

# THE Harbinger of Light.

A  
MONTHLY JOURNAL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### MR. NAYLER'S LECTURES ON SPIRITISM.

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

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

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

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



## To Correspondents.

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

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

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

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This proposition is sustained by the following facts:—

All the Spiritual communications recorded as of Divine

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

TAU-BETH.

OCT. 8, 1870.

## COMMUNICATION FROM W. J. FOX.

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

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

W. J. FOX.

### Poetry.

#### A DEAD MAN'S MESSAGE.

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

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

##### I.

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

##### II.

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

##### III.

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

##### IV.

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

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

##### V.

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

##### VI.

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

##### VII.

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

EDWIN ARNOLD.

### SPIRITUALISM THE ALL-EMBRACING RELIGIOUS FAITH.

A DIALOGUE BETWEEN A MODERN SPIRITUALIST AND A CALVINIST.

BY CALEB S. WEEKS.

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

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

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

ONE OF THE COMPANY.—Are you a Spiritualist?

S.—Yes.

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

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

\*There is no God but God.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## HOW TO FORM SPIRIT CIRCLES.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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