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SECULARISM: WHAT IS IT, AND WHAT IS  
ITS WORTH?

BY GEORGE SEXTON, LL.D.

I.

“Ad populum phaleras, ego te intus et in cute novi.”—*Persius*.

DR. GARTH WILKINSON remarks in the preface to a most able book of his on *The Human Body, and its Connection with Man*: “We were forced upon this tract of thought by noticing that the Rationalists got to nothing as punctually as if nothing had been their aim, and that their inductions were of no consequence, supposing them to be true, which, however, concluded against their truth. We found also that they were like the fellow who claimed Virgil’s *Sic vos non vobis* to himself, but could not complete the line which the great poet had left half finished. In the whole company of them, and in all their promise of offspring, there was not a spark of revelation, though to hear them talk one might have imagined that they knew the way of making myths, and that writing Bibles was their *forte*.” This most admirably describes the position of the Secularists of to-day. They have followed a course of thinking which has led them to the conclusion that they came from nothing, and are on the high road to nowhere—that they alone are in possession of the true secret of the origin of the universe, which secret is that total ignorance prevails on the subject, and that no man, not even themselves, knows anything about the matter—that the only revelation is to be found in Nature, and that she has not made a revelation at all—that theology is mythology, and mythology moonshine—that Christianity is of natural origin, but that nobody knows what its origin was—that Secularism is the true panacea for all the ills of human life, although what Secularism

is, no mortal can tell—and that primary importance should be attached to the duties of this life in contradistinction to the duties relating to the future life, because there are no duties appertaining to the future life, there is no future life, and nobody knows whether there is a future life or not. The Secularist prides himself on his knowledge, yet boasts of his ignorance; talks loudly about the advanced character of his views, yet finds his opinions full blown amongst the lowest savages and the most primitive races of mankind. He is for ever prating of the Unknowable, which he seems to know all about, for he constantly predicates of it innumerable characteristics. He holds dogmatism to be a crime, yet no man is more dogmatic than he in regard to those very matters which he tells you no one knows anything about. He assures you that in philosophy he is an *Agnostic*—a compound Greek word very fashionable just now, which in plain English means a know-nothing—and in the face of this he swaggers and boasts about the superiority of his intelligence over that of other people. Talk to him of God, and he dogmatically asserts that there is no God, the proof being that no one can tell whether there is or not. Speak of creation, and he scornfully rebukes you by proclaiming that there never was any creation, and that the universe could not have had a beginning, because its origin is shrouded in impenetrable mystery, and that consequently no one knows whether it had a beginning or not. Secularism endeavours to reduce to practice the famous couplet of Gray—

—“Where ignorance is bliss,  
’Tis folly to be wise.”

but endeavours to build upon this very ignorance a superstructure of knowledge, which it dogmatically proclaims as infallible truth. But we shall see this more fully as we proceed.

Unbelief is like the chameleon. It changes its appearance so frequently, and sometimes so rapidly, that those who are best acquainted with it can hardly recognise it under its new form. The scepticism of the present age is of an entirely different character from that of a hundred years ago, or, perhaps, of any past time. Those who are familiar with the writings of what are called the old Freethinkers will find them completely out of harmony with the teachings of the modern representatives of the school of so-called Freethought. Tindal, Chubb, Collins, Toland, Shaftesbury, Paine and the rest of the men whose writings remain as a record of the flimsy attacks made upon Christianity in times gone by, have been completely supplanted by atheistic teachers who, while they usually display less coarseness on the one hand, yet, on the other, have carried their views to an extreme that would have considerably horrified their prede-

cessors. The infidelity of to-day, while it denies God, and, therefore, leaves no place for the operation of the supernatural, professes to cling to some sort of a religion, which it calls, with a charming vagueness and mysticism, the Religion of Humanity; claims to be friendly to Christianity, and to have a sort of admiration for the character of our Lord. It deprives, of course, the Gospel of all its inspiration and all its authority; but it professes to conserve its moral precepts and its practical instruction. Jesus Christ it recognises as a great ethical teacher, whom it places alongside of Socrates, Plato, Epicurus, Zeno, Epictetus, Confucius, Shakespeare, Bacon, and some other men, a few of them even now living; but the supernatural element in His character it entirely eliminates; denies His infallibility and even His sinlessness, and thus attempts to present to the world a new Christ, which is the product of its own wild imaginings. It talks in smooth and oily tones about remodelling Christianity, in the most friendly way; but its remodelling is, in reality, a destruction of all in the Gospel that is vital and valuable to mankind. Instead of rejecting Christ's religion altogether, it asks for a re-statement of Christian doctrines, by which means it may get rid of what is antiquated and obsolete, and retain what is pure. But its re-statement would amount to an entire denial of all that gives to Christianity its real and lasting value. The consequence of all this is, that the old arguments, which did such noble duty in defence of revealed religion in the past, are now utterly out of place, and can no longer be used against the scepticism with which we are—alas!—but too familiar. Books which played an important part in defence of Revelation a hundred, or even fifty years ago, are now out of date, and, comparatively speaking, of no practical value. Unbelief presents a new face, and must be met with new weapons.

The names by which sceptics have chosen to designate themselves, or by which they have become recognised amongst mankind, have been as various as the forms of faith—or no faith—enunciated. Perhaps none of these terms has accurately portrayed the principles of the person to whom it has been applied, but each of them has done duty in the place of a better. It is not easy to select a word which shall describe in general the views of persons who have little in common except their disbelief in, or denial of, what is held by others. Men who rejected Christianity were wont, until recently, to be called Infidels; but this name was used as a term of reproach by the opponents of those to whom it was applied, and, so far, was very naturally objected to. Moreover, it was employed by the advocates of almost every creed, respectively, when describing their antagonists; and, hence, expressed nothing definite beyond

the fact that the person so designated disbelieved in something held by those who applied to him the term. Literally, an Infidel is one who is unfaithful; and the designation, consequently, cannot, properly speaking, be legitimately used of anyone who is true to his honest convictions. At the same time, we seldom adhere strictly to the etymological meaning of words; and in this case, as in others, we are, consequently, to some extent, justified in following the usually accepted meaning of the term, whatever may have been its original definition. As, therefore, the word Infidel has become commonly accepted as the designation of one who rejects Christianity, I do not see the same objection to its use—nor did I, even when I was connected with the party which is usually so described—that some other men appear to experience. The word Sceptic, which we now commonly employ to describe an unbeliever in general—whether in philosophy, religion, or minor matters—has also become greatly changed from its original meaning. It is derived from σκεπτικός, which signifies one who doubts; and was at first used of an inquirer, an investigator, one who looks about him; and, consequently, in that sense, could hardly be limited to the rejectors of Christianity. Despite this fact, however, its modern meaning is, perhaps, definite enough. The old word Freethinker appears to have found much more favour among unbelievers in the last century, and, perhaps, is even still popular amongst many. No more inappropriate name, however, could probably be discovered than this to describe the persons who have arrogated to themselves the designation. For what is a Freethinker? It means, if anything, one who thinks freely, or who is free to think; and the rejectors of Christianity, as far as my experience goes, have no right to any such distinguishing characteristic. Indeed, according to their own creed, to think with perfect freedom is simply impossible, since they hold that all thought is an unavoidable result of organisation, and controlled, inevitably, by circumstances. Clearly, therefore, they, of all people in the world, can have no claim to be designated Freethinkers. The term, however, is a high-sounding one, and they arrogantly employ it with a view to impress upon the public that they are the thinkers *par excellence*, and that their thoughts are less trammelled than those of their opponents; an assumption which is a mere pretence and utterly opposed to facts. The words Atheist, Deist, Pantheist, and others of a similar kind, are distinctive enough in their meaning; but, then, they simply describe the views of the person to whom they are applied in reference to God, and, hence, are hardly definite enough for ordinary use.

Somewhere about twenty-five years ago, Mr. George Jacob

Holyoake, at that time the leader of the Unbelievers in this country, and possessed of a considerable share of popularity consequent upon his having suffered a term of imprisonment for blasphemy, proposed a new name by which he and his followers desired to be hereafter known. The term "Secularist," which was now for the first time adopted in connection with sceptical views, was, I believe suggested by Professor Newman, and it speedily became the recognised appellation of those who had been previously called Infidels. This term is derived from *Seculum*, a division of time, an age, and hence had been pretty generally employed to distinguish the things of this life from those which pertain to the next, the division into sacred secular having been employed long before Mr. Holyoake's time. His object in adopting this new designation was, as he explained at the time, twofold. First he desired to get rid of the odium which attached to the old word Infidel; and, secondly, he was anxious to adopt a designation which was not entirely of a negative character, but should include in its meaning certain positive principles. How far this latter object has been accomplished we shall see as we proceed. The first reason I hold, and I urged as much at the time—I myself then belonging nominally to the party which Mr. Holyoake represented—is based upon sheer cowardice. To reject a name because a certain amount of odium has become associated with it is to show very little faith in the principles which it represents. Not so acted the brave religious Reformers, who went out boldly in the face of the most fearful opposition to regenerate society, caring nothing for the opinions good or ill of the world, but striving only to do their duty, keep their consciences clear, and secure the approbation of God. The followers of good old George Fox were nick-named Quakers as a term of reproach; but what cared they what they were called? They had a work to do, and right nobly they did it; so that to-day all the odium which originally attached to the term Quaker has completely disappeared, and the designation rather gives the idea of an extra amount of respectability. Glorious and Godfearing John Wesley went forth with the one sole aim of denouncing sin and preaching the righteousness of the Gospel; and hair-brained antagonists babbling out petty spite at his thundering denunciations of their favourite sins, called him a Methodist. What did he do under the circumstances? Beg that they would desist and apply to him some more respectable term, in order that his followers should not be called by a name of reproach? No; he went to work all the more energetically, and said virtually, if not in words, "If we are to be known hereafter as Methodists, then Methodists let us be, and if the word be now used as a term of reproach, and has

a certain amount of odium attached to it, then we will lead such lives as will make it respectable." How effectually this has been done, every person knows. Mr. Holyoake, however, did not like the word Infidel because of the odium attached to it, so he cast about for a less objectionable designation. One cannot help saying that if respectability were the thing wanted, it should have been put into the principles, not into the name. And this course of reasoning I adopted to Mr. Holyoake at the time, and again and again employed during the period that I was connected with the party now universally recognised by this term. My business, however, on this occasion is to deal not so much with the name as with the principles with which it has become associated, and to point out to you what I conceive to be their objectionable character and influence upon society. In the present discourse I shall endeavour to show you that it is exceedingly difficult to gather from the writings of Secularists what this Secularism is, as no two of them are agreed as to what it involves. As far, however, as we are able to gain anything like a definite idea of its tenets, we shall find that all its positive principles have been purloined from other sources, mostly from Christianity, and that everything that it has distinctively its own is a set of cold, blank, heartless negations.

When an advocate of Secularism proclaims to society his new Gospel of Unbelief, and calls upon mankind at large to renounce their old and long-cherished convictions in favour of his new-fangled scheme for regenerating humanity, the first questions that one naturally feels impelled to ask him are what it is that he proposes to do; how he intends to bring about his design, and what there is in the doctrines that he has to teach to recommend them in preference to those which he proposes to supplant. These are questions of the very greatest possible moment, and an answer to them ought to be insisted upon at the very outset of the procedure of investigation which is claimed for this new scheme. If Secularism were put forward simply as a system of unbelief, whose sole aim was to overthrow Christianity and to destroy men's faith in the supernatural, then, of course, its acceptance or rejection would have to depend upon the evidence which could be brought to support that which is attempted to be overthrown. The whole thing would in that case resolve itself into the question, "Is Christianity true?" But Secularism claims to accomplish much more than this. It makes loud and noisy pretensions with regard to its positive principles, and is never tired of boasting that it contains within itself everything which is requisite for the well-being of mankind. In that light, therefore, it must be looked at. You will, I think, see at once that a new system may contain prin-

ciples which are not only unobjectionable, but are such as would conduce to the well-being of society to be acted upon, and yet be quite unable to establish a claim for consideration on the part of the public. If this same Secularism aimed at effecting certain reforms in society, which all agree we should be the better for having accomplished, still to argue from that fact in favour of its acceptance as a whole, would be to adopt a *non sequitur* in reasoning of a very dangerous character. For in the first place the scheme might be utterly incompetent to achieve the results which it advocated in consequence of certain defects in the very nature of its existence; secondly, the whole thing might be unnecessary in consequence of the fact that all that it intended to do was being accomplished much more effectually elsewhere; and, thirdly, its proposed reforms might be associated with, or subordinated to principles of so objectionable a character as to more than counterbalance any amount of good that might spring from their realisation. Now all these are points that require to be very carefully considered, whenever any new scheme is brought before us with a view to induce us to reject all that we have been accustomed to look upon heretofore as essential to man's happiness. What then is this Secularism? What does it seek to accomplish, and what are its claims upon society? Altogether it seems to me to occupy an extremely equivocal position, the very classification of which is marvellously uncertain. It is not a science, nor a philosophy, nor a religion. It professes to take the first and second of these under its protection, and to insist that the last shall be altogether rejected; but before one moment's consideration can be given to its dictates, we must know by what authority it utters them, and what are the claims it has to make in favour of its own pretensions. It talks largely about ethics and morals and reforms, and all that kind of thing, but it does not even profess to be a system of moral philosophy, since its ethical code is borrowed from an outside source, and has, therefore, no necessary connection with it, as will be fully shown hereafter. There are, of course, large numbers of moral precepts to be found distributed throughout its literature; but as these are in no case original, they fail to impart to the system any distinctive peculiarity. Nay, moreover, not only are all of these that are worth anything to be met with elsewhere, but they are to be found in a much better form, and appear to be much more in place in their old frames than in the new setting of George Holyoake's Modern Gospel. Nothing can be more clear to any man at all acquainted with these subjects than that you cannot take a number of precepts, however good, string them together, and call the collection a system unless some great principle be discovered from which

they spring, or which will serve as a basis for their support. I by no means maintain that an ethical code to be good must inculcate some new duty or furnish a moral maxim which had not been met with before; but I do contend that any system which has nothing but antiquated precepts to give us, without either a new foundation for their basis, a new mode of connecting them, a means of imparting to them fresh vitality, or presenting new motives for obedience to them, cannot justly claim one moment's consideration, because it has no *raison d'être* for being in existence at all. And this is precisely the position of Secularism. Trite and common-place precepts might be collected together from all sources, ancient and modern, and presented in a new form with a new basis, and with additional sanctions, and the world be an immense gainer thereby. But to collect together even the best maxims that have ever been propounded to regulate human conduct, without supplying to them any connecting link, and without showing any kind of uniform foundation upon which they can rest, is most certainly not to originate a system. If, therefore, Secularism really contained in its ethical code all the moral teaching to be found in the New Testament, it not only would not establish its claims upon society, but would justify us in despising it as a purloiner of what does not belong to it, unless it could present these in a new light, give to them a firmer basis, impart to them increased vitality, or furnish us with more powerful motives for obedience to their teaching.

Secularism lays claim to no authority by means of which it can enforce what it teaches, nor to which an appeal can be made in the case of a dispute amongst those who accept it. In no case can it be considered a system, since it has no primary principles about which all are agreed. Each individual enrolled in its ranks must be held to be at perfect liberty to accept what he pleases and to reject the rest, by the doing of which he will not forfeit his position in the movement; nor his claim to be considered a good Secularist. The consequence of this is that no two even of the leaders are agreed as to the very foundation of their principles; they are constantly wrangling over, not simply minor matters in connection with their scheme, but about the very fundamental bases of the whole system. And any unfortunate novice who should dip into the works of these men—which are by no means numerous—with a view to ascertain what the principles of Secularism really are, would find himself very considerably puzzled.

When Mr. Holyoake first propounded the new name "Secularist," he attached to it a definite meaning which had taken shape in his own mind, and with which he intended it here-



after to be associated. By him it was elaborated in his study, expounded in his books, and advocated in his lectures; and the world was prepared to accept, if not Secularism, at least Mr. Holyoake's definition of what it was. He wrote a description of it in *Chambers' Encyclopædia*, and defended it very ably in a debate with the Rev. Brewin Grant—the most terrible opponent the Secularists have ever had to contend with—now twenty-three years ago. For a time things went on smoothly enough, and although very few persons became converted to Mr. Holyoake's way of thinking, yet large numbers accepted him as the exponent of a new but whimsical set of principles. Very soon however a storm arose in the heretofore clear sky of Secularism. Enemies of the Holyoake régime were found within the camp itself. Revolutionary principles were abroad, and the authority of the founder of the dynasty was set at nought. Another king arose "which knew not Joseph." Mr. Bradlaugh, then calling himself "Iconoclast," came into the field, and with the noisy rant and fustian that has characterised him ever since declared that Mr. Holyoake's Secularism was all wrong, that the principles had been completely misrepresented, and that he was the man whom the fates had appointed to set things right. Mr. Holyoake had no doubt been sincere enough in his way—simple-minded man that he was—in proclaiming a Secularism that was not atheistic, but the error into which he had fallen in this matter was of so alarming a character that it could no longer be tolerated, and hence the necessity for a new and revised secular code. Here was Secularism number two, which as it could not be made to square with Secularism number one, came into violent collision with it, and split up the movement into two parties, which, as is usual in such cases, began violently to abuse each other. From that time the Bradlaughites and the Holyoakeites, or as they were pleased to term themselves the Destructives and the Constructives, wrangled, quarrelled and hurled secular anathemas at each other's head in a style that would have gratified the old man of the Vatican. The Constructives declared that the Destructives were ruining the cause by their coarseness, vulgarity, and violent antagonism to all who differed from them; whilst the Destructives retaliated on the Constructives with the charge of truckling to their opponents, acting on policy, and playing the traitor to their principles. This storm in a tea-pot raged furiously for some years, until it culminated in a debate, which took place in Mr. Bradlaugh's Hall—called, as though in satire, the Hall of Science, for science is just the one thing that is never taught there—in Old Street, London, in the March of 1870. Here was a pretty exhibition in connection with the system that was con-

tinually bringing it as a charge against Christianity, that, in a long and splendid history of eighteen hundred years, it had become broken up into sects, and yet which could not itself—despite the fact that it professed to avoid all those questions about which differences of opinion are so common—maintain its harmony even for one generation. The two leaders of Secularism are now seen engaged in a violent war of words, for two nights, with a view to ascertain what Secularism really is. The contrast between these men, as they appeared on the platform, was very great. One of them calm, cool, smooth, oily, and persuasive, looking the very personification of policy; the other self-sufficient, arrogant, and noisy, tearing a passion to tatters, and seeming to say in every sentence uttered—

I am Sir Oracle,

And when I ope my mouth, let no dogs bark!

The real question at issue between them was as to whether Secularism was Atheism, Mr. Bradlaugh maintaining, dogmatically, that it was, and Mr. Holyoake, with equal pertinacity, contending that it was not. The former of these disputants—with that kind consideration and liberal feeling which he never fails to display towards his opponents, whether in his own camp or out of it—admitted that it was just possible that there might be sincere Secularists who had not altogether found their way to Atheism; but, then, such unpardonable delay on their parts in reaching the goal to which they were all hastening must be ascribed to the fact that they lacked the necessary quantity of brains to enable them to see the results of their own doctrines. His words are:—

Although, at present, it may be perfectly true that all men who are Secularists are not yet Atheists, I put it to you, as also perfectly true, that, in my opinion, the logical consequence of the acceptance of Secularism must be that the man gets to Atheism, if he has brains enough to comprehend.\*

Complimentary this to all those who did not see eye to eye with himself on this question. From the printed report of the debate we learn that this lively sally was received with “loud cheers”—of course, from the friends of the speaker; which is of itself a sufficient indication of the kindly feelings that prevailed in the audience between the two sects of Secularists. Mr. Holyoake, although he did not charge his opponent with lack of brains, yet, retaliated upon him with biting sarcasm, for his arrogant assumptions of having sounded the depths of the universe sufficiently to make himself quite sure that there was no God. He remarks:—

All I can say is I congratulate Mr. Bradlaugh on possessing that infinite knowledge (laughter) which is so unwise a display when the Theist claims it.

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\* *Debate between C. Bradlaugh and J. G. Holyoake, p. 16.*

I think the Theist assumes an infinite knowledge when he says he knows there is a God. I think he who says that one is impossible, betrays an equal capacity for knowing everything.\*

As may be easily imagined, this debate ended as most debates do—in each disputant becoming more firmly convinced than ever that his own view was the true one. From that time the two schools of Secularism, the Constructive and the Destructive, quarrelled and abused each other to their heart's content. The Destructives were and are still by far the most numerous, for a very obvious reason—that the work of pulling down is so much easier and so much more agreeable to the feelings of the majority of mankind than the more laborious task of building up. To pull down and destroy is accomplished almost with the same ease as the descent down that slippery pathway long since described by a Roman poet, whilst the task of constructing is like the more arduous labour of returning along the steep ascent.

Facilis descensus Averni,  
Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras,  
Hic labor, hoc opus est.†

No sooner was this discussion over than another Secular leader—Mr. Charles Watts—proceeded to enlighten the public upon his view of the case. In a lecture which he gave almost immediately afterwards, in the Old Street Hall, and in an article written by him at the same time which appeared in the *National Reformer*, he pointed out that according to his view both Bradlaugh and Holyoake were wrong; and that Secularism was something different to what it had been described by either. Here then was Secularism number three. But this was not all, for not long afterwards there arose another champion in the Secular movement—by name George William Foote—who, in a small publication entitled *Secularism Re-stated*, endeavoured to prove that all the previous exponents of Secularism had been in error, and that he alone was the true oracle that was capable of unfolding its wondrous mysteries. And I suppose we shall have from other champions—male and female—as they arise, more re-statements of this same Secularism, until the Secular sects will be as numerous as the individuals in the movement, each one having a form of Secularism peculiar to himself. Now what is to be done with all this jumble of conflicting opinions with regard to matters that should be as clear as the noonday sun? Certain it is that the inquirer who looks into Secularism for the first time with a view to ascertain what it really is, must find himself in a great state of perplexity. Should he conduct his investigation without bias and prejudice, there is not much

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\* *Debate between C. Bradlaugh and J. G. Holyoake.* p. 52.

† Virgil.

danger of his relinquishing the firm, sound and well-trodden highway of Christian truth, to wander in the bogs and quagmires of Secular whimsies where there are no finger-posts to point the road, and where the guides themselves are quarrelling as to which way should be taken. Mr. Foote has very well remarked :—

The problem of Secular organisation cannot, of course, be definitely and satisfactorily solved until we are agreed upon the real nature of Secular work ; since instruments must be fashioned to suit a purpose, and means adopted in subordination to an end ; and it is also evident that we can never thoroughly agree upon the real nature of Secular work until we arrive at a common understanding as to what Secular principles are, and what they imply.\*

Certainly ! And as the “ common understanding as to what secular principles are and what they imply ” has not been arrived at, no secular organisation is possible, and no secular propagandism likely to produce any effect upon society. For it must be borne in mind, that these differences of opinion among the leaders in the movement do not simply affect minor and unimportant details, but concern the very fundamental principles of the cause, as will be hereafter shown—In the public debate which I recently held with Mr. Foote for four nights, at Middlesborough, he said, in pointing out these contradictions and differences of opinion that I had only dealt with minor matters, and had not discussed the great and vital principles of Secularism. I replied to this that I had not dealt with the great and vital principles of Secularism, and for a very obvious reason, that Secularism had no great and vital principles to be dealt with ; that all that was good in it had been borrowed from other sources ; and that its sole distinguishing peculiarity consisted in a set of coarse denials and crude negations.

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#### THE MATERIALISTIC MURDERER'S PLEA.

HERE was live protoplasm, six quarts or so :  
 Now 'tis dead protoplasm, what more ?  
 No force has been lost, as the chemists will show :  
 The world is as rich as before.  
 All the atoms are here, all the builders are here,  
 And better work waits them, no doubt.  
 You zealots, who clamour for vengeance severe,  
 Do you know what you're talking about ?

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\* *Secular Work and Organisation*, p. 3.

## REVIEWERS REVIEWED.

BY THOMAS BREVIOR.

"BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE."

*Blackwood's Magazine* for March last has an article on the Powers of "The Air," in which the writer reports some recent facts of spirit-manifestation; and presents his views on the subject of modern Spiritualism. These facts though remarkable in themselves, are of a kind with which the readers of the *Spiritual Magazine* are sufficiently familiar, and with which therefore I need not detain them. His reflections and conclusions make no pretension to be either very original or profound. But he is no bigot; and if he is not particularly well informed on the subject, at least he is disposed to give it fair and candid consideration; and this is the more noteworthy in a reviewer in a magazine so eminently respectable and conservative as *Blackwood's*; and is decidedly in advance of many reviewers of loud liberal profession.

Our reviewer candidly avows he has no great love for Spiritualism, and would not regret were it proved a delusion; but, he adds, "if the weight of sound credible evidence is in support of it, I must, notwithstanding that a mass of roguery and imposture may also have collected around it, yield it belief." And he lays down the sound premise that—"If unimpeachable testimony of the existence of these spirits can be adduced, we must not put it aside except on still stronger testimony which can show the first to be mistaken." He acknowledges that "the evidence for it seems strong and has never been fairly rebutted;" and he makes the further admission that—"the more one thinks on Spiritualism simply as a fact, and putting aside what spirits may pretend to teach, the more one is persuaded of it being in nowise repugnant to the teachings of Holy Writ."

Our reviewer owns to have had no personal experiences of Spiritualism, but he has been much impressed by the weight of testimony in its favour; especially by experiences personally communicated to him by intelligent credible witnesses of marvellous phenomena, and while the events were still fresh and vivid in their memory. He does not dispute that such facts so attested really happen; nor that they are due to spiritual agency of some kind. The question with him is—of what kind?—Are the spirits good or evil? Are they departed souls? or are they of an order distinct from Humanity? He does not overlook their testimony that they are human; but he thinks

there is question of their credibility. He tells us—"The fondness of the spirits for darkened rooms, their decidedly mysterious proceedings, their sparing and unsatisfactory communications, and the utter uselessness of many of their most startling deeds, are fatal to confidence."

Although these objections have been urged and answered again and again, yet it is due to so candid a critic to once more pass them briefly under review; so far at least as they bear on the immediate point at issue. In all endeavour to pierce into what to us is superlatively the "realm of mystery," and in all attempt of the dwellers in that realm to manifest their presence to, and hold converse with us, we might reasonably expect that there would be "decidedly mysterious proceedings." Whatever Spiritualism reveals to us of the spirit-world is so much reclaimed from the domain of mystery, and a stimulus to further exploration in what has been the great *terra incognita* of the ages. And if as we proceed new mysteries open before us, this is only what happens with every advance of knowledge. It is instructive to note in passing, that there are theologians who denounce all such investigation as a laying of profane hands on sacred things, an unlawful prying into Divine arcana providentially concealed from us. If there are spirits who have had no experience of earthly life, many of our proceedings must be as "decidedly mysterious" to them as theirs can possibly be to us.

The alleged fondness of the spirits for darkened rooms is an imputation based on exaggeration and misconception. It is only a fraction of the physical manifestations of spirits for which darkness partial or total is required. The most ample and convincing proofs of spirit agency may be obtained independently of this condition. Constant experiments are made by those who co-operate on either side the veil to eliminate it as far as possible; but spirits and men are alike subject to the laws of their environment, and must patiently conform to the conditions imposed by limited knowledge, and which experience has proved most effective. It would need to be proved that spirits voluntarily, wilfully, and of preference, shroud themselves and their doings in darkness and mystery, ere these concomitants can fairly be held to invalidate their testimony. I am not aware that this has ever been attempted; certainly it is not attempted by our reviewer.

That spirit-communications are sparing and unsatisfactory, is a vague, sweeping, and over-hasty generalisation. Sparing they assuredly are not, as witness the voluminous communications through Judge Edmonds, *Nature's Divine Revelations* through A. J. Davis, the trance messages through Mrs. Conant, and the inspirational discourses through Emma Hardinge and Cora

Tappan. As to their satisfactory or unsatisfactory nature, that is a matter of opinion and degree: they are of various merit, and should be judged separately, not lumped together, after the rough and ready but unscientific fashion of our reviewer.

As to the alleged "utter uselessness" of many of the most startling spirit-manifestations, it might be urged that one important purpose they serve is this of startling an unspiritual and conceited generation by marvels that transcend and seem to contravene those laws of Nature with which we are acquainted, and which we are so often told "are never departed from;" and by a class of facts with which it was unfamiliar, open a new method for the investigation of important problems which may largely influence the philosophy of our time. But we need not travel beyond the limits of the article in hand for an answer to the *cui bono* of spirit manifestations? Our reviewer admits that they have brought home to his mind with fresh and startling force forgotten experiences of early life; that they check the spread of materialism; that they throw a new flood of light on old stories of mesmerism and magic, sorcery and witchcraft, dreams and divination; and that "possession by spirits as exhibited in the New Testament no longer looks obsolete, but is once more frightfully real and modern to the mind when we reflect that there are spirits continually about us whose nature permits them to meddle freely with matter." Spiritual healing of disease, premonition, and other forms of beneficent spirit action, our reviewer has not taken into account.

The reader can now judge how far our reviewer has made out a case "fatal to confidence" in the spirits, and the belief in their human origin. They are, at all events, likely to be better informed on the latter point than an anonymous reviewer who has never been at a *séance* with them, nor witnessed any of their manifestations. They do not ask unlimited confidence, nor would it be wise to give it; but to charge them all with bad faith would be at least equally rash. David confessed—"I said *in my haste*, all men are liars!" and we may well hesitate and reflect ere we, at our leisure, bring against the spirits the same railing accusation. There are, moreover, one or two considerations which strongly confirm the truth of their averment. If consistency be a test of truth, their continuous, concurrent, and unvarying testimony that they are human, may be fairly regarded as good evidence on the point. But this is not all: they manifest all the qualities and characteristics we find in Humanity, and nowhere else. Their thoughts, sympathies, affections, memories, are all human. They speak the speech of men; they revive the recollection of past incidents in the lives of others, and of their own earthly existence; they sing,

play music, draw pictures, write messages, appear in materialized form, visibly and palpably human, leave in wax the mould of the materialized hand, foot, or face; and imprint their portrait on the photographic plate; and in these several ways are often identified by their surviving friends. If all this does not prove them human, I am at a loss to conceive what could do so.

Our reviewer *naively* confesses—"I never in my life attended a *séance*, or witnessed any medium's performances." I think this ingenuous avowal gives the key to the situation. Had he done so, and persevered in his investigations, his difficulties and objections would probably have been removed. That he is frank and tolerably free from prejudice is freely conceded; but is this the only requisite qualification in a public instructor? Is it too much to expect that a reviewer should first be a viewer—that the teacher should himself have learned? What would the editor of *Blackwood's Magazine* think of an article on Chemistry containing the admission, "I never in my life entered a laboratory or witnessed any chemical experiments!" Wherefore should Spiritualism be treated differently to Chemistry, or any other science? If the aforesaid editor required an article on Biology he would probably apply to Professor Huxley or Mr. Spencer, if one on Heat to Professor Tyndall, if on the Radiometer to Mr. Crookes; and if without offence I might offer a suggestion, it would be to consider whether he might not with advantage follow in the wake of the *Contemporary Review* in inviting Mr. Alfred Russell Wallace, Mr. William Howitt, or Dr. Sexton, to contribute an article on Spiritualism to its pages. Either of these gentlemen would be well qualified for the task by ample knowledge and careful study of the subject.

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*Blackwood* again recurs to the question of Spiritualism in its number for July; in an article (evidently by another hand) entitled "In a Studio—a Conversation," reference to Cagliostro leads to the subject of magic; and the dialogue thus proceeds:—

*Belton*: Have you ever looked up the subject of magic?

*Mallett*: Yes, a good deal; and very curious is the literature on this subject. Some of the old writers give you, for instance, complete formulas to raise spirits of various kinds, and seem to have had an absolute belief in their efficacy. It seems to be pretty clear that they did have faith in these invocations; for it is impossible to believe that such men as Cardanus and Cornelius Agrippa, Albertus Magnus, Johannes Bodinus, Pietro Abana, Hieronymus Fracastorius, Torreblanca, Debris, Pomponatus, and Vairus, and men of that stamp, should have wilfully endeavoured to palm off on the world, with such calm seriousness, statements which they knew to be lies. At all events they clearly profess their faith in the power of man, by magical processes, to raise the dead, and evoke spirits by incantation; and various receipts are given by them to effect such purposes.

*Belton*: I suppose that at the present day no one would believe in this. These men flourished in ignorant ages, when science was in its infancy, and when superstition was at its height.



*Mallett*: You are very much mistaken if you believe that the day of the magicians is entirely past. The magical art is still cultivated, though in secrecy; and there are numbers of persons who still study it, practise it, and have faith in it. So, at least, I have been assured by men in whom I cannot but place trust, and who have declared to me that they themselves have attended magical *séances*, and employed the formulas of the magical books with successful results. Certain it is that the Abbé Constant devoted himself to the study of the magical arts and occult sciences, and, under the pseudonym of Eliphas Levi, wrote some remarkable books on the subject, and specially one on *La Haute Magie*, which I recommend to you, if you are curious in such matters. There is no doubt, too, that a few persons were and are his disciples and pupils in France, and among them may be mentioned Desbarolles, the author of *Les Mystères de la Main*. I must confess, however, that after reading *La Haute Magie* I was not very much enlightened on the subject. A great deal was hinted and insinuated and vaguely indicated, but comparatively little directly taught either as to the theory or the practice of magic.\* A very accomplished and distinguished writer, who lately died, assured me that he himself, on one occasion, by following certain prescribed formulas, evoked one of the spirits held by those who believe to be very dangerous—understand me, not by means of any medium, but by his own practice—and that he satisfied himself by this and other experiments that the prescribed processes were not by any means delusions or follies. This same gentlemen also told me, when I made a remark similar to yours, that I supposed no one in the present day believed in magical art, that, on the contrary, he knew many who studied it, and believed in it. "*Che volete*," as the Italians say. You may make out of this what you choose; I merely repeat what I have been told.

*Belton*: Was he not making a fool of you, and trying to see if he could hoax you?

*Mallett*: By no means. He was very serious; and, after giving me book and chapter for what he said, he finished by drawing my own horoscope very cleverly, thus showing that, at all events, he had studied the matter.

*Belton*: What did he prophesy about you?

*Mallett*: No matter; I shall not give you the chance of laughing at me.

*Belton*: You stimulate my curiosity. I think I should like to try some of these evocations and incantations, but I am sure nothing would come of them. Is there any difficulty in performing them?

*Mallett*: No; there is no real difficulty; but numerous materials and objects are required which are not to be obtained without trouble and expense, and certain arrangements must be made which are sometimes not easy; and though, if any one were seriously inclined to try the experiments, any little obstacles could be easily overcome; yet it requires a certain patience, seriousness, determination, and trouble that few persons would take in the vague hope of arriving at results in which they have a complete distrust. I have often thought of trying the experiments myself; but I have, to begin with, no faith, and therefore I shrank before the little obstacles of trouble, expense, and time. Besides, I don't know precisely what I should do with a demon, or even a spirit, after I had raised it. I am more used to men and women, and I like them better. That is, I like a spirit plus a body more than a spirit minus a body. I talk and act more freely with them. As for the spirits that are said to come up at tables by the late processes of incantation, they are generally so badly educated, and speak such bad grammar, that I don't care for their company. I could stand any amount of bad grammar, if they would only tell me something that we all of us do not know, and that we desire to know. To rap out, by tedious processes, feeble common-places of morality and tawdry statements of future existence, which correspond solely to the vulgarest notions, or to advise us as to our conduct in copy-book phrases of evil communications corrupting good manners, does not pay. If what they said were really worth saying, I would endure even the tediousness of their methods; but I cannot see that they have added to our literature anything very valuable. Shakespeare has so terribly

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\* Since writing this, we have seen the death of the Abbé Constant announced in the Paris journals.

degenerated at the table that I feel sorry to see that he has lost his mind in losing his body.

*Belton*: But you have had strange experiences, have you not?

*Mallett*: Very strange experiences, which I cannot explain, and which nobody has ever been able to explain, to my satisfaction at least. But all that were of any note were physical and material results; and I do not accept any spiritual explanation of them. But don't let us talk about them now. They bore me, and they wouldn't amuse you.

*Belton*: You seem to consider the fact of the utter triviality of all that is written and rapped at tables to be sufficient proof that it does not come from spirits. I agree with you in thinking that their utterances are not from the so-called spiritual world; but I do not see why we should expect spirits out of the body to have more intelligence than spirits in the body. We have no reason to think so. We know absolutely nothing in respect to the changes which take place after death. It may be that pure and refined spirits, freed from the body, ascend to higher existence; but in that case it is difficult to imagine that such spirits would return to rap out foolish statements at tables. But, on the other hand, there are many low, mean, contemptible spirits dwelling here in the flesh to whom the body may lend apparent respectability, and stripped of this garment which conceals their inanity of intellect and baseness of desires, they may fall in the scale of being even below what they seemed here. Such spirits—of the earth earthy—would long for the gratifications of the sense and the flesh, and might be supposed to haunt the earth to which their desires cling, and grasp at any means of communication with it. Their heaven would be the heaven of the senses, and of the life they had lost, and one would naturally expect from them lies, hypocrisies, and deceit of every kind. Freed from the body, the naked spirit would be what it desired—the high and pure of aspiration would therefore ascend to loftier planes of existence, the mean and base might descend even to lower. I only suggest this answer to any argument against spiritual communications founded upon their triviality, feebleness, and absurdity. Let us clear our minds of distinctions between human beings and spirits. We are all spirits; all our communications are spiritual. It is two spirits who talk together—not two bodies—here on earth. We have no warrant for the belief that the instant the spirit is freed from the body it necessarily leaves the earth—whatever be its condition—and becomes at once purified, and beyond its influences. It may be or it may not be; but it is certainly a possible supposition that they whose whole happiness, while here, has been in the joys of the body, and whose desires have been mean and depraved, may only continue to be possessed by the same desires, and long to regain the body through which they obtained their gratification.

*Mallett*: It never struck me before in this light, but it certainly is an intelligible theory, whether it be correct or not. We all have faith in gradations of future being, and we believe that the spirit survives the body, and retains its identity; and why not suppose, if its preparation in this life has been for higher spheres, it would naturally ascend to them, while if it had been for lower spheres, it would equally descend to them? If, after death, we retain an individuality, we naturally must remain what we inherently are, with the same desires, the same aspirations, the same tendencies. This would, if we accept it, enable the human being here to shape for himself his future sphere, by the training of his thoughts and aspirations to what is lofty, pure, and refined on the one hand, or, on the other, to what is low, bestial, and degraded. We should thus reap what we ourselves have sown, and not be subject to any judgment and sentence outside of ourselves. Would not this recommend itself to our sense of perfect justice?

*Belton*: If we choose to take another step, we might suppose that repeated trials might be allotted to every spirit to climb up to higher spheres of existence by the purgation of its desires (since every spirit is what it desires), by its devotion to noble ends, by its constant experience that the low leads only to the low, by its sense of loss in consequence of its base aims.

*Mallett*: In respect to these so-called spiritual communications by means of table-rappings, and all that, we shall never have the phenomena properly investigated so long as we begin with a theory. To set out with the assumption that all

the material phenomena are occasioned by spiritual intervention, is entirely unworthy of science and philosophy. But so strenuously is this theory advanced by believers, that the minds of those who pretend to investigate them are warped at the beginning: on the one side are those who are inclined to the spiritual theory, and on the other, those to whom such a theory is absurd, and even worse; and both, for entirely opposite reasons, are averse to strict examination and investigation. The real question is, "Do the facts exist or not?" If so, how are they to be explained? If the facts clearly exist, it is idle to reject them because a foolish theory is advanced to explain them. Are there any facts outside our common experience of the laws of nature so called? If there be, let us arrange them with calmness and honesty. On both sides, on the contrary, I find precipitation and impatience. Those disposed to the spiritual theory accept everything at once as spiritual. Those who are sceptical and unbelieving reject every fact as a cheat, without carefully investigating it or explaining it. It suffices the latter class on one or two occasions to detect a charlatan at work, or to encounter an entire failure of the experiment, to come to the conclusion that the whole thing is the result of charlatanism. But repeated failures or repeated cheating prove nothing. No scientific man would investigate any other question in the same spirit as he does this. If the matter were worthy of consideration at all, he would not be stopped in his researches by repeated failures to obtain his end. He would try again and again. He would not insist in the outset, for instance, that galvanism did not exist, unless he could produce its effects in the way he chose. He would not insist on his own conditions, and assert that unless the results were obtained through them, they did not exist at all. But this is what he constantly does in his professed investigation of so-called spiritual phenomena, because it is the term spiritual which annoys and disgusts him. If you recount to him any phenomena, perfectly material and physical, as having occurred in your presence under conditions contrary to his preconceived opinions or experience, he says, "It would not have occurred had I been there;" or he smiles, and says, "Ah, indeed!" and thinks you are a fool. If you press the point, and ask him to explain it, and tell him the details, and show him that his explanation does not accord with the facts, he assumes at once that you were incapable of investigation, that you were humbugged, or that you lie. Humbug is the great word he uses—a very expansive one, which means anything or nothing. If you reply, "How humbugged? where is the humbug? point it out—I desire to know as much as you;" he declines to particularise, and prefers the generalisation of—Humbug.

*Belton*: I cannot wonder at his condition of mind, nor fail to sympathise with his disgust at so much absurdity as is put forth by Spiritualists in general.

*Mallett*: Nor I; but, at the same time, he should, I think, preserve a more scientific and philosophic attitude, and not decide until he has thoroughly investigated. There may be nothing in all this; he may be quite right, only he has not examined the question sufficiently to decide upon it. For all he has seen and can explain there may be something. Of all these phenomena some may be real and point to a law not yet understood. Are there any such? It is not, to my mind, sufficient to try a few casual experiments on absolute conditions, and to reject the whole if failure ensues. In science one does not expect the first tentative experiment to succeed. Suppose the experiment fails a hundred times and succeeds once, the important fact is the one success, not the hundred failures. The truth is, that all begin with scepticism—not honest scepticism which neither believes nor disbelieves, which is ready to accept or reject according to the evidence and facts, but scepticism with a loaded bias to unbelief. There is no reason either for or against the existence of any phenomenon *à priori*. The mere fact that it is contrary to our experience is no proof that it does not exist. Suppose a community of blind persons to exist on an island which has never been visited by any person who saw, and suppose by accident a man with the power of sight should be thrown among them. How could he prove to them that this faculty really existed in him? He would at once be met by the statement that it was contrary to their experience, that no one they had ever heard of possessed such a faculty. Vainly would he reason with them. His exhibition of this faculty would be treated as humbug and charlatanism. He would say, for instance,

"Place a person fifty yards from me, and beside him any selected person in whom you have confidence. I will tell you, without moving from here, every action he makes." He would do this. What would be the answer? Would the blind be convinced? Not at all; they would say, "You have a confederate; this knowledge is procured by a secret system of sounds and signs intelligible to the senses we all have, or by some method which we do not know; what we do know is that nobody can see." Or they would say, "Let us lock you up in a room all by yourself, with no doors or windows, and chain you there, and then you must tell us what is done in another house by a person we will lock up there, or what is done in the street outside." If you answer, "Under those conditions I cannot see;" they would cry out, "This proves it is all juggling. If you can't see as well in a box locked up at night as in the open air by day, you cannot see at all. There is no such power that exists; and though we do not detect the trick, it is nevertheless a trick." Don't you see that the seeing man in this case would be in a hopeless position? Suppose that there be anything real—I do not say there is—but suppose there be anything real in the phenomena of tables rising in the air, the person through whose mediumship they are executed is, to the scientific man of to-day, in a position analogous to that of the seeing man among the blind, or the hearing among the deaf, provided they have had no previous experience of such a faculty as sight or hearing.

*Belton*: You speak as if you believed in these phenomena. Do you?

*Mallett*: I was not speaking of my belief, nor did I intend to indicate whether I believed in any of them or not. I merely meant to say that the spirit in which they are investigated is not what I wish it were.

*Belton*: But do you believe?

*Mallett*: I believe what I have seen and what I have tested with all my senses. I mean the physical phenomena, for I have every proof of their reality that I have of anything, and I am not yet persuaded that I am an utter fool. But I do not undertake to explain them, much less do I accept the spiritual explanation. In my opinion there is quite as much stupidity in our incredulity as in our credulity. I cannot explain anything. It is an entire mystery how I see, how I hear, how I move my arm. Anatomists and scientific men explain to me the mechanism, and I understand that; but I do not understand how I set the mechanism in movement, nor they either. A man lives, sees, moves, one moment; the next moment he is what we call dead. The mechanism is the same, but the somewhat we cannot trace that moved it, is gone. *A priori*, outside our experience one thing is as difficult to believe as another, and it is idle to attempt to set bounds to any operation of life by our experience. It is quite possible that we have subtle powers and faculties which have escaped our observation, and that are exercised at times unconsciously or only in certain abnormal conditions. Change for a moment the normal conditions of ordinary life, and instantly we have new phenomena, as in the case of madness, monomania, or delirium. In high fever the organs are far more susceptible than in health. What are you going to do with second-sight and ghosts, apparitions and premonitions? Will you reject them all? Is there nothing in them?—or will you say with Dr. Johnson, "All argument is against it, but all belief is for it?" Are there no such things as sympathies and antipathies which we cannot explain, and yet which to us are real? What is love? What is hate? No! we do not know anything yet; and there are, in my opinion, penumbral powers and senses surrounding our plain and definite ones, which we do not understand, and which we have not investigated. All I mean by this is, that it seems to me very foolish to cry out humbug at anything which is contrary to our common experience; and that it would be more scientific and honest to investigate calmly, than to ridicule without investigation. And this is all I have to say, and don't let us talk any more about it. I am ready to believe anything if you can prove it properly. I am ready to disbelieve it if you can show that it has absolutely no foundation; but I do not begin by believing or disbelieving before careful examination. If I have not examined into it, I merely say I know nothing, or, as Montaigne did, "*Que sais-je?*"

*Belton*: I daresay you are perfectly right; but my own persuasion is that ninety-nine one-hundredths of all this Spiritualism is utter charlatany, and I

think I am very generous in giving you up the one one-hundredth. Do you remember that medium who, after gathering a considerable number of persons together at one of his *séances*, and finding that several had obtained entrance without paying for their tickets, rose—on a subsequent *séance*—before commencing his operations, and said: “I wish to make one observation—there’s nothing riles the spirits so as coming in without paying?”

*Mallett*: I remember; and he was a very clever fellow, and knew what he was about. I have no doubt the more money was paid the more his spirits were raised. But I admit that there are many charlatans of this kidney, and numbers of people whom they take in, and to whom the rubbish that is slowly rapped up at the table seems like inspired communications from the other world. My disgust at all these fellows is quite equal to yours. I cannot use language too strong to express my abhorrence of those who, by lying arts, pretend to summon from the other world those who were dear as life to us, but who have passed away, and then put into their mouths those miserable lies. Think, for instance, of Charles Sumner’s spirit being rapped up the other day, and giving this remarkable advice to his listeners—“You mustn’t act selfish!”

*Bolton*: Sometimes the messages rapped up are very amusing. Did you ever hear what the spirit of Dr. Webster, the murderer of Dr. Parkman, once rapped up to an astonished audience?

*Mallett*: Never; but pray let me hear it.

*Belton*: Well, Webster, as you know, killed Dr. Parkman to avoid paying a debt due to him; and when the spirit of Dr. W. presented itself to the table and was asked, as usual, what he was doing in the spirit-world, his answer was that he was keeping a boarding-house, and that Dr. Parkman was living with him, without paying, until he should work off or eat up the debt.

*Mallett*: That shows more ingenuity and intellect than one generally gets from the rapping spirits. If they would always be as amusing I should like to attend some *séances*.

*Belton*: Yes, if they only would be a little amusing, it would be a relief; after all they might make such fun of us here: what a chance for them! but they are so deadly serious, and so sadly commonplace, that they are not good company. Heavens! only think of such a lot surrounding you in another world, and you without a body to hide away in, or a key to your door, and all of them swarming in upon you with their futile remarks and sad commonplaces.

*Mallett*: It would be worse than the mosquitoes in the Western States of America. Why do we always think of spirits as being so serious? Are we to lose all our sense of humour when we lose our bodies? Are we never to amuse ourselves? Is there nothing in the other world to correspond to the enjoyments of this? Are all our art and poetry to be utterly swept away? Are there to be no varieties of character and personality? Shall we never laugh? Worse than this. According to the old superstition, we artists shall be in a pretty mess; for all the graven images we have made, and all the likenesses of things in the heavens, or the earth, or the waters under the earth, will, it has been said, become endowed with life and pursue us, and haunt us, and torment us—a pleasant thought indeed! But what should I do there without art and poetry, and literature and music, and all these occupations and delights? Will there be no work for us to do? no books to read—no pictures to paint?

*Belton*: Music is, according to the general belief, admitted. We shall be able to sing. It will always be the same song; but we shall be able to sing it eternally; and we are told that we shall never tire of singing it. But as for painting pictures and modelling statues, I have never heard we should be allowed to do that.

*Mallett*: I earnestly hope I shall have a body. I don’t at all conceive how I could do without one. But every one tells me—and, of course, every one knows—that I shall not need a body; and that I shall be perfectly contented with doing nothing but sing. But how shall I sing if I have no body? What sort of preparation then are any of us making for such a world? If we are to be deprived of all means of exercising such faculties as we have spent our lives in training and cultivating here, what is the use of training and cultivating them at all? Why are these passionate desires given us here for what seems

to us pure and noble, if, the moment we pass away from earth, they become perfectly useless? If to-morrow you were to deprive me of all these occupations, I should be very unhappy; and how can I be happy there deprived of them—that is, so long as I maintain my own identity and consciousness?

*Belton*: At all events I hope I shall have some kind of body to inhabit and use. It seems to me dreadful to think of wandering about a mere naked spirit, with no house to cover one. In fact, without a body I should be nobody. The idea of being blown about by the wind, or of being open to invasion by every other spirit, without any power of secrecy of thought and feeling is abhorrent to my notions. I do not care to keep this body, if I can find a better; but this is better than none; and I have lived in it so long, and had so much happiness in it, that I have a sort of fondness for it. If I take a new one, I should like it fresher, better, and handsomer in every way, more quickly responsive to the spirit, and not so easily tired. I should like, too, to be able to go to sleep in it, and to make excursions from it into other regions; for, of course, I hope there will be upper regions still. And of all things I should hope to be able to be alone, sometimes, if I chose. I like the odour of flowers. Do spirits smell? Are we to be out of our senses, so to speak? I hope not.

*Mallett*: Did you ever read *The Gates Ajar*, by Miss Elizabeth Phelps? She takes up this question and develops it in a most peculiar way, and with much talent.

*Belton*: Yes, I have read it; and I hear it is very popular, as of course it would be. The vague notions of a future state of existence which are generally entertained are quite unsatisfactory. And I can easily understand that such a view as hers would recommend itself to many. Her development of it to me is quite too material.

*Mallett*: At all events it does, after a peculiar fashion to be sure, recognise that the tastes, feelings, thoughts, and aspirations we cultivate here will not be utterly obliterated hereafter, and will find something hereafter to correspond to them. But come! our conversation has wandered widely enough, and it is time to break off. "Light thickens, and the crow makes wing to the rocky wood." Let us go and see it on the Pincio.

There are passages in this long and interesting extract which invite comment, but our space precludes further observations.

## NOTHING TO DO.

"Nothing to do!" in this world of ours,  
Where weeds spring up with the fairest  
flowers,

Where smiles have only a fitful play,  
Where hearts are breaking every day!

"Nothing to do!" thou Christian soul,  
Wrapping thee round in thy selfish  
stole;

Off with the garments of sloth and sin,  
Christ thy Lord has a kingdom to win.

"Nothing to do!" There are prayers  
to lay

On the altar of incense, day by day;  
There are foes to meet within and  
without;

There is error to conquer, strong and  
stout.

"Nothing to do!" There are minds to  
teach

The simplest forms of Christian speech;  
There are hearts to lure, with loving  
wile,

From the grimmest haunts of Sin's  
defile.

"Nothing to do!" There are lambs to  
feed,

The precious hope of the Church's need;  
Strength to be borne to the weak and  
faint,

Vigils to keep with the doubting saint.

"Nothing to do!" and thy Saviour said,  
"Follow thou Me, in the path I tread."

Lord, lend Thy help the journey  
through,

Lest, faint, we cry, "So much to do!"

ANXIOUS ENDEAVOURS OF SPIRITUALISTS TO  
REDUCE CHRISTIANITY TO THE LEVEL OF  
PAGANISM.

By WILLIAM HOWITT.

THERE are desperate attempts continually made by Spiritualists, the Hudson Tuttle, the Peebles,\* and the like profound reasoners, to reduce Christianity to the level of the systems of Confucius, Buddha, and others. What can induce them to labour at this it is not easy to see, except it be the mere love of novelty, the defect of the reasoning faculty in them, or the suggestion of the dear spirits, who are supposed to be very knowing and very honest, however stupid and dishonest their suggestions would lead one to think them. Certainly the preference for these pagan system-makers does no honour either to their taste or judgment. I never read the fond admiration of these men for poor Paganism in preference to Christianity, but I think of Hamlet's lecture to his mother for stooping to marry her husband's brother and murderer. Put the two religions in the place of the two Danish kings, and the application is perfect.

Look here upon this picture and on this—  
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.  
See what a grace was seated on this brow;  
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;  
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;  
A station like the herald Mercury,  
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;  
A combination, and a form, indeed,  
Where every god did seem to set his seal,  
To give the world assurance of a man:  
This was your husband. Look you now, what follows:  
Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,  
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?  
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,  
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?

\* \* \* \* \*

What judgment

Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you have,  
Else you could not have motion: but, sure, that sense  
Is apoplex'd: for madness would not err;  
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd  
But it reserv'd some quantity of choice,  
To serve in such a difference. What devil was't,  
That thus has cozen'd you to hoodman-blind?  
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,  
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,  
Or but a sickly part of one true sense  
Could not so mope.

\* We are in a position to state that the views of Mr. Peebles have undergone considerable modification lately on the subject of Christianity.—Ed. S. M.

And again how like !

O Hamlet, what a falling off was there !  
From one whose love was of that dignity !  
  \* \* \*   And to decline  
Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor  
To those of mine !

In these religions, as in those two kings, what a difference !  
what a fall from one to the other !

Thomas Wentworth Higginson writes a pamphlet with the object of raising the founders of Chinese and Indian religions to a par with that of Christ. He calls his book *The Sympathy of Religions*, and what a ricketty book it is ! According to him you can find something that is good in Christianity in this or that other pagan writer, or pagan system, and by collecting all these fragments of truth, these little sparks here and there, you might make up a Christianity. What a confession ! This Christianity which he seeks to degrade and dissolve can only be equalled by collecting painfully and putting together carefully all the good things written by all the pagan writers, and preached by all the pagan founders of religions in the world. Could he give a more decided and striking proof of the supreme superiority of Christianity ? You might make, he thinks, by this process a religion equal to Christianity. Does he not see, do not all these Iconoclasts see that Christianity is already made, and already includes all the sublimest doctrines in the world ? Yet this is what they are all compelled to confess at the very moment that they are asking us to set other religions on the same footing as Christianity. In vain ! we cannot swell their dear little mole-hills in Alps.

Higginson quotes Dean Milman thus : “ If we were to glean from the later Jewish writings, from the beautiful aphorisms of the Oriental nations, which we cannot fairly trace to Christian sources, and from Platonic and Stoic philosophy their more striking precepts, we might find, *perhaps*, a counterpart to all the moral sayings of Jesus.”—*History of Christianity*, Book I., chap. iv.

And what a second building of Babel ! What delightfully absurd labour in vain ! If we were indeed to scrape up all the earth and stones in a kingdom, we might, *perhaps*, pile up a mountain. And why ! The mountain is already piled up, and much better than all the pigmy hands of little men, who think themselves so clever, could do it. The mountain and the religion of Christ are already constructed to our hands, and we may conceit that we could build them, or make, or discover, as great, but it is simply conceit. This is the sum of the reason of these clever sneerers at Christianity, if we were laboriously to



glean from all pagan and possible sources of all countries and ages, we might, *perhaps*, compile a system equal to that which one Divine Man promulgated *at once*, and which is a perfect system and religion when all others, even according to these Anti-Christian cavillers, have only each of them a fragment or two of the truth; and that it would require the whole of their combined gleaning and amalgamating to make, *perhaps*, a system as good.

Mr. Wentworth Higginson, at the very moment that he is endeavouring to pull down Christianity, in order to set up a jumble of these molecular pagan systems, also confesses as follows: "What religion stands highest in moral results if not Christianity?" (p. 17). "I say again, Christianity has, on the whole, produced the highest results of all in manners, in arts, in energy" (p. 18). Then why don't these people just let it alone?

"Historically, of course," he continues, "we are Christians, and can enjoy the advantages which that better training has given, just as the favoured son of a king may enjoy his special advantages, and yet admit that the less favoured are equally sons. The name of Christianity alone ceases to excite respect when it is used to represent any false or exclusive claims, or when it takes the place of the old and grander words—"Religion and Virtue" (p. 20).

What confessions for the truth to wring from an advocate of error! According to this champion of Paganism, Christianity, as a religion, stands the highest in moral results. Its followers enjoy the advantage of a superior training, and rank as kings' sons in comparison with common men—*i.e.*, they are kings' sons in comparison with pagans. The name of Christianity only ceases to excite respect when it is used for bad purposes. How logical! Because a system is used for bad purposes by priest-craft or any other craft, it is then to cease to deserve respect.

To condemn a system pure and noble in itself for the faults of false and selfish professors, is to condemn—not the system, but your own absurd reasoning. Without wishing to exclude any men from the rank and privileges of men, surely any man with the least possible white in his eye, will prefer the moral rank of a king's son, and a system which justly confers on him that rank, to those systems which only entitle him to the moral status and endowments of a mere man, and nothing more.

When these Paganophilists have exalted Paganism by all this process of gleaning, scraping together, raking all straws out of all corners, and conglomerating their motley heap of odds and ends, this is all that they can achieve. They can, they think, make up a system that may, *perhaps*, bear some-

thing of a resemblance to and comparison with Christianity. A pitiable result, after so much scheming and labour! It is the old story of the mountain bringing forth the mouse. How much better and wiser are they who, having the whole, are contented with it; prefer the whole to a part, and leave the pagans, who know no better, to hug themselves on their oddments. To be contented to belong the religion which "stands the highest," and has produced the highest results in manners, arts, and energy. Certainly, no one who has had the privilege of enjoying the refinements, the intelligence, the political pre-eminence, and the literary, scientific, and mechanical triumphs of the Christian portion of the human race, would be very willing to take up with the status of any pagan race in these particulars. No; not even a Paulus would do it, a Strauss, a Hudson Tuttle, a Peebles, a Lord Amberley, or a Higginson, unless they are more fatuous and hydrocephalous than we are willing to think them. All of them, spite of their morbid propensity for eating of dirt in preference to good sound provisions, are in their lucid moments compelled to confess that Christianity, much as they hate it, stands higher, and has produced infinitely nobler results than their composite system—the most palpable outcome of Paganism. And of one thing let them be assured, that the moment they present us a religion better than Christianity, we shall be only too glad to lay hold of it.

And if these zealots of Heathenism would but take another view of the two systems, and bring forward the purity of the one, and the vilenesses abounding in all the rest of their beloved systems, what an odious figure their most tolerable Paganisms would present. Even Plato, one of the purest of the pagan teachers, tells you that the young women of a State ought to be brought out to wrestle naked in public. That a number of young men, in war time, should be selected to stay at home and have free range amongst the wives and daughters of those who are absent forfeiting their lives for their country! Where are the common sense and the common decency of men who can, for a moment, put such a system into comparison with the purity-breathing system of Jesus Christ! The world is not yet so imbecile as to take an owl for an eagle.

Zoroaster, who has some good axioms, we can no more think of placing by the side of Christ, whose every doctrine demands "purity in the inward parts," than we could of comparing "Hyperion to a satyr." Zoroaster orders all the children of his devotees to be washed at their birth in the urine of cows: that the urine of cows shall be swallowed on certain religious occasions, and that the priests shall apply it in various rites!

If you look into the history of Gautama, the last professed incarnation of Buddha, you find such extravagances connected with his birth as would disgrace the history of *Jack the Giant Killer*. In all these systems the extravagances of fable, and the vilenesses of doctrine and ritual, place them at an infinite distance from the purity and divinity of Christianity. The history and the best authenticated accounts of the cruelties and obscenities of the festivals, and the practices of the temples of India, tell an awful tale of the nature of Paganism; and none but men who see the truth through the jaundice of a diseased moral sense, or who labour under the defects of half-education, or the incompetence of reason, can for a moment think of putting systems so essentially different into comparison. These wrong-headed Spiritualists, who, originated amongst the crude, little cultivated masses of the American States, seem to think that nobody but themselves have looked into the lives and works of Grecian, Egyptian, or Indian pagan teachers; whilst the fact is, that these things are widely known and properly estimated. I myself have read immensely and laboriously in these, as well as others have, and only to arrive at a more exalted idea of the Gospels compared with the various systems of pagan antiquity, which, indeed, retain scintillations of primal truths, but merely as glow-worms, remarkable only in the absence of the perfect sun of Christian revelation. If there be a system as full of divine truths, perfect and complete, let these cavillers produce it. If it exist, why don't they? It would be worth reprinting and making familiar to us.

I see that one man has written a book called *The Sixteen Crucified Saviours*. There never were sixteen crucified Saviours. There never was but one Saviour; and, more than that, one crucified Saviour—Jesus Christ. All original advocates of new systems have been persecuted, but not crucified; and there is no history of religious dispensation, except that of Christianity, which is not mixed up with vague fable, or does not lie amid the clouds of far-off myth; if we except Mahomedanism, which no one who has really read the Koran can place very high, either for its literary or moral merit, very much, indeed, above the literature of the nursery. The reward of a harem of houris, in the other world, as the incentive to a pure and religious life on earth—what a moral code to place beside the system of inward purity demanded by the religion of Christ! There is none of these systems—although their advocates talk of the prophecies attending them—which can produce a course of practical prophecies of a Saviour, like that of the Hebrew Bible,—prophecies implanted in every page of the national history of the Jews, and that amid prophecies regarding all

surrounding nations that have been literally fulfilled. The life of Christ, unlike the lives of all other originators of religions—except, again, Mahomet—was placed in the period of comparatively modern history, and confirmed, not only by the Roman writers, but by a thousand other facts. To endeavour to place the history of any other founder of religion beside it, is to simply place a skeleton by a living man. And then, to look at the moral, social, or political condition of Hindoos, Buddhists, of any other class of religionists, in comparison with that of the Christian nations, wretchedly as they have adhered to its grand injunctions, and the mighty difference is decisive of the innate merits of the one and the other.

In a word, then, all that we have to say to these boasters of a better possible Gospel, to be tinkered up out of classical and heathen sources, is—produce it. We have heard long enough of possibilities of better things; but, as we never get them, if they don't show us practical proof of some higher and holier revelation, we can only class them with dreamers, or impostors, and that, too, of the stalest and most tiresome stamp.

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## CHARACTER SONNETS.

A. L.

GRACIOUS and suave, full of all gentleness,  
 Of quiet kindly thought, steadfast and firm :  
 With noble bearing that doth well express  
 A soul that would all meaner motives spurn.  
 A man of enterprise and action, too,  
 Busied with patents, shipping, and exchange ;  
 Thy eager brain revolving still some new  
 And better plan of wider use and range.  
 Yet not in this thy spirit can find rest,  
 The full content of all its deeper need ;  
 But like the dove, it wanders forth in quest  
 Of home and freedom—a new world indeed !  
 This dual rounded life of faith and sense,  
 Brings in each sphere its work and recompense.

A. M. H. W.

FAIR thought and high imagination both combine  
 To swell the tide of music in thy tuneful line,  
 Drawing deep inspiration at the fount of Art,  
 Thine is the inner vision of the pure in heart,  
 A gift transcending all, and that sweet native grace—  
 Fragrant aroma of the spirit—all may trace.  
 Is not the soul a poem greater than all books,  
 A living loving miracle of Art that looks  
 On us, and converse holds through form and face like thine,  
 A constant revelation of the Mind Divine ?  
 What tender, true affection, gracious sympathy,  
 And lofty aspiration, may we find in thee !  
 Yet all of winning sweetness that in form is seen,  
 Can be but faint expression of the life within.

T. S.

## ANGELHOOD.

By WILLIAM OXLEY.

THE following remarks are resultant on the hearing of a discourse on Sunday last (July 30th, 1876), delivered by Mr. Morse while in a state of trance at Grosvenor-street Hall, Manchester, and who, as he assured me, was quite unconscious of the words that he uttered on the occasion. His usual controlling spirit, who uses his organism at public meetings, is known as 'lien-sin, who purports to have been a Chinese sage in earth-life; but in my opinion on this particular occasion the spirit himself was but a medium, used by an intelligence of a higher order than himself, and thus was an intermedium for the time being. Whether this be so or not is but of little consequence, as truth in itself is absolute, although subject to modification in its descent or passage through the channels in which it flows. This law also holds good to the hearer or recipient, for its perception and reception will be varied according to the mental or spiritual states of all those to whom any truth, or portion of truth, is presented; hence the variety of doctrines concerning the same truth, as believed in by the different religionists of the world, for when closely analysed, the radical ideas are not so divergent as they appear to the superficial thinker or observer.

For instance, the underlying belief of all systems of religion is that the First Great Cause, and to which men by common consent apply the term Deity or God, is that *He is one sole self-existent Being*; but above or beyond this central belief, there is confessedly a great mystery, and the history of the religions of the past is but the index of the human mind in its attempt to unravel the mystery of life, and to penetrate into the region of past and future existence.

In our present state and existence, no fact is more certain than that *we are*; that we are conscious of being in such a state of existence, and that we are surrounded by others equally conscious of the same fact. Again we are conscious that we live upon the surface of a solid material earth; and finally we can, with more or less certainty, trace our own beginning and ending or our entrance into and departure out of the present state; but *whence we came* and *whither we go*, and how our habitation was made, are questions which, to the majority of mankind, admit of no reliable or trustworthy solution, and it is for the palpable demonstration of the fact of a continued existence or consciousness of living, that humanity is waiting and longing for.

The advent of what is called Modern Spiritualism, with all

its marvellous phenomenal and intellectual powers, has burst upon a state of humanity in civilized countries at least, with a suddenness and brilliancy that has dazzled and almost blinded those who have seen and heard of its presence; when mankind does awake, as assuredly they will, to the reality of this power, the possibilities of the now dormant embodied spirit will be called into action, and new worlds will be revealed, the realities and actualities of which are not even yet suspected, and the worlds of spirit will be opened to those who are gifted with knowledge, so that the consciousness of life or being will not be confined to *one state*.

It is more particularly in reference to the advent of Modern Spiritualism, and the part which angels and spiritual beings are playing in the wondrous drama that I intend to notice; and it is to a most important and in fact startling announcement, as well as to the doctrine concerning the angels made by the guide or guides through the organism of Mr. Morse that I desire to call especial attention; for, if true—and time and events must prove or disprove—then mankind will have a fixed fact to mark the commencement of a new era in the world's history, and again, if true, the ages of the future will cherish the records of such a fact, and such records may possess a value that we now little dream of. On this account I desire to see fixed in print the statements of a disembodied spirit, whose testimony *may* prove to be of incalculable value. The subject of the inspirational discourse was named by myself to Mr. Morse (and given by impression to a friend) just before the commencement of the meeting; so that what was given was in no way the result of forethought on the part of Mr. Morse himself, and in proof of such thoughts being inspired by another, I believe they are not as a whole in accord with the private opinions of the medium. I asked him if he thought his guides would speak on "The angels and the angels of the Lord;" to which he replied that he did not know, but that I must leave it, and, if agreeable to his guides, they probably would do so; and, immediately after the invocation, the control stated that he would speak on the subject which had been requested, and that while he would be careful not to wound the susceptibilities of his hearers, yet that he would speak as the truth on this great subject was seen from his stand-point (the plural pronoun *we* was used all through the discourse). He (or they) commenced by stating that all systems acknowledged that God is one; but when the founders or proclaimers of this commenced by this statement, and added "I am His prophet," it was at this point the conflict began, inasmuch as the claim was open to question, and the demonstration or proof of the latter postulate was, and must of

necessity for ever be, adduced on different grounds to the former, and that such claim was the same with spirits as with mortals, and that both must be guided by the exercise of that which in man is called the rational faculty, but which corresponding faculty in spirits is distinguished by another idea; such being the case, the guides would give forth that which was within their own knowledge.

“The word angel, in its simplest sense, means a messenger; but, in its higher application, refers to orders of beings of different degrees in knowledge and power; and that it is quite proper to draw a distinction between angels *per se* and the angels of the Lord; the angel *per se* is the perfected form of the spirits of those who have inhabited earthly bodies (and there are no angels but who have once been men) then progressing through various states, until, with knowledge acquired by passing through the experiences of such *ascending states*, they are fitted to enter the highest spheres, then they are ranked as *angels*; and such is the destiny of every human being who has and who will inhabit this or any other earth; but the *angels of the Lord* (or Jehovah) are those mighty beings who have graduated on other planets, or other solar systems, and by such a process they are qualified to guide and control the destinies of lesser spirits, or those spirits who are to people the earths which are placed under their power; in short, such are really the earth or planet builders, or artificers, so vast is their power, and skill, and knowledge, that they not only take cognizance of, but actually direct and move as master minds, all those who are subordinate and who form the sum total of the descending and ascending spirits belonging to the given earth under their charge.

“Every earth, and even solar system, is made and perfected under the presidency of these mighty angels of the Lord; and it is because such a thought is the highest that man can conceive, therefore he has designated these God or Gods. To prevent degeneracy and to fulfil the purpose of the creation of earths and systems, which is their ultimate perfection, there is provision made in such economy that distinctive eras or epochs should occur; and *special organisms* are prepared into which the afflatus of the mighty angel can flow, which, being specially prepared, can receive and give out clearer knowledge and exhibit more beautiful love, thus reflecting in greater lustre and power the mighty angel of Jehovah, the Guide and Controller of the earth; the appearance of these special prepared forms or organisms upon the earth are points of attraction, which, after their disappearance, have been deified as *incarnations of Deity*, and are worshipped as such.

“All nations and systems have had these at various periods, hence the Avators of the ancient religious systems, which as history proves were unrecognised and unappreciated at their advent, and not until long after their departure were they exalted to the rank of Deity, and considered to be God manifest or made palpable to the senses of mankind. Among these are the Brahma of India, Osiris of Egypt, the Buddhas of the East, the Mithra of the Persian, the Jesus Christ of the Christian,—each and other systems claimed their Avators to be the manifestation of God; but it would be seen that if by the term God is meant the Infinite One, it could not be, for the Infinite One to be contracted and limited by time and space, as all organisms are, would be to become finited; hence He could no longer be infinite,—a proof to the reasoning faculty that such could not be.

“When the names applied to the many Avators were discovered to be the expressions of qualities rather than of individuals or personalities, then it would be seen that such advents of God to earth were to be spiritually discerned, and then they will be acknowledged to be what they really are, that is, a more conscious reception of the afflatus flowing through the spheres to the earth.

“Nevertheless, this consciousness is more perceptible to certain special organisms, and these in times past have been misinterpreted, and their true character not discerned, for the Avator has been made in thought a Man and God. Those who have given utterance to truths of an exalted order, and been conspicuous by the purity of their lives, may not without justice be considered as Avators or messengers of God to the nations of the earth. But, has God spoken by these messengers who have been specially qualified and prepared in the past; and will He cease to speak through such prepared organisms? We reply, ‘No,’ and we now make the announcement *that there is at the present time one upon your earth.*

“We may be asked to name Him, and to say who and where he is. We could name him and describe his locality, but for sufficient reasons we withhold the answers; that one himself is not, nor will he be fully conscious who and what he is, until he crosses the boundary, and until his bones have mingled with the dust of the earth on which he now is, but his power will be felt by the subtle quality of his thoughts and writings. One reason why we withhold further knowledge is that there is to be no more *man-worship*, but the consciousness of the Divine, which *is* in every human being, and which is the life itself, may be and ultimately will be enjoyed and appreciated by all.



Such is the science of the angel as propounded by one (or more) who sees from the plane or standpoint of spirits. Communications of this character should silence those who, professing to be wise, are constantly reiterating that the Spiritualistic movement produces nothing worthy the attention of intellectual or scientific minds. The philosophy here unfolded commends itself for its rationality and consistency; for, granted the continuance of life in other conditions than pertaining to embodiment in matter, what more probable or likely but that such continuance must be of a different order and character? Accepting it, we may see the reason why a sojourn in earthly life conduces to the happiness and power of those who have passed through such experiences; and, as knowledge is power, it follows that the descent of the individual or atomic spirit into outer or more ultimate conditions, must, of necessity, take with it into all future and ascending conditions the knowledge gained by such experiences; and, moreover, as we see even here, that knowledge is useful and gives to its possessor the means of adding to the happiness of himself and others when imparted and applied to uses,—it follows that in the higher spheres, the same law may be operative, and as a consequence such additions will be made to the sum total that a wider range of happiness and usefulness will be the resultant.

Another and important end in view (and we cannot conceive of a purposeless existence) is that life itself may be perpetuated and perfected in new and ever-varying forms, organic and inorganic, and as this implies locality and residences, we may see how and why earths and their surroundings are brought into existence. And who can do this but the Great Life itself (call it by what term or name we will), acting and operating through and by means of the forms of which *it* is the centre and spring. If man as mortal has the capability of accomplishing such vast works as his habitation bears testimony to, what shall we say will be his powers as immortal, and as the angel, in which state the Divine is possessed in greater consciousness! Knowing this, we may cease to wonder why the solar systems with their attendant satellites are in such myriad numbers. Vast and innumerable as these are now to us, as space itself is infinite and state is eternal, there is yet room and opportunity enough for the calling out into *ultimate existence* those which are now *subsisting* in the Infinite Mind.

The announcement made by the controlling spirit is nothing less than startling, which was, that there is now on the earth one of these Avatars, or special forms of life (or prepared organisms) who will give to humanity thoughts, and manifest such wisdom and purity of life as shall tell upon the ages yet to come. If

this be so, it is no less than the actual fulfilment of the prophecy held by all systems, *viz.*, that such a one would appear.

In a remarkable work lately issued,\* this event is clearly specified as very shortly to take place, by two spiritual intelligences named Hafed and Hermes, where it is stated that a great Reformer would appear on the earth; that he would be of humble parentage, and that his advent was nigh at hand. A statement of similar import was made by the guides of Mrs. C. Tappan in the same hall in Manchester more than a year ago—June 27th, 1875, the subject of the oration being, “The New Messiah.”†

Strange will it be, if the present generation is to witness this remarkable advent, and if he should prove to be the “desire of all nations.” The signs of the times are portentous, and clearly indicate the activity of new forces in the mental and spiritual worlds. That such must tend to revolutionize the present systems, social, scientific, and theological, is patent to all who have the power to delve beneath the surface of human society in its present arrangement; one thing is tolerably certain, which is, that it will be a revolution, not involving in its train conflict and antagonism of class against class, system against system, church against church; but that its sway will be manifest in the interiors of all who come within its action, and will act as a solvent to dissipate the barriers which now separate the human race, and will tend to harmonize mankind into one great family and brotherhood, acknowledging one great Fatherhood, which is in heaven.

Higher Broughton, Manchester,  
August 1st, 1876.

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THE “HOMILIST” ON THE PUBLICATIONS OF THE REV. F. R. YOUNG.—The *Homilist* for August contains the following notice of two recent publications by the Rev. F. R. Young:—

Mr. Young is no ordinary man. He lives in the highest literature, sympathizes with the highest themes, and pursues the path of thought with freedom, vigour, and independence. He thinks for himself: his convictions are his only *credenda*. Here we have two of his sermons—one on “The Personality of Christ,” and the other on “The Day of Pentecost.” Not one preacher out of a thousand could be found who can put so much valuable thought into so small a compass. Our principle is not to recommend books because we agree with all the opinions they set forth, but because of the soul-force with which they are charged. On this ground we recommend these Discourses.

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\* *Hafed, Prince of Persia*. H. NISBET, Glasgow, pp. 443, 444, 482.

† *Discourses through the Mediumship of Mrs. Tappan*. JAMES BURNS, London. *Oration: The New Messiah*, pp. 12, 13.

## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

## DR. SEXTON'S LABOURS.

We refer to this subject again with the very greatest reluctance, and would not do so at all but for the purpose of drawing attention to a significant fact which will hereafter become all-important in connection with Spiritualism. Dr. Sexton, of all the workers in the cause, is the only one who is persistently neglected and left to suffer with hardly a hand stretched out to assist him. Two or three warm-hearted generous friends have done more than their share, and the doctor will ever feel grateful for their kindness; but the great majority stand aloof, and proffer no kind of aid whatever. Now, how is this? If there were any difficulty at arriving at a satisfactory conclusion on this point heretofore, there is none now. The last month has brought shoals of letters, which will set the question at rest for ever. In most of these communications the amount of praise lavished on the doctor as to his "great learning," "wonderful eloquence," "splendid talents," and all that sort of thing, would be sufficient to satisfy the vainest of men; but still the persons who profess so much admiration refuse to help him in his undertakings, and some of them even go so far as to say that conscientiously they can hardly wish him success in his efforts. Dr. Sexton is a believer in the Divine authority of Christianity—the large mass of the Spiritualists are dogmatically anti-Christian. This is the secret of the whole thing. Christianity is an "old worn-out exploded error," an "ancient superstition," an "obstruction in the way of the world's progress," a "ridiculous delusion of the past," and so on to the end of the chapter, whilst Spiritualism is the grand regenerator of mankind, that is destined to accomplish all sorts of unheard-of impossibilities. Any attempt to reconcile these is declared to be a task only fit to be compared with the labours of Sisyphus working at his everlasting stone. The Lord Jesus is spoken of as "a man of wonderful mediumistic power," "a myth," "a good-enough reformer in his way;" but to suppose him to be the Almighty, as Dr. Sexton does, is "next door to insanity." The doctor's notion on this point is "an infatuation," "man-worship," "a vestige of priestcraft," "a horrible delusion," &c., and his practice of preaching the Gospel is sneered at as though the so doing was rank heresy against Spiritualism. One entire Society discontinued taking the *Spiritual Magazine*, and refused ever again even "to look into it," in consequence of an article that appeared in its pages from William Howitt, the most brilliant writer that ever took up a pen in defence of the cause; and

more than one Spiritualist declined longer to subscribe to it because the words "with which is incorporated the *Christian Spiritualist*" appeared on the title page. The present condition of Spiritualism may be learned from these facts, and the result may be easily foreseen: In America the other day, a meeting of the leading Spiritualists took place, with a view to organise the movement upon a religious basis, and the strongest objector to the term Christian being employed was an Englishman—a quondam assistant of Mr. Burns—on a visit to the States. We have no wish to exaggerate the importance of this fact—as Mr. Linton is certainly not a representative man—but, taken with the others named, it is significant. A division between the Christian and Anti-Christian Spiritualists is imminent. The latter begin now to manifest such intolerance towards the former that for the two to work together harmoniously will soon become simply impossible. Christian Spiritualists, such as William Howitt, S. C. Hall, D. D. Home, Newton Crosland, W. M. Wilkinson, Thomas Shorter, F. R. Young, Enmore Jones, and others, have not only done work in connection with Spiritualism which will bear comparison with anything that can be pointed to as accomplished by those who reject Christianity; but they have lent a helping hand to all, regardless of theological opinion. They see now how their acts are reciprocated. To be a Christian is something like a crime in the eyes of some of the leaders of the movement; and those advocates who take sides with freethinkers, scientific sceptics, and unbelievers in general, are by far the most popular. An alliance between this sort of Spiritualism and Secularism is quite on the cards for the future, but the severance of it from all forms of Christianity is inevitable. No wonder that Christian men stand aloof and refuse to have anything to do with a cause which aims at overthrowing the religion that has ushered in temporal civilisation and eternal peace. Of course it will be replied to this that the spirits teach doctrines quite in accordance with the views herein condemned. We know it and regret it, since the inference to be drawn from it is by no means favourable to Spiritualism. Beautiful and blessed angels of light come down from the Father's throne to cheer us on our way through this wilderness; but alas! on the other hand, devils from the lowest depths of Tartarus come too, to deceive, delude, and destroy. And we need the very greatest care in picking our road amongst these conflicting influences. We have mediums who cheat, and leading men who defend them on the ground that they are impelled to play tricks—that is to deceive and lie—by the spirits. Be it so; then away with such mediums, and avoant such spirits. If Spiritualism cannot stand on truth, let it fall. We will have none of it but that

which is true and pure, and good and holy, and in a word—Christian.

We have now made our position clear, if there was any doubt about it before, which there could hardly be, for we have generally spoken out pretty plainly. If we get no support, then we will do without, come what may. Let Spiritualists of the Anti-Christian schools, and the spirits from whom they receive their false doctrines, band together as they do, to oppose us, we shall survive it; for God is the God of earth and of the spirit-world as well, and His Providence will not fail. Henceforth our teaching will, if possible, be more marked than heretofore, and we will spare no pains to oppose falsities in whatever form they may come, whether as the Anti-Christian teaching of Spiritualists, communications full of error from spirits, false doctrines enunciated by trance speakers, or trickery and cheating on the part of mediums. Christian Spiritualists we ask to give us such help as they can, for it is clear we shall get little elsewhere. We must be true to conscience and leave the issue to God. Difficulties enough to overwhelm many a man press us down at this moment, crushing out life, energy, and health; but in the midst of all comes the blessed teaching of the Master, worth all the spirit-communications that were ever made,—“In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

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DR. SEXTON AT AUGUSTINE INDEPENDENT CHURCH,  
CLAPHAM ROAD, LONDON.

The anticipated appearance of Dr. Sexton in the pulpit of this church has become a general topic of conversation in religious circles. One of the Christian journals thus announces it: “On Sunday, September 10th, the well-known orator, Dr. George Sexton, will preach two sermons in Augustine Independent Church, Clapham-road (the Rev. Dr. Thomas’), which will, we doubt not, create an unusual amount of interest—is in fact creating it already. It is pretty well known that the doctor was for over 20 years one of the most able and prominent of Freethought advocates, in which capacity he gave some hundreds of infidel lectures in the principal towns of England and Scotland, and wrote numerous publications of a sceptical tendency; and his present position, therefore, as an exponent of Christian truth, is one which will naturally attract the attention of large numbers of persons both amongst believers and unbelievers. The interest, too, will be considerably enhanced on this occasion by the fact that he intends to devote his two discourses to a consideration of the present aspect of Infidelity, to describe the

course of thought which led him to accept Christ's Gospel, and to state briefly the grounds of his present position. Taking these circumstances into consideration, in connection with the well-known reputation of Dr. Sexton as a man of science and an eloquent speaker, there can be no doubt that the church will be crowded." We may add that the service will commence in the morning at 11 and in the evening at 6.30.

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AN INCIDENT IN A LIFE.

On Sunday, July 9th, there entered Christ Church, Cork, and took a seat where his family (an English family, some time resident in that city), a very long time ago worshipped, a white-headed man, who held in his hand a prayer-book, one of those presented to the young of both sexes by the "Association" formed at the beginning of the century (and still existing) "for Promoting the Knowledge and Practice of the Christian Religion." It contained his name and an engraved tablet; for it was awarded to him as a prize at a competitive examination in that church, and bore the date 1812. Sixty-four years have passed since then: he had kept the prayer-book all that time: he read from it the service, substituting the name of Queen Victoria for that of King George the Third; and gave thanks to God for blessings of a long, a successful, a happy, and a very busy life, the fruit, these blessings may have been, of seed planted by the book given to him sixty-four years ago. The white-headed man was Mr. S. C. Hall.

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ANNIE EVA FAY ORDERED TO TAKE OUT A JUGGLER'S LICENSE.

Judge Donohue, in Supreme Court Chambers, has decided the case of Annie Eva Fay, the "spiritual test medium." The Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents made application to the court to compel her to take out a juggler's license, or else be permanently restrained from giving her exhibitions or *séances*. On behalf of the Society, various affidavits were submitted, alleging that Miss Fay was a juggler, and performed her feats without any supernatural aid, but merely through "legerdemain, prestidigitation, or sleight of hand." On the other hand, were affidavits in which it was alleged that the proceedings were the result of a conspiracy between various ministers of the Gospel, who were seeking to crush out the truth as exemplified in the feats of Miss Fay. Judge Donohue decided yesterday that the case comes within the statute in regard to theatrical and other entertainments, for which a license fee must be paid to the Society for the Reforma-

tion of Juvenile Delinquents. In his opinion, he says: "While the court should be careful in any attempt to restrain parties claiming to be in pursuit of knowledge or the exercise of religious rules, the court should be equally careful not to permit the mere name or claim to sustain an exhibition that the statute contemplates should pay a license. It seems to me, after careful consideration of the facts in this case, that this defendant comes within the statute, and must be restrained."—*N. Y. Times*.

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#### A NEW SECT.

A new sect, called the "Eclectic Church," is said to have sprung up in Iowa, under the lead of a Mr. Pickett. The following are the principles of the new organization: (1) One God and Father of all. (2) We are living in the dawn of a new dispensation—the Eclectic Church. (3) One man in a normal condition should be married to two women, and two only. (4) Jesus Christ will never come to this world at some future time. (5) Must have a visible head to the true Church of God. (6) Limited punishment in the future life.

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#### DEATH.

I do not believe that at the hour of death there is one moment's suspension of conscious existence. I even believe that in the so-called insensibility or unconsciousness that often precedes bodily dissolution the dying person is still sensible, still conscious. It is only that the electric wire of the nerve has lost the power of carrying messages from the inhabitants within to those outside. It has become a non-conductor.—*DR. CUMMING*.

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## Notices of New Books.

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### TREMADOC SERMONS.\*

ALMOST every popular preacher now publishes his sermons, and the result is that this form of literature occupies a more conspicuous position to-day than it ever did before. The sermon has, in fact, taken the place of the essay so much appreciated by our forefathers. But then sermons have really become essays

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\* *Tremadoc Sermons; chiefly on the Spiritual Body, the Unseen World, and the Divine Humanity.* By H. N. GRIMLEY, M.A., Chaplain of Tremadoc Church and Professor of Mathematics of the University College of Wales. London: HENRY S. KING & Co.

in a large number of cases, and would fail to be recognised as anything else, but for the orthodox text of Scripture at the commencement—having frequently nothing whatever to do with what follows—and the assertion made that they were preached on such an occasion. Very often the word “sermon” forms no part of the title-page of these books. Some name is selected upon much the same principle as that which guides novelists in adopting a title for their books, and you are left to make the discovery that a volume of sermons is intended after you have purchased the work. We are not complaining of this, but simply pointing it out as one of the characteristics of the literature of the times.

In the work before us this course has not been adopted. It is a volume of veritable sermons, and as sermons they come before the world. True when we first saw the book advertised, we had no idea what *Tremadoc Sermons* meant, which arose probably from the faulty character of our geographical knowledge, but we were not long in making the discovery that there was nothing more cabalistic in the word “Tremadoc” than the name of the place where the discourses were preached. These sermons, too, are really expositions of the passages of Scripture selected as texts, or what is the same thing, hortative remarks based upon them.

To say that we were pleased when we perused the work of Mr. Grimley, will by no means express our true feelings. We were charmed to an extent that we hardly care to confess. During the past few years we have read some scores of volumes of sermons, but with perhaps one or two exceptions never any that pleased us so much as this. The tone that pervades the book from the beginning to the end, is as truly illustrative of Christian love and charity as the sermons themselves are faithful expositions of Divine truth. The author is a man who has not only studied the Gospel, but he has also studied human nature—a branch of study too much neglected by preachers in general—and he has profited largely by both. His work is full of sound sterling common sense, blended with the very highest form of Christian truth. Mr. Grimley is, we suppose, what would be termed a broad Churchman, but like Stopford Brooke, and unlike most of the clergy of that particular school, he holds firmly by the Deity of Christ, which, according to our view, is the great central truth of Christianity, without which the gospel becomes largely null and void.

The topics dealt with in these sermons are both numerous and varied, and all of them are treated with a degree of power which is seldom witnessed. The parishioners of Tremadoc are unusually blest in having such a man as Mr. Grimley to minister



to them in sacred things. We hope they appreciate him, and do not in this case fulfil that almost universal rule referred to in the Scriptures respecting the one place where a prophet does not find honour. We give a passage or two with a view to show the whereabouts of Mr. Grimley in theology. The following is from a sermon on "The Holy Trinity":—

The doctrine of the Trinity is in truth, my friends, but the doctrine of the Incarnation—the doctrine of the Divine Humanity—presented to us in a new aspect. Various phases of the doctrine, which is the great central doctrine of the Christian Church, have been successively brought before us. In Jesus, the Son of the Blessed Mary, we have been taught that the Divine and the Human were mystically united; and that in the progressive stages in which the mystic union was accomplished, we are to see shadowed forth the various stages which all Humanity must pass through before it can rise into perfect union with the Divine. Our Lord's life on earth was, for His Humanity, a progress from humiliation to glorification. In His person the Divine entered upon the domain of human life, and came into contact with all the hindrances and all the evils with which life on earth is beset. The union of the Son of Mary with the Divine did not exempt Him from the life of sorrow and suffering which has always been the heritage of man. It was by suffering that He was made perfect, that His human nature was so glorified as to be rendered fit to be perpetually the temple of the Divine. His life on earth is for all ages the type of the life of all who long to have part and lot in the great life of redeemed Humanity. If we would be united to the Divine, we must live the Christ-life on earth, we must go about doing good, we must have sympathy with Humanity amid all the wretchedness into which it has fallen; we must endure patiently toil and sorrow: we must, indeed, suffer with Christ if we would be glorified with Him. In the Resurrection of our Lord from the tomb with His glorified body, we are to see foreshadowed for us our own rising to a life beyond the grave, and the reality of the future life of all Humanity. In His Ascension to glory we are to see written down in lines of light the promise of the future Ascension to eternal union with the Father of redeemed Humanity.

To-day we have to contemplate our Lord as reigning in that eternal union, His Ascension, to which we tried to raise our thoughts two Sundays ago. The Divine One with whom He now reigns in the spiritual world is our Father. He is the great Creator of all things. He is the Omnipresent Being who in the beginning made the world, whose Spirit moved over the face of the waters, who in various ways caused men to be conscious of His presence, who inspired the poets and prophets of old with messages to their fellow-men.

This Divine Omnipresent Being—the Father, Maker of heaven and earth—whom men in times long past were not able to personify, whom the imaginations of men were not able to form any representation of, has revealed Himself to His children of a later date in the person of His Son, the Man Christ Jesus. In Him we are to behold the fulness of the Godhead bodily. In Him we are to behold the Divine in the only abiding form in which He has revealed Himself to us. Throughout all preceding ages, the Divine One had been but a great Spirit hovering over the universe, had been but a Voice heard amid the thunder and lightning which echoed and flashed among the mountain tops, had been but the Inspirer of prophetic souls; but had not revealed Himself to the world clothed upon with any abiding personal form. But to men He is now for ever henceforth revealed in the human form of the Lord Jesus, who, strictly speaking—using the word person in its modern meaning—is the only Person in the Ever-blessed Trinity. To the eye of faith now the Divine wears the human form—the glorified body—of the Jesus who lived and suffered upon earth, and in whom was commenced the great union of the Human with the Divine.

The Divine influence proceeding from the one Deity who thus reveals Himself to us, we speak of as the Holy Spirit—as the Breath of the Divine—as the Spirit which has ever been breathing divine life and divine thoughts into the souls of men, and which has since the ascension of our Lord been

carrying on the great work commenced in His Sacred Person now glorified in heaven.

And Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are the three manifestations of the Divine—the three persons—using the word in its older primitive sense—of the one God, whom we speak of as the Holy Trinity.

This doctrine of the Trinity could have no significance for us were it not but another aspect in which we are to contemplate the doctrine of the Divine Humanity—the great truth that the word, the life, the thought of God, took flesh in the person of Jesus, and may become incarnate too in all Humanity—the truth that the union of the Divine with the Human was accomplished in the Son of Man, and is being slowly carried on in all sons of men.

This great truth has been practically denied by some amongst those who call themselves Christians, and formally rejected by others.

There are some amongst those who assert themselves as accepters of the doctrine of the Trinity who nevertheless in effect are deniers of it. They speak of our Lord as Human and Divine, but in reality they only contemplate Him as God. They hold such strange views as to the depravity of human nature that it becomes impossible for them to dwell upon the thought that the Divine has united Himself to the Human. And the vileness of Humanity is to them of so strange a kind, that they think of it as removed not by any progressive work within the soul, but by having ascribed to it a righteousness which it has never known, and which the human soul can only get to know by ceasing to do evil and learning to do well, by patient surrender of self to God's good will, and steadfast continuance in a life of Christian love. The doctrine of the Divine Humanity involves the thought of the Divine entering into union with every human soul which is striving to live the true heavenly life, and aiding it as it so strives amid the sorrow and suffering which is the earthly lot of us all, to become perfect even as the Father in heaven is perfect. The doctrine cannot really be held by those who are for ever harping upon the desperate inherent vileness of Humanity—upon a vileness which is such that the Divine One Himself knows of no transformation which can be effected other than by imputing to the vile one a goodness he has never experienced, and effecting in heaven a supposed change which has no counterpart in the travail and anguish through which only a sinful soul can pass from union with selfishness and death to union with the Saviour, with the Divine One, who will help it on the road to heaven. The doctrine cannot be really held by those whose views with regard to Humanity render it impossible for them to contemplate the Human in mystic union with the Divine. The name of Christ is to all such only another name for the great unapproachable Deity, who, though omnipresent, presents Himself to the eye of faith in no form in which we can recognise His full kinship with ourselves. The Humanity of Christ is really cast out of their thoughts.

But there are others who consciously and avowedly reject the doctrine. They do so mainly as upholders of the Unity of God. They recognise Christ only as man. And yet there are some amongst these, to whom the name Unitarian is generally given, who assert that they see in Christ more of the Divine than they can see in any other man; and there is a growing tendency amongst them all to contemplate the Divine elements of His character more than their predecessors have done. In this tendency there is an approach towards the great doctrine of the Divine Humanity. Those amongst the Unitarians who are so learning to contemplate our Lord are really in greater nearness to the truth than those amongst ourselves who give utterance to the doctrine with their lips, but banish it from their hearts. These latter practically abolish the Divine Humanity; but the Unitarians, while they shrink from acknowledging our Lord as wholly Divine, by their confession that His Humanity was inspired with a diviner life than was ever vouchsafed to son of man before, and by encouragement of themselves in the contemplation of the diviner aspects of His Human life, are struggling towards a more decided acceptance of the great doctrine of the Christian Church than those who cast out from their thoughts all idea of the union of the Human with the Divine in the person of our Lord.

We think, in reference to the latter part of this extract, that Mr. Grimley mistakes the tendency of modern Unitarianism. It seems to us, with a few exceptions, to be in the very opposite direction to that which he imagines. Unitarianism as a rule is merging into Theism, and the opinions of Unitarians on the subject of the person and work of the Lord, are undergoing a change not in the direction of the acceptance of His Divinity, nor in the lower sense of believing him to be a man full of the Holy Ghost, but of the denial altogether of His superiority to other men. In truth, Unitarianism is simply ceasing to be Christian, and many of the leading men in the denomination are giving up—very consistently, we think—the use of the Christian name. The error, however, into which Mr. Grimley has fallen, arises clearly from the charity of his feelings, and may therefore be excused.

From a sermon in the volume on “The Spiritual Body,” we copy the following, as full of sound thought:—

But not only is the Divine aid which the thoughts of men receive rendered evident by the very efforts of doubting and sceptical minds helping to secure a more general acceptance of the doctrine of the Divine Humanity,—the aid is also made manifest in the fact that truths which were unveiled to the early Christian writers are being more and more clearly discerned as the conclusions to which the highest scientific inquiries are tending to establish. The truth expressed in the words of my text, “There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body”—the truth disclosed to the Apostle Paul—has of late been dawning with increasing clearness upon the minds of scientific men. The investigations they have been engaged in—the insight into the mysterious constitution of the physical universe which they have secured by the exercise of the faculty of scientific imagination, the faculty which enables them to picture to their minds the action of atom upon atom during any chemical change, or the vibrations which attend the transmission of any one of Nature’s forces from one point to another,—scientific investigations and scientific thought have enabled the minds of men to obtain a clearer understanding of the truth of the existence of the spiritual body. The teachers of Christendom, who have had St. Paul’s words much on their lips, and have in their hearts pondered much on the underlying meaning, have been in the habit of saying that the spiritual body of which St. Paul speaks is one which dwells within the natural body and is of the same form as that body. The phrase that the body is saturated with the soul, or that the soul pervades the body in every part, is one which you yourselves will recognise as having been uttered in your hearing more than once. The intimate connection of body and soul has from time to time been dwelt upon here. How deeds which work degradation in the body bring about a corresponding degradation in the soul—how the weakness and deformity by which sin renders its influence visible upon the outward frame have allied to them a feebleness and depravity in the indwelling spirit; how ignorance persevered in, how frivolity encouraged until the mind is utterly unaware that there is such an attitude as one of seriousness,—how these leave their stamp upon the body, and can be read in the face void of all the finer expressions, and in the ungraceful movements of the body, and how at the same time they imprint themselves in a corresponding way upon the texture of the soul,—these things have not been silently passed over here. How, on the other hand, a life of thought and healthful activity—of thought and action which contribute to the grace and beauty of the body—leaves its abiding marks upon the soul within; how the culture and discipline of the mind which may be read in the glance of the eye, in the habitual expression of the face, in the demeanour of the whole

body,—how these, too, mould the spirit of which the body is but the temporary dwelling-place; how loving thoughts, unselfish deeds, and an ever-growing sympathy with all that is noble and tender in the past life of Humanity,—how these, while setting their impress upon the body, are at the same time woven into the tissue of the immortal spirit,—how these things have been dwelt upon you cannot be unmindful.

It is most difficult to make extracts from a work of this kind where every portion is so good. We have but indicated its contents, and must leave our readers to get the book for themselves, and we promise them if they do, they will not be disappointed in its perusal. It is one of the few books of the age. That it will have a large sale is tolerably certain, and in that case it is sure to do a great deal of good.

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#### THE NEW CHURCH INDEPENDENT.\*

AMONGST the numerous publications that we receive from all parts of the world, there is none to which we accord a more hearty welcome month by month than the *New Church Independent*, issued at Chicago. Its contents are always varied, and of the very best. Swedenborgian, as its name implies, it is of the most liberal character. No article is ever to be met with in its pages that does not breathe the glorious principle of Christian charity. It is conducted with great ability, and is well worthy of support. To those of our readers who may now hear of it for the first time, we say procure a number for yourselves, and peruse it carefully, and we have no doubt that, having seen one, you will require another.

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#### THE RELIGION OF THE CHRIST.†

THE name of the eminent professor of Hebrew at King's College is a sufficient guarantee that the book on the title-page of which it appears is worth reading. Amongst the "men of mark," and they are many who have laboured in the now well-worked field of Christian Apologetics in the present age, Mr. Stanley Leathes is second to none. His *Boyle Lectures* will be remembered by all who take an interest in questions of this class as masterly pieces of reasoning in defence of the divine origin of Christianity, against which sceptics have in

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\* *The New Church Independent and Monthly Review*. Chicago: WELLER and METCALF. London: G. SEXTON, 75, Fleet Street.

† *The Religion of the Christ; its History and Literary Development considered as an Evidence of its Origin. The Bampton Lectures for 1874*. By the REV. STANLEY LEATHES, M.A. London, Oxford, and Cambridge: RIVINGTONS.

vain directed their strongest artillery. And now we have a volume of *Bampton Lectures* from the same pen and on a similar subject. *The Religion of the Christ* will prove a most useful book at the present time when so much unbelief prevails respecting the great truths of the Gospel, and when an active sceptical propaganda is busily engaged in endeavouring to undermine the divine authority of our Lord. The subjects dealt with in the volume are as follows:—"Anticipation of the Christ in Heathen Nations;" "The Christ of Jewish History;" "The Christ of the Psalms;" "The Christ of Prophecy;" "The Christ of the Gospels;" "The Christ of the Acts;" "The Christ of the Pauline Epistles;" "The Christ of the other Books." Each of these topics is described in a most masterly manner, the whole together forming a mass of evidence in favour of Christianity, which will not be easy to gainsay. We hope sceptics will read the volume, since if they do it is difficult to conceive of the result being other than beneficial. And for those Christians who desire to store their minds with weapons in defence of their faith, it must prove of inestimable value.

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POSTHUMOUS PAPERS OF THE REV.  
O. P. HILLER.\*

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THIS is one of the most charming little books we have ever come across. We learn from the preface that the author intended "to publish a book of sermons and moral essays on his attaining the age of sixty years." He died, however, before reaching that age, and hence in order that such pieces as he had selected for publication should not be lost to the world, they have been issued since his death. We can only regret that a man who could write so well did not write more, and give us several volumes without waiting till he should reach the age of threescore. There is a simplicity and beauty in his style that is perfectly charming. In the little volume before us there are twelve short sermons, mostly upon topics of considerable importance, followed by fifteen brief essays, also of a religious character; and at the end of the book are a number of very beautiful reflections and maxims. We should have been glad to quote some extracts from the volume to give our readers a taste of its contents, but space forbids, and besides, it would be difficult to make a selection where all is so good.

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\* *Posthumous Papers; being Selections from the Unpublished Writings of the Rev. O. Prescott Hiller*, Edited by FREDERIC ALLEN. London: J. SPIERS, 36, Bloomsbury Street.

## HYMNS FOR THE SPIRITUAL CHURCH.

## THE CENTRAL SUN.

<p>SEE how the Sun from yonder height          Kindles a myriad fires ;          His splendour floods the world with          light,          In which black night expires !          He kisses all the distant hills          In blessing every morn :          He sparkles in the dancing rills          That frolic round the lawn ;          And run and leap o'er rock and          stone,          In eager glad endeavour,          With sportive feet to hasten on,          To meet the embracing river.          He paints the flowers with varied          hue,          The canvas of the sky          With radiant pictures ever new          Each hour that passes by !          He wakes the music of the bird,          The verdure of the tree ;          Each living thing with joy is stirred,          Its heart upeaps in glee !          He peeps in at the cottage door,          A democrat is he ;          He treads the gilded palace floor          With lordly step and free !          He gilds the humble village spire,          The proud cathedral dome ;          The mosque, the minaret ; his fire          Gleams in the Arctic zone !</p>	<p>And burns on India's coral strand ;          Around the pendant world,          From East to West in every land          His banner waves unfurled !          He journeys with a thousand ships,          And visits every shore          From day to day, yet never sleeps ;          Unwearied as before !          Beneath his bright benignant reign          Unnumbered harvests rise ;          With flowers and fruit and golden          grain,          Earth blooms a Paradise !          Yet he but faintly mirrors forth          The All-beneficent ;          The love which fills all heaven and          earth,          Eternal and unspent !          Thou Central Sun—the fount of light—          Illume each darkened mind !          Disperse the shadows of the night,          As clouds before the wind !          Kindle upon each heart the flame          Of pure and holy love ;          Till purged of every sin and shame,          As seraphim above !          And when this earth fades from our          sight,          And mortal life is o'er ;          May we dwell in Thy nearer light,          In glory evermore !</p>
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T. S.

## Correspondence.

## A PRIZE ESSAY AND ITS REVIEWER.

*To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."*

SIR,—I cannot but believe that Baron von Dirckinck Holmfeld's criticism of Miss Blackwell's Prize Essay, in your last number, will be read with regret by many, and with indignation by not a few.

Considering all that Spiritualism owes to the courage, generosity, and devotion of women, I think the Baron might have paused before he sought to tarnish the laurels which were awarded by competent and impartial judges to one whose sex was unknown to them at the time, and to whose talents and industry, so freely given to our cause, no one will grudge the only outward reward they have yet received.

If the Baron had reviewed the Essay on its merits, the case would have been different ; but he asserts, *a priori*, that the female intellect is incapable of thinking logically ; and yet, in the same paragraph, concludes that Miss

Blackwell could not have written the Essay without male assistance. Is *this* logical?

He lays down the axiom that women cannot judge of the truth of things, *per se*; they can only admire, in proportion as they are prompted by affection; insinuating that Miss Blackwell's advocacy of certain doctrines is in consequence of her personal admiration of their chief propounder. Probably Baron Holmfeld has not compared Miss Blackwell's published writings with those of Allan Kardec, and, therefore, does not know that there are many essential points on which her views are altogether different from his.

Baron Holmfeld imagines that women can only shine by a borrowed light, reflecting the lustre of some male luminary, on whose brilliancy they have gazed until they have lost all sense of independent vision. He does not attempt, in his notice of the Essay, to disprove the arguments by a logical chain of reasoning; he simply inveighs against them, because he conceives that they favour Materialism; whereas their object is to show how far the materialistic views of some of the world's greatest thinkers are reconcilable with those high spiritual truths after which their authors spent a life-long search in vain. The intellects which propounded the grand doctrines of Evolution and Universal Restoration could not rest content with the narrow outlook of Judaic Christianity, and they were forced on to a broader, if, also, a more barren platform. "We do not like it," I heard one of this school confess lately, "but we cannot help it. Show us something better, we are ready to accept it; *only, we must be able to see it.*"

Baron Holmfeld concludes his notice of the Essay by attempting to cast a slur on the good faith of the adjudicators, supposing that each must have found in it some favourite theory he was glad to see supported. It speaks well for the universality of the Essayist's sympathies, if she could appeal at once to the pet notions of four independent thinkers; and it is the highest praise if they each found in her Essay—while its authorship was yet unknown—that which, above all the others, gave it a claim on their regard, even from the personal stand-point suggested by Baron Holmfeld.

Such criticism is unfair to the writer, the judges, and the public; and will not, I venture to think, rebound, in the general opinion, to the praise of the critic. However, if it should have the good effect of sending readers to the Essay, to judge for themselves, even Baron Holmfeld's ungallant remarks will not have been made in vain. There is only one excuse for them, and that is, the supposition—expressed by a lady in Paris, and recorded by the Baron himself—that he had once before lived on earth as a woman; and that his "soft upbraidings" are reminiscences of woman's jealousy and woman's want of logic in a former existence.

EMILY KISLINGBURY.

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## MILTON ON EVOLUTION.

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*To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."*

SIR,—In reference to Dr. Wilder's most wise and interesting article on "Intuition," I think that we must recognise an inner self or underlying instinct, power and sapience in man, as more or less independent of experience and approaching to the instincts of animals—nay, as being the very soul of the understanding itself, as something what sight would be to a blind person in recognising distance and all objects at a glance, instead of groping in the dark, picking up experiences bit by bit; and a mesmerised somnambulist and clairvoyant will often refer this power to a voice informing them. The following fine passage from Milton's *Paradise Lost* illustrates very closely Dr. Wilder's meaning, or, at any rate, is worth referring to:—

"To whom the winged Hierarch reply'd:  
O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom  
All things proceed, and up to Him return,

If not depriv'd from good ; created all  
 Such to perfection, one first matter all,  
 Endued with various forms, various degrees  
 Of substance, and in things that live, of life ;  
 But more refin'd, more spirituous, and pure,  
 As nearer to Him plac'd, or nearer tending,  
 Each in their several active spheres assign'd,  
 Till body up to spirit work, in bounds  
 Proportion'd to each kind. So from the root  
 Springs lighter the green stalk ; from thence the leaves  
 More airy ; last the bright consummate flow'r  
 Spirits odorous breathes : flow'rs and their fruit,  
 Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublim'd,  
 To vital sp'rits aspire, to animal,  
 To intellectual give both life and sense,  
 Fancy and understanding ; whence the soul  
 Reason receives, and reason is her being,  
 Discursive, or intuitive ; discourse  
 Is ofttest yours, the latter most is ours,  
 Differing but in degree, of kind the same."

This fine passage on evolution ought to please Mr. Darwin. "One first matter all," working up by degrees to the highest conditions of mind, spirit, instinct, and intuition, and is in accordance with the sequence and development observed ; and we must accept things in the natural sequence, dependance, and order as they occur, and we shall then find that Spiritualism and Materialism are not in opposition, but that spirit is but matter sublimely elevated in degree and nature, until capable of "life and sense, fancy and understanding," instinct and intuition ; and, if we find that spirit has its source in matter, we do not degrade spirit, but only acquire a more just and enlightened conception of matter in its ultimate nature, transcending all analysis, any further than the nature of a thing is recognised in what it does—"one first matter all."

HENRY G. ATKINSON.

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### LINES TO "CISSY,"

*One of the controlling Spirits of Miss Fairlamb, of Newcastle-on-Tyne.*

OH stay, gentle spirit, oh stay but to tell  
 Of the far spirit-land where thou, Cissy, dost dwell.  
 Is thy home, little maid, with the angels above,  
 Where no feeling is known but the sweet one of love ?  
 Where the perfume of flow'rs ever falls on the air,  
 And the dear Rose of Sharon in glory is there !  
 Hast thou passed in thy way on this visit to me  
 Heaven's fair gates of pearl and the grand glassy sea ?  
 The river of life that flows from the throne,  
 Where blest little ones drink, Jesus claims for His own ;  
 Thou'lt forgive those who say, because dark is thy skin,  
 Thou canst be but the child of the father of sin.  
 Is not this then a proof that thou art of the blest,  
 Thy meek presence sheds peace o'er the wearied one's breast ?  
 Too well we know, Cissy—more like Satan's arts,  
 To make fairest of skins hide the blackest of hearts.

Newcastle-on-Tyne,  
 Nov. 1st, 1875.

FLORINA.