manifest. This we hold proven by a weight of evidence as great as that which proves anything in the wide realm of science or religion. If our facts give new and added proof of man's continuous existence beyond the grave, and of his power to return and manifest himself to us, they certainly are matters of transcendent importance and fit subjects, in our opinion, for examination not only by scientists, but especially by the clergy, because of their deep religious significance.

The Rev. Mr. Mercer Renews His Attack on Spiritualism.

The old-line Swedenborgians seem to be disturbed at seeing Modern Spiritualism working out for itself an independent theism, in which all that is rational and good in all religions and philosophies is included as part of the supreme truth.

It would seem that in Mr. Mercer's opinion the theism that is founded on some human declaration, like "There is one God, and Mahomet is his prophet," or, "There is one God, and Swedenborg is his prophet," has a decided advantage over the theism evolved from the great facts of nature, including those of Spiritualism and psychology.

Herein we differ from Mr. Mercer. To the patient thinker an all-embracing theism may seem as necessary a deduction from the laws of reason, including Spiritualism, as it can be from the Swedenborgian's assumption that Swedenborg is infallible, and that what he says of God must be accepted as true in every particular.

Mr. Heinsohn says of Hartmann's famous book: "Edition after edition places this work in all circles and classes of society, and the materialists are in terror and despair."

With a weakness for creeds, characteristic of all earnest sectarians, Mr. Mercer seems to think that because Swedenborg gives to his disciples a formulated description of the Supreme Being, therefore their theistic belief is more genuine and real than that of the independent Spiritualist.

Are we likely to be any the less devout believers in God than the Swedenborgians because we refuse to accept any diagram, whether from seer or saint, from priest or philosopher, of that inscrutable Being, the

But is Spiritualism wholly barren and meaningless? Does it not help us to go further yet? It does, and by this process of thought: There is a sense and recognition of moral order, an Intelligence and a Will, and a consciousness superadded, in the mind of man.

There is a sense and recognition of moral order, an Intelligence and a Will, and a consciousness superadded, in the mind of man. Spiritualism proves to us that all these essentials of the true man are not confined to the visible, perishing material body, but inhere in a supersensual organism, which subsists after the dissolution of the physical.

Now what is the theism that Mr. Mercer would have us accept in lieu of that which Spiritualism, in conjunction with all the facts of nature and of human nature, yields up the earnest and reverent seeker after truth? It is a theism which would have us believe that in the year 1745, in the city of London, as one Emanuel Swedenborg sat in his room in his boarding-house, after dinner, the Lord God, in the form and dress of a man, came to him, and said, "Eat not too much"; and afterwards added, "I am God the Lord, the Creator and Redeemer of the world."

The construction which Spiritualists put upon this extraordinary claim is, that Swedenborg, grand medium, learned and good man as he was, at the time referred to was either under a hallucination produced in part by too much eating, or the subject of an impression made by some psycholozizing spirit who claimed to be the Hebrew Jehovah and the Infinite God.

And now, we put it to Mr. Mercer, may not those persons who, by faithful thinking and scientific study, work out their own conceptions of the Infinite Spirit, be as free from that "Materialism and epicureanism" which he charges upon us, as the individual who believes in a God that entered Swedenborg's room in London, and said to him: "Eat not too much"? If the essence of such a belief is in its "necessity," then surely it is a necessity, not of the reason, but of the absence of all reason.

If, as Mr. Mercer says, there is a Spiritualism only separated one remove from "a materialism which denies any life hereafter," then we denounce such Spiritualism as spurious, rootless, lifeless, and abortive. If there is a Spiritualism, which, as he says, is only one remove from "an epicureanism which cares nothing about any life hereafter," then we repudiate such Spiritualism as a mockery and an inconsistency, stealing a name to which it is not entitled.

With a weakness for creeds, characteristic of all earnest sectarians, Mr. Mercer seems to think that because Swedenborg gives to his disciples a formulated description of the Supreme Being, therefore their theistic belief is more genuine and real than that of the independent Spiritualist.

But this surrender of one's reason to human authority, or to a questionably divine revelation, in a matter of such moment, is it not the refuge of a self-indulgent moral invalidism, hoping to shake off trouble and responsibility, rather than a legitimate end, attained by sincere, strenuous effort in honest, patient thinking, in indefatigable study, and right willing?

Are we likely to be any the less devout believers in God than the Swedenborgians because we refuse to accept any diagram, whether from seer or saint, from priest or philosopher, of that inscrutable Being, the

infinite Spirit, and are content in our present disciplinary state, with studying in nature and the human soul the manifestations of his existence, his moral nature, his laws his wisdom, and his love; and in seeking to become receptive of all high spiritual influences, divine and true?

In proving to us the reality of an undying spiritual principle in man, Spiritualism helps us to rise to the sublime realization of a regulating spiritual principle, behind all that may seem partial disorder to our finite vision, in the universe; and from the summit of that principle, we look up to the veiling atmosphere and the sun-bright clouds, beyond and above which mounts Reason on the wings of faith to a God in whom that principle inheres.

Mr. Crookes.—Is he an Impostor?

The New York World, on the authority of "an occasional correspondent," makes the most damaging charges against Mr. Crookes, and other eminent scientists. This correspondence is introduced with startling head-lines, and contains the requisite padding to make it appear honest, fair and learned, while it really is a most dastardly attack.

The fair fame of this noble man, hitherto unquestioned, is assailed, and that, too, on the testimony of such a low mountebank as W. Irving Bishop, whose silly tricks and total want of manly integrity of character have forever consigned him to the list of the "dead beats." Having become too well known in America, this charlatan tries his fortunes in England, and falling in with that prince of scientific mountebanks, W. B. Carpenter, well known for his lying charges against A. R. Wallace, and better known as the person whom Wallace proved by his own words to be a quack in science, and dishonest as a man, in the words of this sapient correspondent, these two fitting companions began "experimenting."

The men hinted at as in collusion with Mr. Crookes, are Varley and Wallace! Mr. Bishop is modest! for "after affirming that he gained the confidence of Miss Fay, and thus learned all about the method by which the 'gobemouche's' test was avoided, the correspondent says, 'Fay did not understand the exact principle and means of performing her feat, but Mr. Bishop, by means of his clew and the help of three leading electricians of the Western Union Telegraph Company was enabled to solve the mystery.'

We presume Bishop will gain notoriety by this attack on the character of men who are his infinite superiors, and that Wm. B. Carpenter has an opportunity to gratify his petty spite and galvanize his decaying reputation into semblance of life, but so far as doing permanent harm to the characters of the great men impeached, it will fall as an idle tale. Bishop here for a while was the pet of the churches, but he was utterly incompetent for them, and wherever he went, by the contrast of his stale tricks with the genuine spiritual phenomena, he became a sort of ignoble John the Baptist of Spiritualism. He did far more good than harm. Seeing this, his church managers gave him the go-by. The more the English opposers support him the better, for the reaction will soon come. Dr. Carpenter has been repeatedly urged by Mr. Wallace and others, to investigate the phenomena of Spiritualism, and has refused; preferring to explain them without knowing any thing about them.

Now it is fitting that he should unite with the champion spiritual mountebank to investigate, not the genuine phenomena, but how these may be imitated, and to blacken with falsehood the character of men like Wallace, Varley and Crookes, whose shoes he is not qualified to un buckle. We can only hope that the journals that publish so eagerly such unblushing falsehoods, will be equally swift to make corrections when the true character of these charges are proven.

The Sunny South.

The first snow reminds us of the fragrant orange blossoms and mild atmosphere of the Southern clime, of the many warm friends we have there, and awakens in us a latent desire to visit that inviting locality; and this more especially, on account of the urgent invitation of our esteemed friend Dr. N. B. Wolfe, of Cincinnati, to accompany him on a trip to Florida. The Doctor has recently leased his "Hotel Windsor," at Jacksonville, Florida, to Col. William M. Nichols, of Georgia, who has been in the hotel business for many years, making the house he has kept very popular. The Kimball House of Atlanta, and the Parker House of Savannah, owe much of their reputation to his management. Under the new regime we have no doubt the "Windsor" will soon be filled to overflowing.







A Song of Peace.

BY MRS. M. M. C. BUTTS.

Welcome, bright Christmas day,  
When all the nations' round  
Shall clasp their hands from shore to shore  
And speed the joyful sound!  
Then all the green clad isles,  
And all the tropic vales  
Shall echo back the glad refrain:  
"Sweet peace at last prevails!"  
'Tis coming slow, but sure,  
The peaceful era bright;  
Oh, Christmas bells, ring in the day  
Of peace, and joy and light!  
We will not hang our harps  
Upon the willow spray,  
But gird our peaceful armor on,  
And seek the promised day.  
Hail, blessed Prince of Peace,  
Hail, angels pure and bright,  
Inspire our hearts to love and praise  
On this fair Christmas night.

Nature Essentially Unknowable.

The more we endeavor to solve the problem of existence, to trace to their ultimate inception, (if such there may have been) the elements from which the universe was built—to grasp the causes through which creation has been wrought out to its present degree of unfolding, or to comprehend the essential nature of matter, and of those forces through which the universe has been endowed with life—the farther we extend our search in this direction, the more conscious do we become, that there are things in nature, which are too deep and too mighty for finite understandings to comprehend; and in our search after ultimate truth, we find, that at least the human mind falls back powerless, stunned with an overwhelming sense of its inability to fully fathom the Infinite, or to grasp the ultimate, in its attempted analysis of creation or its elements. All the knowledge we possess, has been gathered from our observations of these changes which have been wrought through the application of force to matter, as it is constantly taking place around us. Man has noted down a few of these observations, and has deduced therefrom a seeming knowledge of the laws which appear to underlie such changes, and these accumulated observations and deductions he has dignified by the name of the sciences, or that which he conceives that he knows. But back of all these lies the great unknown, that inscrutable mystery of mysteries—viz., the origin of matter and of force and what it is that constitutes their ultimate and essential nature. What are they? Whence came they? And whither are they tending? We behold the universe as one vast thing of life, linked together in all its parts by those mighty forces, which vivify, and make it in all its fractions, one complete and harmonious whole; and yet we cannot comprehend it. We can neither completely unravel the history of its birth, if any such there were, nor can we fathom its destiny. This much, however, we do know; that amid all its mutations, progress is continually being made, and that matter and force, the material and the spiritual, are constantly advancing and attaining to higher powers, and being wrought out into those more unfolded possibilities which have through all past time held buried in the bosom of nature. And from our observations of the past, we have every reason to believe that the same process of unfolding, development, and growth will be continued throughout the future also. Farther than this we cannot go in our attempts to unravel the mystery of existence, or solve the problem of our own, or the infinite ocean of worlds which surrounds us. And although we must rest satisfied with our present capabilities for acquiring knowledge, we have nevertheless the glorious assurance, that ultimate progress is the destiny of every soul which has grown up during the infinite past, from the simpler expressions of life below, and which in the time to come will be wrought out, as we believe, with powers and capabilities, as much in advance of what we at present possess, as the human mind now exceeds those elementary manifestations of power which we recognize in the field of the physical force below us.

Mystery! Shrouded in mystery.  
Nature throughout is a riddle unsolved,  
How little we know of all its past history;  
What will its future be? This is a mystery:  
What was it fashioned from—how 'twas evolved.  
Limitless! Nature is limitless.  
Boundless is space with its ether-bathed seas,  
Flaming and line never sounded its deep abyss,  
Never has telescope pierced its depthsathomless;  
Endlessly upward, and outward it runs.  
Infinite Nature is infinite.  
Morning never dawned on its unending day;  
Time was not born out of chaotic night,  
But his shuttle has ever speeding its flight,  
Endless duration, extending each way.  
Mutable! Nothing is permanent.  
Backward and forward the elements swing,  
From nebulous matter, to stars in the firmament,  
Backward again to each primitive element,  
This is the song they eternally sing.  
Onward, and upward, eternally.  
This is the law that is stamped, upon mind,  
Matter is simply the loom that is weaving,  
Soul from the forces, low down, it is leaving;  
Lifting it upward to things more refined.

Detroit, Michigan.

MR. DAVIS COURTS CRITICISM.

A Noble and Characteristic Letter.

To the Editor of the RELIGIO-PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNAL:  
I am deeply thankful that you were moved to write me for an expression relative to the proposed criticisms by Professor Wm. Denton, upon the geological parts of "Nature's Divine Revelations." For this affords me an opportunity to say that, having several years ago incidentally heard that Brother Denton had found important errors in that large volume, I immediately wrote to him, urging him to prepare and publish his discoveries and criticisms, assuring him, in all candor, that I for one, would thank him most sincerely. He will recall the fact that I urged him to delay not, because we do not want to be loaded with errors and contradictions in any of our books. This position is the only true stand for Spiritualists, Harmonial Philosophers, and Free Religionists generally. And if Brother Denton or any other equally candid, honest, and competent friend, of truth and progress, can aid the cause of scientific and philosophical truth by showing the mistakes and clairvoyance and mediumship, I for one will

hold up his or her hands and bid them a hearty God speed in the timely and much needed effort. Brother Denton answered me at the time (some years ago) that he was not then at liberty to take up the critical labor. But now I hope he is ready, and it is my special desire that you will give him all the space and all the freedom which he and the subject require.

Christmas.

BY HENRY T. CHILD, M. D.

In the beauty of the Illies, Christ was born.  
The day of the birth of a perfect man! Though the councils have fixed the one we observe, it is only the ideal, the reality has not come in its fullness yet, but it is on the way, and it will come.  
Let us glance at the great work which the Creator has been doing during millions of years in fashioning this beautiful world on which we live, and bringing it up to its present state of perfection.  
Let us go back to the period when it was a mass of liquid fire, split off from its parent sun, and like a rebellious child, rolling in wild confusion, its chaotic condition tended by tremendous earthquakes, and volcanoes belching forth their mad fires, and all the elements rushing in rapid currents, what a turbulent child it was! How it must have disturbed the peace of the whole family of worlds! But the power of the Creator was there at work by laws fixed and immutable, fashioning and forming it for a far higher destiny than its present condition, for our world is in its infancy yet, but a baby world, a big unruly boy, hard to control or understand. But then as now, it was on its way to a grander condition than our feeble imaginations can conceive of. We need not dwell upon the wild freaks of this child of the Infinite, but pass on to the time when the Creator summoned to his aid the teeming world of life, those wonderful and beautiful teachers that have played so important a part in taming this unruly child and bringing it into harmony, and clothing it with beautiful verdure and waving forests, and crowned its mountain peaks with the glories of heaven, and made its valleys a habitation for man. After millions of years' the time came when the Creator needed more efficient aid, and he said, in the figurative language of the Orient: "Let us make man in our image." The mission of man was that of a co-operator with the Creator in the work so auspiciously begun, the earth had become in some sense a garden, but a very rude one. The first men who came upon it were also very rude, and very low in the scale of being. We have no doubt they fell very often, for it is the nature of all children to fall, and this is one of the means appointed to strengthen and develop them; every fall was an upward step, and so man in all ages of the world since he came upon it, has been continually falling, not to lower, but to higher conditions. Man has always been growing stronger and wiser and the earth has grown more rapidly into order and discipline since he came to the help of the Lord against the mighty. We may imagine that in those early days, as in our own time, after the most terrific and violent storms, which seemed as if they would have destroyed everything, all nature would smile in the most beneficent and quiet manner, as if nothing had happened, showing that these great convulsions are a part of the grand work of development. Man's work everywhere is to co-operate with the Creator in the development of earth to its highest conditions. Living as the primitive race did, naked and in rude caves or huts, they were still doing their work, but as time rolled on they began to build houses and afterwards cities, very crude and imperfect at first, but the types of better things to come. A city is a symbol of man as an individual, and of his condition. It presents all the elements of human character, and it represents a condition in which these elements are most rapidly and successfully developed, and when man has learned his true mission, and when every day shall be a Christmas, and more perfect men shall be born than have ever yet walked the earth,—then will model cities of perfection and beauty be built. The older cities were types of men in their crude and barbarous conditions; there were walled cities, and strongly fortified cities, and there were Babels many. How many men are there to-day, who live in Babel all the time? Their language is confused, no one faculty knows the language of another; still man has built many better cities than Babel, for he has an ideal of a true city within himself, though his conditions and surroundings have not enabled him to work it out. Our modern cities with all their wonderful improvements, are but a prophecy of that perfect city that is yet to be built; not as at present, with magnificent and pinnacled palaces, and grand and costly churches, rearing their tall spires, in heathenish custom to ward's a supposed heaven, and attempting to attract the attention of an imaginary Deity, while beneath their shadow are the hovels of squalid poverty, festering with disease and crime.

The model city, like the model man, who is to be, will retain all that is good and useful of the present, and will add thereto more than has yet been conceived by man, to render it a perfect home of peace and happiness, adapted to the highest and best development of individuals, and of the race. In the figurative language of ancient writers, its "walls shall be salvation, and its gates praise;" and "not one of its inhabitants can ever say I am sick." All shall be well, and their lives shall be devoted, in the beauty of holiness, to the unfolding of their own natures, and those of their fellow-beings. That selfishness, which now crushes the weak and over-rides the poor, will not be known in those cities which are modeled after the perfect man in everything, for as man receives and carries out revelations of the Divine, the desert shall blossom as the rose, and every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain shall be brought so low as to make perfect harmony, in which man's nature will be developed, and out of the book of his own nature man will draw the lessons of his outer life, and co-operating more fully with the Creator there will be a sublime unfolding of nature everywhere, and under his control and direction the elements and forces will come to be subservient to him, and will minister most abundantly to his comfort and happiness. The long desired millennium, or heaven on earth, will be found where alone it ever can be found, in the peaceful and harmonious development of man, as a physical, and intellectual and spiritual being. May the time soon come to us as individuals, and as a race when every day shall indeed be a Christmas day in which perfect men and women are born physically and spiritually, because the conditions that surround them are so far unfolded that these results must ensue. Then will the vision of the poet be realized:

"All things grew harmonious; it seemed to me  
No form but had its spirit; vale and grove  
And mountains sang; that stream of melody  
Woke in my beating heart a heavenly love,  
And gave me wings of light to soar above.

Our earth had bloomed into its golden age;  
The soul had won its birthright, Nature brings  
Her tribute to the mad; here wisest Sage  
Bears rule, and noble hearts are accepted kings  
Here Genius clothes the spirit with bright wings;  
And they are priests whose lips divine are burning  
With Foesy, fed from thought's living springs,  
And so they feed with Truth each spirit yearning  
And lead us to our God, forevermore returning."

The Coming Republic.

BY C. O. POOLE.

"And then aside the dust cloud rolled  
The Water seemed the builder too  
Uprising from the ruined old  
I saw the new.  
Take heart!—the Water builds again—  
A charmed life old goodness hath;  
The tares may perish, but the grain,  
Is not for death."

In the Declaration of Independence is found the governing principles of a republic for humanity, and the progressive intelligence and love of equal rights of our people, are, ere long, to give these immortal declarations form, life and practicability in a glorious constitutional structure of great beauty. The vestible, or "Bill of Rights," will be that land, air, light, water, electricity, magnetism and spirituality, are and shall be without price, inheritable and accessible by all men and women, and that the chief end of government is to prevent the sagacious, the grasping and the selfish from invading natural rights and oppressing the weak and helpless.  
The foundation or organic law of this freeman's temple, will be to aid and carry into practical effect equality, liberty and justice, and especially to promote human progress and harmony. In order to effectually attain these results it will be declared:

That all legislative power is vested in a house of representatives, composed of one from every organized county in the United States:  
That the executive power, without veto, is vested in a president, elected directly by the people for the term of five years, and in case of vacancy the speaker of the house of representatives to act as president for the unexpired term.  
Equality of all citizens before the law, without regard to religion, color or sex, and compulsory voting by every man and woman.  
Labor or occupation compulsory for all under sixty years of age, and also compulsory education of children.  
All officers, elective; no salaries to exceed \$3,000 per year, and no office filled by the same incumbent for more than one term.  
All railroads and telegraph lines over ten miles in length, to be owned and managed by the people.  
All private corporations to become co-operative associations, with the stock thereof only held by the workers therein.  
The general government to have exclusive power over marriage and divorce.  
No person (or man and wife) to own but one farm not exceeding one hundred acres, or but one city or village lot for a dwelling, and but one lot for business, and all real estate forever exempt from taxes, liens and incumbrances.  
Alienation by devise or will, abolished, and only lineal descendants to inherit, and in case of failure of such heirs, property to escheat to the State.  
No person allowed to accumulate and hold over fifty thousand dollars worth of personal property.  
Gold and silver coin demonetized, and instead absolute paper money issued by the government at the rate of \$50 per capita.  
Every note, bond, mortgage and evidence of debt founded upon a money or property consideration, not payable on demand, or sight, uncollectable at law.  
No interest rate whatever allowed.  
Lawyers, doctors, ministers and professors in colleges, disqualified and debarred from holding office.  
Trading in money, stocks, bonds and personal property, for speculative purposes, prohibited under the severest penalties.  
Husband and wife joint owners of property, and inherit each from the other.  
Revenue raised by poll tax, graduated income tax, export duty on all raw productions, and a tax on all labor-saving implements and machinery.  
No import duties except for protective objects.  
Poverty and riches, ignorance and crime, declared to be evidence of mental imbecility.  
Reformatory and educational farms for curing the imbecile, the avaricious and criminal, to supersede all jails, prisons, poor-houses and charitable institutions.  
The army, navy and West Point Military Academy abolished.  
Life insurance and banking corporations prohibited.  
Fire insurance only permitted by townships, villages and cities, and only on buildings within their respective limits.  
U. S. postal certificates without interest to supersede savings banks.  
The capital of the new republic either in the State of Illinois or Missouri.  
New York, Dec., 1878.

Christmas Day in Here!

The day of kindly greetings, of joyous good will and humane sympathy, good angels bless the festival!  
Not only does the Episcopalian grow more genial, and the Presbyterian's face glows with heightened grace, and Methodists and Baptists, Unitarians, Quakers and Free Religionists forget the "fens," and meet and greet with paternal warmth. The sold and frank old infidel lets hereby alone and clasps the good hand of his orthodox neighbor with a tender yet hearty grip. The Spiritualist must fall into line, and keep Christmas as the holiday of good will. This may be the dawn of a time when not one but all the days of the year shall be so kept. Heaven speed that time!  
So we lay aside all critical questions of the Virgin Mother, or the exact meaning of the Gospels, in the human and Divine nature of Jesus, and look into each other's eyes for the light and warmth of a love that lifts us all toward the realm of the Divine. We turn toward the joyous aspects of life. We seek to make all others joyful, and say: "A Merry Christmas good friends, one and all!"  
G. B. STRANDBERG.  
Detroit, Michigan.

Spiritualism is in advance of materialism, and must ever lead in the path of progress.

A Thrilling Letter from Mrs. E. L. Saxon, of New Orleans.

From under the shadow of a great dread, quiet restored, and the incentive to action and self-forgetfulness over, I feel like one who had endured a great strain, and a horrible mental and physical lassitude possesses me. Like the Lotus eater, "We rolled to starboard, and we rolled to larboard; we are weary of action—let us rest!"  
Crowding faster and faster comes the scenes, and actors of the three months' tragedy before me. I contemplate the greatness and goodness of the many; of the national forgetfulness of feuds, isms and bitternesses, in the generous struggle of all nationalities in helping us to meet the three grim fiends, Death, Hunger and Nakedness. Of our people here, I am constantly reminded in thinking of them, of Scott's description of the desperate valor of the Scottish troops at Flodden field, when they made their last stand, and fought around their wounded king—  
"Linked in that serled phalanx light,  
Groom fought like squirrel, and squirrel like knight,  
All fearlessly and well!"  
I recall with wonder now the utterly unprecedented panic that possessed our people on the first breaking out of the fever, before its terrible fatality was known. I feel certain that spirit power swayed the blindly-acting people to hasten them away before the quarantine was established, that forced us to remain in the plague-stricken city, else many a gay cavalier, fair young maiden, or joyous child would have added to the harvest of death. So, too, to the spiritualizing and ennobling influences of our open communion, and the positive teachings of the true spirit of religion, is due the great humanitarian spirit shown all over the land in a manner unknown to the world before.  
I begin to believe that the real intention of the Spirit-world is to sap and mire creedal organizations by spiritual facts. The clergy dare not avow these facts, even if known; the laity believe and investigate in secret, and a wise priest or minister condones the fault or is conveniently blind to it, well aware as they must be that their open condemnation was fast exciting reasoners and thinkers from their fold.  
I saw during the epidemic more fully than ever before the effect of religious or creedal teachings, in cobwebbing the mind with fear of death, hell and the judgment. A lovely girl of sixteen, child of devout Catholic parents, died, but previous to her death she was forced to hold in one hand a lighted candle, a crucifix in the other, and repeat the prayers of the church, whilst the devout sisters of charity knelt praying around. Only a few nights after her burial she appeared to both parents, a spirit maiden, to show "grand-pa" was not such a fool as they thought him" in believing in spirit communion. The Catholic says: "Oh, yes, in the church it is all right," but thanks be to God, whose mercy is boundless as earth, not one of his stricken ones pass away; that angels do not minister to them either in or out of the form.  
In the early part of the epidemic there was found in a desolate, lonely room a poor stricken boy; one of the adventurous northern boys, who had come south to seek his fortune, a mother's darling, handsome as a young Greek god. A good and noble woman, a devout Catholic, who had nursed me in the fever of '67, sat with me by his dying bed. He gave me messages to his mother, and begged us to pray for him. I told him of God's goodness and mercy, of his entrance into a better life, of the unseen world, real as this, whilst my good friend prayed to Jesus and the virgin to save his soul. It was a sight to wring a heart of stone, to see him creep close to the edge of his low, poor bed, and beg me to hold his hand hard: "Let me lay my head on your knees; now put your arms over me, and I'll think you are my mother." Then he would mutter the little prayer that millions of children have prayed: "Now I lay me down to sleep," "I'll think I am a baby again, and home with my mother."  
How close our hearts grew to each other, we two women, as we clasped hands and sobbed over the dying boy—both mothers, both many times bereaved, just as this northern mother was now being bereaved. She, my good companion, was an orthodox slave, I free as a bird from all beliefs, yet we were closely united in soul, and were not we ministering angels in the flesh though only two poor, frail women, ministering tenderness and motherly love to a dying, homeless stranger.  
Since firmly convinced of this glorious truth of spirit communion with those we call dead, I had lost no near friend, but soon my time to know, if it was indeed a sustaining knowledge, came. My dear, good husband lay very ill in one room; my son's darling, my little eleven year old girl, was dying in another. I stood where the end was very near, holding her little hand. I had with me two friends, both women, both mediums, both of the purest and most spiritual natures. From early life I have been conscious of some unseen presence, that sometimes touched me. Suddenly I felt the old electric thrill, and the palpable touch upon my waist as of a living arm, a head resting on my shoulder. I did not speak. Suddenly my friend called out from the opposite side of the bed, "Oh, pray don't move; a spirit friend is embracing you, a grey-haired man. He has his arms about you, and bends his head on your shoulder." As if in confirmation of her word, the rape came all over the head-board. We three knelt around our dying flower, with hearts lifted in grateful thanks to the good God "who gives his angels charge concerning men."  
My little one sprung fearlessly to the great unknown; no fear darkened her young soul. There were two families, the one ascended, the other here, and she knew they awaited her, for her life had been passed amid the teachings of spirit communion.

Not three weeks after the death of this little girl, my son, a boy of ten years, was stricken with the deadly scourge. Not five hours after the first attack, when the physician had pronounced it fever, he called me to him, saying, "Mamma, if I die, put that table in this room, and sit here every night with slate and pencil; I can write well enough for you to read; I will get Lisale, and we will come and tell you all we can of where we are; or I will any way, if I can." I begged him not to talk of this, saying he was frightened because his sister had died. "No," he said, "I am not one bit afraid; I have never lied nor stolen. I may get too sick to tell you, and I want to tell you now."  
He called his old favorite, the woman who had been with me since his birth, and consigned to her his pigeons, chickens, and birds, with the calm, cool wisdom of a man forty years old. Does this fully illustrate that death is only rendered terrible by the foolish and false ideas instilled into the youthful mind, in its tender and plastic period? We should teach our children that the benevo-

lence of death is only less beautiful and bountiful than the benevolence of life, all a law and a necessity.  
Dark as seems the future before us, never was life more full of promise to the earnest, watching soul; and ere fifty years shall pass, the visions of to-day will be but the alphabet of a philosophy, beside which all of man's boasted wisdom of the past, will be simple as a school-boy's lesson, and immortality will be a demonstrated fact, instead of a half doubted theory.  
E. L. SAXON.  
New Orleans, La.

Christmas.

BY J. W. SHIFFER.

"'Tis strange to see the humors of those men,  
These great, aspiring spirits, that should be wise."

Christmas is coming! So say a great many of the older, and many more of the younger people. In the minds of both what does "Christmas" signify? A religious sentiment or a joyous, social event or convention? The latter mostly, but whether it be celebrated as a day commemorative of the income of the "man Christ Jesus"—across the water—or of the re-union of families, the principal feeling is, that it is a holiday for pleasant reflections and enjoyments, aside from all theological dry-dust. Because it is understood to be a day for such socially, Parson Wiseman, Elder Longface and Deacon Believe-it-all, for once, at least, throw off their super-sacredness, and clothe themselves with a natural unaffectedness. Men and women, throughout the world, as a rule, with all their professions of tenacious adherence to their different church doctrines, when they get out of their straight-jacket, take a hundred times more pains to sate upon the elements of natural diversion than the dancers of the situation with their neighbors for similar indulgence would warrant, if the fatal consequences of such amusement were really believed to be imminent and sure.  
It is historically disputed whether Christ was born on the 25th of December, or in the spring of the year.

Leaving the first advent, at Christmas time, we come to the second, as expected by the adherents of this dubious doctrine, who in New York recently convened in anticipation of the second coming of the same departed spirit. Rev. Tyng, Jr., whose ambition is equaled only by his attempts to provide opportunities for its gratification, and whose irregularities regarding some of the debts of his fashionable church I might personally speak of with little credit to his profession, was the prime-minister of the occasion. His opinion, as expressed to a New York reporter, was, that some morning we shall wake up and find all the good men of the city and world caught up in the air with the Lord, leaving the cities to be governed by the same civilians, they being among the wicked, and with but few of the pulpits supplied, the ministers being among the good; although we would suppose they would be most wanted just then to prepare the rest of us for a respectable showing in the *desires*.  
Such is the logic and assumption based on disputable Bible construction. And many others of the book-worshipping members of the convention agreed with him. But it was noticed they did not decidedly state the day nor the place; whether the new governor would come and make his headquarters in Jerusalem or New York! This uncertainty is very embarrassing. It might also be well to know, if he dropped upon New York, whether by any natural means all the rest of the world could see him from the other side of the globe without taking ninety days to make the trip, and whether, when they came, the ninety days could be called the judgment day, and whether there would be standing room only.

Your readers, who do not care to defend the Bible more than they use it, as is the manner of some, will remember it is said that Christ informed his friends that their generation should not pass away before he should come again. But it seems, according to the best acknowledged information, that he was mistaken; and there is little doubt of the mistake of these modern hopefuls. The time has been set, the disciples have assembled on the house-top in their raiments of white, but have come down again disappointed and rheumatic, postponing their reserved seats for another occasion.

Vanderbilt, his millions and his Spiritualism, continue to interest and vex the public and the press. To many folks, the fact that a man should entertain any serious interest or belief in the subject of Spiritualism, is sufficient evidence of his insanity and incapacity for business. In the trial it has been attempted to show that Vanderbilt, because of his confidence in meats, and his declaration that he really had evidence of the truth he acknowledged, was imbecile, and unable to construct a proper will. Reviewing the testimony as given by the several witnesses, Spiritualists and unbelievers, it looks as though the claimed spirit advice that he should place the monumental wealth merely in the care of the son best capable of its preservation and enlargement and best use, instead of dissipating it through a dissipated son, or unbusiness-like daughters, was the soundest counsel he could have received.

Any way the skeptics have another instance of the acceptance of the claims of Spiritualism by one who was esteemed for his practical business sense and success, and that a man need not be incapable of due attention to his earthly interests, in an ordinary or unusual degree, even to the extent of accumulating one hundred millions of dollars, because he makes a confession of faith in Spiritualism, and claims he has been benefited thereby intellectually and financially.

One of the counsel for the breakers, a gentleman well known as a brainy man in politics, has been investigating the subject through the mediumship of a friend of ours, and although commissioned to prove the Commodore's insanity by reason of his faith, tells us that before he gets through with such stunts as he has already received, he himself may be in the same fix; indeed he is as ardent as a new convert. Considering the renewed impetus given to the subject, and the increasing influence it is exerting in the various churches, and in private life especially, may we not look for the time when all prejudice and ecclesiastical humbug, shall be displaced by rational Spiritualism, the former dwindling down to the twentieth echo of an echo.  
87 Leonard street, N. Y., Dec., 1878.

While to the unlearned in spiritual manifestations this method of conveying intelligence may seem mysterious, to those who have been quickened by the spirit there is no mystery.  
Every breath is the result of a condition. Every thought conceived in the human brain is the result of conditions.







Lessons of the Year.

BY M. A. (OXON), LONDON, ENGL.

It is the wisdom of prudent men to endeavor new and again to gather up the lessons that passing events teach them. The end of a year is universally considered to be a time suited for such retrospects, and the present year has been especially fruitful in warnings that we Spiritualists should heed.

Wherever we turn we find that phenomenal Spiritualism has been on its trial. In America you have been convulsed by the discovery that a profitable trade has been made out of mediumship; and you have had much edifying argument pro and con upon the cause.

Now, it ought not to be so difficult as it is to convince people that phenomenal Spiritualism, as it is at present conducted in public circles, is sure to produce a crop of mischief. Nor ought any observant person to fail to see that this mischief is all the more serious because the evil is mingled with the good, because it is so hard to say where the true ends and the false begins.

But one or two things are clear: 1. The results that we have obtained from public Spiritualism heretofore are not encouraging, and point to something wrong in our methods.

2. When we look the question fairly in the face, we find that, in a majority of cases, the cabinet is the great engine of imposture, as well as the great obstacle to careful investigation. I have been present at a great number of cabinet sances, and the general result in my mind is bewilderment and disappointment. No sane observer, without antecedent knowledge on the subject of spirit-intercourse, ought to be expected to accept as proven any fact in phenomenal Spiritualism on the evidence ordinarily furnished by a cabinet sance.

3. Public mediums, of approved power and of hitherto untarnished honesty, are falling victims to this state of things. Let them, and all who value their good name as mediums, insist upon sitting in public only on the most unequivocal conditions. Let them insist on this as due to themselves or as sensitives who are subject to an influence outside of themselves, under which they are not the guides of their own actions.

4. And when all this has been done by way of purification, we shall always be liable to fraud and buffoonery until we purify ourselves; until we try to raise ourselves to the plane of spirit, instead of trying to drag spirit down to the plane of matter. We must recognize ourselves as factors in the manifestations, and study the critical conditions under which we can best come into relations with the progressed spirits, who alone can do us service, and leave us the better for the intercourse.

Who believes now, that if he does what ecclesiastical corporations have dogmatically decided to be wrong, or if he refuses his assent to all their dogmas in a bundle, that his body will be perpetually burned in a material hell?

Who believes now in the curious psalm-singing, which was the believer's heaven, but which most of us would find something very much the reverse of the beatific vision?

Who does not see that these dogmas are dead and inoperative, and that we are in the very throes of the birth of a new and a better era, when a simpler and a sublimer faith will be ours? Who does not trace the genesis of that faith to the new dawning of men to think for themselves? And who does not see that that liberty wherewith we

are made free, is one of the most blessed products of what we loosely call Spiritualism?

Wherefore, as the end of the year's retrospect, may the Xmas bells:

"Ring out the old! Ring in the new; Ring out the false, ring in the true! Ring out a slowly dying cause, And ancient forms of party strife; Ring in the nobler modes of life, With sweeter manners, purer laws. Ring out old shapes of foul disease, Ring out the narrowing lust of gold; Ring out the thousand wars of old, Ring in the thousand years of peace."

DEVOTIONAL SPIRITUALISM.

Being Short Sunday Exercises for Spiritualists.

[NUMBER TWENTY-SEVEN.]

[The thinkers and seers of all the ages have been laid under contribution in this series. Credit will be given in due time; but no distinction is here made between what is original and what is selected or compiled. These articles are prepared by a competent scholar, whose wide research and great attainments well fit him for the task, and entitle his labors to the highest consideration. It is to be understood that in publishing what appears under the above head we do not thereby, necessarily, endorse it all.—Ed. JOURNAL.]

DISCOURSE.

In Luke's report of the words of Christ we find this saying: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

Such an account of the kingdom of God has more right, even if recorded only once, to pass with us for Christ's own view of the essentials of "salvation," than the common accounts, even if repeated twenty times; for it was manifestly quite foreign to the disciples' own notions, and they could never have invented it. The more the meaning of the passage is sought, the more profound and rational appears the truth which it expresses. It is in entire harmony with all those notions of "salvation" which modern Spiritualism inculcates.

The soul of man has two garments, an inner and an outer one. The latter, or the physical, may be reared and destroyed. The former, or spiritual body, in which all life, thought, feeling really abide, is that through which the spirit expresses itself in the next stage of being. The co-existence of these two bodies during our earth-life, and their separation at death, is the central truth about which a rational psychology must revolve. It is, moreover, the key to the relation between mind and matter.

The existence of this wonderful duality of universes; of an invisible and a visible world blended together by corresponding forms; of a spiritual body and a natural body co-existing,—is recognized by all great poets in their most exalted states, and runs in threads of beauty and truth, here and there, through the songs of all nations. The contemporary philosophy of Germany, so far as it is not Sadducean, adopts this explanation of a spiritual body; as the writings of Schubert, Ulrich, Lütze, Immanuel Hermann Fichte, Professor Schöberlein, Julius Muller, and others, abundantly show. Even the so-called evangelical theology of America is beginning to arouse itself to a recognition of the great truth, and we now rarely hear from its pulpits the old Pagan notion of a sleep of the soul till a "day of judgment," at the consummation of the ages. Spiritualism is fast infusing into all theologies its dominant and strictly Scriptural idea of the spiritual body.

Even the Catholics begin to speak out. Mr. J. C. Earle (London, 1876), a Catholic writer, says: "The belief in the immortality of the soul is closely bound up with that of the spiritual body; for it is impossible to believe in the separate existence of the soul without a form and an organism. The soul can no more exist after death than it could before death without a medium through which it may receive and communicate impressions.

Admitting the spirit-body and Science tell us that the fact of its being invisible to our coarse external senses, is no evidence whatever of its non-existence—the force of Christ's saying, "The kingdom of God is within you," becomes apparent; for we see that a man may thus carry with him the everlasting register, or meter, of his own thoughts, acts, and emotions. Thus every man's heaven or hell is the product of his own interior love or thought, influenced, or induced, it may be, by external causes. His world is beautiful or hideous, according to the good or evil woven into his own nature; and it becomes what it is, simply by the continued operation of the laws under which he exists; the laws of thought and of appropriation.

Not by any immediate grace of God, arbitrary and partial, but by steady organic changes in the spiritual substance of their own souls, do the proud, the covetous, the sensual become humble, liberal, and pure. The evil and false things in us are removed, just as the old material of our natural bodies is slowly eliminated and quietly replaced by new tissues and organs.

How far a man may be responsible for his will—how far hereditary causes, early environments, taints of blood, accidents of obscure disease, and sensitiveness to influences from the Spirit-world, may affect and shape, that will, we cannot say. That is one of the mysteries for higher intelligence to solve. We have only to face the unavoidable fact: a man's heaven or hell is what his own will, his own affections, whether spontaneous or appropriated, and concurrent circumstances of birth, education, and accepted influences, have made it. We may be sure, that so far as he is irresponsible, divine justice will make amends for all that may seem at variance with it in the individual's lot; and as we advance in receptiveness to divine light, all seeming discord will be recognized as "harmony, not understood."

"There will come a day," says Immanuel Kant, (1724—1804), "when it will be demonstrated that the human soul throughout its terrestrial existence, lives in a communion, actual and indissoluble, with the immaterial nature of the world of spirits; that this world acts upon our own, through influences and impressions, of which man has no consciousness to-day, but which he will recognize at some future time."

Yes, the great philosopher is right; and these influences and these impressions we may court and appropriate; and the fault may be largely our own if we do not court the pure, the good, and the true. The day predicted by Kant seems to be fast drawing near. Immortality, and inter-communion with the Spirit-world, is already, to thousands of competent investigators, a scientific fact.

And now let us pause, if we can, just all that is actually best in this life, and in the next, is thought. Is there anything of real value in the end but thinking? Even in good feelings, what is the core and the central life? Is it not the good thought that is in them? There is no feeling worthy of the name (holding the name of the fact, for example, is not worthy of the name), but is as dew around an idea; and it is this idea which pervades and gives it all its reality and life.

We are sent here, then, to think—that is admitted. But what are we sent to think? Why, what but that which is—and that is infinite. Our business here, then, is to think the infinite; to find out divine thoughts. "Impossible vain!" a certain class of dogmatists will say. But where is the difficulty if the instrument with which you approach the infinite—thought—be itself infinite? It is not thought to thought. To study all created things and their author is, then, the immortal destiny of man. Let him not be slow to begin the work even here. And let his thoughts be good thoughts; his influences, good influences.

RECITATIONS.

God liveth ever! Wherefore, soul, despair thou never! Our God is good. In every place His love is known, His help is found; His mighty arm, and tender grace Bring good from ills that hem us round. In thy sorrows' swelling flood Own His hand who seeks thy good; Soul, forget not in thy pains, God o'er all forever reigns.

God liveth ever! O my soul, despair thou never! Scarcely canst thou bear thy cross? Then fly To Him where only rest is sweet; Thy God is great, His mercy nigh, His strength upholds the tottering feet. Trust Him, for His grace is sure, Ever doth His truth endure; Soul, forget not in thy pains, God o'er all forever reigns.

IT SHALL BE WELL.

If thou shalt be in heart a child, In giving, tender, meek and mild, Thought with light stains of earth defiled, Oh, soul, it shall be well.

It shall be well with thee indeed, What'er thy race, thy tongue, thy creed, Thou shalt not lose thy fitting meed; It shall be surely well.

Not where, nor when, nor how, we know, Nor by what stages thou shalt grow; We may but whisper faint and low, It shall be surely well.

It shall be well with thee, oh, soul, Though the heavens whirl like a scroll, Though sun and moon forget to roll, Oh, soul, it shall be well.

INVOCATION.

Make our duties plain before us, O ever-present spirit! Let us learn that to live a true, a good, a beneficent life, is the one thing needful in Thy eyes. Help us to think, and to think aright.

We know, that our speculative opinions may drift and vary; our fleeting emotions may kindle and subside; but if Thy law of right be felt and obeyed, we cannot stray far from thee; for that law is thy representative in the soul. All belief in Thy personal nature or in our own personal hereafter may vanish from the outward understanding; but from Thy law of right in the conscience—from the sense that meanness is meanness, and impurity defilement, and injustice wickedness, and the absence of love, inharmonious and defect—we cannot escape; and so we cannot shut out Thee, God, from our souls.

Establish us, O Spirit, in that divine law which converts the soul, and makes it a joy to do thy will. Keep us from presumptuous sins, from vain and evil thoughts; and cleanse Thou us from secret faults. Amen!

HYMN.

Shine forth, eternal source of light, And make thy glories known; Fill our enlarged, adoring sight With lustre all thy own.

To know the author of our frame Is our sublimest skill; True science is to read Thy name, True life to obey Thy will.

For this I long, for this I pray, And following on pursue; Till visions of eternal day, Fix and complete the view.

BENEDICTION.

The peace of God, which passeth understanding; the light of God, which is true wisdom; and the love of God, which is reciprocity and highest life, be with us and abide with us all, here and hereafter, now and forevermore. Amen!

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