

# CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALIST

"EVERY PLANT WHICH MY HEAVENLY FATHER HATH NOT PLANTED SHALL BE ROOTED UP."

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## MIRACLES AND SCIENCE.\*

The following article forms Chapter fourth of a work lately published in London, with the above heading. The avowed intention of the author is to show that Religion and Christianity are capable of being reduced to exact analysis and positive knowledge, in order to effect the Atheistical objections of M. Comte and his sympathizers.

By the assumptions of M. Comte, all religions are associated with the infancy and ignorance of the race, and thus far have had place among the social and moral forces of civilization, only because of the imperfect methods of science and philosophy, and the consequent tardy progress of the race.

Those who may read the little work of "MIRACLES AND SCIENCE," will find there is another view to be taken of the issue, which the author presents in a calm spirit and a candid manner.

In publishing this chapter, we wish the reader to observe the conclusions of the author, for if we are not much mistaken, they reflect in a good degree the calm and Catholic Spirit that enters into all discussions among the cultivated and intelligent in Europe on theological subjects.

The entire absence of everything like *cant* and *Phariseism*, will go far towards winning the ready assent of the reader to the general conclusions, and prove suggestive we doubt not to the cautious reader.

An obvious lesson is taught in its method and spirit, for while it comes from monarchical Europe, its liberal and candid philosophy must put to the blush much of the theology and popular ethics of republican America.

In this, however, we are again reminded that "he is free whom the truth makes free, and all are slaves beside," so that it makes but little difference in fact to the pure and true Spirit, whether it is for all to seek the truth, the beautiful and good. We hope, however, that the influence of the article may be such as will tend to soften the severity of criticism, and suggest to the controversialist the need and necessity of a constructive philosophy, be he in or out of the Church.

It is time, surely, that SCIENCE and RELIGION were made acquainted, and brought into friendly and harmonious relations, since the reckless declamations of the Schools on either side, have failed in producing better fruit than clamorous discord and sectarian tumult.—Ed. Chr. Scr.

I begin with that of him who, after hearing all that I or others abler than I can say in defence of the New Testament miracles, may reply that his reasoning seems satisfactory as long as he keeps his merely reasoning attitude; but that directly he asks himself, "But did the thing actually happen after all," the old difficulty—the "incurable skepticism" the mere name of which Gibbon thought answer enough for the best authenticated miracle, comes back with all its first force. I confess that I myself feel the difficulty, the doubt returning as often as it is repulsed, as painfully as any man can do; and while I admit for some individuals the expediency as well as the possibility of keeping it more or less out of sight by the activities of practical life (according to the advice which the old clergyman gave to the young one who had doubts about the Trinity, that he should take a large parish,) I agree that for others not this but the deliberate facing the doubts is at once the only possible, and the only honest, course: and that to him who does thus face them, they come with a force which could not have been felt by our fathers, whose minds were not trained to our clear recognition of the universal and invariable laws of Nature. As often as we attempt to bring our facts, or rather our fact-recognizing power, and our logic together we find ourselves on the brink of a gulf—of a *sublimis in alto* genus—which we cannot leap as they could. Yet if we look again, we shall see that if modern science has increased the difficulty it has also supplied a better aid than the old unscientific temper for meeting it.

Some positive philosophers, as M. Humboldt and M. Comte, peremptorily decline to inquire into the question of *Origins*, as being among the mysteries which natural science, the science of sequences, cannot reach. A plain man might ask whether, if this be so, positive philosophy is not using the phrase "all the facts" in a merely technical and professional sense, which signifies "certain classes of facts to the exclusion of others;" but happily we need not quarrel with science on this ground. For Sir Charles Lyell, who stands in the first rank of physical science, while he occupies no ordinary position as a social philosopher and a man of letters, tells us that to Geology these topics, of the origin of beings and the possibility of so astonishing a phenomenon as that of new species called into being from time to time, do strictly appertain; and he then proceeds to investigate in the ordinary scientific method this question which, I need hardly observe, demands an intellectual capacity and attitude exactly analogous to that which is required of him who proposes to himself the inquiry whether the miracles of our Lord stand in any real and conceivable relation with the ordinary laws of Nature.

Niebuhr's method again was strictly scientific, though like every one else he sometimes mistook notions for facts in his application of it; and he not only considered the origin of civilization a subject of human interest, but held that it was best to be explained by "some immediate inspiration."

\* From a recent work by Edward Strachey, author of "Hebrew Politics in the times of Sargon and Sennacherib." London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans. 1854.  
† Principles of Geology, 9th edition, page 704.

and instruction in the domestic and social arts.\*—And Dr. Pritchard, who maintains the unity while Niebuhr held the original diversity of mankind, points out the belief of so many races in all parts of the world, that civilization had been brought to each of them by some foreign conqueror or visitor, and (if I rightly understand his argument) indicates the Hebrew people and the revelation they had received from God as the first source of the civilization thus widely spread.†

But above all I must appeal once more to the reader's own consciousness and observation of the facts of his human, as distinct from his animal, existence. Birth and Death, not of the animal produced or annihilated under the laws of animal life but of the immortal Spirit entering into or passing out of this world, are true miracles to him who has an eye to see them, though they happen daily and hourly before us. Nor does the growth of that new life of relations between man and wife, or parent and child, from which the animal bond is as distinct as the shadow from its substance, deserve the name of miracle much less. I do not pretend to argue with him to whom none of these facts are known: but I confidently appeal to him who does know them whether they do not afford a sufficient analogy with the miracles recorded as the acts of One who is God as well as man, to enable him to pause before he takes for granted with Gibbon that the skeptical difficulty which he feels in even admitting their possibility or conceivable ness is of itself a conclusive argument.

And then, though I grant nay protest that the more honest course for the man who has doubts is to face them, I would beg the reader to consider well whether what is honest for him or for me is therefore of necessity good in itself? Is not skepticism, curable or incurable, a curable or incurable disease of the mind, and to be treated accordingly? It may have been no merit to our fathers that they did not feel our doubts, may it may be true that our doubts are but the inheritance of their overconfidence, as the hard-drinking fox-hunter may transmit to his son the consumption which never touched himself: it may be that the "practical man of our own day is not only grossly credulous, but the cause, through reaction, of skepticism in others: but let us look at the facts, not at the moral merits, and then say whether skepticism is in itself a more manly and healthy state of mind than credulity. Skepticism enables us to see several sides of a matter where "practical men" see only one, to be eclectics where they are partisans, and to look down on their attacks and defences of what we discern to be one object, with the calmness of Epicurean gods: but it gives us this knowledge only in paralyzing at least our practical powers of duty, and often our moral sense too.—Whether in politics or in trade, in social or in domestic life, the man who suspects everything and everybody inevitably exhibits this paralysis, and incapacity for healthy action, unless he substitutes the no less diseased energy of selfishness. The skeptic may be a Hamlet—"in apprehension how like a god;" or a Pessimist, too flabby for a boy and too shallow for a man; but the disease shows itself the same in both. And lastly, in religion, skepticism not only gives us a metaphysical Theism, the idea of the Infinite in humanity or the worship of the Goddess Humanity, instead of Jesus Christ; but it is the same Spirit in disguise which leads such honest and holy men as we all know to advocate the lies and filth of working popery; to deprive their brethren of education or of permission to preach the Gospel unless they will subscribe thirty-nine written, or other unwritten, Articles to which not one in ten thousand of the impostors attaches any distinct meaning but which he hopes may bolster up a faith which his heart tells him is slipping from his grasp; or to entertain ingenious questions as to the limits within which a man may preach doctrines which he does not, or conceal those which he does, believe without becoming a hypocrite first to others and then to himself. Let me ask him to whom the Bible and Christ are still realities, whether when he has lost these his state of mind will not be certainly, utterly, diseased—however logical, however honest, may have been each successive step of his course? I repeat that such a course may be honest; but its honesty will not make it the less honest in itself. I respect, and am not afraid to acknowledge as God's servants and martyrs, the men who have taken it because they felt it was honest and truthful so to do: but I will not therefore be induced either by logical consistency, or even by brotherly sympathy, to admit that the course itself is not wrong, and does not betoken an unhealthy state of mind. Their writings give ample evidence that if they start with a positive love of truth, it habitually degenerates into a negative and by no means critical hostility to what they take for error, and a hardly less negative substitution of some hypothetical opinion of what may be, for the actual knowledge of what is; and if they cannot see, and hold it for mere uncharitable bigotry in us to see, this difference between positive and negative, criticism and prejudice, opinion and fact, in Spiritual things, I must consider their case as one of intellectual weakness at least a tendency to moral defect and disease. Such men—for I do not speak of those who disbelieve

because they are not in earnest, or because belief would demand of them a new moral life,—are the victims of our superstitious orthodoxy: by misguidance in youth and persecution in manhood we have driven them on, step by step, till they have made and it was apparently their duty to make those fearful experiments on themselves which have thereby, and perhaps only thereby, become unnecessary for those who can learn truth by their errors.

But what is the remedy for this disease of skepticism? For the individual there may be, perhaps can be, no complete cure within the limits of his short life on earth; because he is a member of a society which has an indefinitely prolonged and progressive existence, and of the defects and diseases of which at any given moment he must bear his share, whether he be actively or only passively cooperating with the other members in working out the remedies and the healthy growth in which also he shares with them. Healthy action is indeed more or less possible to the mind, though it may not be able entirely to shake off its skepticism thereby, may though it should only maintain instead of advancing its position. But what is healthy mental action in each man, each must decide for himself from the indications of his own experience. Let him seek for the truth with as thorough disregard of consequences as Strauss himself can boast: let his conviction, that to him the question is not one of criticism but of life and death, impart all his earnestness, but no bias, to his search: but let him not forget that the failure of religious, prayerful, earnestness in such inquiry is a certain indication that diseased is superseding healthy action of the mind. For a man may begin thus earnestly, yet presently find that his faith in Christ and the Bible is giving way before his inquiries; and if he does so, he must look to the practical results. This faith is not an opinion formed by logical inference and comparison of probabilities, and which therefore must stand or fall as these may do, but trust in a Person and in that Person's communications of His will,—a fact, and not an opinion at all; and therefore any investigations which the individual finds hostile to his clear recognition of what he has already ascertained to be a fact, and a fact of vital importance, on grounds which transcend and are independent of logic, are certainly unhealthy for him, and can only lead him to error. He must admit that this is so only to him individually, and because of the antecedent weakness or other deficiencies of his mind; for neither logic nor criticism nor any other just operation of the intellect can really contradict facts, though many facts are beyond or beside their reach: but if a man sees clearly that by pursuing a certain line of investigation he shall arrive now at new truth, but merely at the denial of a truth he has already ascertained, he will show less love of truth than aberration of conscience if he persists in that investigation. Truthfulness no more requires a man to destroy his faith unless he can prove its reality by logic than charity requires him to beggar himself and his wife and children in order to relieve the poor. In this as in every other human activity there must be a prudent consideration of what the limitations and deficiencies of human powers make possible to the individual.—Beyond these limits he must be passive. Since skepticism is a disease he must in great part meet it by patient endurance while he abstains from all useless struggles to work himself into a more healthy state of mind, and instead carefully husband such weak vital energies as still remain to him, and so waits quietly—as men wait in chronic diseases of the body—if perhaps an insensible action from within, working day and night he knows not how, may effect a cure from within where all external doctorings have proved worse than useless. And if the cure does not come in this way either—as it does not always—still patience through faith in Christ is the ultimate rule: the end may not be in this world, yet "the vision is for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie; though it tarry wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

But as regards the Church, the body of believers, into which this skepticism is eating in every direction, the case presents other aspects, and suggests other arguments and objections, though such have been in some degree anticipated in speaking of the individual.

Man is Spiritually as well as naturally a twofold being, personal and social: he is a member of Christ and child of God, and also a member of the Church of Christ and Family of God; and therefore he has in things Spiritual, as in things natural, a twofold means of learning truth. A man's stock of the knowledge and wisdom which relates to this life would be very poor if it were only what he had collected for himself, and not the accumulations of his race in all times and places; and on the other hand he is unable to make any worthy use of this heritage except so far as the cultivation of his own mind qualifies him for the vital assimilation and reproduction, and not merely the retentive possession or clever distribution, of these fruits of the universal human mind. And so it is with Spiritual wisdom, which must be derived at once from the Christian's personal knowledge of God and of the mind of God, and from that accumulated and accumulating knowledge which is the common possession of the whole Church. But Truth is Truth before and above the Church: the faith of a Christian man is on the one hand personal trust in a divine and present Lord, with an affectionate reliance on his truth before we understand it; and on the other an actual apprehension by our intellectual faculties that this truth is real, and no less satisfying to our reason than to our heart; and

hence it follows that all such notions as that "we must obey the Church though it should command us to believe that black is white" fall to the ground of themselves. They have simply no meaning when applied to the belief of Truth, for they stand in no relation to their subject matter, the fallacy being that an illustration (possibly useful as an illustration) taken from the obedient conduct which a soldier owes his officer, or a citizen his laws, has been turned into an argument which overlooks the difference in kind between conduct and faith. Nor will any enlargement of the definition of the Church (which indeed I use in its widest and therefore properest sense of the whole body which holds Christ as its head) affect this subordination of the Church and its authority to that which is true in itself. But though no real seeker for truth will take the *dicta* of the Church as a substitute for it, he will (as I have already said) be aware that he will find little truth if he has not the wisdom of the whole body to help his own; and therefore he will always gladly listen to the teachings of the Church, and suspend his own judgment till he has fully informed and possessed himself of all that they offer him;—nay, the consciousness of the fallibility of his judgment even when most sustained and enlightened by the Holy Spirit will often cause him to continue that suspension, even when no examination of the particular teaching of the Church convinces him of its soundness.

Yet it is no less true of the Spiritual than of each earthly society, that every new discovery and every new activity originates not with the society, but with some individual member of it who anticipates in her own person the new want, and the necessity for satisfying it, somewhat before it is felt by the body at large. And if a member of the Church find that he is vainly applying to her for help and guidance in any matter, he may be sure that this is the sign that it is his business in however small a degree to help her. For though the Church as a whole has a life of its own, which is indeed the Holy Ghost dwelling in it, yet it is not the less true that each member possesses the same life organically in himself; so that the life of the whole at once sustains and is sustained by the life of all the parts, derived by each directly from Christ himself "from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."\* And therefore the least of us must not forget—he will deny the Spirit of Christ within him if he does not assert—that fallible and actually faulty as his judgment is he is himself directly taught of God, and not merely through the medium of the Church; and that not only has he a voice as a member of the Church in her decisions, but also the power in virtue of God's teaching of himself to add something to the general stock of knowledge; and that his contribution cannot be so small (if he be indeed a Christian and derive his light from Christ) as that the Church can say "we have no need of it." Only we must take heed that we do always remember, and that not by verbal profession but by effective mental discipline, the faulty condition of our minds which have to receive and reflect the divine light, and how inevitably we distort and darken it in the transmission in ways and to an extent of which, from the nature of the case, we cannot be ourselves conscious at the time: so that while the man has a right to believe that he can impart for the general profit any truth which he has had to find for himself because it was not already in the general stock, the wisest man is bound to remember that only by repeated examination and discussion, and the application of the various tests which time and God's providence supply, can the truth be sifted from the errors which will undoubtedly be found mixed up with his ablest views and statements: and that till after this process is completed his are but private opinions and not yet an expression of the Church.

But the chief of these tests, and that for which there is no conceivable substitute, is free discussion. If opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making (as Milton says), discussion is one half the process by which it is made, as the other half is individual examination. Nor can I agree with those who think that there is danger of our shaking the faith of our brethren by the promulgation of our own conclusions from such examination, if they should contradict received opinions. If a man has inquired thoughtfully, earnestly, and in the fear of God, he has inquired also by help of the Spirit of God, and whatever amount of human error there may be mixed up with his conclusions there will certainly be some divine truth also; and the truth is well worth having even at the cost of the errors. The objections and the scoffs of the mere skeptic whose aim is not to discover the truth, but only to attack prejudices and superstitions, or what he deems such, may be injurious to the faith of those who cannot meet his attacks with equal alertness of intellect: but the earnest Christian seeker after truth will not touch the faith though he must the prejudices and superstitions—for we all have these latter though they are often quite other than what the skeptic supposes, or at least have a foundation of reason which he cannot discern. And though I do not dogmatize as to other times and circumstances, I venture to say that in our own time nothing is doing such real injury to the faith of the Church as this dread of disturbing it. The longer we delay to purge away our prejudices and our superstitions by admitting the genial light of truth the more confirmed do they become, till in the end they have to be broken

up by the reckless skepticism which superstition always engenders in the human mind at last, and which when engendered not only destroys its own parent but also—for the time and as far as possible—the truth itself. The Church in England is just entering on the severest conflict in behalf of the Bible which she has yet known: but though she is daily strengthening the moral position of the Bible, by making us feel increasingly that it is a book of life, she shows little sign of any preparation for its intellectual defence beyond a reliance on the prejudices of her numbers in behalf of their accustomed routine of opinions.

But is not this refusal to investigate prejudices for fear of disturbing faith, in accordance with the parable of the Wheat and the Tares? No: not in our day, and in the actual state of the Church.—What the parable means for us, is that neither the Church nor any member of the Church can, without perilling the faith of each and of all, oppose the free growth of the good seed of earnest truth-loving inquiry after Truth. This earnest desire for the truth in all that relates to the Bible, which is showing itself in every direction in spite of all the mistaken though honest efforts of orthodoxy to repress them, is the good seed which He who is the Truth is sowing in men's hearts and making to grow "night and day they know not how:" and though the tares of doubt and skepticism and low mistaken notions of the plans and the power of God do habitually make their appearance along with the true wheat, still our prescribed and plain duty is to suffer the tares for the sake of the wheat, and to leave to the Lord of the harvest to exterminate the former in His own time and way. God offers us new and farther knowledge of Himself, and of His ways and works, on the mysterious condition that this knowledge shall be accompanied by the appearance of errors which only He himself can separate from the truth, and which He will only separate in His own time without any dictation from us: shall we refuse the offer because of the condition? Our faith is indeed weak and tottering enough: no thoughtful man can look into his own heart, or into what may be plainly discerned of the hearts of his neighbors, and not be aware that under the thin crust of our reticent orthodox volcanic fires are slumbering. The men who have gone out from among us openly declaring that honest investigation of received opinions about Christianity has compelled them to abandon it for pure theism, or else that a still severer logic has shown them that not theism but atheism must be their end if they do not take refuge in the infallible authority of Rome—these are but the representatives of an ever-increasing number who are silently yielding themselves to the prospect of a like fate, because they see no help. And so they fall: so any of us may fall at any moment, because we will not trust God to strengthen our weak faith in His own way; because we will maintain it by the pride of an unsympathizing formal orthodoxy instead of by that frank and free discussion of our doubts and perplexities which would itself be a true symbol and earnest of Church communion, and of the presence of Him whose presence makes the Church, than either rituals and dogmas, or traditional interpretation of Scripture. There is a schismatical temper which leads us to deny Church fellowship to men who believe in Christ, because they will not deny Him by the admission that the faith which is His gift is worthless if not supplemented with our rituals and articles: and it is only another manifestation of the same Spirit which excludes those who will not, because the God of truth forbids them, worship at the shrines of a traditional bibliography. And so we excommunicate each other because we will not admit on either side that the light should be set in the candlestick of plain speaking and not under the bushel of orthodox formulas.

Our religious life in relation to the Bible—and without the Bible there can be no religious life long—is all sickly and flabby and stunted for want of free discussion. We keep our Body Politic in so-briety no less than vigor or health by a discussion as free as the air we breathe, and which we permit one-sided or unwise or even bad men to use in their way because so only can the wise and good use it effectively for the common weal. We do this and laugh or grieve at the panic-stricken rulers of the Continent who repress with the eyes and hands of an ever-present police each natural and in itself innocuous expression of thought and feeling. But in religion we liberty-prizing English are very Austrians: in every social meeting, almost in every household, we have some member of a Spiritual police which is ever ready to make a man an offender for a word, and to exert an activity in suspecting evil which is only equalled by its incapacity for apprehending the utterance of truth or reason. And it does its work just in the fashion of its civil counterpart: for if some individual who still retains a more than ordinary loyalty to the orthodox creeds should therefore make an effort to defend them by insisting on their applicability to the new wants of men's minds, him it discovers and denounces and casts out of the synagogue; but the greater number of inquirers our police-system merely (yet how effectively we all know) represses into a mental and Spiritual condition which too often suggests the question whether a rational reformation is still possible, or whether there only remains for us the alternative of a volcanic torrent of atheism or a Byzantine Christianity in which faith and skepticism will be but contending forms of death and corruption. *Solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant.*

But let us only allow ourselves the same liberty in theological as we do in political thought, and we shall find that the good and wise will thus acquire

a power in maintaining the truth to which they as well as we are now strangers. The Germans reverse our habit, and allow in theology the freedom of discussion which they forbid in politics, and with answerable results. Though no help which they can give us will ever be more than a most inadequate substitute for a home-bred theology—since we want men and minds, and those of the English stamp, and not merely ready-made books—yet it is on the Germans that we are up to this time wholly dependent for our defences of the Bible against our own as well as their skeptics: and indeed it is impossible to read the pages of an Olshausen or a Neander and not be sensible how much they and the Churches to which they have ministered did and must profit by the liberty of unlimited discussion; and how they because they "try all things" are able to "hold fast that which is good" with a healthful masculine grasp of which we have hardly a dream.

Since then there is a Body Spiritual as well as a Body Politic, and since the former, which is the Church, has a life—a divine life—proper to itself and from itself diffused into all its members, it is to the invigoration of this life in accordance with God's laws of life that we must mainly look for the cure of skepticism with its painful perplexities and doubts in the individual member. And then it will be seen that this transient evil has been the opportunity for a permanent progress of good.—Nay, he who looks well may perceive even now that the future is full of promise that our faith in Christ shall be—not petrifried into Romanism nor exarist into Pantheism but—established on the ground of positive knowledge as it never has been yet. Our lack of love for truth, and distrust of the power of truth, may prolong the evil of our present miserable division of labor in which one set of men attack the faith in order to eliminate superstitions, and another uphold the superstitions lest the faith should go with them; but the time must come when the true relations of the negative and positive methods of investigation will be recognized by the Church and each member of it who desires to have a reason for the faith that is in him. Then it will be found that we have more than compensation for our lack of that readiness to conceive of miracles which our fathers had because they had not our clear views of the invariable laws of Nature. In as far as their ignorance helped them, it was a poor kind of help which from its nature was certain to break down at last: but when the scientific method of investigation which has dispersed that ignorance as to physical sciences shall have been effectively applied to theology—when our orthodox superstitions and our skeptical theories which are but varieties of the "first notions of the intellect" which Bacon pronounces to be "radically vicious, confused, badly abstracted from things, and needing complete re-examination and revision," shall have been alike subjected to that intellectual discipline which, in theological no less than in physical science, "must purge our sight before we can receive and contemplate, as they are, the lineaments of truth;"—then we shall see clearly that, in the one case as in the other, reason requires and only prejudice could forbid us to accept conclusions which "stand in open and striking contradiction with those of superficial and vulgar observation, and with what appears to every one until he has weighed and understood the proofs to the contrary, the most positive evidence of the senses."\*

\* Quoted from Sir J. Herschel's Astronomy, as are the words from Bacon, by Mr. Grote, in his chapter on Socrates (History of Greece, vol. vii. chap. 68), which I would recommend to the reader as full of instruction as to the difference between the method of positive, scientific, investigation, and those of metaphysical skepticism and unveridical tradition and sentiment.

A TOUCHING INCIDENT.—A Boston correspondent of the Fall River Monitor records an incident which allows us to "thank God and take courage."

In passing down Broomfield Street, we think it was, we met a man in the winter of life, his gray hair falling over his pale features, and with staff in hand, laboring to reach his home. The bad work he made of it led the bystanders to think him intoxicated. He would walk a short distance in a very unsteady manner, then pause and lean upon his staff, a source of merriment to the boys and of laughter to the men, who like the Levites of old, wagged their heads and passed by on the other side. Pausing a moment to look at the old man, we noticed a little girl, (God bless her!) anxiously watching his movements, and evidently desiring to do something to assist him. She might have seen fourteen winters,—was richly dressed, with a pretty face, and an eye full of meaning, expression and soul,—and with books in hand, was probably on her way to school. The little Samaritan did not long remain inactive. Approaching a gentleman, she inquired, with faltering tongue, while a tear was seen on her fair cheek: "Is the old gentleman sick or intoxicated?" "Drunk, I guess," was the heartless reply,—at which, with the soul of a hero, this little angel of mercy approached the old man, and after a moment's conversation, the two were seen wending their way along the street, the little girl supporting the tottering form of him whom the unfeeling crowd had left to his fate.

On inquiry, we learned that the old man was a worthy person, and having gone out on a morning walk, was suddenly overtaken with a sort of blindness, which was the occasion, though unconscious of it himself, of his unsteady gait. He is a temperate man, and sickness subjected him to the jibes and jeers of the multitude, save that noble hearted girl. We tried to learn her name, but were unable to do so. How like an oasis in this desert selfish world such conduct appears. Whoever the girl may be, we say, God bless her!

\* Ephesians, iv. 16.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 1855.

**"THE SPIRITUAL CIRCLE AND ITS MISSION."**

It is a common saying, because a recognized fact "that change makes change," but few comprehend or seek to know the nature of the agents used, or the medium through which the change was effected. The providence of history, however, as well as the mechanism and economy of animate nature is full of Spiritual beauty to the student that seeks for the one, and the philosopher who comprehends the other. Indeed, so conspicuous a feature is it of the wisdom and order of God's government, that the lessons of life in their various and seemingly conflicting modes, give but the same significance, and demonstrate the same truth. Mr. Millman, the famous critic of Gibbon, after a critical survey of history, seems to have a like conclusion in mind, when he wrote, "there is no knowing to how remote a quarter it may be necessary to trace our domestic events, from a country how apparently disconnected, may originate the impulses which give its directions to the whole course of affairs." The apostle under the influence of inspiring faith, was made to see, that through the "fountain of preaching," the plain and simple truth of Him, who was the "resurrection and the life," men could and would be saved from sin and sorrow. These reflections might be multiplied, as sacred and profane history are full of incident to illustrate the thought, and coincident to elaborate the reflection, but when fancy has failed to grasp the detail of events, as they spread out before the inspired vision the panorama of life, in which men and things move and have a being, and reason bows before the majesty and mystery of Nature, faith, and a Spiritual conception of the destiny of things, as well as the "providence of history prompts the confession that "God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to fulfill."

Plain and simple as is the confession, it is nevertheless burdened with wisdom, and would if properly comprehended, inspire the mind with the most profound veneration for the agents God uses in the ministration and mediation of good to the children of men. But men do not see, nor feel the full conscious presence of God, in history, life and daily deed. Hence the need of "line upon line, and precept upon precept," that the Spirit may be quickened, and the mind prepared for the reception of new truth, "as day and to-day uttereth speech, and night unto night addeth knowledge," for the lesson of life is ever unfolding. This in a measure, however, is brought home to us by nearer and more personal relations, for there are few that cannot see in the history of their fatherland, the homes of their "Sires" or the revolutions of the age, indications of a providential guardianship, which for a time has quickened the Spiritual senses and opened the doors and windows of the inner temple, so that inspired rapture has entered into, and mingled with the soul's entranced devotions, making music all the day. Hence history is full of holidays, and the world of holy places, sacred things, inspired men and ennobled women, all baptized in the heart's sunshine of affection, or consecrated by the tender memories that gather round the objects of devotion. Still "change makes change," and providence drapes the figures for the scene of action, so that each heart has its sacred place and cherished mediator, beside which it may have often wept, before whom it may have knelt and prayed, while the storm of life was chastening and subduing the lusts of the flesh. Spiritualism in the fulness of time has come to give new faces to old friends and warm the affections into newness of life by making the Spirit conscious of its own inherent power and beauty. The promise of Jesus to his sorrowing disciples seems to be an incorporated blessing in all after time, for where two or three are gathered together in the name of peace, purity and love, there the harmonizing Spirit of affection and devotion come to speak consolation for the past and hope for the future. Thus the harmonious Circle and the truthful medium are blessed in their mediation and mission, and should be recognized by all true Spiritualists as the fitting and proper instrumentalities of this new dispensation. The Spiritual Circle, *per se*, has all the simplicity that bespeak the presence of that Divine intelligence that shapes our ends, and makes all things minister to good, for it has in its nature the form and quiet of the Quaker's best conceptions, the devotion of the religious meditant, be he Catholic or Protestant, and gives to all that liberty, "where-with Christ had made us free."

This conception of the Spiritual Circle and its mission, is not as yet the recognized idea on the subject; but there are those who, having enjoyed its sweets, know how to appreciate its blessings and speak of its relations. The soul that has been warmed into spiritual life, and made to see new beauties—while looking life and nature in the face—cannot fail, but rejoice in the dispensation of grace, that made it partake of food, to eat of which is to live eternally. To this soul there is no fanaticism in its appeal to facts, for its faith has made it whole; and in the sublimity of its gratitude it proclaims—"I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." And this modern manifestation is to thousands what the Gospel of Jesus was to Paul—"Glad tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people." What wonder then that we seek to propagate this faith and make others partake of its blessings! None!—for the gratitude that wells up in the better nature of the spirit, gives fortitude to the weak and loyalty to the timid, until all are made akin in this new evangel of work and praise.

To propagate this faith a few men united in this city, nearly one year ago, and resolved to support and sustain the public Circle, where all could come and partake of these blessings, without money and without price. At that time great doubt was expressed as to the utility of the undertaking, because there were prophets of evil, who could see in the future only failure and disappointment. But the spirits of good have taken care of their own, and the Circle has been blessed in its mission, for others have followed its example until spiritual communications are alike to be free to all—free as the Spirit of God that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. The Society for the Diffusion of Spiritual Knowledge, organized on the idea of giving spiritual food to all that hungered and thirsted after righteousness—and good to all, and injury to none—has been the fruit of its short and peaceful history. Others (pronounce us useless) in imitating our example, and have come to aid in the good work, in which we wish them God speed, and all the success their spirit friends could desire.

The reader will observe in the following Introduction to "THE PUBLIC CIRCLE," a great, a leading,

a most important point, which merits the highest and most serious consideration of every man and woman now engaged in spreading the cause of Spiritualism.

And in the judgment of many of our society, the establishment and support of Mediums, to afford rare communications, is one, if not the most important practical step to advance the cause. We commend the movement, therefore, of Mr. Conklin and his associates, as well as every other similar enterprise, to the highest consideration and earnest imitation of every philanthropist who would advance the interests of humanity through Spiritual instrumentalities.

This little Periodical owes its origin to the wish of some Spirit-friends of the Medium, J. B. Conklin, to provide means whereby he should be enabled to devote a large portion of his time to Free Public Circles. "We desire," (so runs the communication made through him to the present Editor) "that his course should be approved, and that all Theologians and Priests, and receive the balm that will heal the wounded Spirit, without money and without price. He will be cared for—the great cause of truth will march on with greater rapidity—his own soul will grow in truth; and his mediatorial power be stronger. Think of it! We ask for thy aid—we ask it on behalf of Heaven and human humanity!"

Continuing the subject on a following occasion, it was said: "We desire to see the cause marching onward, and as it marches, carrying in its train the broad banner of 'TRUTH IS FREE!' Men's minds, as they have gradually been unfolded, Theologians and Priests, are naturally becoming skeptical; and they have been looking for something more tangible. They are not satisfied with the opinions and theories of others;—they are no longer content with *accoutrements* of food;—they want the substance. Now we will make an suggestion, which will be advantageous to the Medium, and more of a recompense for the few gratuitous hours which he may give to the poor seeking souls than he is aware of. It is this: We keep a record of facts, precisely as they occur at his table; and at the expiration of each month, have them put in regular form, with a brief comment to each, and may be given by impression to them; and circulated everywhere, at a small compensation, say six cents a number. Men will read, and they will find within their minds a desire for personal investigation; especially when they find that the investigation can be obtained upon the same principle that they can obtain the air they breathe."—*page 1*

**REV. DR. LYMAN BEECHER ON SPIRITUALISM.**

Dr. Beecher, of Boston, in a lecture before the Young People's Christian Association, March 21st, made use of the occasion to strike Liberal Christianity and Spiritualism a blow, with the intention, no doubt, of doing both a serious injury. No doubt can be entertained of the ability of Dr. Beecher to say the word needful for such execution, so that his failure will only awaken suspicions as to the true nature of the controversy and the value of the issue he makes with a progressive theology.

The Tribune of March 26th, gives the following, which for assumption and presumption, may well be called "nallum in parva."

"Dr. Beecher's sermon was on the subject of Eternal Punishment in a Future Life, which he enforced as a fact clearly stated in the Divine Revelations, and the only religious system which could hold the universe together; unless God's punishments are unending, religion goes downward and backward. The doctrine of the future punishment of sinners, and grace and instills love, he designated as an absurdity, opposed to all men know and feel of human nature. Among other classes of Spiritualists, he said, 'I have seen a man who had been in the world of spirits everything save the Father of Spirits—God!'"

Although thousands of volumes have been printed, and millions of sermons preached, to prove "Eternal Punishment," the question is still at issue as to the duration of punishment. The doctrine of eternal punishment we had long since learned to look upon as a species of mental dyspepsia for the two following reasons:—

1st. As happiness is by common consent acknowledged to be "our being's end and aim," it of necessity must be realized in one form or other to meet the demands of life. Insanity and madness comes when the hope of peace is fled, so that the conditions for punishment could not exist. So long as there is hope to cheer the mind, so long punishment, as such, cannot be either total, final, or eternal.

2d. Could it be possible, however, for the mind to actualize to itself such a thing as eternal punishment, the Spirit retaining a consciousness of events, from all we know of human nature and the force of habit in life, we could not conceive of punishment being positive or of a torturous character, since habit is second nature, if not nature herself, in working dress. It is fatal, however, to all arguments got up for the support of an exclusive or isolated heaven or hell, to know that Spirits, good, bad and indifferent, report their own progress, and teach the lesson of discipline and culture rather than punishment and torture. This is the head and front of the Spiritual offending, for which we expect no forgiveness in this age or the next, without theology should repent of its sins. Dr. Beecher has done much to awaken thought, and his family will long be remembered as the friends of progress and reform, but the children of a milder and more tolerant faith will call him blessed for the strict humanity of his labors, rather than for the isolations and exclusions of his theology.

**LECTURES.**

On Sunday morning last, Judge Miller, of Newark, gave an address upon Spiritualism from the Tribune state, at the Stuyvesant Institute. The subject selected by the impressive Spirit, was the *Love Principle of God in History and General Providence*, which was fluently and forcibly expressed. In the afternoon, at the same place, the Hon. Warren Chase gave an address—the subject of which was the *Mission of Spiritualism*, (a report of which will be found in another place in our issue.) The speaker very feelingly pointed out the error of discord, and showed the evil the conduct pursued by the Spiritualists of Boston and New York might do to the cause.

In the evening, the same gentleman lectured to a very numerous audience at Dodworth Hall—Judge Edmonds having requested him to take his place, owing to an indisposition he (the Judge) had experienced the day before. His subject was the *General Aims and Objects of Spiritualism—Its Progress and the Solace it Affords*.

Before dismissing the subject, we do not think a few remarks would be out of place. The discord which the speaker has witnessed in the body of Spiritualists in his short visit to this city, is, we think, more apparent than real—and much of it arises from the many doctrines propounded for the consideration of the body. There are, it must be admitted, two grand distinctions presented for consideration, by which the theory of Spiritualism is solved—the material or scientific theory and the religious or Christian elements drawn from the inspirations of the gospel. It is not that the followers of either theory have feelings repugnant to each other, but that they combat the particular doctrines in order that the truth may be elicited; for it is very clear, until we are exactly sure, that that which we believe is the truth, inquiry, in other words, argument, must exist; but these arguments, although opposite views may be elicited, yet can be, as we trust they are, based on love. A philosophical analysis of the precepts must be a legitimate theme for discussion; for, if we accepted this or the other thing without inquiry, then we are delivering ourselves, bound hand and foot, become the slaves of authority. Spiritualism inculcates the perfectest freedom in all matters of faith, and how ever opposed, those who favor the philosophical or material theory are to the Christian theory; yet they unite in its great attribute of love, which is the universal brotherhood. If then they each embrace the essence, what does the mere disputes of

words amount to? If these disputes are conducted in a temperate spirit, then all were well. It must be conceded that sometimes angustialities do appear, but these are faults which are incidents of humanity; for despite our desires to know God and his truth, such things will be so long as the spirit is clothed in the flesh. But still a spirit of charity should suggest itself to us, that it is not because we see differences exist, that we are therefore, to suppose an antagonism. We know that amongst sectarians a fierce war is sometimes raised, and the hand of one is raised against another in all the fierce bitterness of strife and hatred; but because we see this in the sectarian church, shall it be said that our differences are conducted in the same spirit? It has been our lot to witness the strife of words amongst the brotherhood, but a moment or two after we have seen the friendly grasp interchanged between the warring speakers. Though the words showed differences were entertained by each, yet it also showed there was no hatred in the heart. It must be remembered that Spiritualists, however high their aspiration, yet still are men, and that human feelings will sometimes predominate, and although men own the pure influence of love and make endeavors of their acts, still there are times when it has not quite the mastery. We know that jealousies and desires for sway will creep in, and mar for a moment that which otherwise would be a harmonious gathering; but we also know that perfection is not an instantaneous result. The reflections and observations so continually made upon the jars and discords which appear on the surface, should warn the brethren these things are not viewed with the eyes of jealousy by the world, is it not written that "even the elect, if it were possible, might be deceived." Let us then, in our difference be guided by the pure spirit of Charity; let love be our president; let us then agree to differ only for the sake of inquiry—neither striving for a particular view, nor fighting for victory, but only that the truth may be elicited.

**LECTURE BY THE HON. WARREN CHASE, STUYVESANT INSTITUTE.**

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 1.

Mr. Chase introduced his lecture by reading a short poem by J. Richardson, who is a clergyman and also a Spiritualist, residing at Plymouth, the home of the Pilgrim Fathers.

More than eighteen hundred years ago, an individual preached amongst the rocks and brooks of Judea, and associated to himself a few followers, and taught them, and with them, two great principles to man, the one never until this time realized, the other never practiced, and these truths were, first, the immortality of the soul and eternal life, the second, the universal brotherhood, love towards one another. No spot upon the face of the earth is there where one of these precepts have been truly realized, or the other practiced. We, standing in the middle of the 19th century are more highly blessed than were the eras which have preceded us, for we are enabled to realize the first, and we are able to demonstrate positively and prove the first truth taught by the Judean teacher—the immortality of man. If we in our demonstrations can carry home this conviction to our own nation and the world, shall we not then practice the other also? Shall we not carry out the principle of the universal brotherhood, and show it a living element in our lives? If we prove the immortality of man, then shall we not practice this brotherhood of love, and thus perfect the precepts propounded.

If Spiritualism is of any value, then it must be demonstrated in the acts of life, its truths must be felt, its theories realized, its precepts practiced and lived. If we only love and greet those who approach us in the aspect of friendship with the smile, and pleasantness on the lip, what better are we than the world around us? If we in truth feel the truth of Spiritualism moving and working around us, then it must be manifested to the world about us. I look at Spiritualism in its religious phase—as faith in God and the brotherhood of man. Philosophically it proves the immortality of the soul, religiously the purity of love. If we live in its precepts, then shall we realize those truths propounded by Jesus of Nazareth. If we are to use Spiritualism for the mere purpose of collecting facts; for the mere purpose of gratifying the curiosity or from other such feelings, then Spiritualism cannot fulfill its mission. That mission which I so earnestly looked to when its pure light first dawned upon the world.

We have now phases of fact which can reach all classes of society. The sensualist can be reached through the senses, if he have mental power sufficient to solve a problem of the simplest kind. We can prove to them that those friends whom they knew and sympathized with on earth, whose bodies they have committed to the dust, can hold communion with them. To the scientific mind we can afford positive proof by the aid of philosophy and reason. To the intuitive and impressive mind, we have no need to present the phenomena at all, for they are Spiritualists as soon as they learn that which Spiritualism is. These are the three grand distinctive classes of mind, and each of them can be reached. It is now no longer necessary to invite men to believe, we can say, come, see, and judge for yourselves, for its truth can be conclusively proved, as conclusively as that the sun shines and the rain falls. If Spiritualism was merely to prove that the Spirits of the departed can communicate with their friends still in the flesh, then it would not perform its mission. That Judean teacher would not have fulfilled his mission by merely proclaiming the immortality of the soul, but in teaching to man the link of universal brotherhood, he did. We teach this, yet amongst us we find those who are in intercourse with the Spirit-world wrangling with their fellow-men. We must have more than Spirit-intercourse, for Spiritualism is something more. The churches preach the immortality of the soul, and possibly they believe the doctrine they preach, but with us this is not merely a belief, it is a problem solved, then it is real and true, it is a reality.

Death to the churchman is a horror, a something brimmed with grim and frightful images; they say it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. This does not show that living and relying faith; does not give us that security which Spiritualism can give us. Is not this fear a manifestation of unbelief? If we go to the churches and view the lives of the churchmen, do we find the precepts of its Judean founder carried out?—Where do we find Christ's doctrine of love practised, that love they so loudly proclaimed? Do we not find the conflict of opinion continually rife with them, denomination warring with other denominations. If they do not practice the divine precepts which ever is so ready on the lips, and if we do the same, what better then are we than they? Where is the example that when the smiter smites them on one cheek, that they turn the other also. This phrase is wrongly translated, it should be when they smite thy love, turn thy love to them still, for the

correspondency of cheek signifies love. We are not to render hate for hate, but love for hate, for the application of love is in the expression of all those numerous relations so expressive of its truth. If we can do this in our day, then shall we realize the teachings of the Judean teacher—immortality and love. I had hoped that Spiritualists would have so borne themselves towards each other, and to other sects that the principle of universal charity would have been apparent in all their acts, for those only who exemplify this principle in their conduct and lives can be accounted to be Spiritualists, and when I meet with men who practice this principle, although not professedly Spiritualists, still I claim them as such, for as I view Spiritualism, I only see that is the link which shall unite the whole human family in one brotherhood. When this will be, still remains to be proved, yet I am not the less an expectant of such a result. To me it was much that I was able to prove my own immortality, but a far greater thing will it be to realize the doctrine of love.

By my intercourse with the Spirit-world, I have learned there are spheres or strata, but in each strata I do not find any jarring or conflict, but in each plane there is harmony. I have learned it is the desire of a convention of harmonized Spirits to introduce this harmony on earth, and for one I am zealous and anxious to carry out this desire.—When this is consummated, shall we not then have become practical Christians? for although this is the precept of the church, still it is not practiced, but if Spiritualists show it is their practice, then Spiritualism is the dawning of harmony to the race. There has been a strange meaning applied to this love, but in the sense I refer to, it exposes that condition of the mind which fosters no animosity, evil, or scorn for others. Then its expression is in the term charity towards those who are on a level with us. This is love, so also the aspirations and desires of the heart in prayer—is love. It is love to God, and this is that which was referred to by Jesus when he taught his disciples that which was love. If we desire happiness, then we must treasure this feeling.

If we are to work through this generation to collect facts only, then we shall not be the founders or builders of the temple, but do only that which David did, the next generation will do the part of Solomon. If we are only to draw together bricks and boards, we shall never have a house to live in. Facts, facts, is the continuous cry, and when you have them, what will you do with them, lay them before the world, and will it believe in them? The laying these facts before the world, do they demonstrate the reality of the Spirit-intercourse?—Have we not had facts throughout all time, and they, they have been understood either by the historian or by those who lived in the time when they were enacted? Are there not nations who single out and reverse some facts, and reject others? You are aware the Christian world recognizes the facts of the Bible. The Mohammedans have also facts recorded, and they recognize and reverse them.—The facts recorded in the Bible have not made people religious, and although they have these facts, yet they have been unable to understand their Spiritual significance, for the Bible readers admit the facts, and then repudiate the whole notion of Spirit-intercourse.

The red men of this country in their legends have such facts, as sacred to them as the written histories are to other people; yet although they know these facts, they have not made them sensible of Spirit-intercourse, but they are more ready than the churchmen to admit such things can be. England is full of such facts. Mrs. Crowe has collected the narratives, America is not behind. The records of New England, the doings at Salem, show that such facts were, and also the dreadful use which was made of them. If one turns a file of old papers, is it not seen these events were continually occurring? Are then your facts new?—Will the mere narrative make people believe more than the facts of the past? For years I had no exalted belief in the immortality of the soul, but I had faith, and I have learnt that facts are only useful to induce investigation. People perhaps will say, well, if Spirits do communicate, what then?—Christ taught the immortality of man. This shows these facts are not the sole dependence, but it is to be placed in the other part of his mission, for in that we receive the blessing, "go first and be reconciled to thy brother, and then bring thy gift to the altar." From this it is shown our first duty is to be reconciled one to another. If we practically feel the truths about us, then we shall be able to do this; then if Spiritualism does not do this, it fails! The one thing necessary is to harmonize ourselves with each other and with God, for to be happy we must be in harmony. The preachers preach of hell, we are not ignorant that conditions of suffering exist within ourselves, and the hottest of all hells is that anger which too often burns in the human heart; it is this hot hell, this consuming fire which it was my hope Spiritualism would extinguish. This is the mission of Spiritualism, and there are thousands and tens of thousands of Spirits who yearn for the day when discord shall die out from among men, and harmony reign universally, and these Spirits are trying to indoctrinate the universal brotherhood of man and his communion with God, and the sum of these messages is love one another; to hold to each other the same relations as exist in an individual family. They do not call on us to live in one house or in one nation, or to mingle our business transaction, but to lay aside all antagonism amongst ourselves and the world. All harmonious beings harmonize with nature and with God, for happiness, harmony and heaven are synonymous terms. It is not said that all will immediately be equally happy, but all will have their capacities for happiness filled according as is that capacity. Which shall it be said of us, that we laid the foundation, or only gathered the facts, and laid them by? We have all we require, we have the conditions, the faculties, the materials, shall we not then co-operate with God, with Nature, and the Spirit-world, or conflict with them all, and leave behind us such a record of our Spiritualism and progress. We must indoctrinate our hearts with the pure principle of love, not only to the men of this world, but towards those of the Spirit-spheres; cast from us all fear, hatred, scorn, and contempt, and in the vacant and desert place late possessed by them, plant the glorious tree of charity, then the desert and vacant spots will be radiant with good, and then we shall be happy, for this will bring us into a communion where the sunshine of heaven shall be found, and it will be the commencement of a new life.

In my travels I have met many persons who have thought that the communicating with the friends departed was the full mission of Spiritualism. If this were all, the world might well ask, what good can it do? We all know that life has important social duties, but we also know that the domestic circle has not harmonized the world. All new institutions have an infancy, and they have to endure struggles as the man does in their days of childhood, the child only by experience can learn, and this is done by contact with the world; caution and practice go far to make its mental condition. This was thoroughly exemplified in New England, when the pilgrim fathers first sojourned in its wilds. We have the records of the past and the present, then shall we not avail ourselves of the experience to be learnt from them, and so escape the evils incident to childhood; if we do not do so, then our successors will.

I have visited Boston and New York cities, which for this land may be styled Mecca and Jerusalem, for both are visited from all parts of the union, few are the people who have not paid a visit to one or the other. In these cities I had hoped to find the bond of brotherhood. It had been my wish in my future wanderings to have pointed to them as my bright stars of experience, but can I do so? In the country I do not say I find higher development, but I do find more harmony. It is my hope that Spiritualism will never sectarianize as other institutions have done, for never will my assent be given to aught which shall tend to the bringing it into an exclusive organization. Christ never incited this exclusion. If we have light, then let that light shine so that it shall be seen of all men, but this shining is not to be shown in argument and the indulging in prejudices, its exemplification must be that we are illumined by love. All who unite in, and practice this brotherhood, will lend a helping hand to build up an institution which will work a lasting benefit in the world.

I do not wish to be misunderstood in respect to my observations concerning Boston and New York, all I desire to say, that I have not found that harmony amongst them I had hoped to find. Since my last visit to New York, the Spiritualists have increased in numbers, a small room was then sufficient to contain all who were willing to appear, since then, you know well what your changes have been. If love has increased among you, then you have advanced; if but your numbers have increased and not your love, may it not be that you have retrograded?

Protestantism in the last hundred years has increased its sects, but this increase has but served the purpose of disunion. Our faith must not sectarianize itself. It may be its fate in large cities, but it will not be so in the small cities and rural districts, and they, if you carry out the precepts of the Judean reformer, will hold out to you the hand of brotherhood, for by these teachings they are walking. When next I visit this city, I trust to find more harmony; I had hoped and ill-fellings be cast from out the bosom, then shall we find Spiritualism the sun of the world, then we shall have a Spiritual religion—the immortality of the soul and a universal brotherhood.

[From the Spiritual Telegraph.]  
**THE FINAL ORGANIZATION OF SOCIETY.**  
We are indebted to a foreign gentleman of distinguished intellectual powers and attainments for the following highly interesting letter. We shall be most happy to furnish a vehicle for his earnest and enlightened thoughts as often as he may be pleased to occupy our space.

LONDON, Feb. 28, 1855.  
MR. EDITOR:—You and I belong to two different worlds. I never saw your world; perhaps you never saw mine, and most probably the greatest portion of your readers never saw it. Patriotism is natural; we all love our own country, or at least we wish it well; and we glory in its honor and feel ashamed of its reproach. It is our Mother. For this reason I should never argue with any man about the relative merits of his country and mine. We cannot easily comprehend each other. But I firmly believe that every nation has its own part of the great problem of civilization to solve, and in proportion to the influence and power of that nation in the civilized world, is the importance of its part of the problem. From this you may conclude without further preface that to the part which the United States of America have to perform, I attach great value.

But I am none of those who believe that old things go out and new come in, just like one candle following another in succession. The growth of ages, especially of civilized ages, is one. It is as one plant—as one tree. There is development, but no death of one part to permit another of different origin entirely to supersede it. When succession takes place, the old must ever have part in the new, and as all society hangs upon two principles—Law and Liberty—we find that all successive developments are merely different modes of attempting the solution of the great problem of the reconciliation of these two apparent contraries.

Law looks to the organization of the collective man and the mechanism of society, and in working out its own exclusive mission, its tendency is to subdue the individual and check the development of original genius, and the pursuit and realization of private interests. Liberty, on the contrary, regards the individual man as a primary principle, and its tendency is to claim for the individual the right of a full and a free development.

It is evident that either of these alone is an impossible condition of social existence. They, therefore, combine in all societies. But in the oldest forms, the law principle predominates, and in the youngest forms, the liberty principle predominates. But no nation in the world has as yet been able to adjust the balance of these two principles and put them in equilibrium. This is the mission of the age to come.

The farther East we look the more we find the law repressive of liberty. I believe Japan is regarded as the least free country in the world. Dr. Siebold, one of the Dutch visitors of Japan, says of it: "Liberty is indeed unknown in Japan—it exists not even in the common intercourse of man with man, and the very idea of freedom, as distinguished from rude license, could perhaps hardly be made intelligible to a native of that extraordinary empire. But, on the other hand, no individual in the whole nation, high or low, is above the law; both sovereigns—the Mikado or Pope, and the Zogoon or Emperor—seeming to be as completely enthralled by Japanese despotism as the meanest of their subjects, if not more so."

This is the extreme East, where the law, or the eldest of the two primordial principles, has received its fullest development. And if you seek for the fullest development of Liberty, the youngest, there is only one great country in the world in which you can find it. That is your own, which I consider the democratic antithesis of mine. Mine is the end of the Old World, yours is the beginning of the New—the woman that comes out of the man. But though Liberty is decidedly feminine collectively, it is masculine individually, and thus there is no occasion to quarrel about sex.

Law is the Old World, and Liberty is the New; or rather, Law is the eldest, and Liberty the youngest. But Law will never go out that Liberty may come in; every thing is for ever; no mission ever dies; Moses and his law still live; Greek literature, philosophy and taste are as healthy as ever; Roman law never was more vigorous. But they have been modified by cultivation and translation, and

the new geographical world of America will modify the old world of Europe, and combine with it. But it can only give back in return for what it receives. It has a part of the problem to solve, but not the whole.

Dividing Christendom into East and West, we find Rome at the East and the States at the West. Rome is the spiritual or ecclesiastical Law—the States the spiritual or ecclesiastical Liberty. France—or Russia, if you please—is, as the champion of the Church, the political Law—the States the political Liberty. Neither will ever yield to the other, because the one dislikes the excess of the other. Britain attempts to reconcile the two, but cannot succeed, for one half of Britain is in the New World and the other in the Old World; and the two halves are divided. They have quarrelled and separated, and Liberty has sought a wider field than she could find in the Old World. Without this wider field the problem could not have been solved. There was a providential necessity for this. It completes the antithesis of the East and West, and as a proof of this, it is the American West that promises to open up Japan, while the children of the extreme East are numerous and rapidly collecting on the Western Pacific shores.

The far West is the end of the world, and the Western great nation is the last of the old nations, and the beginning of the new. The movement of society turns in her and begins a new career, but it preserves its own characteristic individuality. Diversified liberty and individual variety and contrariety are its peculiarities. Hence, perhaps, in no other country can the spirit-revelations take so manifold a form and character as in the States. In our country it does not seem to be possible, and analogy gives us a very good reason for it. The multitudinous form of spirit-revelation is in perfect accord with the free democratic principle, and it is that form also which will for ever be the most attractive and interesting to the heart and its affections. It is the resurrection of the dead, the finding of the lost, the drawing of the curtain between death and life. But something is wanting. This multitudinous form of revelation wants a unity. Where will it find it? Only by coming Eastward, and modifying old principles as it proceeds. No one country can have all the gifts nor can solve all the problem. Each has its part. When the spirit-revelation arrives here in power, it will take a more unitary form than it does with you, and as it goes farther East than we are, it will grow proportionately in that respect—not losing its native liberty, but modifying and chastening it, while at the same time it gives greater liberty to the law that oppresses in more Eastern regions. And thus the two eternal principles will chasten and cultivate each other, first in the spiritual and afterward in the temporal sphere.

I give this, of course, merely as an hypothesis, but it is true to history and geography, and also to justice and universal analogy; and it easily explains the reason why the Spirit-revelations began in America—why they are so diversified and contrarious, and why they do not appear in the Old World as they do in the New; while at the same time it prepares the mind of Spiritualists for the appearance of singular and extensive modifications in more Eastern regions, not to contradict, but to modify and throw light upon their own.

I know there is a great reluctance everywhere to go eastward for any thing. Even here we abhor, as probably you do there, the idea. Our Protestants are looking, not for lessons in Rome, but for a fire and brimstone judgment. They literally expect it to sink in a burning gulf. They think there's nothing in it worth preserving. Our liberals and republicans here thought France ready for a republic in 1848. "There will never be king or emperor more there, you'll see," they said to me. And when Mazzini was in Rome, it was thought to be all over with the Pope, as if the Pope were a man. The Pope is a principle, and there is not a firmer throne in the world than that of St. Peter. It is ecclesiastical law, which, so long as there is a Church, must have a representative of some form or other, and the more unitary the form the stronger the power. It only wants liberty to modify it and correct its abuses. That liberty comes from the West.

God is not a respecter of nations any more than of persons. His tender mercies are over all his works. He never gave the fulness of truth to any people; nor had he ever a favorite nation. The Jews were no favorites of his; nor were the Romans more hateful in his eyes than Israelites; nor does he abhor Popery or Islamism as a Protestant does. He knows the use of them, and why he has placed them where they are. Patriotism blinds men even as sectarianism does, and it causes us to hate what God has ordained, and what his great plan of providence has made indispensable for the final organization of the Church State.

I say Church State, because I believe that the final organization of society will be not a Church and State as in England—not a Church as in Rome—not a State as in America, but something that has never yet been—a Church State—a moral government sacred as a Church and political as a State. And it will be the legitimate offspring of old Churches and States, but without their abuses and defects—a moral Church in which a man's faith will not be fettered by creeds imposed by one generation upon another, but will be free to grow in everlasting youth.

In traveling back to the East we shall also travel back to the Patriarchal system. It is the first and the last. Not the old form, but the old principle revived and rehabilitated. But it will be sanctified by the patriarchal system in association with it.—A great moral government involves the idea of a great multitude of diverse families. There is the family of marriage—the simplest and oldest form. There is the communal or distinct family—or a smaller, if you please—and larger and larger—a gradation of families, every man and woman, as well as each child, being a member of the whole series in succession, and of all but the first as long as life. Thus every man will be known in society, and be responsible, and have one responsible for him. His profession will be known, his public and private conduct will be known, and yet he will be free, for no secret tribunal will have power over him; and the ruling power will be moral rather than physical.

What is called Liberty by many is the right of secret misbehavior—the curse of all countries, and the real cause of the neglect of the poor. What makes you and me afraid to visit certain lanes, and streets, and alleys, and rookeries in London or New York? It is just this Liberty, and the consequent neglect of the inhabitants. No patriarch, no matriarch, visits those places or knows the inmates, and speaks kindly and morally to them, and inquires into their circumstances, and gives them advice or sympathizes in their sufferings.—They are personally, spiritually, and morally neglected in the full and free development of individual Liberty. They do as they please with themselves; wash or not wash; swear or not swear; drink or not drink; and when government visits



We cannot allow a gem like the following to appear in our columns, without commending it as worthy of more than a mere passing glance.

[For the Christian Spiritualist.]

## ELECTRICITY.

BY FANNY GREEN.

Life of primeval substance! finest form  
Of the material being! when the mass  
Of unspined Creation silent lay—  
Formless and dark—as chaos infinite—  
Thine was the mighty Motion that went forth,  
Living and quickening, from the Will of God.  
To fashion this stupendous Harmony.  
Each round its nucleus of attractive force  
Gathered the central masses, orb by orb,  
Into still fairer being rounded forth.  
Then the young Planets, daughters of the Sun,  
To Life's mysterious beauty slowly woke,  
And gathering round them all their spheres of light,  
Each found her orbit; and the Sister Spheres  
Sped onward in their still, majestic march,  
To the deep music of Eternity.

New forces sprang from every central force;  
The impulse of creation, gathering strength,  
Spread into wider circles. Thus awoke,  
Through all the dark expansion of Old Space—  
Which like a shadow of the Eternal Mind  
Lay brooding round the elements of Being—  
The far-off Universes, praising God,  
Whose life in radiant streams of life and love,  
Flowed into their whole substance, and inspired  
Gross matter with its fiery divine.

And while within the arms of ancient Chaos  
Lay this fair Earth, in embryo shrouded deep,  
With all its rudiments of future life,  
Electric forces, stirring in the depths,  
Obeyed the Mind and Will of God.  
Ere a new creation. Then came forth  
Order from Chaos, Music from Discord,  
And latent life from bondage arose as Death.  
O'er the dark Spirit of the Eternal moved  
The dark waters, with a vital power,  
It clothed itself with electricity.

Water attracted water. To the depths  
Gathered expansive oceans; and the springs  
That poured themselves in tiny rivulets,  
Owned the great law, that makes a brotherhood  
In every kindred substance, stretched their arms—  
Each called to each, united, and embred;  
Till broad, majestic Rivers, owning still  
The power that tends to equilibrium,  
Sped to the ocean, great of every stream.  
Electric fire that quickened centredward  
Threw up the mountains, scooped the valleys out—  
Then Life and Beauty woke; and over all  
Rounded the spacious canopy of Heaven.

The vital influence, active—working still—  
Put forth strange forms of Planet and Animal;  
On the bare rocks the Lichens mapped themselves;  
Marshes with absorbent verdure smiled;  
And 'neath the shadow of gigantic Ferns  
Wandered the Taurus and the Mastodon.  
Then all the thousand laborers of the sea  
Gathered to the great workshop of their work;  
The coral insect laid the corner stone  
Of her fair palaces, and wrought the base  
Whence she might boldly find her solid arches,  
And rear her pile into a continent.

Thus ever molded into fairer types,  
And ever flowing into finer thought,  
Worked its creative Energy, until  
The Rose and Lily, fairest red and white,  
Bloomed into perfect beauty. Out from Life  
Came forth Sensation, thence Intelligence,  
Fancy and Reason wrought up, and refined  
From the lower Instincts, Passions and Affections  
Till the creative Thought attained its highest,  
In Man, the type of Beauty and Power,  
Set the Eternal on the perishing—  
The mortal crowned with Immortality.

The law that spheres a planet, molds a tear,  
Groups universes, gathers heart to heart,  
Tapers the sunbeam's shaft and oris the dew,  
Thrills in the glances of the living eye,  
Pours beauty on the flower—filling its breath  
With sweetest perfume—through its azure paths  
Spreads the life currents, and propels the sap  
Through all the ligamentous arteries of the Tree.  
In the alchemic of the subterranean  
It scatters rainbow light, to tinge the gems  
And color the young crystals; from the clouds  
It hurls the forked lightning—in mid earth  
Concentrating its deep and hidden power,  
Speaks in the Earthquake's thousand fiery tongues;  
Or from the great Volcano's burning mouth  
Utters terrific tones, that arouse  
The world at once with prophecy and dream.

All feeling, passion, and all eloquence,  
Reason's diviner influence, Science, Art,  
Are but attractive forces, through whose power  
Heart speaks to heart, and mind replies to mind,  
Angels are brought down to the soul of men,  
And men rise upward to the heart of God.

## RELIGIOUS TRANCE ECSTASY.

The following narrative, which we copy from the "Historical Collections of the State of New Jersey," (pages 50, 51 and 52), may serve to convince some of our sectarian neighbors of the necessity of caution, in ignoring the Spiritual phases now agitating the age, lest they do violence to the providence of God in history.—Ed. Chr. Spr.

The following extraordinary incident was communicated to the editors of the Christian Advocate and Journal, by the Rev. Mr. Purdue, of Milville, in Jan. 1843.

"Mary Coombs, the subject of the following biographical sketch, was born in March, 1794; and when about 10 years of age, she was convinced of her sinful state and brought to serious reflection and prayer by hearing her mother read the Holy Scriptures. One passage particularly, the recollection of which she still retains, made, even at that tender age, an indelible impression upon her mind. It is Isaiah liii, 11: "Wo unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him."

At the age of 13 years she experienced a clear sense of God's pardoning mercy, at a Methodist quarterly meeting at Tuckahoe. For two years after this happy change, so strong were her religious convictions, and so uninterrupted her peace, that to use her own language, she "had neither troubles nor trials." This truce, however, was succeeded by a season of severe trial; and she was reduced to "great heaviness through manifold temptations." She was much harassed with a fear that she should never again enjoy the same consolations, or be able to endure the trials and difficulties of life. At a class-meeting, held at the dwelling-house of Richard Penn, about 5 miles from this place, on the 20th of November, 1808, she was unusually blessed, fell under the power of God, and remained for seven days and nights, in one of the most remarkable raptures of which I have ever read or heard.

There was an unusual coldness of the extremities, and an unnatural rigidity or stiffness of the muscular fibre of the whole body. But a very singular phenomenon was, that every day, precisely at 6 o'clock, P. M., consciousness, and the powers of speech, and voluntary motion, returned for a short time.

This was gradual, however, and always preceded by paroxysms of trembling, in which her whole frame was violently agitated, accompanied by opening of the eyes, half-articulated words, and other signs of returning animation. The first words which she usually uttered as to be distinctly understood, were, "Blessed Jesus!" "Lord give me more strength!" and some others of a like description.

The intermediate state was generally of about from 30 to 45 minutes duration; and as soon as she could set up on the bed, she would commence exhorting those about her, particularly the unconverted, to forsake their sins, and "flee the wrath to come." This was done in the most earnest and serious manner, with an almost unearthly pathos, and in the use of language, appeals, and arguments, altogether beyond her degree of mental cultivation and intellectual capacity. This would seem the more remarkable, when it is considered

that she had scarcely any education, said but little on all occasions, and was naturally diffident and retiring in her manners.

The singularity of the case, as might reasonably be expected, produced great excitement in the neighborhood, and attracted crowds of people, even from a distance, to witness her exercises.—The knowledge of "sins forgiven" was not considered the privilege of believers, even by a majority of those who made a profession of religion in the neighborhood. The miseries of the damned; the necessity of immediate repentance; and the fact that sinners might know their sins forgiven in this life, were the principal theme of her discourses.—The effects produced by these exhortations were truly astonishing. From Wednesday until the close of the week, the house was filled to overflowing every night; and but little was heard except the cries of the penitent, the prayers of the pious, and the shouts of new-born souls till long after midnight.

Such was the state of excitement upon this occasion, and such the influence that attended these exhortations, that persons, upon approaching the house, would be seized with conviction for sin, at hearing the sound of her voice, before entering the door. After speaking about one hour, if the interval lasted so long, her voice would gradually become more and more faint, until it ceased to be audible, and she would fall back upon the bed, and remain apparently insensible to all external objects till the same time the next evening. The sister, at whose house she remained, (now an old and worthy member of the church at Port Elizabeth, in this state,) assured me that she asked for neither food nor drink during the week; and that the only nourishment she received was a few spoonfuls of this gruel, which was forced into her mouth at three different times. This she received reluctantly, and would finally resist their efforts to force it upon her by closing the teeth firmly together.

One circumstance which served greatly to excite the curiosity of the people, and draw them to the place, was, that early in the week she stated that she would be exercised in this way every evening till the next sabbath; and that at the same hour on that day that she had fallen into this rapture the previous sabbath, she would have finished her work, and would return home. That consciousness, and the powers of speech, and voluntary motion, should return every evening precisely at 6 o'clock, (as was found to be the case,) when she could by no means have access to any one-piece, was perfectly unaccountable upon natural principles. Upon the following sabbath, (November 27, 1808,) the day she had designated for her return home, it was estimated that not less than five hundred people were present to witness it.

At 2 o'clock precisely, one week from the time she had fallen into this rapture, she seemed to recover as out of a sweet sleep, and quietly returned home with her friends. On being asked, before she left the house, some questions relative to the subject which had occupied her whole attention during the preceding week, she calmly replied that she had nothing more to say—that she had finished the work assigned her for the present. Inquired of her whether she intended to leave the place, she felt free to communicate concerning her feelings and Spiritual perceptions at the time.

A physician from Bridgeton, who visited her during the rapture, was asked his opinion, upon which he remarked that he did not "understand the case." Sister Surran (her name by marriage) is still living; and although she has been called, in the providence of God, to pass through the fires of temptation, and the waves of affliction, still retains her integrity, and sustains an unblemished reputation for consistent piety. I sought an opportunity to converse with her, and inquired of her all that she felt free to communicate concerning her feelings and Spiritual perceptions at the time.

She is, and always has been, reserved on this subject. So much so, that her nearest relations have seldom ventured to converse with her concerning it. She stated to me, however, that while speaking, she seemed altogether under the influence, and subject to the control of a supernatural power; that to speak required no effort, either of thought or reflection, on her part. To use her own language, "the words were all put into my mouth, and I had to speak them."

She described her sensations during the seasons of repose as peculiarly agreeable. She heard the commingling of distant but harmonious sounds, such as would be produced by numerous voices and instruments of music; which seemed to be wafted upon every breeze of heaven, and fell upon her ear in tones of enchanting melody. With reference to this world, she was in a state of perfect intellectual abstraction. Not one of its difficulties, cares, or even thoughts, intruded upon the sanctuary of her heart. In conclusion, I would remark, that the circumstances of the case utterly preclude the suspicion of collusion.

From the Sonora Herald.

## SPIRITISM.

Having in our last paper re-published from the S. F. Chronicle, a communication of "Caxton's" on the subject of Spiritism, because we admired the style, the tone and the Spirit in which it was written, and are desirous to promote inquiry on every subject, we have been favored with a direct communication from the writer, which we take great pleasure in presenting to our readers. For ourselves, we seek light upon this as upon every other subject, we are in favor of free discussion, and moreover, their novelty, their boldness, and the apparent superiority of the intellect from which these views emanate, are sufficient reasons why they should find a welcome place in our columns. Those who take exceptions to or disagree with his doctrines, have the same opportunity of replying to him. We shall be pleased to hear from "Caxton" again.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SONORA HERALD.—The introductory remark by which you preface the publication of an article, subscribed "Caxton," recently published in the San Francisco Chronicle, and which accidentally fell under my notice—is my apology for trespassing upon your columns.

All men agree to the proposition, that if Spiritism be true, or if there be any truth in it, no duty could be more imperative, as no pleasure could be more alluring, than to devote time and patience to its investigation. And yet, the moment one word is said about forming a Spiritual circle, or creating a mental battery, few men there are, who are brave enough, to unite together for the purpose, or honest enough, after commencing to explore these new and most wonderful fields of human thought, to carry out the original design, and proceed with the caution it requires, and the candor it invokes.

The world is full of *isms*, and California is overflowing with shams. The neighborhood is intolerant of novelties, and friends ready to suspect insanity. Traveling thieves under the guise of superior wisdom, have humbugged and hoaxed the community, until confidence in Spiritism, and its professors, has long since been lost, and in the belief of a very considerable majority of men, it exists only as a BAKKERT DELUSION, whose glory has departed forever.

Such being the tone and temper of the times, the newspaper even that opens its columns to its discussion, challenges the loss of subscribers, and is compelled occasionally to prelude its correspondence by an insult to the science, as a sort of sop to the popular Cerberus. Who can wonder then, if busy men cannot pause long enough in their railroad existence, to consider, each for himself, the truth of Spiritism, when there are so many to cover it with ridicule, and so few able to vindicate its claims to the world?

Like the Christian religion, its injudicious friends do it more injury than its enemies; and whenever it has gone down in public estimation, its destruction has been owing more to the folly of its dis-

ples than to the force of opposing arguments. Few persons are capable of the investigation of a new phenomenon. It requires great clearness of mind, quick apprehension, unlimited patience, and perfect honesty. By this I mean an honesty which will not only disdains to deceive others, but which will not impose upon itself. These traits are indispensable in common sciences; but in Spiritism, robed as it is in novelty, glittering all over with wonders, allied to invisible powers, just emerging from the waters of superstition, and turning the human mind back upon itself, these characteristics must be possessed to a very great extent before any reliance can be placed in facts, appearances, or conclusions. Of all sciences the most recalcitrant is psychology; of all arts the most difficult, the art of reasoning. Hence, there are ten thousand notions about the constitution of the human mind, and as many schools of philosophy:—hence sects innumerable spring up in religion, and parties, almost as antagonistic, in politics. But the truly philosophic mind sees the grand results, through all these contraries, and grasps the final triumph of all religion, in the simple maxim of love to God and love to man; and the triumph of all politics, in the art of self-government. Alas! how few there are who have the ability to discover these truths, or the honesty to recognize them after they have been demonstrated.

But as there are idiots in all professions, fools in all sciences, hypocrites in all realities, so do we find men of the identical stripe in the science of Spiritism. Who has not felt disgust at the "gas" of politics, the sickly trappings of the modern pulpit, the learned quackeries of medicine? So in Spiritism. Everything human has a tendency to expend itself in empty superficialities, and it did not require the genius of Oxensten to discover that the world was governed less by great intellect than by established usage. It is then no argument against Spiritism that it also has its inanities, its tom-fooleries, and its disgusting trivialities. Wise men pass these things by, and do not judge of the speed of the Telegraph by the height of the posts or the size of the wire. Many a sweet pippin, juicy and delicious, flourishes under a rusty skin, and many a diamond glitters beneath a dull and ragged exterior.

Whatever then may be the appearance of Spiritism, do not rest satisfied with that; but examine the subject fairly and honestly, and I venture to assert you will soon be its disciple. And think of what you are to become a disciple! not of a religion whose faith founds itself upon ignorance, but of a science, which unites man with angels, and earth with Heaven. Not of a sect, whose chief employment is to bamboozle the mind, but of an art which disrobes superstition of its terrors, and throws open the portals of the grave. All true religion is founded on Spiritism, and no man can be other than a hypocrite or a fool, who declares he believes in the immortality of the soul, or the truth of inspiration, who discredits it. Things beyond nature, can only be proved to exist through natural channels. The senses form the channel in Spiritual matters, and they are the only means by which invisible agencies can be shown to exist.—Belief without evidence is superstition, and without sufficient evidence, folly. Fools and zealots never yet convinced a skeptic, or converted an atheist.—Theology is not the science to study in order to become religious; but Nature is. Books written by men no wiser than I, cannot instruct me; Nature is always wiser than authors, and deeper than them. Her mysteries are always realities; to fathom them is to grow wise—not to commit to memory the learning of fools.

Hereafter let no skeptic flatter himself that he can lay aside his infidelity by reading polyglott treatises, or running out threadbare analogies.—Let him go to Nature: consult the hidden treasures of his own soul, trace the link which connects his own Spirit with the mind that thinks, and the hand that writes, and look up through Nature's works to Nature's God.

## EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.

But surely I need not endeavor to vindicate Spiritual existence to you. You happily admit its reality quite as fully as I do, and hence I am not called upon to urge home an unwelcome truth.—Indeed, there can be no demonstration of Spiritual realities to unwilling minds. The affections determine every man's intellectual state, and if, accordingly, a man be a self-seeker Spiritually, or claim a paramount Divine regard for himself or his sect over other men and other sects, the Divine mercy itself provides that he also deny Spiritual or immortal life, and accept instead the falsity which inheres with his depraved affections. Immortal life pertains to no man by any outward gift or tenure, but purely by virtue of renovated affections, and if these affections are wanting, a man must be incapable of acknowledging that life on the other side of the grave as on this. But, I repeat, you and I have happily no doubts on the subject. We both alike admit the great truth of Spiritual existence, and are so far in thorough unity. If, then, I have seemed to linger upon the topic, while recapitulating the results we have come to, it has been only in order that our reciprocal conceptions of the truth might be so harmoniously adjusted, as to insure our seeing with equal clearness its inevitable logical consequences.

And after all I must end by conjuring you both as a scholar and an earnest disciple of Christ, to betake yourself without delay to the fountain-head of rational illumination on this subject, in the writings of Swedenborg. Inticipate the intellectual rapture you will one day experience, when you see that inner world of which he speaks, and which now lies in the dark inane so voiceless and dead to all human prayer, emerge into substantial being, its glittering ranks instinct with the most intimate human love, and its myriad industries impelled by the sole force of spontaneous and untasked human delight. It is a scandal to men of your mark in the church, men of independent mental habits, who feel moreover the church's insatiable present exigency, that you should have so long accepted the judgment of interested ignorance and quackery in relation to this man, nor have tried for yourselves the invincible armor he has forged for heaven's truth. I remember to have heard one of our professors at Princeton, while lecturing to the class in *Ecclesiastical History*, exhibit his masterly incompetence somewhat to this effect: "We must not omit from our survey of this period the name of Emanuel Swedenborg, a most learned and pious man, whose head appears to have been turned by unknown causes, and who consequently fancied himself in continual colloquy with the apostles. It is related of him, that whenever he sat down to dine, he had twelve plates laid also for the apostles, who were invariably present to dine with him.—Strange hallucination!"

This was the harlequin costume, which a most amiable and conscientious person felt himself authorized to put for our instruction and diversion, upon the sanest and most far-reaching intellect the world has yet known. This was the complacent

and puny estimate his sagacity had framed of one, whose massive step was even then shaking the ill-cemented edifice in which he lectured, and whose majestic voice would one day silence the venal wrangling of the sects, as the crash of heaven's thunder silences the tumult of the dovecote and the rookery. And this is the sort of judgment, two parts ignorance, two parts sectarian self-complacency, which I would have men like you disown, for the sake of some direct and positive knowledge.

The great truth which Swedenborg brings to the illustration of the past as to the illumination of the future, is the truth of the Divine Natural Humanity. The New Testament affirms this truth dogmatically, and without shedding any light upon its rational contents. Indeed, the sects have not done disputing, as yet, whether it actually does so much as make this dogmatic affirmation. Swedenborg, however, leaves them to settle their quarrel according to their several instincts, and quietly proceeds to unfold the interminable interior things which go to the formation of that truth. He opens up a transcendent physiology, showing us the laws of Spiritual existence, and bringing us for the first time in rational contact with the primal substances and powers of the world. He proves that the things we have always thought the vaguest and most powerless, are in truth the most substantial and creative. Thus, love and wisdom which are the most inconspicuous things possible to the carnal apprehension, turn out to be the essential Powers of the universe, and admirably elucidate all the detail and all the harmony of its multifarious life. He steers, as we have seen, a thousand miles wide of the devouring rock which has wrecked every argosy that has hitherto tempted, with portly sails, the perils of that silent and mystic sea. He denies indeed to the very outset, that God has power to create absolute life, or a creature which shall live of itself, and makes it a strict corollary of His uncreated perfection, that He should be able to create only forms, organs, receptacles, subjects, of life. This is the magic spell which makes every word propitious, and every current available, and finally brings the brave and reverent adventurer to a secure anchorage in the crystal river, whose streams make glad the eternal city of God.

Swedenborg never attempts to captivate your ascent to his statements by argument. As a more wonderful Humboldt indeed, he carries you into regions before untrodden of mortal feet; but he no more essays to reason you into a belief of the *audita et visa* he encounters there, than Humboldt attempts to convince you argumentatively of the tropical *fauna* and *flora* whose existence he witnessed in South America. Reasoning is manifestly out of place in either case. It is always the resort of those who do not possess the truth, and are therefore free to argue whether there be any such thing as truth or not. Ratiocination is the art of turning the true into the probable; that is, of lowering truth and heightening falsity. The truth is only truly seen by its own light; and when you reduce it therefore to a merely probable existence, you obviously obscure its intrinsic evidence, and to that extent, of course, brighten the evidence of the opposite falsity. Nothing, accordingly, is more common than to find a brilliant dialectician able to argue either side of a question with equal plausibility, making the better reason appear the worse, and the worse the better, interchangeably. He who possesses the truth, possesses also an interior witness of it which is all-sufficing, namely, the love of it which dwells in his heart; and all the communications of such a person are of a positive character, being *yes*, *yea*, or *ay*, or *may*. Only he, therefore, who does not possess it, ever feels compelled to vindicate its existence by a resort to the lower grounds of probability. Thus, Humboldt reports the orderly fact which meets his eye in the southern hemisphere, and there he stops. He gives you such insight, doubtless, as his science permits, into the laws which govern their generation, but he never for a moment puts the actual existence of the facts in doubt. The very truth of his experience, indeed, disqualifies him to reason about its reality. If the denizen of Berlin cavil at his narrative, and allege the lower temperature which surrounds him there, by way of disproving tropical vegetation, you would not expect Humboldt to sit down, and solicitously argue with the skeptic. You would expect him at most to bestow a passing sigh upon human imbecility, and go forward in the career of observation so obviously congenial to his faculties.

The case is altogether similar with Swedenborg. Supposing his experience of the Spiritual world to be real, his writing could not possibly differ from what it is. He states, with the utmost precision, the laws of that world, or the principles out of which all its phenomena proceed; but he never attempts to persuade you of the existence of these phenomena by an appeal to the laws of this lower world. He very courteously awaits your ascent to his side, by virtue of the ladder of Spiritual principles he has let down to your understanding; but he is invariably guiltless of the insane endeavor to justify Spiritual existences upon natural principles. Proselytism accordingly never enters his head. He knows very well that every man whose soul is inwardly attuned to angelic fellowship, will, some day or other, in this world or the next, infallibly learn these supernatural tidings, and become enrolled in that evangelic company which shall yet fill every desolate place with the healing and fruitful presence of God. And he consequently feels no prurient desire to precipitate so assured an event. Above all things, he would be sorry to compel any averted or reluctant attention. For none, so well as he, knows the watchful love which proportions the intellect to the affections, and prevents the soul receiving an excess of truth beyond the wants of the life.

HENRY JAMES.

## EARLY HISTORY OF BOOKS.

On the origin of books there rests a darkness which the mind cannot now penetrate. The oldest sacred books extant are those which were written by Moses. There were, however, books in the time of Moses; and some of those books are cited by the inspired writers. The oldest profane books which have come down to the present time, are the Homeric Poems, which were written about 2,800 years ago; yet it is mentioned by some Greek writers that about seventy profane authors wrote before the time of Homer. It may be stated, as a curious fact, that John Hardouin, a learned French ecclesiastic, published, about one hundred and fifty years ago, a work in which he mentioned that all the ancient Greeks and Latin books, (excepting Cicero, Pliny, Virgil's Georgics, Horace's Satires and Epistles, Herodotus, and Homer,) were spurious, and forged in the thirteenth century, by an association of persons under the direction of one Severus Arcontius.

Before the art of manufacturing parchment was discovered by the ancients, they wrote upon stone, ivory, thin sheets of lead, boards, the bark of trees, the leaves of the palm tree, and the skins of goats and sheep. Sometimes they spread wax upon thin wooden boards, and after writing upon the wax with an iron pen, they strung the boards together, and thus made books. The honor of the discovery of the art of manufacturing parchment has been commonly ascribed to Eumenes, a king of Pergamus, who was a patron of literature, and who died about two thousand years ago; but some

antiquarians imagine that parchment was used in the days of Moses. It seems that paper manufactured from fine rags was not known in England before the year 1330. For many centuries before that period, the Chinese were acquainted with the art of manufacturing paper from silk, and the same people, too, from time immemorial, have practiced the art of printing characters by means of wooden blocks.

It is supposed that the first books were in the form of blocks, or square tables; but when the ancients learned to write on flexible substances, they found it more convenient to make their books in the form of rolls. The very process of giving that form to us, as we know, from the remotest isles of Polynesia, a Samoan newspaper, printed entirely by a man, who, only a few years ago, were a set of naked savages, addicted to cannibalism and infanticide, and without the elements of a written language. The paper was printed in a style which (as an English printer truly said) would do no discredit to an English printing office. Not only so; but the same Christianity has the power of immediately inspiring those who receive it again to aid in its further diffusion, and to hand on the torch which has kindled the halcyon fire on their own hearths and altars. Only last year, I observed that the same process of giving that form to our missionary societies was derived from the converts it had made—from New Zealanders, and Tahitians, and Hotentots, and Bechuannas; and other societies were aided from similar sources in a similar proportion! These simple facts are worth a thousand platform speeches. Let our Deistical "magicians" do the like by their enchantments. No, they can talk and write (as Harrington says) "book-revelations against book-revelation," and dream their many-colored, ever-impracticable dreams of human regeneration, and that is all. Till Deism does something more, Christianity has not much to fear from it.—*Defence of Eclipses of Faith.*

About the close of the seventh century, the number of books in the Library at Rome was so small that the Pope directed one of the bishops to supply the deficiency, if possible, from the remotest parts of Europe. In the year 855, Lupus, Abbot of Ferrières, in France, sent two monks to Rome, to beg of Benedict III. a copy of Cicero de Oratore, and Quintilian's Institutes, and some other books. "For," said the Abbot, "although we have parts of these books, yet there is no whole or complete copy of them in all France." About the year 900, books were so scarce in Spain, that one and the same copy of the Bible was used alternately by several different monasteries. In 1299, the Bishop of Winchester borrowed a Bible, with marginal annotations, and he gave a bond drawn up with great solemnity, for the due return of the sacred volume.

Extract from a Lecture on Ballad Poetry, by James Russell Lowell, at Boston, on the 19th ult.

Mr. Lowell continued: It was worth thinking of whether the press, which we have a habit of calling such a fine institution, be not weakening the fibre and damaging the sincerity of our English, and our thinking, quite as fast as it diffuses intelligence. Consider the meaning of expression—something wrong from us by the grip of thought or passion whether we will or no. But the editor is quite as often compelled to write that he may fill an empty column, as that he may relieve an over-filled brain. And in a country like ours, where newspapers are the only reading of the masses of the people, there is danger of a general contentedness in common place. For we always become what we habitually read. We let our newspapers think for us, argue for us, criticize for us, remember for us, do everything for us, in short, that will save us from the misfortune of being ourselves. And so, instead of men and women, we find ourselves in a world inhabited by incarnated leaders, or paragraphs, or items of this or that journal. We are apt to wonder at the scholarship of men of two centuries ago. They were scholars because they did not read so much as we do. We spend more time over print than they did, but instead of communing with the choice thoughts of choice spirits, and insensibly the grand manner of the supreme society, we diligently inform ourselves of such facts as that a fine horse belonging to Mr. Smith ran away on Wednesday, and that a son of Mr. Brown fell into the canal on Thursday, or that a gravel bank caved in and buried alive Patrick O'Callahan on Friday. (Laughter.)

It was us that were getting "caved in" all the time, and becoming mere sponges to take in the stagnant water of village gossip. And it was our own fault, and not that of the editor. For we make the newspapers, and the editor would be glad to give us better stuff if we did not demand such stuff.

Another evil of this state of things is the watering of milk-and-watering of our English. Writing to what there is no higher compelling destiny than the coming of the printer's devil must end in this at last. The paragraphist must make his paragraph, and the longer he makes it, the better for him, and the worse for us. The virtue of words becomes wholly a matter of length. Accordingly, we have now no longer any fires, but "disastrous conflagrations;" nobody dies, but "deceases" or "demises;" men do not fall from houses, but are precipitated from mansions or edifices; a convict is not hanged, but suffers the extreme penalty of the offended law, &c. (Laughter.)

We rattled such barrow loads of gravel for a grain of gold dust, and when we had found it, it was only mica after all. (Laughter and applause.) And for this news we cover the earth with telegraph wires, when we might have it fresh from heaven on the electric lines of the poet and the prophet. If part of our retribution in the next world was memory, if the brain showed like sympathetic ink, by the fires of remorse, consider what a dreary time some of us would have if we were sentenced to read the list of accidents and thefts and murders with which we had sedulously enriched our minds on earth. (Laughter and applause.) We wish to be understood as speaking with all limitations. There were judgments which it was profitable to read if only to get the opinion that contradicted our own. Lectures were only another form of the same evil—(a laugh)—to supply a demand for entertainment and learning loosely.

The old ballad-makers lived in a better day. They did not hear of so many events that none of them made any impression. The world was now one great village; then, a little hamlet was a world. They did not live as we do in a world that seems a great ear of Dionysius, where, if a scandal is whispered in Pekin, we hear of it in New York. The minstrels had no metaphysical bees in their bonnets. They did not speculate about this world or the next. They made the great modern discovery that a bird in the bush was no bird in the hand. They did not analyze or refine till nothing genuine was left of this beautiful world but an indigestion. The people in those days lived frankly; they looked out cheerfully upon life, and were more concerned about their stomachs than the mysteries of their being. Their world was a small one. They took things as they were, without supposing they were responsible for the consequences. Goodness did not always

"Put in his thumb, And pull out a plum."

Nor evil come to a bad end. They were probably sincerely thankful for a "good murder" or a shipwreck, just as newsboys are now. (Laughter.) We must consider, also, that news was then communicated from man to man, not from telegraph to telegraph, and those ballad singers had therefore daily lessons in force and veracity. Fancy the difference in 1775 of a man riding into a country village, and saying "there has been a fight at Concord; some Americans are killed; I saw the blood on the bridge planks;" and between reading on a newspaper bulletin "Rumored battle at Concord; lives lost on both sides." In the one case the man would snatch down his musket; on the other wait for a further despatch. (Applause.)

CHRISTIANITY AN AGGRESSIVE SYSTEM.—Of all religions Christianity is that, and that alone, which never will let the world slumber. No form is so corrupt as not to have eternal energy enough to send forth its emissaries to the ends of the earth; men who will endure all privations and bear all perils to persuade the nations to embrace it. This, among many other peculiarities which discriminate Christianity from other religions, is one of the most striking, and ought to excite deep reflection. No other religious system manifests, or ever has manifested, this remarkable uniform tendency. How would all Europe be astonished at the appearance of Mahometan Moolahs, or Hindoo Brahmins in London and Paris, sent to persuade us to embrace their religions. Not only have heathen religions never done this, but the religion which cradled Christianity itself, rather restrained than expended its benefits. Judaism received, but hardly welcomed proselytes. Christianity, on the other hand, addresses all "kindreds, people, nations and tongues;" and has, in these our days, especially lifted up its voice in every clime, and is speaking the dialect of nearly every tribe of man. Nothing is more certain than that man will have some religion, and none other makes conquests, and as is too plain. Deism neither will nor can, it is tolerably certain that Christianity, whether true or false, is likely to reign.

And let us not forget what Christianity is now doing; it has (as just said) the power to do what

no other religion does, and what no form of Deism ever attempts to do; it has the power to render those who believe in it intensely anxious to make it triumphant: it sends its agents to the uttermost parts of the earth, and supports them there. And, by doing so, it has reclaimed barbarous tribes to civilization, abolished their idolatry, fixed their language, and given them the elements of all art, literature, and civilization, in giving them the Bible, or in the very process of giving that form to us, as we know, from the remotest isles of Polynesia, a Samoan newspaper, printed entirely by a man, who, only a few years ago, were a set of naked savages, addicted to cannibalism and infanticide, and without the elements of a written language. The paper was printed in a style which (as an English printer truly said) would do no discredit to an English printing office. Not only so; but the same Christianity has the power of immediately inspiring those who receive it again to aid in its further diffusion, and to hand on the torch which has kindled the halcyon fire on their own hearths and altars. Only last year, I observed that the same process of giving that form to our missionary societies was derived from the converts it had made—from New Zealanders, and Tahitians, and Hotentots, and Bechuannas; and other societies were aided from similar sources in a similar proportion! These simple facts are worth a thousand platform speeches. Let our Deistical "magicians" do the like by their enchantments. No, they can talk and write (as Harrington says) "book-revelations against book-revelation," and dream their many-colored, ever-impracticable dreams of human regeneration, and that is all. Till Deism does something more, Christianity has not much to fear from it.—*Defence of Eclipses of Faith.*

THE APOSTLES: THEIR LIVES, WIVES, AND CHILDREN.—Great deal is said in the ecclesiastical history about the Apostles themselves, but very little about their families. In this view a French writer asks the following questions: Were the Apostles married? did they have children? what became of these children? where did these Apostles live? where did they write? what became of them? did they have a district? did they exercise a civil ministry? did they have a jurisdiction over the faithful? were they bishops? did they have a hierarchy, rites and ceremonies? These questions are curious, and the reply involves a great deal of obscure antiquarian learning.

1. Were the Apostles married? There exists a letter attributed to St. Ignatius, the martyr, in which are these decisive words: "I remember your sanctity like that of Elijah, of Jeremiah, of John the Baptist, of the chosen disciples, Timothy, Titus, Erosodius Clement, who lived in chastity; but I do not blame those others, happy in the bonds of marriage, and I hope to be found worthy of God, in following their traces in His reign, after the example of Isaac, Jacob, Isaiah, and of the other prophets, such as Peter and Paul, and other Apostles who were married."

Some scholars have pretended that the name of St. Ignatius is interpolated in this famous letter. Turin, and all those who have seen the letters of St. Ignatius in Latin, in the Library of the Vatican, acknowledge that the name of St. Paul is found in them. And Baronius does not deny that this passage exists in some Greek manuscripts; but he pretends that these were added by some modern Greek.

There was in the ancient library of Oxford a manuscript in Greek of these letters of St. Ignatius, in which these words are found. I do not know whether it was burned at the taking of Oxford by Cromwell. There is still one in Latin in the same library, in which the words "*Paulus et Apostolorum*" are effaced, but in such a manner that the ancient characters may be easily read. It is certain that this passage is contained in many editions of the letters.

The disputes concerning the marriage of St. Paul may be very frivolous. What matters it whether he was married or not, if the other Apostles were so? We have only to read his first Epistle to the Corinthians to prove that he might have been married like the others:—"Have we not a right to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other Apostles, and of the brethren of the Lord and Cephas?" Or I only and Barnabas, have not we the right to forbear working?" Who goes a warfare any time at his own charges?" It is evident from this passage that all the Apostles were married as well as St. Paul.

And St. Clement, of Alexandria, declares positively that St. Paul had a wife. The Romish discipline has changed, but that does not prevent there having been other customs in the primitive times.

2. Of the Children of the Apostles? We know very little concerning their families. St. Clement, of Alexandria, says that Peter had children; that Philip had daughters whom he married; the Acts of the Apostles speak of the four daughters of St. Philip, who prophesied. It is believed that there was one married, and that she was St. Hermione.

Eusebius reports that Nicholas, chosen by the Apostles to cooperate with St. Stephen in the holy ministry, had a very beautiful wife, of whom he was jealous. The Apostles having reproached him for his fault, he corrected himself, and bringing his wife before them, said—"I am willing to relinquish her, let him who will take her to wife." The