









## AN OPEN LETTER.

## Directed to All the Clergy.

An open letter to all clergy, both Catholic and Protestant, who believe and teach the doctrines of the fall of man in Adam, Violation of Innocent, Reception of the Body, Forgiveness of Sin and Eternal Punishment.

These fundamental doctrines of your religion we consider false and at best only the crude ideas of a dark age, and in no way calculated to promote the upliftment of the inner soul of man, which is the main object of human life on earth, and even if you did speak truth, preaching is but a small part of the Christian ministry.

Jesus healed the sick and obligated his followers to do the same; and he said: "These signs shall follow them that believe." In my name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands on the sick and they shall recover." How does this tally with your official work? Do you ever do any of these things? The fact that you do not shows that you are not sincere.

In the early days of Christianity the sick were healed; but the clergy soon forgot humanity and switched off to preaching about gods and things they knew nothing about, because it required no spiritual labor. This brought on the Dark Ages, and priestcraft reigned supreme until the renaissance, when light again dawned on darkened Europe. Whatever excuse may be found for those of that age, there is none for you, who live in an age of light, science, learning, pentecostal revelation and inspiration, for perpetuating a system of dogmatism that never was true.

Science has demonstrated the fact that man has been rising instead of falling; therefore vicious dogmatism is not only on the fall is neither necessary nor true. Resurrection is the rising of the living spirit from the dead body. Forgiveness of sin, in the theological sense, is a delusion. As in all other things effects follow causes, so the acts of men are followed by their legitimate consequences, and the individual is responsible.

If people understood this, instead of depending on priests for redemption, they would endeavor to live right. Eternal punishment is an absurdity. What has no end could have had no beginning. The whole system is the work of untrained brains unable to respond to spiritual impressions; and the growth and progress of human souls is the effect of spiritual evolution and not of such unreasonable doctrines as these, which do more harm than good.

Both Catholic and Protestant preach redemption through the blood of Christ, whom they represent as doing all the suffering while man does all the sinning. This is very encouraging for those who want to live in sinful pleasure regardless of moral or spiritual law, and get to heaven without deserving it. Catholics in particular settle all soul accounts by absorption. This is as it is written: "God shall send down sinning delusion that they shall believe all that they should be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (See 2 Thes. ii., 12-14, where we find a prospective history of the Christian Church from the advent of Constantine to the final triumph of Catholicism, when the pope, the man of sin, ruled the Roman Empire, and held the powers of Europe in abject submission.)

It also contains a description of its destruction: "Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth and destroy with the brightness of his coming; even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all powers and signs and lying wonders" (Holy Costs).

Protestant commentators apply this to the papacy, but do not think how they themselves are involved to the extent of holding the same dogmas, with a few exceptions, and jeopardizing the spiritual growth and development of humanity and hindering progress.

Now, we will take you on another tack. You despise and reject the Pentecostal Revelation known to you and the outside world as "Modern Spiritualism"; but in reality "the coming of the Lord" in the passage quoted: "Who shall destroy with the brightness of his coming that man of sin and son of perdition who exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God."

This is the great venerable and holy (?) Christian Church Catholic, with the vicar of Christ at its head, usurping all power and lordship it over the conscience of the people. It was established when the Roman Emperor Constantine proclaimed its councils and bequeathed to it the temporal power. It subsequently settled down in queenly dignity on the ruins of the empire and became "Mystery, Babylon, the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth;" and "drank herself drunk on the blood of the saints." All who persecute for religion's sake, even to a Calvin or a Knox, belong to this "Mystical Babylon" which is doomed to be trampled under the feet of the brightness of his coming—the spiritual light now shining.

Forty-three years' experience with this dispensation convinces us that the crisis is on; that we are in the transition from the old to the new; from the age of darkness and superstition to that of light; and we feel to say with Simeon of old: "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen the salvation" — the commencement of the millennium.

The first harbingers of this happy time were the spiritual manifestations. Mediums are being developed simultaneously in all parts of the world, and preaching the new gospel everywhere without having to learn languages; and their converts are numbered by millions. But you say: "It is all the work of the Devil. Oh, remember your prototypes, the pharisees, and, 'Beware lest that come upon you which was spoken by the prophet; behold ye despisers and wonder and perish, for I work a work in your day that ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you' (Acts xiii., 41)."

If Christians had been obedient to the heavenly vision, Christendom might have been in its millennium many centuries ago, and you are trying to keep it back, or get it in your own way. Jesus told the Jews that: "The blood of all the prophets, from righteous Abel to Zacharias, would be required of them." That which fulfilled seventy years later in the destruction of their capital and the dispersion of their nation; and are you sure that a like requital will not be made on you for all the righteous blood shed in the name of God and religion from the time the church foretook the spiritual, and grasped the temporal power. Yes, you say, we have our threefold test, the head of the church in a straight line down through the apostolic succession. Yes, so said your mother: "I sit a queen and am no widow and shall see no sorrow."

## WE SHALL SEE.

Spiritualists have been induced and seduced in many ways, but have been on the defense, not THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER, which has been on the offense, and which has proved them to be the work of the Devil. Oh, remember your prototypes, the pharisees, and, "Beware lest that come upon you which was spoken by the prophet; behold ye despisers and wonder and perish, for I work a work in your day that ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you" (Acts xiii., 41).

## A MURDER.

## A Psychic Mystery that Puzzled Lawyers and the Law.

UNSWORN TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HONORABLE GENTLEMEN OF THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH, AT THEIR FIRST OCCASIONAL MEETING FOR THE SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION OF THINGS OCCULT.

The first occasional meeting of the Society for Psychical Research drew together an even dozen kindred spirits. It was a motley party, to be sure, but of their enthusiasm for the subject that mutually attracted them there could be no doubt.

There were two or three lawyers, a clergyman of a liberal type, several physicians of more pronounced leaning than practice; an amateur mesmerist, whose experiments were conducted of evenings, after long days of struggling with abstract columns of unscientific figures; a Spiritualist of pronounced views on reincarnation and a distressingly uncommensurate collection business; a dabbler in the occult, whose presence was, perhaps, peculiarly appropos in view of the uncertainty of the society's objects, and finally a newspaper reporter of wide travel and commensurate experience, with leanings toward Blavatskyism in its most acute phases.

"Then you believe in unscientific hypnotism?" said the clergyman to one of the legal gentlemen.

A leading remark, after the formal routine of organization had been effected, had prompted the question.

"Experience has convinced me that there is something in it," was the quiet reply.

"In other words," persisted the questioner, "you would imply that hypnotic conditions may be created without outside influences—that, in fact, a man may unconsciously hypnotize himself?"

"Precisely."

The circle had become noticeably interested. When the clergyman shrugged his shoulders slightly, and murmured something that sounded like a doubt of the lawyer's position, there were some evidences of disapproval. "It was, however, the messenger who had laid out the path of the case, and he had not the table, who spoke."

"Our legal friend undoubtedly has something interesting to tell in connection with his acknowledged belief," he said. "We are here to exchange experiences in things occult. Let us hear him."

"I will tell you an incident that came under my own observation," said the lawyer. "It occurred in a town in Iowa, where I had but recently been entered at the bar. The case, so far as I know, had never been reported. When I have finished, the meeting will at least acknowledge that the case had the elements of something strangely singular about it."

THE LAWYER'S STORY.

It was a strange case. It baffled all who had any connection with it. If ever there was a murder this was one, and yet, in spite of the most damning circumstances, it was almost impossible to believe that the man who was suspected, and who had been convicted, was guilty. The case, in fact, was a mystery. His character was unimpeachable. His whole life was known to his neighbors. The most skeptical could not find a shadow on it.

So far as the outside world knew he and his wife had lived the happiest of lives. If there was any friction between them certainly none of their many friends knew of it.

And yet, one morning, John Ransome awoke to find his wife lying beside him dead, her sightless eyes staring into space, and her round, white throat bruised and blackened where cruel fingers had clasped it with a grip of iron until the last vestige of life had left the still body.

In the midst of his horror the detectives accused him of murdering his wife. In a dazed way he protested his innocence. He was himself too greatly shocked to care much what became of him, but he was not to be left out of the silent figure under the sheet, and said, "Do you think I could have done that and slept beside her all night long?" "That was of an honest man," he said, "and then I fell asleep. When I awoke in the morning she was dead."

But the circumstantial evidence against him was strangely complete. He had been out late the night before. The servant girl, who had called out her wits by the detectives, said she had heard him come in after midnight. She knew it was him by a peculiar hacking cough. This Ransome did not deny. But the servant girl said more. She said she went up to the room about six o'clock in the morning, with a pitcher of hot water, as was her custom. She knocked at the door, and a moment later she plainly heard a key turn in the lock, and then Ransome reached out his hand and took the vessel. A few moments afterward she was startled by Mr. Ransome's cries for assistance. Nothing could shake her statement that the door of their room was locked when she had gone up stairs. Later, when the officers came they had noticed as a peculiar fact that both windows of the room, facing the street, were inaccessible except by means of a ladder, were securely fastened. One officer, a little shrewder than the others, asked Ransome if he had fastened them, and he innocently answered, "No." The most minute search on the lawn below failed to show any displacement of the grass or shrubbery, such as would have been inevitable had any one attempted to place a ladder against the house.

The detectives had consequently established, by only a few moment's work, what seemed the most indubitable evidence against the husband, Ransome was locked in the room with his wife. Both the windows and the door were securely fastened. There was no other means of entrance or escape. No third party could have been in the room and locked the door or windows on the inside after leaving it. The woman was not dead before Ransome's return home the night before, for he acknowledged speaking with her before retiring. No magistrate could resist such evidence. Ransome was committed to jail without bond.

Perhaps the man did not suffer much during his incarceration. He seemed too completely stunned to realize what had happened to him. The inquisitorial powers of the police were used in every conceivable way to induce him to "confess," but in his dreary, broken way he insisted that he was innocent. He made no effort, apparently, to conceal any facts that occurred, either before or after the discovery of the dead woman; he unflinchingly admitted that to the best of his knowledge he was completely locked in with his wife, having himself locked the door and windows on the inside. (Tellingly told the chief that the night before the tragedy he and his wife had some quick words and he had left the house in anger, but that his unkind feelings had all passed away by the time he returned. No one had known of this, and his acknowledgment was prejudicial to his case, but he seemed to have no desire to conceal anything—except how the crime was committed and great enthusiasm prevailed.)

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man was daily strengthening the chain of circumstantial evidence that had been woven around him—joining it with a guileless air of honesty and truth that was astonishing—and yet he vehemently protested that he knew nothing of the murder.

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Ransome's lawyer was in despair. The evidence against his client of which he could not be cognizant, was absolutely irrefutable. The only possible hope for the prisoner was a plea of "guilty," and an appeal for mercy. And this the lawyer urged upon him.

"The case against you is terribly black," he said. "The evidence of the prosecution is unanswerable."

"I know it," Ransome replied. "I know it as well as you do."

"The only chance I see for you is to plead guilty," continued the lawyer. "But I can't do that," was the quick reply.

"Because I did not kill her, and I'll hang before I say I did."

The lawyer looked at the face of the man beside him with a look of wonder in his eyes. Was he really innocent? He could scarcely believe it. The evidence against him was so strong. And yet the eyes of the prisoner looked into his without flinching, and his face had no telltale blush of guilt.

"It's a strange case—a very strange case," he murmured as he walked away.

Ransome stood in the witness-stand. He was on trial for his life. The servant girl had been sworn and examined, and battled over on technicalities by the opposing counsel, and cross-examined and re-cross-examined until her head was in a whirl and her speech incoherent; the officers and detectives had told their stories, made a trifle more dramatic than they deserved by the knowledge that they were on trial, and had become important factors in a great trial; the defense had produced a dozen witnesses for the character of the accused, and now, after a long, heated argument, the prisoner had been placed in the witness-box for the second time.

The strain of the trial on the man had been terrible. The crowd that filled every available foot of the court-room, inside the rail and beyond it, could see and hear everything.

Unheeding his lawyer's adjuration to say nothing except in response to the questions of counsel or of the prosecuting attorney, Ransome had just burst forth with a vehement asseveration of his innocence, when the hundreds of eager eyes that watched him saw his head fall forward on his breast, and his fingers clutch convulsively at the rail.

He was now to tell this honorable court and these worthy jurymen that you knew nothing of the death of the deceased until nearly a quarter of an hour after the servant girl had left your door?"

It was the cold, clear, penetrating voice of the prosecuting attorney that spoke, but there was no reply. The State's attorney looked inquiringly at the prisoner and then at the judge.

"You must answer the question."

"My client will answer it. Your Honor," said Ransome's attorney, and he leaned forward to whisper to him. What he said was indistinguishable, but the court and the crowd saw him look at the prisoner with an air of puzzled wonder. The next moment the lawyer was forgotten and the eyes of Judge and counsel, jury and crowd, were riveted on poor Ransome.

Slowly he raised his head, and his face was white as his awful pallor. His eyes were wide open and staring, but it was evident that he saw nothing of what was about him. They seemed to be riveted with terrible fascination upon something pictured in the air beside him. Then a look of anger, startling in its intensity, flashed across his face, and the breathless crowd saw him reach out his arms until his fingers, long and white and tapering, and working with a convulsive energy, seemed to grasp some invisible object, and clutch and tear, and clutch again, until, with a muffled cry of horror, he threw the unseen object off, and sank back against the rail, exhausted.

For a moment the crowd and group of lawyers within the bar were awed into silence. Then the prosecuting attorney started forward.

The judge waved him back. "Wait," he said; "there is yet another scene in this drama."

The State's attorney sat down. As he did so, the prisoner seemed to revive. His eyes, which had never ceased their horrible staring, began to appear natural. He looked down and out at the eager faces around him, and it seemed to bring him back to his senses.

"What has happened?" he whispered to his attorney, who had sat beside the witness-stand, immeasurably startled by the strange scene he had witnessed.

"You were ill," he said simply.

"Yes, I was ill," said the prisoner, and then, like a flash, a look of anguish and terror came into his face. It was not a trace now. His eyes were clear, and his face had its normal look of intelligence, but those who saw the awful horror depicted there knew there was something more to come.

"I—I—I did kill her—I know it now—I it all comes back to me—I am her murderer!"

There was a restless movement in the crowd; an instinctive pressing forward; a low murmur of horror. The tipstaff sternly called for order, and poor Ransome went on.

"I remember it all now—while I have been standing here it has all come back to me!"

His attorney tried to stop him.

"You are hanging yourself," he whispered.

"Never mind," was the loud response, "I will hang then. When I believed myself innocent I did not hesitate to depose that I did not know that I am a murderer, I shall not do that now."

"The night my wife was killed I had a dream. I thought our dispute had been renewed and that in a sudden fit of anger I caught her by the throat and strangled her."

To-day, for the first time, that terrible dream came back to me, and, and that in my sleep that night I killed her."

For the second time the prisoner collapsed. He fell backward, and an officer caught him and placed him in a chair.

There was another exciting movement in the crowd, and again the tipstaff's voice rang out.

"The court is adjourned," he said—"the prisoner is remanded to jail."

The next morning Ransome was found dead in his cell. The mental agony he suffered was more than he could bear, and he had killed himself with the sharp edge of a tin-clip.

"A good story," admitted the clergyman, when the lawyer had finished.

"And a valuable beginning in our gathering of testimony in the psychic field," added the chief.

W. D. COXEY.

EIGIN, ILLINOIS.

We are glad to learn from G. L. Congdon, one of the leading Spiritualists in this State, that Spiritualism has received a great impetus there through the ministrations of Cecil H. Brooks. The meetings are well attended and great enthusiasm prevails.

This is what puzzled the police. The

## ON THE THRESHOLD.

Standing on the threshold, with her wakening heart and mind,  
Standing on the threshold, with her childhood left behind,  
The violet smiled and bending with the look of sweet surprise  
For life and all its marvels that lights the clear blue eyes.

Standing on the threshold, with light foot and fearless hand,  
As the knight by his armor in a minister gave night stand;  
The fresh red lip just touching youth's ruddy, rapturous wine,  
The eager heart to brave, pure hope, oh happy child of mine!

I could guard the helpless infant that nestled in my arms;  
I could save the prattler's golden head from petty baby harms;  
I could brighten childhood's gladness, and the sweet court of his tears;  
But I cannot cross the threshold with the step of riper years.

For hopes, and joys, and maiden dreams are waiting for her there,  
Where girlhood's fancies bud and bloom as April's golden air;  
And passionate love, and passionate grief, and passionate gladness lie,  
Among the crimson flowers that spring as youth goes fluttering by.

Ah! on those rosy pathways is no place for sobered feet,  
Myrtle leaves naught of strength such fateful glow to meet;  
My voice is all too sad to sound amid the joyous notes  
Of the birds that, through charmed air for opening girlhood floats.

Yet thorns amid the leaves may lurk, and thunder-clouds may lower,  
And death, or change, or falsehood blight the jasmine in thy bower;  
May God thvert thee was far, my child; but oh! should tempest cease,  
Remember, by the threshold waits the patient love of home!

## CATACLYSM.

## Look Out for Prof. Buchanan's Prophecy.

Prof. Buchanan has prophesied that in about twenty years a terrible cataclysm will occur in this country and a large part of land be submerged. The recent earthquakes in Japan, (as set forth by the *Chicago Tribune*) are only trifles compared with the disasters of this country predicted by Prof. Buchanan. "It occurred last month. The point of central convulsion seems to have been not far from the geographical center of the country, some hundred and fifty miles west from Yokohama. There occurred a marked subsidence of the earth's surface throughout an area of two and a half miles in diameter. The bed of a river was raised six feet and nearly two hundred miles of embankment were ruined. Newly-formed geysers spouted mud for hours, a lake six hundred yards long was formed at the foot of a mountain, and numerous yawning fissures opened at the feet of terrified men and women in the cities while their residences were tumbling about their ears. As reported, about 4,000 people were killed, as many more seriously injured, 40,000 houses destroyed, and 200,000 persons rendered homeless. A series of more than 6,000 shocks of lesser intensity followed at intervals during the succeeding eight days, and a vast area was utterly desolated by the visitation. The principal earthquake may be supposed to have been of volcanic origin, as volcanic mud and ashes were ejected from some of the fissures. Two of the great faults which lie in numerous places near the center of the seismic disturbance. Volcanic hills are numerous in that country, and some of them are not yet extinct. Destructive earthquakes have often occurred and slight shocks are of frequent occurrence. The most ancient on record was that of 286 B. C., when the great mountain Fuji-san is said to have been thrown up more than 12,000 feet above the sea level. The earliest one on record was as recent as 1890, in 416 A. D. when the imperial palace at Kioto was shaken to ruins. In 599 another destroyed all the buildings in the Province of Yamato, and in 679 many houses were opened by a terrible shock, the largest being four miles long and twenty feet wide. Another in 829 caused the drying-up of the Akita River, in addition to the numerous other disasters. In 1702 a large part of the Castle of Yedo was destroyed, and the waves swept the coast. In 1854 the town of Shimoda, which had been opened as a foreign port, was destroyed, and a Russian frigate lying in the harbor was so severely damaged that she had to be abandoned. The next year Yedo was visited by a most destructive quake, which in that city and further west overturned more than 14,000 dwelling-houses and 1,649 fireproof storehouses. A big fire raged at the time, which further increased the loss of human life and property. The majority of those who have made these things a special study incline to the belief that the more violent earthquakes are due to the movement and crushing of rock masses by tangential pressures, and that these are caused by the gradual cooling of the earth's crust. Such movements are most likely to occur in such places where the crust is honeycombed by the long, shallow, or conical, of a general matter by the action of water, and still more if hollowed out by volcanic eruption. The strata give way, and the sinking of a portion of the rock originates the more violent effects observed in the vicinity, while the resulting tremor is communicated in vibrations to the surrounding country to distances of many miles. It is reasoned out that around the volcanic center the molecules of rock are first squeezed together by the concussion and are then separated by virtue of the elasticity of the solid medium. The onward motion is taken up rapidly by the next set of molecules, which in a similar manner are first pushed together and then spring apart. In this way the pulse or form of the wave may be propagated to an enormous distance, while the movements of the individual particles of rock are confined to narrow limits. The undulation may travel several hundred miles while each particle moves through but a few inches. The velocity is sometimes very great, that of the great earthquake of Lisbon in 1755 being computed at about twenty miles a minute, and a half the time the velocity of sound in air. It is not now thought probable that the volcano vomits up matter from a seething hot liquid interior, which is covered by a comparatively thin crust. The conclusion is rather referred to the action of the water which is converted into steam, and relatively low depths, while the displacement of strata when not due to such action may frequently occur in regions where the pressure changes rapidly from one area to another because of transportation by rain or other atmospheric agency. Hence the earthquake movement due to sinking may let the strata through the crust, and the volcanic eruption of mud and ashes be a secondary instead of the primary feature in the double phenomenon."

Prof. Buchanan will not live probably to see the fulfillment or failure of his prophecy. Let us hope that in this case at least his predictions may not be realized.

## DIVINE PLAN.

## THE SUNDAY QUESTION.

view of the Sunday Question, with letters to and from our readers, and a list of names of those who have contributed to the fund of \$100,000.

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I could brighten childhood's gladness, and the sweet court of his tears;  
But I cannot cross the threshold with the step of riper years.

For hopes, and joys, and maiden dreams are waiting for her there,  
Where girlhood's fancies bud and bloom as April's golden air;  
And passionate love, and passionate grief, and passionate gladness lie,  
Among the crimson flowers that spring as youth goes fluttering by.

Ah! on those rosy pathways is no place for sobered feet,  
Myrtle leaves naught of strength such fateful glow to meet;  
My voice is all too sad to sound amid the joyous notes  
Of the birds that, through charmed air for opening girlhood floats.

Yet thorns amid the leaves may lurk, and thunder-clouds may lower,  
And death, or change, or falsehood blight the jasmine in thy bower;  
May God thvert thee was far, my child; but oh! should tempest cease,  
Remember, by the threshold waits the patient love of home!



