

The Christian Spiritualist.

EDITED BY GEORGE SEXTON, LL.D.

"BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING
THE CHIEF CORNER STONE."—EPH. II. 20.

No. 57.—Vol. V., 9.

SEPTEMBER, 1875.

PRICE 2d.

Published on the first of each month, Price Sixpence.

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Leaves from Editor's Note-Book.

—:O:—

I STATED in the Notes of last month's issue that a tolerably long report of my lecture at Morley appeared in the *Morley Observer*. The report contained most of the passages of Scripture in full which I had quoted, amongst which the one referring to the conversion of St. Paul was somewhat inaccurately rendered, inasmuch as it contained the phrase, a "dull light," referring to the light seen by those who were with the apostle on the occasion. This error—which was none of mine—formed a peg on which to hang a string of objections furnished in a letter to the paper by some person signing himself J. L. The letter itself was a most miserable affair, displaying neither sense nor grammar, and showing the writer to be ignorant alike of Spiritualism, the teachings of the Scriptures, and of logic. Had it not been for the error of the reporter before referred to, I should have passed it by with the contempt that it merited. As it was, however, I sent the following reply, which appeared in the next issue of the paper:—

To the Editor of the "*Morley Observer*."

SIR,—I have no intention at present of entering upon a defence of Spiritualism in your columns, and still less should I think of replying to the erudite criticism which your anonymous correspondent bestows upon the lecture that I recently gave in Morley, and thus to lessen in ever so small a degree the extreme interest that your readers must feel in his profound remarks concerning the doings of the devil—a personage whose career he is probably much better acquainted with than I am, or can ever hope to be. I merely ask you to permit me to say that the phrase "dull light" in the case of St. Paul's conversion is an error of your reporter or printer. I read the entire passage exactly as it stands in the authorised version of the Bible. I would add that in my lecture I studiously treated the Scriptures with that reverence which the inspired word of God demands, a course of procedure which your correspondent would have done well to imitate rather than to indulge in flippant remarks about Ezekiel's "lug." I would also suggest to J. L. that before he rushes into print in future he should learn to express himself in a manner less open to misunderstanding. To "keep losing articles" is to say the least of it somewhat equivocal in its meaning, especially when we "could not tell where they had gone to," even whilst we were keeping them.

If any person competent to discuss the question of Spiritualism chooses to enter the list in your columns, I shall be very happy to deal with him to the best of my ability, despite the great pressure on my time. Such an antagonist, however, must sign his real name, as I cannot afford to fight with anonymous men of straw.—Yours, etc.,

LONDON, Aug. 2nd.

GEORGE SEXTON.

The obscurity of the language of J. L., and the fog in which he evidently found himself when attempting to set forth his views on this subject, called forth another letter, which being from an anti-Spiritualist I may also copy:—

To the Editor of the *Morley Observer*.

SIR,—Will you be kind enough to allow me through the medium of your paper, to ask your correspondent, J. L. to thoroughly explain the meaning of the following extract taken from his letter of July 31st, entitled—"Dr. Sexton as a Scripture Exponent?" The extract to which I refer, and which your correspondent styles a *statement*, reads as follows:—"A merely created human spirit cannot act upon matter apart from itself—that is, if it be not united to it." As the foregoing is somewhat ambiguous to me an explanation would greatly oblige yours, an anti-Spiritualist,

FARSLEY, Aug. 3rd, 1875.

J. PARKINSON.

In fact, no one could read the letter signed J. L., without coming to the conclusion that the writer was a most illiterate person, and totally unable to express his ideas—if he had any in his head—in such English as could be understood by any one else.

On the 25th, the subject of my discourse at the Cavenish Rooms was "Sincerity," a topic which created a considerable amount of interest, and was listened to with great attention by those who were present. On the following Sunday I gave, by special request, the lecture that I had previously delivered at Morley, on the "Relation of Spiritualism to the Teachings of the Bible." The audience on this occasion was larger than usual, a goodly number of Spiritualists being present.

The recent death of my father has been already made known by announcement in the Spiritual papers. He passed away from earth on Wednesday, the 4th ult., having just completed his seventy-third year. Throughout his life he was one of the strongest and healthiest men to be anywhere met with, up to the time that he was attacked by the malady that eventually carried him off—about two years since. For the last few months he suffered intensely, and his death was therefore—although somewhat unexpected—not much to be regretted. Spiritualism is a great consolation on occasions of this kind, but still we cannot see those near and dear to us pass away without experiencing some heartfelt grief. We are not sorry as men without hope, we know that we shall meet our lost friends again; indeed, we feel that it is quite possible that they are ever near us. Still, there is the pain of parting, which nothing can altogether destroy. As I gazed on the inanimate clay that had once encased the active spirit of my father, I thought of the superiority of the views of those who believe in a future life over the cold, dismal, cheerless creed of materialism which recognizes no meeting again when once death has snapped the thread of earthly life; and I brushed away my tears, lifted my heart to God, and exclaimed—

"Death's arrows like the shuttle flee,
And dark howe'er life's night may be,
Beyond the grave I'll meet with thee."

Then came to my mind the nobler consolation still; grandest of truths ever put into human words; source of brightest comfort to millions of our race, when nothing else could cheer them:—"I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me though he were dead yet shall he live." Ay, thought I, this is worth all the philosophy that was ever written, and all the science to which even the fertile womb of the future can give birth.

My father had spent the greater part of his life in the little Norfolk village in which he died, and he was highly respected by all classes of persons. On Sunday the 11th, we consigned his mortal remains to the earth, in the small but somewhat picturesque church-yard, where—

"The rude forefathers of the hamlet slept."

Several other members of our family repose in this burying ground, but the place had become so full that there was no space to dig another grave near them. I consequently selected a fresh spot in a secluded part of the ground, beneath the waving branches of an old oak tree, familiar to me in the days of my boyhood. Here we deposited all that was mortal of my father, and here we have reserved a place for her who for fifty-one years was his loving wife, when her turn shall come again to join him from whom she is now but temporarily separated. The funeral service was read—and very impressively—by the Rev. W. A. Walpole Keppel, B.A., rector of the parish; and almost the entire village turned out to show

the last mark of respect to one who had lived amongst them so long, and who had ended his days in their midst.

On the Sunday that I was absent my place was taken at Cavendish Rooms by my friend, Mr. Thomas Shorter, who delivered a very able discourse on "Religion and Theology." The attendance was, I hear, not large, but all who were present were much interested in Mr. Shorter's lecture.

I returned to London on the Tuesday following the funeral, and on Sunday 15th, resumed my place at the regular services at Cavendish Rooms. The congregation was large, especially considering the time of year, and the heat of the weather, circumstances most prejudicial to any kind of public meeting. These services have become, as I anticipated they would, a success, and should they be continued throughout the winter, it may be reasonably expected that the room will be filled. The expenses are, of course, heavy, which during the summer months is a great drawback, but by the kind assistance of friends who have subscribed for seats, I have been enabled up to the present time to surmount this difficulty, and a few more donations will carry me through the quarter. I shall require also a fund for the payment of the organ, and shall be glad of any donations for that purpose, however small. It is extremely probable that I shall pay a visit to the United States during the present winter, but I do not intend on that account to give up the Cavendish Rooms, if friends will only assist me in carrying them on. I shall be able, I have no doubt, to provide substitutes during my absence, and when I return I shall need a place to give to the world such thoughts upon the great and important topics that fall within the range of human life, as I may have to offer.

On Sunday, 15th, the subject of my discourse was "Sacred Things," in which I endeavoured to trace the distinction between the Sacred, and what has usually been called the Profane, and to warn Society against that Iconoclasm which seeks, while it cants about progress, to sweep away some of the divinest truths ever made known to man. I pointed out that the great want of the present age was Life, high spiritual divine life, flowing into the human soul from God, and leading man to see and feel more of the divine mysteries than all the science of the ages could unfold to him. As, however, I shall hereafter publish the discourse, it is not necessary to give a fuller description of it on this occasion.

Some questions have been put to me respecting my Sunday services, prompted, perhaps, more by curiosity than by anything else, but which, coming occasionally from persons who are friendly to my public movements require some kind of answer. I have been asked whether I consider the discourses that I am in the habit of giving on Sunday evenings sermons or lectures, and, whether I look upon the place of meeting as a church or a lecture-hall, and if the former to what denomination I belong. A few weeks ago, the Editor of the *Spiritualist* took occasion to criticise the hymns that I am in the habit of using, one of which he considered favoured "the dogmas of eternal punishment and total depravity," and "led the singers to describe themselves as wretched worms," and ended his criticism by expressing himself as desirous of knowing whether I considered myself "a wretched worm." I may remark that the term "wretched worm" does not occur in the hymn-book, the words used there being "worthless worm." Now, although I dare say I am in common with most other people should resent an expression of this kind if applied to me by another human being, I am quite prepared to use it—and with the most heartfelt sincerity—to describe myself when addressing

as when singing the hymn, we are supposed to be, the "Righteous Judge" of all created beings. Nor do I see any inconsistency in this. As a man amongst other men I am in the habit of asserting my rights, claiming the respect which I consider due to me, and resenting any insult which the application to me of any degrading epithet might be intended to convey. In the presence of a God of transcendent purity and unspeakable holiness, I bow my head in the deepest humility, and confess my unworthiness by using even lower terms than "a worthless worm" to describe my state and my feelings respecting myself. If the Editor of the *Spiritualist* does not understand this mental condition, I am sorry, but cannot help it. Millions of simple-minded Christians find no difficulty in the matter. I may say, however, that the hymn in question is one which does not on the whole commend itself to my judgment, and had I compiled the book it would probably have been omitted. It was selected to besing on the occasion referred to by Mr. Williams, one of the leading members of my choir, who, probably judging as a singer and not as a theologian, was guided more by the metre than by the words. My views on the dogma of eternal punishment are pretty well-known, as I have delivered several discourses on the subject, one of which was printed in the *Christian Spiritualist* for April last; and human depravity—whether the ordinary theological method of accounting for it be the correct one or not—is in some sort of sense a palpable fact, the existence of which we are unfortunately too frequently made aware of in our journey through life. The discourses given on the Sunday evenings I have not called either sermons or lectures, because, strictly speaking, they are neither the one nor the other, or rather, perhaps, they are a combination of both, and might be not inappropriately described by the compound word sermon-lecture. The term discourse is very comprehensive, and answers the purpose very well. On the one hand it gives an idea of something less hortatory than sermons usually are, and on the other it avoids the secular associations of the lecture. I care very little, however, what term is applied to these public teachings. If it pleases my friends or my enemies to say that my Sunday evening ministrations takes the form of preaching rather than lecturing, let it be so. The discourses certainly have an essentially religious bearing, and they are always accompanied with a religious service. I have made this latter a feature from the first and shall adhere to it strictly. I have not used the term "church" at present in connection with these services, nor have I organized any kind of a society for carrying them on. I have taken the entire responsibility on my own shoulders, and with it, of course, the sole management; what shape the movement may hereafter assume I cannot tell. I was ordained to the work of the Christian ministry early in life, and may possibly come again to occupy the position of pastor of a Church. I have already had offers to that effect, but for the present I prefer to remain as I am, an independent teacher of religious and spiritual truth. As to the denomination to which I belong, I have said a score of times that I consider sectarianism one of the curses of the age and the greatest enemy to the spread of religion. Every lover of freedom—every true Protestant in fact, who sacredly clings to the right of private judgment—should use his utmost endeavours to remove the absurd barriers that have been erected between the different denominations, and to bring about a unity amongst all those who profess to be followers of Christ. Each person may hold firmly and prize dearly those opinions which he has arrived at after serious and thoughtful examination, but assuredly these need not form obstacles to his cordial co-operation with other men in the promulgation of

principles upon which they are all agreed. A Christian Church should be a Christian Church, and that term ought to be sufficient to describe it with, perhaps, the prefix of the adjective. "Free" to distinguish it from State churches, and with a view to show the broad principles upon which it is formed. Bailey, in his great poems, makes Festus remark :—

"I am an omnist, and believe in all
Religions—fragments of one golden world
Yet to be relit in its place in Heaven—
For all are relatively true and false,
As evidence and earnest of the heart
To those who practice, or have faith in them.
The absolutely true religion is
In Heaven only, yea in Deity."

He then goes on to say most appropriately and most truthfully what has been often divorced from the previous lines by anti-Christian writers.

"But foremost of all studies, let me not
Forget to bid thee learn Christ's faith by heart.
Study its truths, and practice its behests;
They are the purest, sweetest, peace-fulest,
Of all immortal reasons or records;
They will be with thee when all else have gone.
Mind, body, passion, all wear out—not faith,
Nor truth."

There is published monthly in one of the large towns in England a periodical whose pages are devoted to the intellectual and salutary task of advocating smoking, chewing, and snuffing, with a view to puff off the wares of its proprietor, a dealer in tobacco. Now, the Editor of this paper seems to consider it a part of his duty to vilify and malign all persons who do not bow down and worship the black fetid and poisonous idol Nicotine. It is not sufficient for him that he be left free to indulge his own taste for tobacco-juice to his heart's content, but any persons who dare to differ from him on the question of the desirability of narcotising one's brain and steeping one's senses in a state of semi-stupor by the use of this drug, must expect not one to have tobacco-smoke puffed into their faces, but to find their characters blackened by unfounded slanders. The oracle who presides over the destinies of this trade circular seems to fancy himself a sort of Briareus, whose fierce and terrible aspect is calculated to frighten into submission all mankind outside the far-famed tobacco manufactory, from the precincts of which he issues his literary wares in company with "Tobacco juice for hopwash." To such an extent does this poor churl allow himself to be actuated in his behaviour towards others by the fact of, whether or not they use tobacco that his conduct would be perfectly inexplicable, did we not conclude that he is acting under the orders of the proprietor of the factory, whose servant he is, and that the dignity of the establishment is supposed to be supported by these rather eccentric and very unjustifiable means. For some years past, I have been on what might be called friendly terms with this man, that is, I have not known him intimately, but he has occasionally written me polite and civil letters, sent me his journal regularly each month, and once when I visited the town where he resides, he introduced himself to me and shook me cordially by the hand. This is all changed now. In the Cardinal number of his bantling I am made the subject, not of fair criticism—for that I should be the last man in the world to object to—but of vile and mendacious calumnies, the object of which is to blacken my character and damage my reputation in the eyes of persons whose good opinion I value and whose friendship I prize. And the cause of this sudden and marked

change of attitude towards me is to be found in the fact that I have recently given up the use of tobacco. Really we live in strange times. A man may not now-a-days even reform his diet or cut off indulgences which he may discover to be injurious to his health and ruinous to his pocket, without running the risk of having his reputation blasted by the dissemination of foul lies put into circulation by the miserable wretches who pick up a living in connection with the abuses thus silently and indirectly attacked. If smoking tobacco were ever so wise and salutary a custom at least you would imagine one might in this country at least please himself as to whether he chose to indulge in the practice or not, without laying himself open to be pelted with mud by every dirty rapscallion whose small soul finds its natural food in slander, and who revels in it all the more when it is false. There are people, however, who seem to fancy that when a man changes his views or practices, especially if in the doing so he runs somewhat in opposition to the general opinions and habits of society—the wretched God-forgetting society of modern days—he is fair game for every snarling cur to yelp at, and a fitting subject for every crossing-sweeper to bespatter with mud. The churlish scribbler in question, in his extreme desire to spit forth his foul venom at me, rakes the sewers and gutters of scandal, and drags out a lying story twenty years old, which he, coward-like, puts into the form of an innuendo by asking if I am the person referred to, since, if so, why, then,—people who work with me must be warned, and he—the immaculate scribe—will not soil his columns (*sic*) by any further notice of me, or my performances. He would have saved his small soul the crime of injustice, of malicious slander, and of mendacious calumny—small sins, probably, in his idea, but of fearful magnitude in the eyes of the great Judge of all—had he avoided altogether a notice of me and of my performances. Despite the fact, however, that I and my doings are thus summarily dismissed as likely to soil the columns—ye Gods!—of this elegant advocate of the stinking plant that even the proprietors of the paper sell for "hopwash" to poison vermin, he does again and again return to the charge of his base and cowardly attack. The story that he has to tell—and which, if true, would, he considers, render my very name a contamination to his pure and chaste columns—is simply this, that twenty years ago, or thereabouts—that part of the tale, however, he carefully omits—I published, or threatened to publish—for this varies considerably according to different versions—a book exposing certain evil practices in society, and that afterwards I withdrew the work from circulation on receiving a money consideration in the shape of an annuity. This story was originally invented in a somewhat different form by a scoundrel who called himself my friend—most calumnies originate, I believe, with false friends—and having been put into circulation by him, has done duty in one shape or another for twenty years, past as a small stock in trade of a few wretched scandal-mongers, who could not live were they deprived of the only gratification their miserable souls are capable of enjoying, that of disseminating calumny about their betters. Although false I have seldom taken the trouble to contradict it, since a public man who rushes into print to defend himself against the petty attacks of every insignificant and loathsome viper that crawls about his feet, leaving its filthy slime behind it in its track, will find his entire time occupied in most unprofitable labour. I have always considered it better—and I am still of the same opinion—for a man to let his every-day life speak for his character, and to leave his reputation to be judged of by his daily actions as seen by those with whom he

comes into immediate contact, and who, therefore, know him intimately. And I should not depart from my usual custom of keeping silent now through anything that so small and contemptible a print as this apologist for tobacco-juice might say, were it not for the fact—only known to myself and a few dear personal friends—that this same story has been used very recently considerably to my hurt amongst people whom I very much respect. In referring to it now, once for all—for I shall probably not mention it again—I have an eye mainly to correct the erroneous views of these latter people, rather than to refute the slanders of the jolterhead of the Tobacco Factory, whose good or bad opinions of my doings or myself, are perfectly indifferent to me. The story has recently increased very considerably in magnitude, and will probably end by making me out ultimately, to have committed a murder in order to secure the fictitious annuity, and perhaps to have been executed at Newgate some years since. A poet has said of tales of the kind, what is almost universally true in the experience of mankind:—

“Flying rumours gathered as they roll’d,
And scarce the tale was sooner heard than told;
And all who told it added something new,
And all who heard it made enlargement, too;
In ev’ry ear it spread, on ev’ry tongue it grew.”

Suppose the story were as true as it is false, and of ten times more heinous a character than any one will pretend it to be, surely no person but a villainously disposed calumniator who revels in defamation of character, and breathes slander as his vital air, would rake it up after twenty years, for the sole purpose of injuring one who had done him no wrong. If every man were to have his entire past life—all the faults and failings of his youth, the errors in judgment and in conduct of boyhood, the mistakes, amounting sometimes, perhaps, to sins against God if not against society, committed in early dawning manhood—brought up to confront him at every turn that he might take in the road of life, few of us would perhaps find that we had been so altogether blameless as to give us a relish for the ordeal. The moral scavengers who are ever hunting after some foulness that they can associate with the past life of their fellow men, are of so infamous a brood that they deserve to be simply kicked out of society like some venomous reptile that crawls across the path of honest men, and spits its poison in the faces of innocent children. Yet there are many such persons; and what is worse, they add lies to their slanders, with a view to make their hellish work more complete.

“Slander,

Whose edge is sharper than the sword; whose tongue
Outvenoms all the worms of the Nile; whose breath
Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie
All corners of the world. Kings, queens, and states,
Maids, matrons, nay, the secrets of the grave
This viperous slander enters.”

In my life, whatever other faults I may have committed, I have never acted meanly for pay. I have too great a contempt for money to do anything wrong to obtain it. My friends all know that my disposition leads me too often into the opposite extreme, that of allowing sharpers to impose upon me and rob me. That I should have purchased an annuity in the way stated in this detestable story, is so utterly preposterous that those who are best acquainted with me would never deem the charge worth one moment's consideration, the whole thing being so foreign to my nature as to render the tale incredible. The best answer, however, to the charge that I can

make, is to state that I have no annuity of any kind, derived either from that imaginary source or from any other. I have just what my arduous and honest toil brings me in to live upon, and not one farthing more. And in my past life I have never received a sixpence but what I had earned by my labours, and to which I was therefore justly entitled in point of law, save and except a few presents, occasionally given me by those persons who have approved of my work, and were desirous of aiding me in carrying it on—and even in this latter case, whenever it has occurred, it has always been to recoup me for an outlay in some public cause, which I could not afford to sustain.
G. SEXTON.

Letters & Communications.

LETTERS for the Editor, Contributions, Subscriptions, Books for Review, and all communications having reference either to the literary, or the business department of the CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALIST, must be addressed to the Editor, 75, Fleet-street, London, E.C.

All correspondents who send articles relating to sittings, entrancements, or spiritual phenomena of any kind, must give dates, localities, and names of the persons present for publication. Unless this rule be strictly complied with the communications will not be inserted. It is due to the public, who, from whatever cause or causes, are more or less sceptical about Spiritualism, that they should be furnished with details which they can trace and verify; and if Spiritualists are not willing to submit their statements to this ordeal, they are requested not to send them to the CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALIST.

Communications of every kind must be authenticated by the name and address of the writer. In the pages of the CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALIST as a rule, every article is signed by its respective author. For such articles as are unsigned the Editor alone is responsible.

REJECTED MS. cannot be returned, or letters answered through the post, unless stamps are forwarded to cover the expense.

CONTRIBUTORS are requested to write in a legible hand and on one side of the paper only, and to condense their remarks as much as possible.

THE Christian Spiritualist.

SPIRITUAL FORCES MOVE THE VISIBLE WORLD.”—EMPEDOCLES.

SEPTEMBER, 1875.

PERSONAL AND VALEDICTORY.

In penning these closing observations I shall drop the editorial we and thus get rid for the nonce of those formalities which custom imposes upon journalists in order to place myself more at ease with my readers. It is with considerable pain that I write at all under the circumstances. The editing of this journal has been to me for the past fourteen months a labour of love, and I relinquish the pleasant task with no small amount of grief. The *Christian Spiritualist* has entwined itself about my heart, and I cannot dismiss it to that oblivion where lie buried so many periodicals of every shape, form, and character, without having my feelings considerably moved. However, all of us must bow to the inevitable, and to grieve over that which

cannot be avoided is both useless and vain. It has been a cherished aim with me to make the *Christian Spiritualist* a representative paper—representative of the opinions of considerable numbers of Spiritualists who, while recognizing the great and glorious truths of spirit-communion do not lose sight of the greater and more glorious truths enunciated eighteen hundred years ago by Him who spake as never man spake, before or since. Many Spiritualists are also Christians. This is a fact which no one will for a moment attempt to deny; but strange to say this class of Spiritualists has lent but little aid in supporting the one solitary paper which has represented their views. Indeed, one or two, whose names I need not mention, talked loudly and even extravagantly at the commencement of my connection with the *Christian Spiritualist* of the assistance they intended to render, but have done nothing. They talked, but did not act, or in any way help to support the journal; not even to the extent of subscribing for a single copy. And those who did assist to the utmost of their power were too few to render their aid of any permanent value. Were I possessed of adequate means I should carry on the paper—as I have done—at my own risk and sustain single-handed the loss which it necessarily involves. But as I have to procure my livelihood by that labour which is the most arduous of all toil, and which speedily wears away the physical powers if engaged in unduly, the sweat of the brain, I can hardly be expected to go on losing money which would have to be earned at the risk of damaging my health, and, perhaps, of destroying my life. In coming forward at the first as an advocate of Spiritualism, I sacrificed more than will ever be dreamed of by the outside world, and when to that is added an actual pecuniary loss on my efforts, it must be at once perceived that I am likely to become crushed beneath the overwhelming weight of such heavy responsibilities. The loss which has been incurred by the *Christian Spiritualist* has been very heavy, so heavy in fact that it would have been quite impossible for me to carry on the paper so long but for the liberal assistance rendered me by my much-prized friend Mr. F. R. Young; and even with that it is too heavy to justify me in going on longer unless I saw some prospect of being supported in the future to a greater extent than I have been in the past. Such a prospect I certainly do not see at present, and hence these closing words and the cessation of the journal.

The *Christian Spiritualist* was started in January, 1871, and has now, therefore, been in existence nearly five years. It originated with, and for three years and a half was edited by my old and valued friend Mr. Young. In carrying it on he sacrificed a large sum of money, and what is, perhaps, even worse to bear, a considerable number of his dearest friends. Many members of his congregation left his church in consequence of his public advocacy of Spiritualism, and some of the leading people in the denomination to which he belonged did not fail to discover that he was a much inferior man to what they had formerly supposed him to be, and to act accordingly. The religious world which had held him in such high esteem for so many years frowned upon him when it was discovered

that he edited a Spiritual paper; and Spiritualists themselves gave him but little encouragement to continue to fight in their cause. When the *Christian Spiritualist* was handed over to me, the circulation was exceedingly small, and the loss upon each number issued, of course, considerable. It may be asked here, and very naturally, why I undertook the responsibilities of a paper in such a condition. I reply that in the first place I believed that the energy that I should bring to bear upon the journal and the publicity that it might obtain by means of the numerous lectures that I was then in the habit of giving would so increase its circulation, as altogether to change the aspect of affairs in this respect; and that in the second place several well-known Spiritualists promised to use their utmost efforts to assist me, and thus led me to believe that if the publication could not be made at once remunerative, there would still be no difficulty in obtaining such assistance as would guarantee me against any actual loss. I threw my entire energies into the paper, I devoted a great portion of my time to its production, I increased its size and published in its columns the orations entire that I was giving with considerable success to the public. The result was that the circulation rose rapidly and the prospect became so cheering that, had I not been compelled to fight against such terrible odds, the journal would, I doubt not, speedily have become a pecuniary success. The paper found its way into Christian families where Spiritualism had never been heard of before, and its articles were frequently referred to by periodicals which lie altogether outside the ranks of our movement. All that was needed to make it a success, in the commercial sense of the term, was an amount of capital, by no means large. That, however, I do not possess, and hence the failure. I was willing to give my time, although that I could ill afford, but could not do more. I have an arm-full of letters congratulating me on my efforts, complimenting me on the style of the journal, and expressing the warmest desire for my success. All this is very gratifying, but will not pay the printers' bill. I am, therefore, as will be seen reluctantly compelled to abandon an enterprise which has proved to me a source of great pleasure, as far as the labour is concerned, but in other respects, a cause of considerable anxiety and pecuniary embarrassment.

That Spiritualism will be to some extent injured by the discontinuance of the only journal which advocated its claims upon Christian principles, there can be no kind of doubt. I speak not here of my own work as such, but of the fact that Christian Spiritualism had an organ devoted to its advocacy which exists no longer. Of course this will be considered a small triumph for those Spiritualists who object to Christianity, but it will damage the movement, notwithstanding. I cannot shut my eyes to the fact, which I may as well here state once for all, that the majority of Spiritualists are not only not believers in Christianity, but that they are, to a large extent, antagonistic to revealed religion. A man who occupies a conspicuous position among the Spiritualists of London—himself a Christian—has frequently declared, both in public and in private, that the Spiritualists are divided

about into equal parts of Christian and anti-Christian. I have no hesitation in saying that such an estimate is utterly incorrect; the anti-Christian Spiritualists far outnumber those who recognise the Divine element in Christianity. Of course I am reckoning those outside the pale of the Christian religion who speak of Christ as a wonderful medium or an illustrious Jewish reformer, possessing great Spiritual gifts—where they would probably arrange themselves were they asked the question, and if not, where they would certainly be placed by the members of every Christian church in the world. As a matter of course, I am sorry to be compelled to admit that such is the case, but, nevertheless, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact, and the truth demands that it should be stated.

In this circumstance I discover not only the lack of support of the *Christian Spiritualist*, but of myself generally, since it became known how definite my views were on this question. When I first entered the ranks of the Spiritual movement, invitations came to me from all quarters to deliver lectures, which, of course, was natural, considering the position that I had occupied before the public for twenty-five years. For some time I declined all these offers, as I had made up my mind to remain quiet until my views which were then in a state of rapid transition, should be more matured. At last, however, the pressure became very strong, which, added to the fact that I thought I saw it my duty to state publicly the reasons that had induced me to change my opinions, I consented to appear on the spiritual platform. Something over two years ago, as is well-known, I was engaged by the directors of the Crystal Palace to deliver two lectures on Spiritualism in that building, which being the first and only time that this unpopular cause obtained a hearing in such a place, gave rise in consequence to a considerable sensation among the outside public. From that time I received such numerous invitations to lecture on Spiritualism that my time became pretty much engaged. My contest with the conjurors will be fresh in the recollection of all persons. I was indignant that these men should daily be receiving the credit of exposing Spiritualism by means of their clumsy tricks, and I consequently determined to expose the Exposers. In doing this I incurred considerable expense, and gave to the subject a very large amount of time which I could ill afford. I, however, succeeded in showing a large portion of the public how these tricks were done, and in driving the Conjurors to resort to new ones, which new ones are no more difficult of explanation than those which they have supplanted. In engaging in this work I raised the ire, as might have been expected, of the whole juggling fraternity, and became subject to the vilest abuse from them which malice and rage could prompt. They printed lying statements regarding my character and past career, which were distributed clandestinely in towns where I went to lecture. They sent anonymous letters, full of the most atrocious falsehoods, to the leading men in such towns, and to others who might be likely to be interested in my welfare. By this means they did me an amount of harm, the extent of which it will, perhaps, always be impossible exactly to ascertain. Suffice it

to say that I have been a severe sufferer in a pecuniary sense from their malicious attacks upon my character, and I have no doubt that to-day I should have been many hundreds of pounds richer had I left them alone. The cruellest part of this affair is that some of the Spiritualists who ought to have been foremost in defending me against these false and malicious slanders, have occasionally amused themselves by making them more widely known. Some few instances in which these mendacious calumnies have been used to my hurt by people whose duty it was to repel them with scorn, have occurred very recently indeed; however, I wish to make no further remarks on this score, and will, therefore, let it pass. When I connected myself with the *Christian Spiritualist*, and began to advocate Christian views, my lecturing engagements became like what used to be said of angels' visits—few and far between. I mention this not by way of complaint, but simply to state a fact, which fact will tend to show why it is that I am now compelled to relinquish the publication of the *Christian Spiritualist*.

The *Spiritual Magazine* I shall still continue, at least for the present. It is the oldest of the periodicals devoted to the movement, having been in existence now for nearly sixteen years. It contains a record of all the important phenomena having any relation to Spiritualism occurring either within the sphere of the movement, or outside its domain, and it would be a great pity for it to cease. I may as well state that it is not self-supporting, and that I require some assistance if it is to be carried on. There are, however, probably persons who will not object to help to sustain the *Spiritual Magazine*, whatever might be their views regarding the *Christian Spiritualist*.

This explanation turns out to be more personal, and much longer than I had intended when I commenced writing it. It is, nevertheless, perhaps, after all necessary in order that my exact position may be understood. Spiritualism I prize as one of the greatest and most glorious revelations that has ever been made in the history of the world, and it is only with the bitterest grief that I relinquish any part of my labour in advocating its claims. Further explanation is, however, unnecessary, and I, therefore, conclude these observations, and in so doing close the career of the *Christian Spiritualist*.

GEORGE SEXTON.

Sept. 1st., 1875.

MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

Its Phenomenal, Scientific, Philosophical, and other Aspects. Two Lectures delivered in the Crystal Palace, on Wednesday and Friday, April 2nd and 4th, 1873.

BY THE EDITOR.

II.

Facts in abundance exist by which each of these classes of phenomena can be demonstrated beyond the possibility of doubt. There is no science known that is supported by a larger number of facts than that of Spiritualism. On every hand evidence of an overwhelming character can be produced in its favour. In arriving at the conclusion that the spirits of those who have passed away

do communicate with us, we have been guided by the very strictest principles of scientific investigation and philosophical reasoning. Those who complain of the wilfulness of our views are generally persons who persistently refuse either to become eye-witnesses of our facts or to allow us to adopt the same means of arriving at a theory to explain them that is resorted to in every other branch of science. I am content to take my stand on Spiritualism as a science, to have its laws investigated in the spirit of scientific enquiry, and its conclusions tested by the very strictest induction. I ask no more than this, which is conceded to every other discovery, and am perfectly willing to abide by the result. There are large numbers of facts which I in common with thousands of other people have seen again and again, which we maintain admit of no explanation, but that which recognises in them the operation of spiritual law. If the theory of Spiritualism were nothing more than an hypothesis, invented for the purpose of explaining the phenomena, seeing that it covers the ground occupied by all the facts, and is the only theory that does so, its truth would be as legitimate an induction as any other scientific theory at present considered thoroughly established. But it is more than this. The agency by which the phenomena are produced is not reached by philosophical reasoning alone, of however perfect a character, but by demonstration which no amount of sophistry can set aside. Our ears, our eyes, and our senses in general, testify as certainly and as accurately to the operation of spiritual agents as to the action of material organisations. Nor does it avail for an objector to say, "I have not seen the facts to which you refer and cannot therefore be expected to give credence to your statements respecting them." We reply, that the circumstance of your not having been an eye-witness of the phenomena is clearly no fault of ours, but the result of your own negligence in not having sought for opportunities of making yourself practically acquainted with the matter. But the very fact that you have not seen the phenomena places you beyond the pale of those competent to form an opinion on the subject. By your own confession you know nothing of the matter, and your opinion is, therefore, worthless. That any one who has not seen the facts, however, must necessarily be a disbeliever in the whole thing is a most unwarrantable position to take. How many people among the public at large know anything whatever from practical experience of the facts of electricity, magnetism, chemistry, biology, or any other branch of science? Not one in five thousand. And yet those who are utterly ignorant of scientific phenomena never dream of rejecting the theories which men of science have invented to explain the facts with which they have had continually to deal. It is usually considered sufficient that certain men, who have devoted a large portion of their lives to the investigation of the various branches of science, should have satisfied themselves of the genuineness of the facts they have investigated, and the legitimate character of the theory considered necessary to explain them. In Spiritualism we claim the same liberty. We have seen the phenomena, and have thoroughly and critically examined the facts, and we are the proper persons to judge of the nature of the agency by which they have been produced. The safeguard against deception or imposition in the latter case is the same as in the former, *viz.*, the opportunity which every one has, if the inclination be present, of thoroughly examining the matter for himself.

Our opponents comprise two distinct classes of persons—first, those who will not take the trouble to investigate the subject, or listen to what may be said in its favour, who tell you candidly that they take no interest in the matter,

and that nothing in the world shall convince them of the truth of the theory that we propound; and, secondly, those who, having seen some of the facts upon which Spiritualism is based, are prepared to admit the truth of certain of the phenomena, but hold that they can all be accounted for by some material law, and that therefore the spirit-hypothesis is uncalled for, to say the least of it. The conduct of this latter class is, of course, more commendable than that of the former, although their reasoning, as I shall endeavour to show, is very defective. Those who will not take the trouble to examine the matter are, of course, not likely to be convinced, but then they are, judging by their conduct, a class of persons not calculated to be of much service to any movement. Those who, having seen some of the phenomena, are prepared to explain it all by a theory of their own, are in a fair way to become Spiritualists. If they will only push their investigations further, they will not be long in discovering that phenomena take place in abundance that can be explained upon no other principle than that of spirit agency.*

Reviews of Books.

All the books and publications reviewed in these pages may be obtained at our office, 75, Fleet-street, London, E.C., or will be sent by post on application by letter enclosing published price.

THE LATE J. W. JACKSON ON MAN. (a)

THE first edition of this little volume we believe was issued in separate parts during the life-time of the author, and a new edition having been called for, a most valuable and interesting introduction has been written by Mrs. Jackson, containing a short sketch of the life of her late husband, and the little volume under consideration has been issued by Mr. Burns. Anything from Mr. Jackson's pen was always highly acceptable, and sure to command a large sale during his lifetime, and now that he is gone his works are likely to be all the more prized. He never wrote without having something to say that was worth reading on the various topics that he dealt with. His knowledge of Ethnology was profound, and his acquaintance with the various other branches of Anthropology was such as to entitle him to speak with authority. The book under consideration will well repay perusal, and we sincerely trust that it will have a large sale. The profits, should there be any, will prove, we doubt not, highly acceptable to the widow of the talented author.

DR. ASA MAHAN ON THE PHENOMENA OF SPIRITUALISM. (b)

THIS work, although written against Spiritualism, is a calm and dispassionate production, and displays a spirit of fairness which is seldom to be met with from opponents. Its tone presents a striking contrast to most of the violent and unreasoning tirades on the same subject. The author seems to show a desire to ascertain the truth on this question, and we can only regret that he did not seek further opportunities for personal investigation. A great deal of what he has said he has obtained from second-hand information, which is usually worth little in cases of this kind. And after all he finds a considerable number of phenomena which he has no theory to account for, and of which he attempts to give no explanation. Spiritualism has clearly very little to fear from opposition of so weak a character.

* The remaining portion of these Lectures will be found in the *Spiritual Magazine* for May, June, July and August of the present year.

(a) "Man Contemplated Physically, Morally, Intellectually, and Spiritually." By the Late J. W. Jackson. With Memoir by his Wife. London: J. Burns, 15, Southampton-row.

(b) "The Phenomena of Spiritualism Scientifically Explained and Exposed." By Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D. London: Hodder & Stoughton, Paternoster-row.

THE [AMERICAN] SPIRITUAL MAGAZINE. (c)

In noticing the first number of this Magazine some months since, we took occasion, while praising the general contents, to express our regret that Dr. Watson had selected a title which was likely to mislead, since the oldest and best-established of all the periodicals devoted to Spiritualism, and which circulated largely in America, was also known by the same name. We have now a much more serious complaint to make. In the August number the principal article is entitled, "Christianity—Spiritualism—Science," and on reading it we find pages and pages taken almost verbatim from Dr. Sexton's Oration on the "Claims of Modern Spiritualism upon Public Attention." Even the divisions of the subject are copied from the Oration almost unaltered. With all this Dr. Sexton's name is not mentioned, nor is the slightest intimation given either by inverted commas, or in any other way, that the matter thus plagiarised is not original. We are perfectly well aware that this thing is regularly done by small American writers, but we scarcely expected that Dr. Watson would have descended to so unjustifiable a means of procuring matter for his Magazine.

MR. HAZARD'S SPIRITUAL COMMUNION TRACTS. (d)

THESE are four small publications containing matter of the greatest possible interest to Spiritualists which has been given by spirits through reliable mediums. They have had a large circulation in America, and are certainly deserving of being widely known in this country. We have received a large supply, and they can, therefore, be obtained at our office, 75, Fleet-street, for 6d. each, or we will send the whole four, post free, on receipt of 1s. 6d. in stamps.

Open Page.

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[Under this heading we allow correspondents to state their own views in their own way; the Editor, therefore, cannot be held responsible for the sentiments expressed. Of course, care will always be taken to prevent the introduction of personalities, and of language and matters likely to prove offensive.]

SHORT EXTRACTS OF SPIRIT MESSAGES GIVEN THROUGH THE MEDIUMSHIP OF F. J. THEOBALD, On June 3rd, 1875.

With reference to "Moody and Sankey," the spirits wrote:—

"We from our spirit-home are watching with deep interest the revival now going on in your earth. It is the spirits at work to arouse men from their deep indifference and wilful wickedness.

"In some natures the depths can only be sounded by some startling and, to you, repulsive form of theology.

"No, we do not like to see the love of God kept in the background, and His wrath presented as the means of drawing folks to Him. Far, far better, for them to be led to the loving Father, than frightened to the so-called 'angry God!' In truth, this side would do great harm, but oft-times when the impression is made by fear we, the God-spirits, just remove the fear, and place therein, as far as we can, the tender assurance of God's love.

"No true Christian was ever developed by fear. God looks at motives, and in the present movement, He sees the real earnestness of the men who are acting, up to the best of their knowledge, as the early apostles did. They heed not that to the Christ-like teaching and words of our Lord. Even the Apostles added denunciations, not from God, but from their own fierce and, in many ways, uncultured natures.

"Fear nothing. As surely as the flowers turn upward

(c) "The Spiritual Magazine." Memphis: Boyle & Chapman.

(d) No. 1. "Modern Spiritualism Scientifically Explained and Illustrated. By a Band of Spirits through the Mediumship of the late John C. Grinnell, of Newport, Rhode Island, in the presence of the Compiler, T. R. Hazard." No. 2. "Essays: Moral, Spiritual and Divine, Addressed by a Spirit Wife and Daughters through the Mediumship of the late J. C. Grinnell, of Newport, Rhode Island, to a Husband and a Father in the presence of the Compiler, T. R. Hazard." No. 3. "Essays: Moral, Spiritual, and Divine" (Part II). No. 4. "Essays: Moral, Spiritual, and Divine" (Part III). London: Christian Spiritualist Office, 75, Fleet-street.

toward the sun of nature, so surely must man, in some way, turn toward his Father-God, the Sun of the Spiritual heavens. They may be long before they will voluntarily turn to the good, but in the end 'all shall praise him from the least even to the greatest.' Pray! pray always."

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN A SECT AND A CHURCH.

THE distinction between a sect and a church is obvious enough, and should be kept clearly in view, and one never confounded with the other. A church organizes itself around the whole Christ, believing His truth to be infinite; His advent, therefore, to be perpetual; his spiritual coming always fresh and new. He is not merely the Christ of two thousand years ago, but the Christ of to-day. A sect posits itself on some fragment of truth, some private interpretation of it made by fallible men; and it grasps this, and holds it, as the last word in theology. Hence a sect has no future, and can only keep repeating a worn-out creed for ever. A church, while it holds on to the old truths which are central and primary, is open always to the Lord for new light, life, and inspiration; and so the old truths never become dead and stale, but are seen ever with new settings and relations, and with new illustrations of what before was dark and mysterious. A sect is always becoming partial and narrow, and a thing of the past. A church, if only it be a true one—that is, the very body of Christ—is always growing towards a genuine comprehension and Catholicity; for, being His body and robe, it changes in the transfigurations of His light and love. Indeed, the reason of this notion that Christianity is learned out, and that something else must be hurried up in its place, lies mainly in the fact that men have drawn it off into creeds, and claimed the creeds as the whole of it. And so they study it there, where it has turned into stone and fossil, and not in the living Christ who melts through the ages, and breaks through the worn-out creeds themselves, as the husks and the sheddings of the coming harvest. Looking, therefore, to the Master, claiming to be his minister, and acknowledging fealty to Him alone, I will never ask whether the truth He gives me tallies with the notions of this denomination or that, and whether men chose to call it Unitarianism or Calvinism. I do not believe that any of these names exhaust the truth as it is in Jesus, or are anything more than the first stammerings of His everlasting Gospel. And while I would fellowship all denominations who have the Christian spirit, and work with them so far forth as I could work freely, and to good ends, I would never get moored with any of them in the flats and shallows where the living stream of Christian history is sure to pass by them, and leave them high and dry upon the sand.—Rev. E. H. Sears.

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:O:

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