

OUR ECLECTIC MAGAZINE

THE CREAM OF FOREIGN EXCHANGES

CREATION.

Spirit Communications Concerning It.

Received During Thirty Years of Direct Communication From and With Spirits.

BY EMMA HARDINGE BRITTON

(1) There are three uncreated, primordial, infinite and eternal elements, namely, spirit, force and matter.

(2) The one attribute of spirit is intelligence, the dual attributes of force are attraction and repulsion. The three attributes of Matter are its states, namely, solid, fluid, and gaseous.

(3) Each element is susceptible of subdivision into conditions appropriate to its nature.

(4) The totality of these three primal elements, whether considered from the standpoint of planetary, solar, or universal being is God. The procedures from the totality are firmaments studded with suns, systems, planets, worlds; Matter in its various conditions; Force in all its operations; Spirits from a single spark of animated life, to the soul of man.

(5) SUNS are vast aggregations of cosmic Matter, saturated by Spirit, vitalized by Force.

(6) PLANETS OR EARTHS are driven off by Centrifugal Force from solar masses, and held by Centripetal Force in set orbits revolving around their parent suns.

(7) FORCE as the tool of Creation is motion *per se*. It moves under the rule of eternal, never varying law, and is the life of the universe.

(8) Matter is ever growing under the action of FORCE into forms. As long as attraction prevails over repulsion forms grow; when they arrive at maximum point, repulsion prevails over attraction, then forms begin to decay, and the maximum point at which repulsion ceases is the DEATH of the form.

(9) The DEATH of the form is then withdrawn, and takes on the form that has been moulded through Matter. This form is thenceforth preserved intact, and this enters into, and becomes a part of the spirit or soul world of suns, systems, planets, and earths; it also becomes the spiritual body of all animated beings.

(10) Spirit, saturating every atom of matter, grows in purely embryonic stages, under the action of force, up through every phase of mineral and vegetable life, until it enters into the higher conditions of animated life. It passes on through every rudimentary period of gestation; its movements are onward and upward, traversing countless myriads of earths in the universe; living and dying out of one embryonic form into millions of other, until it is prepared to be born into its ultimate, final, and perfect material form, namely, that of man.

(11) The material body, like every other form of the universe, and when not marred by accident, changes, grows up to a maximum point, then decays, and finally dies. At this stage the life force departs with the spirit, clothes the spirit with the form and functions it has acquired in the material body and the duality form—the soul.

(12) THE SOUL IS DEATHLESS.—As the special function of matter is to grow soul—to become a mould in which souls are grown and take on forms, so matter must die or disintegrate, in order to liberate souls from their embryonic states to their perfected, final form. But spirit never dies, neither do the functions of spirit ever die. All spirit is rudimentary and embryonic in lower forms than man. Man alone possesses, therefore, self-consciousness, and as that is a function of the spirit of man, identity, or self-consciousness can never be lost, never fail, and although it may progress up to Godhead, it can never die or be lost. In the death of the human body, therefore, all that made the man is conserved in the soul, which, once liberated from matter, commences a fresh start of upward, progressive experiences as an immortal soul.

Before entering upon any summary of the new, or rather added state of being into which the soul enters when quitting matter, it is proper to say that life on the earths in space must range from the lowest to the highest, no two existences being on precisely the same grade, otherwise the similitude, like the same twopie of the magnet, or the same two degrees of pitch in tone, would extinguish each other. To produce causes for motion, the gradation of character and state must be infinitely varied, and through we can resolve these varieties into groups, and level all these groups *res upward*, the varieties reaching down to the lowest, and stretching up to the highest state, these varieties must exist on earths which are rudimentary school houses for souls.

(13) OF SPIRIT WORLDS IN SPACE.—Every material body, whether it be the largest sun or the smallest asteroid, grows, arrives at a maximum point of life, turns the hill of time, decays, and dies. But not only the sun or planet itself undergoes these series of changes, but every atom of matter, whether in the mineral, vegetable, or animal realm of being, does the same, as explained in No. 8. When force or life is withdrawn, it, having acquired form in matter, retains that form, and at once passes into the great sum of objects, scenes and existences, that go to make up the soul of the world or the spirit spheres.

(14) As every material atom, that ever

has been on or in this earth, has lived, grown, decayed and died, as force or the soul of things, retains form and is imperishable, so it follows that the Spirit-sphere has been growing and becoming furnished with forms moulded in matter, ever since the planet itself had being. Not a form that ever has been, therefore, whether of the mineral or vegetable kingdoms, but what has passed into and remained an entity of the spirit spheres.

It must be remembered, however, that spiritual things, scenes, and forms, are drawn to the material earth in which they grow, as the blossom to the seed, as the tree to the root; hence the minerals, plants and materials of every kind conserved in the undying archives of spiritual existence, are as much more beautiful than those of earth, as the rose is lovelier than the root from which it springs, or the water lily fairer than the stagnant pool in which its germ seeds were nourished.

(15) ANSWERS TO SOME QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY PROPOUNDED CONCERNING THE SPIRIT-WORLD.—It is often asked wherein consists the difference between the spirit spheres of the true and the false, and those inhabited by the ignorant and evil disposed. To this we reply that, whilst the spheres of spiritual existence are formed of pure force, and fashioned, as above stated, of the blossom and fruitage of matter, the vast differences in its conditions and appearances, represented by different grades of spirits, are produced wholly by two characteristics of the spirits inhabiting the spheres.

The first of these characteristics is, that all powers of perception proceed from within, not as on earth from without. To the pure and good the realities of the lovely realm around them are all redolent of their own natures. The interior light of wisdom and goodness illumines all things around and illumines the sublimity of the spirit world. The kingdom of heaven is within the soul itself. The second is no less influential in determining the characteristics of the scenery and other appearances in the Spirit-world, and it is this: every spirit gives off an aura that corresponds to the nature of the sphere to which he or she belongs. The place appropriate to him. He enters the societies for which he is best fitted, goes to the scenes to which he belongs as if drawn by gravitation until, by culture in the highest departments of his nature, he outgrows the place to which he was first attracted, and must, by the inevitable fitness of things, move on to higher spheres and worlds. Thousands of unhappy spirits, precisely the same laws govern the attractions and conditions which determine the place of ignorance, criminal or vicious spirits. They have no light within, and the darkness of their own natures is reflected on every object around them, drawn by the inevitable laws of gravitation. The place appropriate to them, therefore, is the society of the like themselves, the aura of these undeveloped beings exhales itself in murky clouds which obscure the landscape, present only the similitude of objects projected from their own memories, and fill their spheres with hideous pictures of their crimes, visions of their darling vices, haunting phantasms of their evil doings. Volumes might be written concerning these spheres, obscured by the soul-darkness of its awful inhabitants, and filled with terrible images, all projected from the memories of those who dwell there.

In this summary we are only enabled to say this terrible mental hell is no hell, as the spirits who inhabit it have depicted its horrors in terms that have made the listeners absolutely afraid of sin and wrong. The miser, gambler, drunkard, sensualist, tyrant, oppressor, murderer, all are there enveloped in the darkness of their own natures; haunted by the dolorous sights and sounds of their crimes they have committed. These are the dwellers on the threshold, of whom Swedenborg writes as in "the hells." He affirms them to be imprisoned there eternally, but every spirit, good or bad, by thousands, eye, by millions, in that this is no fire, and that the spirit who enters it, can never die or be lost. In the death of the human body, therefore, all that made the man is conserved in the soul, which, once liberated from matter, commences a fresh start of upward, progressive experiences as an immortal soul.

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of which they locate on the earth, the scene of the soul's only incarnation in a human material body. The second, they claim to be the sphere of suffering, penalty, and ultimate purification from the vices and ignorance which earthly experiences have failed to correct. The third they assert is the sphere of growth and unfoldment for infant spirits whose career has been cut short by untimely death on earth. The fourth is the sphere of mere intellectual unfoldment, or the realm of soul-life devoted only to the acquisition of art, science, and knowledge of all kinds and conditions. The fifth is the sphere of love, in which all who have lived the life of self-sacrifice, and devoted themselves to the benefit and blessing of others, assemble and continue the God-like and heavenly ministry of blessing to others. The sixth is the sphere of love and wisdom combined, from whence come, as from the glory of heaven, those grand, wise, and powerful ministering angels, tutular spirits of countries, nations and powers, who are the mainstays for and worshipers as gods. The seventh is the sphere of preparation for the departure of the great and glorious souls who have learned and outgrown all that the spheres of earth can impart to them or receive from them, and who are about to enter upon fresh paths of the eternal realms of progress. Fresh scenes and new spheres of advancement towards the splendor of the spiritual sun spheres, the nature, powers and functions of which mortal language would utterly fail to depict, the mere possibilities of which it is not lawful for human pen to write, or tongue to utter.

[NOTE.—If the above more detailed description of the spirit life, our readers will find all the information which spirits can impart through imperfect human language, or mortals comprehend in the abundant literature of Spiritualism.]

COMMUNICATIONS.

They Come With a Divine Lesson.

The following beautiful extract is taken from "A Midnight Visit to Holy-rod," and purports to be an oral communication given by Marie Stuart the hapless Queen of Scots, to her beloved friend and medium, the Countess of Caithness, Duchesse de Pomar:

"All life is *Gods Word*. His expression to man of His bounty. The violet is His floral word, language, whose germ has been millions of years entombed in the soil. Oh! how sweet the language of God to those who can read His Word in all its embodiments, breathing forth from the soul—at every exhalation and inhalation. I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord God Almighty. My Word is revealed in Nature, in Ideality, in Poetry in Art and Philosophy. Science and Religion, all the outgrowth of Nature.

"Watch the unfolding since the Angels first rapped out a few sentences through the 'manger home' in America, a few short years ago—how long it took to prepare earth for the expression of God's Word. And even now, see how this rare Angel-reared Lily, Spiritualism is feared and condemned, though its perfumes are the loved souls of your dead, and its expression the waves of their rich ripe minds. All blended with the effete, it meets in the love embrace; but the offspring each month presented, and ever beauty, the perfume of the earth tells us so; and God cannot be stayed in His work.

"Turn over every page of human life, every one of our earth, and see how similar they all are, how sweetly related to the Divine. Cling as we may to the thing or thought of the hour, it passes away as this fair spring, and summer will succeed, then autumn, all bringing their tribute of praise, each one a resurrectionary form."

In the same little volume, amidst many other spiritual gems, is the following trance communication given by Mr. W. J. Colville, in the presence of the Duchesse de Pomar, and by her added to her own comments thereon.

"Students of spiritual things are like persons on a mountain side—some are nearer the summit than others; some very near the base. Those who stand highest have the widest view of the gorgeous panorama spread out before them; those who have gained the summit can look all round, and view the scenery from all sides. Perhaps on one side there are hills; on another, water; on another, tableland; on another, a deep declivity. Those who look only to the north cannot see what is to the south; those whose eyes are turned westward cannot see what is to the east; and it is surprising, while all are climbing on the various sides respectively, diametrically opposite views should be taken of the surroundings? Yet all these views are right, as relative or partial truths; all are wrong as absolute or final conclusions.

"Students of religion, of the spiritual nature of man, or indeed of any natural science, are like these mountain climbers; one sees one side of a truth; another sees another; and the Christian, like the men in the fable who disputed over the color of a chameleon, who were right in declaring what they saw; till at length a wiser man than any one of them interposed, stepped in and told them how the white chameleon was also red, blue, yellow, green, purple, grey, or any other color seen in different lights. Science points you to the perfect ray of white light, and tells you white is the sum of color.

"So with the jarring sects, so with divided schools of thought, wherein many men have many minds. The Christian, the Theosophist, the Jew, the Buddhist, the Spiritualist, and the controlling spirits—all are right and safe when they confine themselves to declarations of what they know; but so soon as arrogant assumptions are put forward, and that is pronounced impossible or untrue which some particular individuals have not discovered, then the strife commences, and persons are often accused of bigotry and uncharitableness merely because they refuse to put out their eyes because some of their neighbors are blind, or to shut their ears to all the voices of the spirit because some of their companions are deaf."

SPIRITUALISM.

ITS RELATION TO SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

BY SIDUS.

Having been requested by the editor of this paper to contribute an article on the above theme for this number, I proceed to comply, rather in the hope of economizing the time and labor of so devoted a worker as the said editor, than with the smallest hope that I can produce any essays of the least approximate worth to those which fall from her own brilliant and powerful pen. Still less can I expect to offer anything entirely original in conception, a certain lecture of Mrs. Hardinge Britton's at which I was present, being so deeply engraved on my memory, that I feel it to be impossible to direct my ideas in any other channels than those which the lecturer treated herself so exhaustively.

Spiritualism, with all its phenomenal modes of communication occurring between spirits and mortals, must proceed on the basis of laws, partly peculiar to spiritual existence, and partly in accordance with mortal being. Of the spiritual side of the telegraph mortals know absolutely nothing, save the resultant facts, and therefore, it is to the correspondence of those facts to the physical sciences with which we are already familiar, that I first direct attention.

OF THE SPIRIT RAPPINGS.

For the production of any sounds occurring in the realm of being known to man, there must inevitably be a concussion between two material bodies, one or both of which must be in motion. The collision, or vibratory action, which results in the production of a sound, may occur between any two or more material bodies in any condition of density or rarefaction, ranging between solids, fluids, gases or ether. Force is the propelling power, matter the colliding body acted on. Now, in the whole realm of matter there are no motions known to scientists by which the production of the spirit rappings can be accounted for, except upon the hypothesis of some invisible being, or beings, namely, that the operator is a human spirit using the vital force of a specially endowed mortal as his means of giving an intelligent message.

I may as well say at this point that, whilst I admit the presence and occasional interposition of imposture in Spiritualism, as in every other new and popular movement in this fraudulent and wicked age, I am not prepared to believe that millions of intelligent investigators, exhaustively and proved thoroughly, by the millions of sane, acute and reliable persons who have proved the truth of Spiritualism, and the supermundane character of spirit phenomena. To these witnesses alone I appeal, and of these alone I write. Of all others I have no right to say that I should have to believe that millions of intelligent investigators, exhaustively and proved thoroughly, by the millions of sane, acute and reliable persons who have proved the truth of Spiritualism, and the supermundane character of spirit phenomena. To these witnesses alone I appeal, and of these alone I write. 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SPIRITUALISM.

QUESTIONS OF INTEREST ANSWERED.

BY KAZMA HARDINGE BRITTON.

Amongst the most frequent of the questions which this number of *The Thinker* has put forth to answer, we may cite the following—

(1) What is Modern Spiritualism?
(2) What relation does Spiritualism bear to the Bible, the standard of the Christian faith?
(3) What is the use (if any) of Spiritualism?

(4) Who and what are "mediums" and if such individuals are necessary as agents for enabling humanity to become acquainted with Spiritualism, why are not persons mediums?

(5) Is there not a great amount of deception practised in Spiritualism, and if so, how are investigators to distinguish between the true and the false?

(6) Why do not Spiritualists give the world something new, and contribute to the realm of science, reform, or religion?

(7) Why should I be a Spiritualist in preference to an adherent of other forms of religious belief?

(8) What advantage do Spiritualists claim in the life hereafter (if any) over believers in other forms of religious faith?

The above are but a few of the questions commonly pronounced by persons unacquainted with the subject of Modern Spiritualism, and although—as a movement—it has spread over a larger portion of space in a smaller period of time than any other belief upon the page of history, there are still many outside the Spiritualist ranks who have not heard our report, but have not become acquainted with the true nature of the movement.

In the interests of a deep and important truth, rather than with any special desire of propaganda, we propose to prepare this missionary number as a duty we owe to our cause, to God, and to the world.

In dealing with the range of subjects involved in Spiritualism, we can only touch of a very few, and in so doing, have availed ourselves of the aid afforded by the writings of some prominent religious thinkers, as well as of those who are avowed apostles of the spiritual movement.

In this preliminary article, the Editor proposes only to show the line of argument that most Spiritualists feel impelled to adopt, when considering the questions above enumerated—all of which will be found fully treated in the ensuing pages of this number. Touching our first question—

(1)—WHAT IS SPIRITUALISM?

We answer, Spiritualism is the science of that life and intelligence which is manifested in the realm of animated beings; but as the life departs from the body of animated being, together with the spirit, so we call the two the dualism of the spirit and the body, and the spirit is the immortal body which clothes the spirit—spiritualism, as the innermost invisible principle, clothed upon by the life—the dualism, soul.

Spiritualism is all that relates to the soul and its attributes, and all that tends to influence the soul through the bodily senses. This manner of Spiritualism was called in Egypt, Persia, and other oriental lands, "magic" amongst the Jews, "miracle" amongst the early Christians, "spiritual gifts," and "the ministry of angels." Amongst the Christians of the middle and still later periods, "supernaturalism" or "witchcraft" whilst the same gifts, powers, and ministry of angels and spirits, is now called "Spiritualism."

The specialty which distinguishes the Spiritualism of the last forty-two years from that of any other antecedent period, is the claim on the part of the spirits that they have succeeded in formulating scientific methods of telegraphing to mortals through the medium of certain specially endowed persons (to be hereafter described) called "mediums," and that through these methods, they are enabled to describe some of the conditions and possibilities of their own state in the Spirit-world, and those which await every mortal on earth in the life hereafter.

Finally, we may sum up a definition of Spiritualism as a set of phenomenal signals and mental impressions by which spirits communicate; and next, as the teachings given by spirits concerning the life hereafter, and the best methods of preparing for that life by our actions whilst still dwelling in the mortal body.

It has been generally agreed to call the means by which spirits communicate with mortals, "the phenomena of Spiritualism"; the teachings and doctrines rendered by spirits, "the religion of Spiritualism."

(2)—WHAT RELATION DOES SPIRITUALISM BEAR TO THE BIBLE? ETC.

The Bible of the Jews and Christians, like those of all other nations (such as the "Yu King" of the Chinese, the "Purana" and other writings of the Hindus, the "Zoroastrian" of the Persians, the "Ziand" of the "Normans," and other sacred writings of various peoples), all record the visitation of angels, the appearance of spirits, and the performance by special individuals of sundry spiritual works beyond mere material power.

In the Bible, the "miraculous" is stated, those visitations and works were called "miraculous," and attributed to the special favor of the Creator. In Modern Spiritualism these powers are claimed to be the results of natural law, "spiritual gifts," mediumship, being claimed by spirits to be the result of special organic qualities resident in different human bodies.

For a further definition of Biblical Spiritualism and its relation to the modern movement, consult Mr. E. W. Walcott's paper on "Biblical Spiritualism."

(3)—WHAT IS THE LIFE (IF ANY) OF SPIRITUALISM?

Spiritualism is, to the dwellers of earth, the post-office and telegraph between the friends passed on to the Spirit-world and those who yet remain in the mortal form.

It might be sufficient to justify our acquaintance of Spiritualism, to remember that it is the only well-proven means by which the mystic sea of death is bridged over, and loved and lost ones restored to the mourning friends they have left behind; but this is not all. In this communion alone will be found the knowledge which none but spirits can communicate. Their state beyond the grave—and, in consequence, of the far-reaching results of earth life to every being who must pass into similar state of existence hereafter. The use in such a revelation make all the difference between the friends who set out on journey to a far country without the least knowledge of its climate, employment, conditions, etc., or in what way to prepare himself and other travelers who have received all this information from the dwellers of the far country, and therefore take the inevitable journey fully prepared for the issue. And this answer will apply equally well to

CHRISTMAS.

FACTS IN REFERENCE TO THE DAY.

It Was a Universal Pagan Festival.

Christmas comes but once a year. And when it comes it brings good cheer.

Ask any ordinary Christian why he commemorates the twenty-fifth of December, and he will tell you he does so because it is the birthday of Jesus Christ. Ask him how he knows that, and he will answer, "Of course it is," or "Everybody says so," or some other form of words which is an excuse for ignorance. He does not know that there is not the slightest evidence that Jesus Christ was born on the twenty-fifth of December, nor is he aware that this day is commemorated by Pagans for hundreds and perhaps thousands of years before the days of Prophet of Nazareth.

The New Testament is silent on this point. But it relates one incident which contradicts the popular belief. It tells us that at the birth of Christ the angels came down to earth, and that shepherds who were watching their flocks by night, now it is an indisputable fact that Palestine is too cold in midwinter for sheep to lie out in their pastures. It is obvious, therefore, that if the flocks were out at night when Christ was born, the event must have happened in a mild season of the year. This is overlooked by the generalization of Christians, who read the Bible, when they do read it, with wonderful carelessness.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, does not appear to have mentioned his birthday, nor did his brothers and sisters. It is hard to tell, but it is likely that the celebration is of immemorial antiquity, though its name and nominal object have changed. It preceded Christianity, and will probably survive it.—G. W. FOOTE, in *The Freethinker*, London, Eng.

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Phonographic Dolls.

Shall Great Britain Become a Land of Idolaters?

From divers rumors in the air we have received prophetic intonations that some striking ecclesiastical changes were in contemplation. Report alleged that the great "Soul-saver" (i. e. the "General" of his own appointment) was up and doing, and his army of black bonneted little "Captains" and "Colonels" were—like an ancient prototype of their "wisdom"—or some other party—"running to and fro."

We have felt glad of this, because, somehow, the last 1900 years of Christianity have been a decided failure; that there never was an age in which wickedness more abundantly than at present, or souls needed more decidedly to be saved. What form, however, the latest soul-saving device was to assume we have been at a loss to discern until we came across a late issue of the *New York Sunday Morning Journal*. In each article, the following remarkable article, which we now copy verbatim.

GENERAL BOOTH'S IDOLS.

PHONOGRAPHIC DOLLS TO CONVERT THE UNIVERSE—THE WHITE MAN'S NEW GOD.

(Special Cable to the *Morning Journal*.)

LONDON, Oct. 4.—General Booth of the Salvation Army, has an idea of applying science to his scheme of converting the world.

A consignment of Edison's phonograph dolls has just arrived here, and these General proposes to use in his work. He advises parents to buy them for their children, and to read to them the portions of Scripture and special prayers. He declares the great religious societies can instruct the dolls according to their special tenets and that these mechanical instructors will outdo the work of living teachers.

"What more interesting subject can you place before Sunday-school pupils?" he asks. "The school should be put in one class instead of in divisions, as at present. Young people will listen more attentively because of the novelty, and great work can be accomplished with very little trouble."

Booth thinks the dolls would be even more effective among the heathen than among the Christians. He shows for instance, the great veneration of Hindus, Chinese and Africans for idols. All the labor of a century in the missionary field has been obstructed because the educated white minister has not been able to eliminate the worship of images, and whenever he has tried, he has had to face the angry resistance of the natives.

"Here is a chance to meet the savage halfway. Lead the doll with what you want said and let it tell it. The African would take it to his hut, and learn from it the attributes of the Creator and the advantages of Christianity as taught in Christian countries."

"Savages would certainly become more docile under the influence of the talking machine. It would awe him. He would despise his own mute idols, and hasten to learn something of the instruction spoken to him by the new image. Then Christianity will spread, and the world will be saved."

"Push forward the dolls," he says to the missionary societies, "and you will reap glorious results."

We give the above extract, not, as the American say, for what it is worth, but because it is so interesting and so worthy of notice. The religious sentiment of any country that will tolerate such a proposition in this extract implies.

In the first place, the self-appointed "General" of his own appointment, proposes to send a pack of preaching dolls to those lands wherein for the last thousand years Christian missions have been carrying fire, sword, and finally, the cross, to the heathen, for the purpose of destroying idolatry. In the next place, this great general of combined salvation and financial progress proposes to introduce the same phony, god-like, and utterly false system of idol worship to the heathen, and to the Christians of the world.

We have heard a considerable amount of holy horror expressed at the idea of the "Heathen Chinese" common practice of saying his prayers by means of a turning wheel. We know of a few tens of thousands, perhaps millions, who have been done to death, in Peru and other heathen lands, for worshipping their idols. Let him who dares to say that the ten thousands slaughtered in this country, Ireland, the Netherlands, and other portions of Europe,

during what is called (in joke, perhaps), "The Reformation," and their doom chiefly because one set of Christians deemed the other set their gods were only enough to bow the knee before; while another set of Christians determined it was better to endure fire, torture, and death, than to offer tokens of worship to any images whatever. Still it must be remembered that over lands and around the world, the Christian priests to explain them, to tell what they meant, and to declare that—like pictures—they were only designed to recall the life and history of the personages they represented. The common sense and two might have hoped, the more respectful sentiment of an age of enlightenment towards sacred ideas has begun to revolt from the silly worship of medieval times, but what shall we say of a professed Christian—the chief of all the world's and nations—who not only proposes to revive the sanctity, blasphemy, and idolatry of ancient heathenism, but now cherishes the idea of making a doll church; give the ignorant savages of India and Africa doll preachers, and furnish our wretched slums and alleys with machine dolls for grinding out sacred ideas concerning the impious attributes of Deity, the solemnity of life and death, and the hope and conditions of immortality. There is but one step, we are told, from the sublime to the ridiculous, and probably not even that one from the praying wheel of the "Heathen Chinese" to the preaching doll of the Great Soul-Saving General.

It must, indeed, strike any reflective Christian as peculiar that the birthday of his Savior should be celebrated with social festivities. What has passed since the original sin, plumb-pudding with the atonement, or whiskey with salvation by faith? What relation is there between carnal enjoyments and a spiritual faith? Why are worldly pleasures the commemorations of the birthday of the Son of God? Why, in brief, is Christmas a festival at all?

The answer to this question has been given already. The pretenses of a religion of life naturally differ from those of a religion of death. It was appropriate worship the Son of God, and glorify in his birth, for he was great gladder and sustainer, giving food to the hungry and joy to the dejected. Regarded in this light, our Christmas customs are seen to have had a natural origin. Every detail is borrowed from ancient sun-worship. Christians are still Pagans without it, and, paradoxical as it sounds, Christmas is a festival for Christ. The celebration is of immemorial antiquity, though its name and nominal object have changed. It preceded Christianity, and will probably survive it.—G. W. FOOTE, in *The Freethinker*, London, Eng.

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during what is called (in joke, perhaps), "The Reformation," and their doom chiefly because one set of Christians deemed the other set their gods were only enough to bow the knee before; while another set of Christians determined it was better to endure fire, torture, and death, than to offer tokens of worship to any images whatever. Still it must be remembered that over lands and around the world, the Christian priests to explain them, to tell what they meant, and to declare that—like pictures—they were only designed to recall the life and history of the personages they represented. The common sense and two might have hoped, the more respectful sentiment of an age of enlightenment towards sacred ideas has begun to revolt from the silly worship of medieval times, but what shall we say of a professed Christian—the chief of all the world's and nations—who not only proposes to revive the sanctity, blasphemy, and idolatry of ancient heathenism, but now cherishes the idea of making a doll church; give the ignorant savages of India and Africa doll preachers, and furnish our wretched slums and alleys with machine dolls for grinding out sacred ideas concerning the impious attributes of Deity, the solemnity of life and death, and the hope and conditions of immortality. There is but one step, we are told, from the sublime to the ridiculous, and probably not even that one from the praying wheel of the "Heathen Chinese" to the preaching doll of the Great Soul-Saving General.

It must, indeed, strike any reflective Christian as peculiar that the birthday of his Savior should be celebrated with social festivities. What has passed since the original sin, plumb-pudding with the atonement, or whiskey with salvation by faith? What relation is there between carnal enjoyments and a spiritual faith? Why are worldly pleasures the commemorations of the birthday of the Son of God? Why, in brief, is Christmas a festival at all?

The answer to this question has been given already. The pretenses of a religion of life naturally differ from those of a religion of death. It was appropriate worship the Son of God, and glorify in his birth, for he was great gladder and sustainer, giving food to the hungry and joy to the dejected. Regarded in this light, our Christmas customs are seen to have had a natural origin. Every detail is borrowed from ancient sun-worship. Christians are still Pagans without it, and, paradoxical as it sounds, Christmas is a festival for Christ. The celebration is of immemorial antiquity, though its name and nominal object have changed. It preceded Christianity, and will probably survive it.—G. W. FOOTE, in *The Freethinker*, London, Eng.

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