

THE
Spiritual Magazine

AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL REVIEW.

JANUARY, 1877.

THE CHARACTERISTICS AND TENDENCIES OF
THE AGE.—A DISCOURSE.

By GEORGE SEXTON, LL.D.

“O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times?”—*Matthew*, xvi. 3.

EACH epoch in the world's history is, of course, known by some distinguishing characteristics wherein it differs from those ages that have gone before, and the periods that will come after. It may not be always easy to trace these and to describe them, since one age passes into the other with such gradual shadings, and the differences may lie in such a direction that they may be only discovered by persons whose experience is very large and very exceptional. Of course, in a discourse of the kind that I shall deliver to-night, I cannot be expected to describe minutely all the characteristics and tendencies of the present age, even were I competent to the task. To do so would require the enumeration of facts which would fill a large volume, and would involve the exercise of powers which but few men possess. For, in the first place, unless the individual is endowed with an extraordinary capacity for observation, he would be likely to overlook a large number of facts of the greatest possible importance, and upon which might hinge, to a large extent, the actual condition of society; and, in the second place, the experience of such a man would require to be not only very large, but extremely varied, or very much that occurs would never have come under his observation. All that I can do, therefore, on the present occasion is to glance briefly at some of the distinguishing characteristics of the present time, and such as are of a nature likely to be noticed by all persons who

possess the ordinary powers of observation. And these will be, of course, limited, more or less, to such subjects as I am in the habit of dealing with in these discourses—subjects which have a bearing upon the current thought of the age, and the habits and practices with which it is largely associated.

To describe the tendencies of the age is to some extent to predict, however vaguely, the future. The doing of this, of course, does not involve supernatural power, but simply the exercise of the ordinary faculties of humanity, such as the Lord reproved the Pharisees and Sadducees for not employing in reference to the important events by which they were surrounded in His day.

Men who have been endowed with the power of vaticination, in all ages, have been to a large extent, viewed as a rule in an unfavourable light by their fellows. The reason for this is obvious enough; prophets have very often been compelled to predict terrible disasters about to happen to their race, and have also been loud in the denunciation of the sin and crime prevalent in the age in which their lot was cast. One can never read the powerful and thrilling language of the old Hebrew prophets as they hurled abroad the thunders of their wrath against the vices by which they were surrounded, without feeling his soul stirred into hatred of the sins of his own time, and the wish that the mantle of these ancient teachers had fallen upon him, so that he could speak out against iniquity with their authority, and the power which accompanied it.

The present age, like all present ages, is especially interesting to those who live in it. The past is irrecallable, the future largely unknowable, therefore our business lies with the present. There is an eternity behind us, and another before us, and we are living just at the point where these two meet. The great ocean rolls by us, passing every moment from the future into the past, and we are continually being startled by the new scenes that move before our eyes like the pictures in a panorama, which are barely looked at before they have again passed out of view.

The present age presents to our notice two distinct and marked characteristics which not only differ widely from each other, but which are apparently wholly antagonistic. On the one side, there is a dense darkness approximating towards that experienced by the Egyptians of old; and on the other side there is a dawn which heralds the approaching day in which the Sun of Righteousness shall dispel all the mists and clouds in which we are now enveloped. In the East there is light, and the darkness is being driven towards the West, but at present it covers us and folds us in its embrace. In dealing with these

two aspects of society I shall take the dark one first, and dwell upon it at greater length than on the brighter and more cheering side of the picture, because I want my words to have weight in doing something towards the removal of the gigantic evils under which we labour; and there is no means of accomplishing this but by drawing attention to the social and moral maladies which it is desirable to cure.

In our day, the present age would seem, from the phraseology that we frequently hear employed, to be in some sort of sense, or, perhaps, in half-a-dozen senses, superior to all the epochs of the past. Everyone appears to delight in glorifying what he is pleased to term "this nineteenth century," as though it threw all the previous centuries so much into the shade that they were hardly worthy of being mentioned at the same time. If there is an unusual display of ignorance, or a crime more than ordinarily heinous, or, in fact, anything of a degrading character, the wonder is said to be how such a state of things can be possible in the "nineteenth century." Verily, the nineteenth century should be marvellously enlightened, to have thus dissipated all the shadows of darkness that the previous ages had failed to clear away. After all, perhaps, this prating of the virtues of the nineteenth century is little more than braggadocio. When we speak of the enlightenment of our day, we do virtually thereby claim credit for being ourselves the main cause of the enlightenment. For are we not ourselves the nineteenth century, about whose wonders we boast so noisily, and swagger with such impudence? In days gone by, at least a more modest phraseology was employed, and the previous ages were not unfrequently appealed to in consequence of their superiority. Old Homer wrote of the heroes before his time, as capable of doing what the men of his day could not accomplish; and the Biblical expression, "There were giants in those days," is indicative of more modesty than we now display. Do I, you will probably ask, mean to say that the nineteenth century is not enlightened? By no means. We have advantages in abundance, with which our forefathers were not blessed; the question is, however, what use we have made of these? For if, after all, with the innumerable superior advantages that we enjoy, we have experienced no great moral improvement, our enlightenment will reflect on us rather discredit than otherwise. We have, no doubt, much to be proud of in this nineteenth century, but, on the other hand, there is no shutting our eyes to the fact that we have much to be ashamed of also, and with these latter characteristics I shall first deal.

THIS AGE IS ESSENTIALLY MECHANICAL.—Probably the most distinguishing characteristic of the present time is the

great perfection to which every kind of machinery has been brought. Nearly fifty years ago, Thomas Carlyle, writing on the "Signs of the Times," remarked, "Were we required to characterize this age of ours by any single epithet, we should be tempted to call it, not an Heroical, Devotional, Philosophical or Moral Age, but, above all others, the Mechanical Age. It is the age of machinery, in every outward and inward sense of that word; the age which, with its whole undivided might, forwards, teaches, and practices the great art of adapting means to ends." This is far more true to-day than it was at the period when the passage was written. For since that time a score of discoveries have been made, all bearing on this subject, and on every hand are to be seen the recent triumphs of mechanical science. The whole end and aim of modern investigation into the laws of nature seem to be to subjugate the powers and forces of the universe to the will of man, and thus to make them subservient to human purpose. It is not so much, however, in the mechanical science itself, that the characteristic of the age is marked which I wish more especially to notice, but in the results of so intense a study of mechanical powers upon the tendency of the thought of the time. Not only are large numbers of men engaged in the construction of every conceivable kind of machinery, and whose minds must, therefore, be largely influenced by the nature of the subjects which engross so much time and attention, but those of us whose studies lie in other fields are so perpetually brought face to face with these mechanical appliances that we also become more or less influenced by the effect they produce upon our minds. The ancients studied Physics, but in a different method, and with a different purpose to what prevails to-day. Many of them were essentially mathematicians, but with them the science of figures was far less mechanical than it is with us. Everything to-day is practical. Air and water, and sunlight and lightning, and all the agencies of nature are seized hold of and made subservient to the purpose of producing what are called material products.

The tendency of all this is to lead the mind that is occupied with it into such a condition that it can see nothing but the operation of mechanical forces anywhere in nature. It has been often noticed that the study of Chemistry is unfavourable to spirituality of mind. The same remark will apply to the study of physics. Dr. Priestly was essentially a religious man, one who had no doubt of the existence of God, and the supernatural origin of Christianity; who believed in the inspiration of the Bible, and the literal occurrence of the miracles therein recorded. With all this he was a Materialist, discovering no spirit in man, and resting his belief in immortality exclusively upon the doctrine

of the resurrection at the last day of the material body. And he may be taken as a type of men of his class. The study of chemistry or physics—and, indeed, the same remarks will apply largely to anatomy—tend to Materialism. Mechanical law is supposed to prevail, not only throughout the universe of physical nature, but in the organization of man himself. The Deity is a mechanical power, and the human body a piece of clockwork. The dynamic power of man is lost sight of, and his motive springs of action traced out in external—and, therefore, physical—circumstances. I read in a paper yesterday an anecdote among the “Facetiæ,” of a physician who, seeing his wife weeping, remarked, “What’s the good of tears? they are nothing but phosphate of lime, chloride of sodium, and water.” And there are people, doubtless, who can see nothing deeper in human nature than what can be discovered by mechanical appliances. In the dissecting room we use our scalpels with a view to trace in death the laws of life, and in our laboratories we employ our test-tubes to discover the basis of vitality. Not only is brain said to be the organ of mind, but it is stated to be the cause of mind; and all the vast powers associated with human thought are declared to owe their existence to the arrangement of a few material atoms. “Brain secretes thought,” so one philosopher tells us, as the liver secretes bile. And if so, it would be quite rational to search for this secretion in the dissecting room, and to make the attempt to analyse it in the laboratory. You know, however, how preposterous such a course of procedure would be, and how absurd, therefore, it is to attempt to trace any analogy between thought and any secretion whatever.

The mechanical studies of the age shew themselves in the attempts to prove man an automaton, and to reduce the moral law to a question of arithmetic. The utilitarian philosophy, as it is called, that originated with Jeremy Bentham, and was so ably advocated by John Stuart Mill, is just a matter of figures and nothing more. It proclaims the greatest happiness of the greatest number as the guiding principle of man’s life, leaving him to find out what actions are conducive to the greatest happiness of the greatest number as best he may. In no age but a mechanical one would such preposterous theories as now prevail be for one moment tolerated. Reduce man to a piece of machinery, and you get rid of everything that is grand, and noble, and lofty, and sublime in connection with his doings.

The effects of the triumphs of machinery on all hands, are also to be seen in the arrangements of society. Organization is everything, individual action nothing. Whatever has to be accomplished must be done by huge committees or associations of some kind or other, and the consequence is, that a great deal

that wants doing never gets done at all. If an idea strike one man, he turns it round and round in his mind a hundred times, with a view to ascertain what society would think of it were he to speak it out; and the chances are that he arrives at a conclusion that it would be unfavourably received, and, therefore, he never mentions it at all, for the rule of action now is policy, not honesty. Conscience is held to be of little moment, while Prudence has been elevated into one of the cardinal virtues. Archbishop Tillotson remarked long since:—"The old English plainness and sincerity, that generous integrity of nature, and honesty of disposition, which always argues true greatness of mind, and is usually accompanied with undaunted courage and resolution, is in a great measure lost among us." This is far more true to-day than it was when first written. We pride ourselves on our superior morality, but it is very largely a morality of prudence. We have all kinds of machinery for detecting crime, which probably tend to keep criminals in awe, but we do little or nothing towards reforming wrong-doers by changing the mainsprings of action which prompt them to vicious courses. We are fastidious, and as such cannot bear to have our eyes polluted by the sight of vice, so we cover up the huge cesspools of iniquity, instead of clearing them out and purifying them. To come back, however, to the point from which I digressed, suppose a man who has an idea in advance of his fellows should decide that it would be favourably received by society, why, then, he mentions it to a few people who he thinks would be likely to aid him in carrying it into effect. On hearing it, they may or may not be favourably disposed; if the latter, the scheme is strangled, and there it ends; if the former, they constitute themselves into a committee, and get others to join them, after which they convene meetings, and talk twaddle by the hour, but do little more. Maybe they have a public dinner as an inauguration of the scheme, where they drink themselves into a state of semi-stupidity, toast each other in bumpers of a fluid that has proved one of the greatest curses of modern civilization, pass the most fulsome eulogies each upon the other, declare they are all "jolly good fellows," and go home to bed in a condition by no means improved by the arduous labours in which they have been engaged. This is no fancy sketch; it is the sort of thing that occurs every day. All kinds of results have to be achieved by corporations, organizations, combinations, and such like shams, which often stand in the way of progress, rather than serve to aid it. What is the result? Great men with indomitable energy, undaunted perseverance, faith in God and hope in the future, with a firm belief that they have a mission to accomplish, and a deter-

mination to do the work which lies at hand, are, alas! no more. Martin Luther, believing that there was something to be done, and that he was the man appointed to do it, went to work with full trust in God, and struck a blow at the corruptions of Rome; and, therefore, on behalf of the right of private judgment in matters of religion, which helped to win for us much of the liberty that we enjoy to-day. Had he waited for the organization of a committee, the probability is that the thing would never have been done at all. John Wesley, acting from the spontaneous impulse springing up in his own noble soul, and the light of God's truth shining in upon his mind, went forth to stem the torrent of iniquity which at that time was sweeping over the land like a flood; and the result everyone knows. True he framed an organization of a most perfect character, but then this organization was a result of the man, and in no sense, therefore, the cause which led him to take the course he did. We have no such men as these now-a-days; and if we had they would be said to owe their existence to the circumstances by which they were surrounded. Circumstances! why, these are the kind of men who make circumstances, and who, finding others ready made, mould them to suit their own purpose; men who believe in their own individuality, and trusting in the arm of God go forth to do battle with the iniquity of the age in which their lot is cast. When one looks around on every hand, and sees the tremendous evils of every kind by which he is surrounded, he is led to pray earnestly that God will raise up such men in our day, and redeem the age from the curses which seem to rest upon it.

God, that some spirit stirred by Thee,
 Would rise to set all nations free
 By bursting one dread chain,
 Whose festering links chafe at Thy will,
 They bid the sun of mind stand still,
 Or make it shine in vain.

A MARKED FEATURE IN THIS AGE IS THE UNIVERSAL DESIRE FOR WEALTH.—This terrible passion is eating into the heart's core of society, and producing results which are fearful to contemplate. Almost everything that is done is estimated in its value by the profit or loss which it entails. Never, at any period of the world's history, was there such a scramble for wealth as there is to-day; men jostle each other in the general rush to become rich, trample one another in the mire, and, in the pursuit of gold, become lost to every feeling save the one insatiable passion that pervades the entire soul. An able writer remarks of money:—"Men work for it, fight for it, beg for it, steal for it, starve for it, lie for it, live for it, and die for it; and all the while, from the cradle to the grave, nature and God are

ever thundering in our ears the solemn question, 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul.' This madness for money is the strongest and the lowest of the passions, it is the insatiate Moloch of the human heart, before whose remorseless altar all the finer attributes of humanity are sacrificed. It makes merchandise of all that is sacred in human affections, and even traffics in the awful solemnities of the eternal world." Conscience is completely ignored as though it were a thing of no moment, and the one passion which holds in subjection every faculty of the human mind is the love of wealth. The extent to which this baneful influence is allowed to control the entire actions of some people presents a problem which it appears almost impossible to solve. I have known men whose only ambition was to die immensely rich,—richer than all other men,—and who, to accomplish this, would not only resort to the most degrading and contemptible means to obtain wealth, but who would sacrifice the ordinary comforts of life, which a very small portion of the superfluous money they were hoarding up would have procured for them. Thus they would wear a threadbare coat, boots which hardly kept the water from their feet, and the rest of their apparel to match, go without necessary food, and slouch through the wet and mud on a rainy day rather than spend twopence to pay for a ride in an omnibus. A man of this character, tolerably well-known to literary men, may be seen in Fleet-street almost any day of the week. The passion is one which it is impossible to understand, for when such a man dies he has to leave his wealth behind, not one farthing of it can he take into the spiritual world. The only thing that he can possibly carry away with him at death is the disposition which this love of gold has engendered, and that can clearly be a source of nothing but pain to him in a world where gold is not. Moreover, in that state, the probability is that he will be able to look down and see his much-prized wealth scattered in handfuls by the men whom he made his heirs. Such a prospect can hardly present a cheerful picture to the mind of any man who is engaged in this wild-goose chase after gold. And if such a man be not a believer in a future life at all, why, then, he is a bigger fool still, because he sacrifices the only opportunity that will ever present itself for obtaining some small amount of happiness by means of the material which he possesses in such abundance.

We heap up riches for some unknown stranger ;
 The homes we rear shall alien owners find ;
 We gather at the cost of toil and danger
 For prodigals to cast upon the wind ;
 And many a hireling eats us up before
 The decorous mourners gather at the door.

I often wonder whether the men who accumulate wealth think there is any credit due to them for becoming rich. There most certainly is not. Any fool can make money if he will only pay the penalty which the purchase involves. Let him sacrifice body and soul to this purpose, sear his conscience, spurn morality, trample all the finer feelings of his nature in the mire, scruple at no deed, however dirty and contemptible, and lose sight entirely of religion, and if he fail to become rich, then he must indeed lack brains. In olden times they believed that men sold themselves to the devil for money. So they do. Not in the literal sense that was then imagined, but in a sense equally true and equally terrible.

This love of wealth also frequently carries with it the desire for a sort of social distinction, which the possession of riches is supposed to involve. The author of an article on the "Court of Queen Victoria," in a recent number of the *Contemporary Review*—supposed to be Mr. Gladstone—mentions the fact "that wealth is now in England no longer the possession of a few, but rather what is termed a 'drug.' That is to say, it is diffused through a circle so much extended and so fast extending that to be wealthy does not of itself satisfy, and the keenness of the unsatisfied desire aspiring selfishly, not to superiority, but rather to the marks of superiority, seeks them above all in the shape of what we term social distinction." This is the sort of sham respectability which wealth brings to a man. He may be cowardly, contemptible, a villain at heart, known to have been guilty of every kind of dishonourable act, but society will, very largely, be content to overlook all this if he is only wealthy. It is not charity nowadays but wealth that "covereth a multitude of sins."

Only a short time ago a case appeared in the papers of a clerk at Brentford who was convicted of swearing in the streets, which act is an indictable offence according to the laws of the land. I wish the laws were more frequently enforced against it. The penalty, it appears, for this offence is fixed by an Act of George II. at one shilling per oath for a day labourer, private soldier, or common sailor; two shillings for a tradesman; and five shillings for a gentleman. Now, this clerk, who was convicted of swearing, being a menial, was only liable to the penalty of one shilling per oath, but he insisted on paying the five shillings, so that he might be considered a gentleman. Assuredly the course of snobbishness could go no farther than this. Here was a man who did not at all object to his name appearing in the newspapers as having been brought up before a police magistrate for making a blackguard of himself in the public streets so long as he could have the satisfaction of seeing

himself described as a gentleman. As, however, all the circumstances connected with the case were stated, he met with his due reward.

The case of this snobbish Brentford clerk is not an exceptional one. There are scores of such, and they arise out of that constant aping of a sham respectability, based upon the undue power and influence of wealth. The curse of this age is gold. Better that famine, pestilence, or almost any disaster should happen to a nation, than that it be surfeited with wealth, and lose sight of everything that is noble, and good, and true, in the everlasting scramble for gold. This is, indeed, a Mammon-worshipping age.

Gone, the spirit-quickening leaven,
Faith, and love, and hope in heaven—
All that warmed the earth of old
Dead and cold.
Its pulses flutter ;
Weak and old
Its parched lips mutter
Nothing nobler, nothing higher
Than the unappeased desire
The quenchless thirst for gold.

THERE IS A LARGE PREDOMINANCE IN THIS AGE, OF WHAT IS CALLED THE COMMERCIAL SPIRIT.—No doubt, on the whole, this quality of our race has been very largely beneficial, both to ourselves as a nation, and also to the denizens of other lands with whom it has brought us into close and intimate communion. It has opened up a path across enormous wastes of ocean, explored the interior of large tracts of hitherto unknown countries, carried civilization to savages, and aided in bringing about a better understanding between nations in the most distant parts of the world. England may well be proud of its peaceful victories won by commercial enterprise. The business habits of her sons and daughters are the envy of all foreign nations.

There is, however, a dark side to this. Commercial prosperity has been too often the result of dishonest and unscrupulous conduct. As a nation, our hands are not clean in this respect, and, as individuals, we are terribly guilty. The shams of trade eclipse almost all other shams, and the disregard of truth among tradesmen is proverbial. Time was, when the very name of a tradesmen in England would command respect, but, alas ! that is no longer the case. The most distinguishing feature in connection with what is called modern business appears to consist in thorough unscrupulousness as to the truths respecting the articles to be disposed of. Take up a newspaper and read down the advertisements that appear in its columns, and what do you find ? Simply a string of announcements that everybody has cheaper and better goods than anyone else.

A tells you that the articles he has to dispose of are far superior to those of B, and to be had at a lower price; and B, in his turn, announces that his goods are cheaper and better than those of A; whilst C can, of course, out-do them both in promises of cheapness and superiority, and is, himself, out-done by D. It seems never to occur to the people who insert these advertisements that this is lying, and that lying is a sin against God, and a social vice amongst men. If you speak to them on the subject, the reply is either, that everyone else does it, or else that, of course it doesn't deceive anybody, for no one believes it. The statement that every other person is as guilty as yourself is a very poor reason to urge in defence of a crime, and the assertion that no one believes the lies you tell, if it were worth anything, would show how useless and unnecessary it was to lie. But, in truth, the men who cover the hoardings in our streets with advertisements containing no single word of truth, know perfectly well that large numbers of persons will believe their statements, and their only regret is that they should be doubted by any. The articles that are sold are, of course, all pretended to be of the purest possible kind, while, in reality, there is probably not one that is not largely adulterated with some cheaper, and very often poisonous material. The silk which you purchase is half cotton, and the cotton made heavy by being dressed with some mineral material. Your coat is shoddy and devil's dust, and every article of food that you take mixed with some deleterious matter. The bread is made of ground-up bones, alum, and occasionally plaster of Paris; the tea is simply sloe leaves; cayenne pepper, red lead and mercury; and the milk—well, one is afraid to say what that is composed of—chalk and lime-water would be harmless, but horses' brains beaten up form a mixture too terrible to talk about. Now, in all this, besides the crime of half poisoning the people who swallow these adulterated articles of food, there is that other crime, if possible, worse, because destructive to the well-being of society—the lying which all this involves. "There is nothing," says Plato, "so delightful as the hearing, or the speaking of truth." Alas, how very seldom do we meet with it in connection with the business pursuits of this boasted nineteenth century!

A DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTIC OF THIS AGE IS THE HURRY AND BUSTLE ACCOMPANYING ALL OUR DOINGS.—This, as a matter of course, arises very largely from the commercial spirit already named. Every one is bent on business, and consequently, has no time to think of aught else. We hear a great deal of talk about the Americanising of our institutions, but in no respect, perhaps, are we becoming so much Americanized as in this. The perpetual hurry and bustle to be seen any day in

this city will show clearly to anyone who witnesses it the rapid rate at which we live in modern times. "Life at high pressure," this has been recently called, and life at high pressure it most unquestionably is. The evils arising from it are several, I may mention two. First, it is destructive to the health, wearing out the physical powers to such an extent as to produce enfeebled constitutions subject to all kinds of diseases, and in the end, to premature decay, for there is, to begin with, the wear and tear of the nervous system, consequent upon the continued anxiety of mind and the perpetual tension of the mental faculties; and there is also what is, perhaps, even more injurious, the destruction of the digestive organs by the hurry with which meals are got through, and the small period of rest apportioned to the frame in order to enable digestion to go on properly. Secondly, there is the lack of time for reading and thinking which this state of things involves. The newspaper takes the place of the Bible, and a list of stocks and shares is considered more important than the profoundest work issued from the press. What reading there is is quite in keeping with the hurry and bustle to be observed in all things else. Books are glanced at, not carefully read and digested. Their contents are skimmed over, not mastered and reflected upon. And the result of this is, of course, to call into existence a class of literature adapted to the case. Hence, wretched sensation novels, and improbable and unnatural stories of every kind are published in shoals, and find numerous readers, while good books teeming with sober and solemn thoughts are scarcely looked into. Men have no time to think, and, therefore, do not care to read books which provoke thought, or which require application in order to understand them.

The knowledge of the age is extremely superficial, and, indeed, how could it be otherwise, with such habits as those I have described? Education is much more general, and that is so far gratifying; but it is a rudimentary education after all. The giants of intellect belong to the past. Great thinkers are sought for in vain in this age. Shallow men abound who talk a mysterious jargon composed of outlandish phraseology, but hidden beneath which a thought is seldom to be found. Well has Bailey said:—

Time was when centuries seemed to roll apace,
And nought whatever to have taken place,
Save heroes' births, the glories of their race.
Time is, and lo! contrasted now with then,
The age of great events and little men.

A MOST CONSPICUOUS FEATURE IN THE PRESENT AGE IS THE MATERIALISTIC TENDENCY OF THOUGHT.—I have frequently

had occasion to refer in these discourses to the materialistic tendency of modern science. And this arises very largely from the fact of the undue importance which is attached to what are called Physical Phenomena, and the small amount of attention which the study of the mind itself receives. In fact, there can hardly be said at the present time to be a science of mind at all. Not only is external nature placed conspicuously in the foreground in all modern studies, but man himself is viewed from an external aspect. Ever since the days of Locke there has been a tendency to ignore metaphysical studies, and to look at mind only through the brain. Psychology, in the true sense of the term, is hardly considered worth the trouble of investigating. Only a short time since we had the president of a newly formed psychological society declaring, in his inaugural address, that their business was to study facts in contradistinction to emotions, imagination, &c., as though emotions and imagination did not lie immediately within the province of psychology. But this man knew of no psychology except as a branch of physiology, and to be studied, therefore, from the external, and not from the internal point of view. He remarks that the business of his society "will be to prove that the science of mind and soul can be based on at least as many facts and phenomena, and, therefore, on as secure a foundation, as any of the physical sciences." What facts does he refer to? Assuredly not physical facts, for these are but effects of the mind, and must clearly be insufficient to form the basis of a science of soul. But in truth, a psychological society with a lawyer at its head, and with not a single psychologist in its ranks, is an anomaly, and shows of itself to what a wretched plight the study of the science of mind has come. "The truth is," says Thomas Carlyle, "men have lost their belief in the Invisible, and believe, and hope, and work, only in the Visible, or, to speak it in other words: This is not a religious age. Only the material, the immediately practical, not the Divine and spiritual, is important to us. The infinite, absolute character of Virtue has passed into a finite, conditional one. It is no longer a worship of the Beautiful and Good, but a calculation of the Profitable." All the great powers of the mind are lost sight of, or, if they are ever mentioned, it is only to place them in the catalogue of fancies which must on no account be allowed to influence the opinions of mankind. Inspiration—through which has come the divinest thoughts that have ever blessed humanity—is now-a-days sneered at because it does not square with some miserable fact in physiology which may perchance hereafter turn out to be no fact at all. Genius, and taste, and imagination, these are no facts according to the materialistic theory, yet I ask you are they not really the most powerful of

all facts with which the world has had to deal? Is the lofty and sublime genius which embodies itself in a magnificent painting less a fact than the canvas and the paint employed for the purpose of making it permanent, and rendering it perceptible to other minds? Are the sublime thoughts of the poet winging their way to men's hearts and stirring up the highest feelings of their nature less facts than the paper on which they are printed, or the ink used for the purpose? Does any man with a grain of sense doubt that lofty genius and sublime thoughts are the most important of all facts, of a thousand times the value to man of any phenomenon to be found in external nature? Adhere to facts, say you! why, you materialistic, pigmy, pettifogging twaddlers, prating ever of facts, you ignore and despise the most marvellous of all facts to be found in God's universe!

The materialism of this age is a hollow and pretentious sham, furnishing no solution of the numerous problems which force themselves upon our attention on the one hand; and on the other robbing man of his purest joys, his brightest hopes, and his noblest aspirations. Jean Paul Richter spoke of a time—as then future—when “Of the World will be made a World-Machine; of the Ether, a Gas; of God, a Force; and of the second world, a Coffin.” Thomas Carlyle, commenting on this, says, “We rather think such a day will not come.” Alas! such a day has come, or very nearly so, for to-day we witness men eminent in science resolving God into a force, and declaring that the grave is the end of man's career.

This materialistic tendency of modern times has forced itself into the temple of God, and now very largely influences several forms of religion. How else shall we account for the spread of Roman Catholicism, and the existence of the miserable thing that apes its doings—the Ritualism that prevails in the English Church? The spread of both of these is largely due to the materialism to be found mixed up with their worship. The crosses, and paintings, and altars, and priests' robes, and all the rest of the tomfoolery which goes to make up the religious show, are all so many appeals to the senses. They are, in truth, material objects standing between God and the human soul, shutting out all the light of heaven, and preventing the influx of the Holy Spirit into the mind, but gratifying the senses, and thus materialising worship itself. Here is the true key to the spread of a system, utterly out of harmony in every other respect with the present age, and which, from the frightful mark that it has left on the pages of history, one would imagine would be looked upon with horror in every free country. The sole means which it appears to make use of for disseminating its principles throughout the land is the elevating into undue

importance the material objects which it mixes up with its worship. Hence the innumerable relics of every conceivable character that imagination can invent that are to be found in its keeping, with which it seeks to gratify the eyes of those who put faith in the idle tales which it tells regarding these treasures. And what is called English Ritualism is of precisely the same character. It is even more contemptible than Popery, because it lacks the prestige of the Romish Church, of which it is a small and spurious copy, and, is therefore, a gigantic sham.

What is called Rationalism in the churches—though why it should be allowed to arrogate to itself this high-sounding title I can never understand, seeing that it is as irrational as anything that we are in the habit of meeting with—owes its success to the same cause. It ignores the supernatural, denies the personality of God, rejects revelation, reduces Christ to a very ordinary kind of man, looks upon Christianity as on the whole rather *effete* and worn out, and establishes a materialistic standard for the measure of immaterial things.

These are the various forms which the sceptical tendency of the age assumes, and which are spreading themselves so largely throughout modern society. The whole thing arises from taking a one-sided view of nature, and from ignoring the better part of humanity :

Lo Nature is God's poem, subtly woven
 In just accords of infinite sweet verse.
 For ever chant with fiery tongues and cloven,
 His orbs veiled magi of the universe.
 The stony brain dissects, devours, denies :
 Heart, mount thy throne, thy sceptre opes the skies.

That is the dark side, and the picture is so black that you will begin to wonder whether, if what I have said be true, there is any redeeming feature to be found. Yes there is, for even the gigantic evils that I have described are not thoroughly bad, since they have in them much that is good, and do but encase a substratum of truth and goodness, which some day shall make itself felt in Society, and which even at the present serve to produce, despite the falsities with which they are surrounded, a beneficial effect upon mankind. Their bright side may not be so easily seen as the dark one, still it is there, and may serve to give us confidence that in the hereafter they will largely increase. Were the evils that I have described unmixed with any good, it is questionable whether Society could hold together, for it is, after all, probably only by virtue of the presence of religion amongst us, and the faith in God on the part of at least a portion of Society, that the social fabric can be preserved. Christ said to His disciples in His day—and His language is applicable to the true Christians of every age,—“ Ye are the

salt of the earth." By these, therefore, is Society preserved from the putrefaction of sin and iniquity which would otherwise destroy it. The bright side to the gigantic evils I have named I have only time just to mention, and leave them to be worked out by yourselves.

The mechanical habits of the time have given us scientific discovery, and the conquest of the powers of nature. On every hand we have opened up the road to new treasures in the shape of inventions that shall bring blessings to nations yet unborn. We have engaged in a fierce combat with nature, and the rich spoils of the battle lie around us on every hand. We have penetrated far into the recesses of material things, and brought to light the richest of earth's treasures. Science, in her own sphere and domain, is the friend of man, and destined, hereafter, to scatter her rich blessings on every hand.

The scramble for wealth is not all evil, since it has procured many comforts and luxuries for mankind. To it our present advanced position among the nations is largely due, and from it modern civilization has to a great extent sprung.

The commercial spirit of the age has opened up intercourse with foreign nations, and laid the foundation for carrying out the divine principle of human brotherhood. The olive branch of peace has been carried to foreign nations by this agency, trade has been opened up between distant peoples, and the civilized man and the savage have learned something of each other's habits, and have placed themselves in a fair way of promoting, hereafter, peace and prosperity among all mankind.

The hurry and bustle of the age has taught us energy, and and shewn us how Divine a thing is work. By these means we have become an example in industry and perseverance to all the nations in the world. The energy of Englishmen is proverbial everywhere. Indolence, although no doubt it is sometimes to be met with, is by no means a general failing. The importance of labour cannot be over-rated, and in this country we have learned to estimate it at its true value. The poet's advice there are few men who are not anxious to take.—

Work, and thou shalt bless the day,
Ere thy task be done;
They that work not cannot pray,
Cannot feel the sun.
Worlds thou may'st possess with health
And unslumbering powers;
Industry alone is wealth,
What we do is ours.

The materialism that prevails so extensively amongst us has also its bright side. It has served to check superstition, and to curb fanaticism, and, above all, it has tended to keep in a

state of activity the minds of those who prize the truths of religion, and value Spirituality.

Then there is one characteristic of the present age, which I have not yet named, and which is of itself of so gratifying a nature that it may be considered very largely to atone for the terrible evils that I have already described. For, after all, the objectionable features in the discussion of which I have occupied so much time this evening, are partial and limited to certain classes. The characteristic to which I will briefly draw your attention by way of conclusion, is much wider in its scope.

THERE IS AN INCREASED AND INCREASING INTEREST IN REAL SPIRITUAL RELIGION.—Every one who takes notice of the prominent movements of the age must be particularly struck with the fact that far less importance is being attached to dogmas of a non-essential character,—which at one time formed barriers of division between different denominations of religious people, and broke up the Church of Christ into a number of small and insignificant parties, each of which displayed a considerable amount of bitterness towards the other,—while a spirit of toleration is being largely developed, and a union brought about that must in the end result in great good, not only to the denominations themselves, but to the world in general. And this is very largely due to the prevalent recognition of the importance, above all else, of a deep, heart-felt religion which penetrates into every part of the soul, and manifests itself externally in virtuous actions and moral worth. The Church of England is rapidly separating into two great divisions; the one to which I have already referred as encouraging the genuflections of Popery, and the monstrous errors of the Dark Ages; and the other, recognizing the real and supreme value of vital religion, blends itself, as far as possible, with Evangelical dissent. The result of this is the formation of a very large party whose end and aim is to teach practical Christianity with a power resulting from unanimity of men of different shades of opinion, such as has been seldom seen before.

A great wave of spirituality is passing over society. Men are becoming alive to the vast importance of spiritual things. Religion rises into the ascendant, and while she showers her blessing upon the world she establishes her claim to supremacy over all forms of thought. God has not left the world without witnesses for His truth, although they are fewer than we could wish. Looking out into the deep darkness that surrounds us, and the heavy moral blight which seems largely to rest upon society, we are sometimes tempted to lose faith in the future, and, longing for the appearance of some God-inspired hero, with undaunted power and lofty aim, exclaim with Tennyson,—

Ah, God! for a man with a heart, head, hand
 Like some of the simple great ones, gone
 For ever and ever by.
 One still strong man in a blatant land;
 Whatever they call him, what care I!
 Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat,—one
 Who can rule and dare not lie.

Such a man will come, and not in a solitary case. The darkness is passing away, the light is dawning; already we see the streaks of morning in the eastern sky. The "signs of the times" are apparent, and can be observed by every one who has eyes to see. The Rule of Righteousness approaches, the lethargy that has settled upon mankind with regard to the knowledge of God and the importance of a future state, is passing away, and humanity will, ere long, awake to the sense of its true dignity and wondrous power. The golden age must come, whatever the obstacles that stand in its way, and through whatever terrible and frightful disasters it may have to be reached.

It is light translath night; it is inspiration
 Expounds experience; it is the west explains
 The east; it is time unfolds eternity.

DR. ROBERT CHAMBERS AS A SPIRITUALIST.

IN the *Spiritualist*, a short time ago, Miss Jane Douglas endeavoured to clear the character of Dr. Chambers from some doubts as to whether he were really a Spiritualist, or being so, he was candid enough to avow clearly his belief. Such doubts were entertained during his lifetime. I have seen it positively asserted in the newspapers that he never believed in Spiritualism, and once during a sharp controversy in the *Morning Star*, a gentleman declared that he had Dr. Chambers' own denial from a mutual friend. I contradicted this assertion at once on my own knowledge. It was a fact that Dr. Chambers was a genuine Spiritualist, but did not make this fact much known publicly. In private life and amongst Spiritualists he avowed his convictions without scruple; but as he did not use the same explicitness in public, it gave to his conduct an air of something like weakness or cowardice. The reason, however, was very different; it was simply a prudent regard for the interest of others. He was, as was well known, a partner with his brothers, William and David, so long as David lived, and afterwards with William, and he has frequently said to me. "So far as I am concerned I would freely avow my convictions.

in this case, but I feel that I have no right to compromise, as I assuredly should do, the interests of my brothers and all connected with them and us." The feeling was most honourable and just. And Dr. Chambers preferred to be under some stigma of duplicity or want of courage, rather than do injury to others. Yet he was not unwilling to make sacrifices for his faith. He told us that he had spent much labour in the composition of a work which should carry out farther his ideas in the track of the *Vestiges of Creation*, but on coming to a knowledge of the real facts of Spiritualism, he resolved to destroy this work as based on a false and mischievous principle. The work, he said, had cost him years of labour and severe thought, and he could not resolve to annihilate it, but after a sharp struggle and many tears. Truth, however—strong, unquestionable, demonstrative truth—demanded it, and it was done. All honour to the memory of one of the most kindly and genial, as well as wise, learned, and industrious of men.

During the time that Robert Dale Owen was in London collecting materials for his *Footfalls*, he came frequently up to a house at Highgate to converse on the subject, to report progress, and to read different chapters as they were written. Dr. Chambers often accompanied him, and always spoke and acted as one who was perfectly settled in the spiritual knowledge and atmosphere. Miss Douglas seems to regret much that she did not accept some MSS. of a work which he was actually engaged upon in illustration and confirmation of Spiritualism. On this point I do not think there is much to regret. Dr. Chambers, it is true, had become anxious to do something to advance that which he now had discovered to be the truth, and that in direct opposition to his former labours, which had been undertaken when he lived and worked under different impressions, but he had not advanced so far in his composition as to give his manuscript that value which it would assuredly have assumed under his able research and clear judgment. No doubt, as she suggests, he began to feel the internal warnings of a nearly finished life, and abandoned the idea of a work to which he intended without question to devote much intellectual labour. The MSS., therefore, which he had prepared were still crude and fragmentary. These he offered to me with the expressed wish that I would continue to work on the plan which he had proposed to himself. These papers were for a considerable time in my hands, but they were but as the carted material of a very small part of the brick and stone necessary to the erection of the proposed fabric.

In no case could I work up any man's material without full acknowledgment of it, and the drift of Dr. Chambers' pro-

jected work was one not exactly falling in with my own plans. I therefore returned them when read, and told him that as Mr. Dale Owen was engaged on these subjects, probably the MSS. might be useful to him, and that I would recommend him to present them to him, and in his hands I dare say they are. I do not, however recollect any traces of their use in Mr. Owen's subsequent writings, and probably he found them too crude and fragmentary for any purpose of his own.

It would have been a great and real benefit to Spiritualism had Dr. Chambers become aware of the great truth of Spiritualism, before his long and severe illness in London, and when his powers were in the full vigour of their exercise. We should then, no doubt, have had a production from his pen marked by his vigorous reason, clear logical acumen, and indefatigable industry; a work which would have become a standard of no trivial authority. As this, however, was not granted to him by Providence, in addition to his other valuable labours, it is a duty which his friends and contemporaries, who know his real opinions on this question, and the real motives of his conduct, to clear away the little dubious haze of uncertainty which his particular position left hovering about him. To those who knew him, whether as a Spiritualist or not, it is needless to say that there never lived a more sterling, honourable, generous or kindly character. Whether as a matter of general enquiry into the subject which had come to interest him so deeply, or as in preparation for his intended work on it, Dr. Chambers had collected a considerable quantity of curious works connected with it, and with the occult sciences, which he freely put at my service when I was writing my *History of the Supernatural*, and I recollect with pleasure the most cordial and commendatory letter which I received from him on his first perusal of it, describing the thorough absorption and delight with which he had gone through it. This letter itself would be ample proof of the honest, fervid, and thorough conviction of Dr. Chambers of the truth of Spiritualism, and not only so, but of his profound satisfaction in it.

WILLIAM HOWITT.

A P O L O G I A.

(In Reply to a Friendly Remonstrance.)

By THOMAS BREVIOR.

You ask me why in this our busy time
 I waste the fleeting hours in weaving rhyme :—
 " In God's great harvest field now growing white,
 Is there no work to do with all thy might ?
 Are there no widows, orphans, blind, or poor ;
 No human ills to lighten or to cure ?
 Gaunt misery and crime and wrong abound,
 The war of class and sect still rages round ;
 Is there not ample room and verge enough
 For hand and brain without this idle stuff ?"
 You question shrewdly : In my humble way,
 Through many a sleepless night and busy day,
 I too have pondered o'er the themes that vex
 The minds of earnest men, and sore perplex ;
 Have sought to give the little aid I could
 To those brave souls who toil for human good.
 I joy that many—stronger, wiser too,
 With vantage gained, the same great end pursue.
 But now that youth has fled, in life's decline,
 I find in simple verse an anodyne
 To soothe the weary brain and aching breast,
 And gain from anxious thought much needed rest.
 The world forgetting, in my waking dream
 I roam through verdant meads, by moonlit stream,
 Or breathe the mountain air, or feel the breeze
 Wafted across the lake or inland seas ;
 Like morning mist the present melts away
 Into the glory of the coming day :
 And, as I meditate, a holy calm
 Pervades my being like a prayer or psalm ;
 Some kindly thought is stirred, an inward glow,
 From whence I know not, nor much care to know ;
 A spur to act, a curb on selfish will,
 An impulse growing stronger, clearer, till
 It rises in my bosom like a star
 In the blue sky, shedding its light afar ;
 A hope, a calm resolve, a firm endeavour,
 A noble joy that may be mine for ever ;
 May I not hope others may feel it too ;
 And, my prosaic friend, perchance e'en you ?
 If in the soul all action has its root,
 Why kill the tree that bears the golden fruit ?
 Imagination sees what yet shall be ;
 The poet's dream is oft a prophecy.
 To raise the mind (though but for some brief space)
 Above the dull routine of common-place ;
 To wake the fancy, and to move the heart,
 To touch some chord of music, and impart
 A keener sense of harmonies that lie
 Beyond our common ken, though ever nigh ;
 To trace the thought of God in all we see,
 To read His word in every flower and tree,
 And in those deep and subtle laws that bind
 The realm of Nature and the world of Mind ;

To keep the heart still young, and fresh, and pure,
 And all its joys and hopes more sweet and sure ;
 That every pulse in unison may beat
 With that dear heart where Earth and Heaven still meet ;
 To make our human life grow more divine—
 To turn its water into heavenly wine,
 And brace the spirit to some lofty end,
 Is surely no unworthy aim, my friend ;
 Nor one that need excite your scorn, although
 How poorly I fulfil it, well I know.

JOTTINGS ON JOURNEYS.

THESE Notes have fallen somewhat into arrears owing rather to the fact that there has been a pressure upon our columns than to the circumstance that I had little or nothing to chronicle. For, in truth, I have crowded a good deal of work into the past three months, as will be seen from the following account of my movements:—

On the last Sunday in September I preached at Peter Street Church, Manchester, in the morning, taking for my subject, "Divine Worship," and dealing with the nature, universality, true object, and uses of religious worship. The congregation was unusually large, many persons having come from long distances to hear me, some probably out of curiosity, as this was the first time I had appeared in a Manchester pulpit, a town where I was so long and intimately known in connection with the Secular party. In the evening there was no service in the church, but instead a monthly meeting in the school room, at which a sort of discussion took place upon the subject of the parable of the Ten Virgins, in which, of course, I took a part. These meetings, which seem to be somewhat common in all the churches of the denomination, are very instructive, and no doubt prove of considerable advantage to young men, who by such means are stimulated to read and think, and, in addition, to obtain some slight practice in public speaking. I think, however, that they might be held on the Sabbath afternoon, so as not to interfere with the regular evening service.

On the following Sunday, October 1st, I preached again in the same church twice, taking for my subject, in the morning, the "Loneliness of Man" as typified by the statement of the Lord respecting Himself recorded in John xvi. 32, "Behold the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone, and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me." In the evening my subject was,

“Onward, but Whither?” in which I endeavoured to trace the relationship of Christianity to true progress, and to distinguish between real advancement and that spurious progress in religion which is too often a going backwards rather than forwards. The congregations were both large, indeed in the evening the church was quite full, a somewhat rare circumstance in Peter Street. Many of the leading members of the society shook me warmly by the hand, and expressed themselves not only highly pleased with the discourses, but greatly benefited by them in a spiritual sense. When I remember that the pulpit in this church was occupied for so many years by so eminent a man as the late Rev. John Hyde, and that the congregation had been accustomed to listen to his profound teachings, the fact that my sermons came up to their ideal conception of what a pulpit discourse should be must be considered all the more gratifying.

From Manchester I returned to London, and on the following Sunday (October 8th) I delivered two discourses at the Assembly Rooms, Hackney, on the “Supernatural Element in Christianity.” These services had been originally commenced, I believe, by some members of the “Christian Evidence Society,” but were now carried on mainly by a few of the Christian residents in the neighbourhood. The congregations were much larger than usual and many Secularists were present.

The scene of my next labours was Darwen, in Lancashire, where I went at the invitation of the Rev. Thomas Davies, the minister of Duckworth Street Congregational Chapel, to preach the Annual Sermons on behalf of his Sunday and Day Schools, which I did on the 15th. At both services the large chapel was well filled, in fact, in the evening it might be described as crowded, the number present being not less than fourteen hundred. Many persons came over from Preston, Blackburn, Accrington, and other surrounding towns. The following report of the Sermons appeared in the *Darwen News* of October 21st:—

On Sunday last Dr. Sexton, of London, for twenty years a free-thought lecturer and author, preached in the Duckworth-street Congregational Chapel, morning and evening, on behalf of the Day and Sunday Schools. There were large congregations at each service.

In the morning Dr. Sexton founded his discourse upon Hebrews xi. 6.—“But without faith it is impossible to please Him; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.” There were three aspects of the question which they could briefly consider, and as it was a question which could only be properly dealt with in some two or three volumes, all he could do was to glance at some of the conspicuous forms of thought and to point out briefly the course by which he himself was led, under the Divine Providence, from the slough and mire of scepticism back to Christianity. The subject presented itself in three aspects: first, God is; second, God sustains a certain relationship to man, described in the text as a Rewarder; thirdly, that God may be found of those who seek Him. The first aspect of the question, God is, formed the main topic of conversation and writing amongst a

certain class of men at the present time who dignified themselves by the name of philosophers. Is there a God? That question was asked to-day in sober seriousness in large assemblies, in ladies' boudoirs, in drawing-rooms, and in other places. Twenty-five years ago all forms of scepticism were unpopular; it was a rare thing then to come in contact with a man who doubted the existence of a God. Scepticism had now become fashionable and popular. Atheism had forced itself into the temple of science, and seated itself on the throne of philosophy. Speak to-day of God and the question would be put, "What is God? What do you know of God?" Scepticism had taken that particular form. It does not say there is no God, but that we have no means of ascertaining whether there is or not, so that the Atheism is represented by a certain Greek word which meant "Know nothing." What was still more to the purpose men did not care, because they said it was a matter with which they had no concern. If God did exist, there must be somewhere overwhelming evidence of His power and goodness, and of such a character that it became next to impossible to set it aside. The history of mankind proved that there had always been a consciousness of God, apart altogether from any evidence that might be obtained from the external world; hence we should find that religion in all ages had been the most powerful influence that had been exercised over mankind. The sceptic would say it had been used mischievously, and that priests had taken hold of it and turned it to their own personal account; but that only proved that the priests had found it to be the most powerful faculty in human nature. To say that priests invented religion was sheer nonsense; they could not have done that; what they did was to take hold of the religious element in man's nature and use it for their own advantage. They had been told that religion stood in the way of science and art. There had been no art to-day if it had not been for religion. Religion had caused to be produced the finest pieces of architecture and the grandest paintings. The noblest strains of music ever breathed from the human soul had been evoked in the cause of religion. Religion had always been the forerunner of civilization. They could not put their finger on a nation in the world's history where religion did not precede civilization. Why was that? It was because the religious element was deep in every human nature; the God-consciousness was there and they could not stamp it out. They might draw atheistical conclusions from the material facts of the universe; they might build up mountains of logic and demonstrate as clear as a mathematical axiom that there was no God, but what would be the result? Why humanity would spring from the shackles thus sought to be imposed upon it, and go back to God in spite of all the arguments and logic in the world. To say that man acted solely and exclusively from intelligence was to talk nonsense. We acted from nobler impulses and aims than intelligence. Dr. Sexton then showed that religion had always existed either in the form of polytheism, idolatry, or pantheism; and next that the nations who were said not to believe in a God occupied the very lowest scale of existence and could scarcely be classed amongst mankind. Yet these people had a superstitious fear of being left with the dead, which implied that they were afraid that the dead could do them injury, and showed that they believed there was a spiritual world. Again, if they asked what was the power which existed everywhere in the universe, causing vegetation, the periodic return of the seasons, &c., they were told that it was "law." But law was not a force nor a power, it was merely the mode in which the things occur. A law in chemistry was that if certain elements were put together, a compound would be the result. But the law in that case simply told that the effect would occur; they wanted to go deeper and to know what was the power which produced the effect. They were told that intelligence and life were forms of force; but if that were true, the highest form of force must have been first, and, therefore, eternal; and the highest form of force was intelligence, which involved consciousness and personality, and was, therefore, only another name for God. Dealing with the second part of his subject, *viz.*, God's relationship to man as a Rewarder, the preacher showed how this involved a certain amount of responsibility upon man to live in accordance with God's moral law; and also stated that if there was one fact more patent than another amongst the races of mankind, it was that we had sinned—call it by what they

pleased. Where, then, was the remedy? Science could not save; moral philosophy was of no use; there was no remedy but in Christ, and he could be found of those who sought Him. He likened the boasted progress of sceptics to the Irishman "advancing backwards," for it had landed them exactly where men were before Christianity. They said, "We don't know God, God is unknown." That was exactly what men were preaching at Athens 2,000 years ago when St. Paul went there. The preacher, after briefly alluding to his own personal experiences, and the manner in which he was led back to God, brought his sermon to a close.

In the evening Dr. Sexton selected as his text Haggai ii. 6, 7. After an allusion to the old prophecy of the destruction of Judaism at the coming of the Messiah showing its literal fulfilment, the preacher sketched the early progress of Christianity during the Augustine age, an age of such enlightenment, and civilisation that it had spread its influence upon the world up to our own day. He then proceeded to inquire what was the position which Christianity held in the world to-day. In considering the subject two questions necessarily forced themselves upon their attention. First: Was religion true; and if so, which religion out of the large number? The preacher then recapitulated the favourite argument of sceptics that in the midst of so many perplexing forms of religions they did not know, even supposing there to be a religion and a God, which was the true one. He would first point out in dealing with that subject that religion was a necessity to human nature; secondly, he would show that all the old religions in the world had culminated in Christianity, and in the third place he would endeavour to point out that Christianity was final, and that there could not possibly be an advance made beyond the Christian religion. With respect to the first point, religion was a necessity to human nature, he asserted that there were no people to be found anywhere who had not some kind of a faith in God and the supernatural. A philosophic Frenchman named Comte founded a new religion which professed to be a religion without God. Recognising the universal want of human nature. Comte instituted worship and prayer. His followers were called Positivists, and worshipped human nature in the abstract. What that might mean he did not know; human nature in the concrete was bad enough, and he suspected it would not be much better in the abstract. Stating that man was unquestionably a spiritual being, the preacher advanced various arguments to substantiate the statement. In the second place he showed how mankind were formerly divided into two great races, the Semitic and the Aryan. Explaining the divisions into which these two races were divided, he also sketched the peculiarities of each religion, and showed that the conspicuous features of Christianity were not to be met with in these religions except in a vague and unsatisfactory form; showing that the love of the Father for us, immortality, and the only real basis for a moral law were found in Christianity. There was no moral law out of Christianity worth a straw. The great moral law came with Christ; was not before and was to be found nowhere else. Step by step the preacher continued to argue that Christianity was the culmination of all other religions. Then stating that Christianity was final because it rose above all other systems, he said there were men to-day who professed to have outgrown Christianity, but in reality they were 2,000 years behind it. Christianity in the person of Christ presented to men an Exemplar which was ever before them, and as He was more than man, so no man was able to attain to the full stature of His perfections. If He had been man merely, it was possible that some other man would have attained to His perfections. Then He would have ceased to be an Exemplar. The preacher then eloquently depicted the adaptability of Christianity to the wants of mankind, to the most ignorant and uninformed, as well as to the highly cultured.

Collections were taken at the close of each sermon, when the sum of £66 10s. 3d. was obtained.

My presence in Darwen appeared to have provoked the animosity of the Secularists, who put into circulation a variety of false and slanderous reports respecting me, which if anything had the effect of rendering me the more popular. The people of

the town seem to have been able to form a true estimate of these calumnies and the motives which prompted them. On the Monday and Tuesday evenings I delivered two lectures in the Co-operative Hall on the following subjects: Monday, "Secularism a Creed of Negations, Deficient as a Moral Guide, and Incapable of Satisfying the Wants of Human Nature." Tuesday, "Christianity of Divine Origin, the True Science of Manhood, and alone capable of regenerating Universal Humanity." On both occasions the large Hall was crowded to excess, on the Tuesday evening there being scarcely standing room. The Rev. J. McDougall presided on the Monday evening, and a most admirable chairman he made. Himself a frequent lecturer upon topics of a controversial character, his experience of platform work enabled him to manage the meeting with a skill which is by no means common. In the correspondence that I had had with Mr. Davies before going to Darwen, I had suggested that it would be better to permit discussion at the close of these lectures, and this was accordingly done, and an announcement on the bills set forth that discussion would be allowed. Despite this fact, some of the Secularists charged me with wanting to avoid debate. The lecture ended—

The Chairman said he had listened with great pleasure and satisfaction to the very able, very careful, and on the whole most considerate address which Dr. Sexton had just given upon what he deemed to be a very difficult and a very dangerous subject. His self-restraint had been most admirable, and he for one was thankful that after his twenty years' experience and active life amongst those men whom he had so ably described, he was thankful to see him on that platform, and he should without any hesitation tell such a man that he had said in a most admirable manner what he dared say some of them, as ministers of the gospel, had often had to say. He would now give an opportunity to any person in the audience for asking questions or making a brief address. If any one desired to do that he would be good enough to give in his name, and they would each be allowed to speak ten minutes. If a question was put, it must only relate to the speech just delivered. He thought those rules were in harmony with a spirit of justice and right, which he desired to obey.

Mr. J. K. Fish now rose in the body of the Hall, and enquired if I was the accredited agent of the Christian Evidence Society, and if so whether I was prepared to meet in discussion Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Charles Watts, Mrs. Harriet Law, or Mrs. Besant, and maintain the positions I had that night taken. The Chairman ruled the question irrelevant, but I thought nevertheless I had better answer it. I therefore replied that I was not the agent of the Christian Evidence Society, but that I was prepared to meet any man or woman living, to discuss the question upon which I had lectured. Mr. Fish now essayed to make another remark, but the Chairman informed him that if he wished to make a speech he must come to the platform, a request which he at once complied with. He then proceeded to state that he had once had a very high opinion of me as a

scientific man, but that I had, like Jonah's gourd, sprung up in a night, that I had gone from Secularism to Theism, and then to Spiritualism. The Chairman declined to hear any personal remarks, and requested Mr. Fish if he had anything to say on the subject of the lecture to say it, and if not to sit down, whereupon Mr. Fish confessed he had nothing to say, and sat down accordingly amid considerable laughter. A number of other questions were asked, but none of them of any great importance. We gathered, however, from the statements made by the Secularists, that it was their intention to bring Mrs. Law over on the following night.

On the Tuesday evening the room, as I have already stated, was crowded to excess. The chair was occupied by the Rev. J. Jutsum (Wesleyan), and there were present on the platform, as on the previous evening, all the principal ministers of the town, including Rev. J. McDougall, Rev. G. Berry, Rev. T. Kench, Rev. J. Blake, Rev. J. Morton, &c., together with most of the leading laymen. I may remark that before the lecture commenced Mr. Oldman, a Secularist, had waited upon me with a message from Mrs. Law, who was present, asking if I was agreeable that she should have two speeches of ten minutes each at the close of the lecture, which would of course occupy all the time allowed for discussion. I replied that personally I had no objection whatever to offer to such a course, but that it must rest with the Chairman, since such an arrangement would preclude the possibility of anyone else speaking besides Mrs. Law, which seemed to satisfy Mr. Oldman. I then gave the lecture on the subject stated, which occupied a little more than an hour and a half in the delivery. Both this and the previous evening's lecture were reported at great length in the *Darwen News*, the report, in fact, occupying over five columns of the paper. When the applause had subsided, which was perfectly uproarious, the Chairman remarked—

I am quite sure you will not think me stepping beyond the bounds of duty if I congratulate Dr. Sexton upon the eloquence, benevolence and good temper he has shown in his lecture. (Hear, hear.) I feel also inclined to congratulate this audience on the perfect attention and good order which has prevailed throughout. I find that certain rules or arrangements were laid down last night by which the nature of the discussion was guided. I do not see that we can improve upon them, and I shall adopt them for our guidance this evening. It must be patent to all that the Doctor has addressed himself to great fundamental principles; therefore it will be right and fair in the discussion that shall follow that the time of the meeting shall not be occupied by mere quibbling, or by personalities. (Hear hear.) We are not here to throw stones at one another; we are here now to take the sling of reason and the smooth stone of argument, and send them with all the force we can command. (Hear, hear.) The rules I have here are very brief and very simple. The first is that any person who wishes to ask a question shall forward his name to the Chair, and ask the question from his seat. Another rule is, if he desires to speak he must come up to this platform and he shall have ten minutes and fair play. Another rule

is, all questions and remarks must be strictly relevant to the subject of this lecture. These will commend themselves as reasonable rules, and I shall therefore be glad at once to receive the name of any person who may wish to ask a question or make a speech.

This done, Mrs. Law rose, and after referring to the interview that Mr. Oldman had had with me at the commencement, and my expressed willingness for her to have two speeches of ten minutes each, she asked if she might have three speeches of ten minutes each, which request caused a considerable amount of dissatisfaction to be manifested by the audience. The Chairman announced that he intended to adhere to the rules that had been laid down. Mrs. Law protested, contending that she had come a long distance, that she represented the Secularists of Darwen, and that none knew better than I that it was impossible for her to reply to my lecture, "and show the opposite side of the question in a paltry ten minutes." I remarked, in reply to this, that I was perfectly well aware that ten minutes was an insufficient time for anyone to reply to a long discourse, but that the Secularists at the close of their lectures did not allow more, and that I failed to see why they should expect of us what, under the same circumstances, they would not themselves concede. For my own part I was quite willing that she should have two speeches of ten minutes each, but certainly should not agree to her having three, because that involved keeping the meeting on for an hour longer and another half-hour's talking for myself, while as it was, I was considerably fatigued with the long lecture I had already given. Mrs. Law still persisted in speaking, although she had declared that unless she was allowed the three speeches of ten minutes each she would have nothing to say. Mr. Oldman claimed a hearing for her, and the meeting was in a great state of confusion and uproar. The Rev. J. McDougall rose and protested against the meeting degenerating into a catechistical one. Mrs. Law still remained standing, and as a matter of course, for the time being, no progress could be made. Presently some one in the audience started the Moody and Sankey hymn, "Hold the Fort," which was taken up lustily by a great part of those present. This ended, Mr. McDougall complained that it was as great an infringement of the rules as was Mrs. Law's attempt to speak, which in truth it really was. The Chairman now decided that as all the time that could be allowed for discussion had expired, no further opposition could be listened to. The proceedings that ensued are reported as follows in the *Darwen News* :—

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the Rev. J. Mc Dougall to move a vote of thanks to Dr. Sexton. (Cheers.)

The Rev. J. MCDUGALL: Before I do so, I, in the most respectful, earnest manner ask this lady to take her seat.

Mrs. LAW: I shall if the Chairman asks me, sir.

The Rev. J. Mc DOUGALL: The Chairman has already asked you several times. He had great pleasure in moving that the thanks of the meeting be tendered to Dr. Sexton for his very able, interesting, and masterly address. He had had nothing to do with the arrangements of the meeting; he was never consulted about them until he took the chair on the previous evening; but the arrangements having been made every person was bound in honour to abide by them. He never had listened and never would listen to a lady make a speech. It might be that brains were being softened and hearts hardened, but the exhibition of that evening compelled him to say that it was by Secularism, otherwise no woman with any self-respect would have placed herself in that position. (Loud cheers.)

Mrs. LAW: You have insulted me, and I shall rise. (Uproar.)

Mr. Mc DOUGALL said he had no wish to insult anybody. He objected to have anyone forced upon him. (Cheers.) Dr. Sexton had exhibited great courage and good temper, and at the same time had been very patient in dealing with his subject. As to any lady who desired to speak, let her speak to those who would listen. Let her take the hall and find her own audience; he would have nobody forced on him. (Cheers.) He asked for a hearty vote of thanks for Dr. Sexton. (Cheers.)

Mr. H. GREEN was called upon to second it, when Mrs. Law jumped up and said, "I will second it." (Cries of "Chair" arose, and she sat down again.) The motion was spoken to and approved by the meeting.

A vote of thanks was awarded to the Chairman, on the motion of Dr. Sexton, seconded by Mr. T. H. Marsden, for his admirable firmness in which he restrained the turbulent element introduced into the meeting. Mrs. Law obstinately made one or two ineffectual attempts to gain a hearing, and the meeting separated, the Chairman regretting that Mrs. Law should have wasted so much of the time of the meeting.

Now it will be apparent to every person that the main cause of the disorder and confusion this evening was due to the fact that Mrs. Law persistently refused either to submit to the conditions of the debate or to sit down. She desired to give some sort of explanation—what it was I did not learn—and no doubt she thought she was justified in doing so, but then, as she had stated that she would not speak unless she were allowed the three speeches demanded, the audience refused to hear her. Individually I regretted the disturbance very much, and should have been glad to hear what Mrs. Law had to say in reply to my lecture. She reviewed the matter afterwards in her own journal, the *Secular Chronicle*, in which she throws all the blame of the uproar upon the audience, and declares that they but "copied the example of the leading Christians on the platform, who were first and foremost in the cabal, and one of them manifested a greater disposition to appeal to brute force than any of the uneducated persons in the body of the hall, pushing us roughly, and probably being only restrained from further violence by a Secularist threatening to proceed against him by action for assault." Most certainly if this happened I saw nothing whatever of it, and it is difficult to see how it could have occurred without my having witnessed it, seeing I was on the platform very near to Mrs. Law the whole of the time. There was a talk made about sending for a policeman, but most certainly

that functionary did not make his appearance. A few weeks afterwards Mrs. Law gave a Sunday evening lecture at the Hall of Science, London, on my "Reasons for Renouncing Infidelity," on which occasion she took the opportunity of reviewing the Darwen proceedings and stated that a policeman was sent for, which was evidently a mistake. In her lecture, the title of which was, "Dr. Sexton, Saved or Sacrificed," she summed up by concluding that I was sacrificed, but whether I was saved or not she didn't know. She remarked, they could not but be sorry, for here was a great intellect gone astray, but she believed that when he came in contact with, and saw the bigotry and intolerance of the men amongst whom he was going, he would yet sicken at it and come back to them again, and they would give him a hearty welcome when he did. Of course it is very kind of the Freethinkers to offer to welcome me back again when I shall sicken of Christianity, but that is hardly likely to happen. And it is but fair to say that up to the present time I have found far less bigotry and intolerance among Christians than I have seen and still see displayed by so-called Freethinkers. Mrs. Law in her journal is kind enough to exonerate me from all blame in connection with the Darwen meeting, but she does this in a way that seems to indicate that she feels a kind of pity for the helpless condition in which I was placed. She remarks:—

Dr. Sexton, during the whole of the proceedings, endeavoured to moderate the virulent fanaticism of his colleagues, and betrayed such a strong distaste for their one-sided policy, as must have convinced them that, while a converted Freethinker is considered a great acquisition to the Church (owing probably to the rarity of the production), he requires special training to fit him for co-operation in the great clerical work of suppressing free inquiry; and, for our part, we can conceive no greater object of commiseration than a man of genius and culture, like Dr. Sexton, unwillingly receiving his first lesson.

Now I most emphatically deny being placed in any such position. The Chairman again and again appealed to me as to the course that he had better take, and there was no minister on the platform who would not have treated with respect any suggestion that I might have offered. I am not a man, as Mrs. Law knows, who is likely to submit to be deprived of my independence and freedom either by one set of men or another, and certainly on this occasion no attempt was made to accomplish any such result.

Out of these Darwen meetings at one time it seemed extremely probable that a set debate would arise. The Secularists put themselves into communication with their champions in London, and Mr. Bradlaugh was invited to take up the gauntlet. The Darwen ministers, however, seem not to have been favourably disposed towards a public debate, mainly on the ground that it would bring large numbers of Christians together to hear their

sacred and most cherished opinions denounced in coarse and vulgar language. They convened a meeting, and unanimously agreed not to take a part in any discussion that might be brought about. This afforded an opportunity to the editor of the *National Reformer* to vent forth that petty spite which he never fails to display towards me. In his columns he replies to a Correspondent, probably an imaginary one, as follows, and there can be little doubt that the reference is to me—

J. P., Darwen.—It is sufficient for us to know that the clergy of your town refused to have anything to do with the Christian lecturer in question. He is really not important enough to advertise in these columns.

Now, no one knew better than the man who penned this that he was stating an unmitigated falsehood. He was well aware of the fact that the objection of the Darwen ministers was not to me, as a representative, but to discussion altogether. Indeed, not only did they express the greatest confidence in me as an advocate of Christianity, but they are even now anxious that I should go again and preach and lecture in their town. As to my not being of sufficient importance to be advertised in the columns of the immaculate print absurdly called the *National Reformer*, that is a statement which can only provoke a laugh. Time was when I was not deemed so unimportant a personage by this mud-pelting scribe of the dingy court of Johnson; but then he himself has grown bigger since those days of long ago, and now in the giddy heights to which he has been elevated by a legacy of two thousand pounds and the prospect—a terribly remote one it must be confessed—of a seat in Parliament, fancies himself a veritable Briareus—when perchance he is but a much meaner animal, as the Greek proverb has it, and in his blind self-sufficiency thinks it looks grand to assume to treat with contempt better men than himself, whom he was once wont to look up to with respect, and to swagger as though an attitude which—

Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres,

could impose upon sensible people. He should remember the frog in the fable that aspired to become an ox—the moral has a point.

The meetings at Darwen concluded, I returned to London, and on Friday 20th lectured for the Mutual Improvement Society, connected with the church at Argyle Square. My subject was the "Poetry of Geology," which was enthusiastically received by a large and appreciative audience.

On Sunday 29th I supplied the pulpit of my friend, Dr. Thomas, morning and evening, in Augustine Church, Clapham

Road. I preached in the morning from Hebrews iv. 9, and in the evening from Matthew vi. 25—34. The congregations were large.

On the Tuesday evening following I gave a lecture for the Young Men's Christian Association at their rooms in Aldersgate Street, which was well received and highly appreciated. The following notice of it appears in the *Young Men's Magazine* for November:—

Another champion of what is popularly called "Free-thought" has thrown down his weapons, or rather has enlisted in the service of the Christian faith. Dr. George Sexton, for many years *facile princeps* amongst the speakers at Metropolitan and Provincial "Halls of Science," has lately made a public profession of his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as his God and Saviour; and, on the 31st October last, delivered a lecture at 165, Aldersgate-street, on "Twenty Years' Experience of Scepticism and Sceptics."

It would not be fair to Dr. Sexton to give a report of his lecture, which he will probably have occasion to re-deliver elsewhere; and we shall sufficiently indicate the nature of it by saying that it was a masterly statement of the utter insufficiency of Secularism to furnish either the principles, the motives, or the consolations which men so urgently need. Theoretically, it is hard to say what Secularism is, as each man seems to have his own definition. Practically, it is nothing else than an organised attempt to destroy Christianity without putting anything in its place. Hence, as may be supposed, Secularism has done nothing, and attempted nothing, for the public good. Whatever has been done, either in popular education or in the amelioration of physical evil, is due to Christianity alone. As a matter of individual consideration, he contended that, even assuming the Secularist idea that a man's interests have relation only to the affairs of this present life, the Christian has the advantage. In the affairs of daily life he has the same resources in art, science, and literature, with the Secularist; he has the same scope for the exercise of his industry and talents; while he has, in addition, the support of his faith in an Ever-present and Almighty Father, to whom he can at all times have access in prayer. So also in regard to moral conduct. It followed that, if it could be supposed that Christianity is untrue, the Christian lost nothing by his error. On the other hand, if Christianity is true, as the lecturer now believed, he is incalculably a gainer for this world as well as for the next. We cannot, however, attempt to describe the clearness of argument and aptness of illustration which combined to keep a large audience in rapt attention. We hope Dr. Sexton's lecture will be often and widely re-delivered.

On Saturday, November 4th, I made my way to Manchester, having arranged to preach the anniversary sermons in the Salford Temple on the following day. The weather was somewhat unfavourable on the Sunday, but still the congregations were both unusually large. My subject in the morning was, "Ideals and their Realisation in Individual Life," based upon Mark xiv. 8, and in the evening "Religion Essential to Humanity," Luke x. 42. The sermons were highly appreciated, and the collections were larger than had ever been known, with one exception during the pastorate of the Rev. W. Westall, the present minister.

On the Monday I travelled from Manchester to Swindon, where I gave a lecture on the Wednesday following at the Mechanics' Institute on the subject of "Sleep and Dreams."

The large room was densely crowded, many persons being unable to obtain seats. A report of the lecture, copied from the *Swindon Express*, appeared in the *Spiritual Magazine* for December, and need not therefore be further referred to. I stayed the rest of the week with my friend, the Rev. F. R. Young, and preached the anniversary sermons in his church on the following Sunday, 12th. The rain fell in torrents during the whole of the day, but still the congregations were good. In the morning I preached from Revelations xxii. 9, and in the evening from Matthew xi. 28. A somewhat lengthy report of these sermons appeared in the *Spiritual Magazine* for December. After the evening service Mr. Young administered the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, interesting to me because it was in his church and at his hands now some three years and a half ago that I received this ordinance for the first time after my return to Christianity.

From Swindon I returned to London, having only a few days to spare before going North to fulfil my engagements in Scotland.

On the night of Saturday, 19th, I travelled by the Great Northern express to Edinburgh, reaching the modern Athens, as Scotchmen love to call their principal city, at six o'clock on the Sunday morning. I had to stay at the railway station two hours under circumstances which at first appeared anything but cheering. Being Sunday, of course the refreshment rooms were closed, and for the matter of that the waiting rooms appeared to be closed too, for it was a long time before I could discover one, and when I did succeed, it was destitute of both fire and light. With a little exertion, however, I succeeded in getting these deficiencies supplied, and so made myself tolerably comfortable till eight o'clock, when I took train for Peebles to pay a visit to my kind friend, Mr. Tod. I reached Peebles between nine and ten, and found Mr. Tod's coachman waiting for me, and was by him conducted to as pleasantly situated a private house as I have ever seen, the residence of one of the most kind-hearted men living. Here I spent the Sunday and part of the Monday, and have seldom enjoyed myself more thoroughly. Scotland has always a charm for me which I am perfectly unable to account for, and here I was in a part of Scotland, every spot of which has been made famous by the great "Wizard of the North," as Scott was wont to be termed, and in company with a man with whom I feel the deepest parts of my nature to be in sympathy. On the Monday Mr. Tod drove me round the neighbourhood in his carriage and showed me many of the famous historic spots with which that part of the country abounds. Whenever I come into contact with places of this kind I feel as if I were on enchanted ground and could behold a panoramic picture passing before my

mind of all the famous events that have happened there in the past, and when I am alone sometimes I become transfixed to the spot and remain for hours in a sort of reverie. I have never been in America, but when I do go, it strikes me that the great defect that I shall experience will be the entire absence of everything old and historic. On the Monday afternoon I took train for Glasgow, where I arrived between five and six o'clock in the evening. My dear old friend, Bowman, met me at the station as usual and escorted me to his residence, where I am always so heartily welcome and so thoroughly at home, that I begin to look upon 65, Jamaica Street, as a sort of Scotch residence of my own, and am only sorry that I am not able to spend more time there. On the following day (Tuesday) I lectured at the Mechanics' Institution, Barrhead, on the "Poetry of Geology," and stayed during the night with the President, Mr. J. Z. Heys, a member of the firm which owns one of the largest calico printing establishments in the country. On the Wednesday my host was kind enough to conduct me over this immense manufactory, and explain to me all the process of calico printing, through every stage, a subject in which I was immensely interested. I returned to Glasgow in the afternoon of that day, paid a few visits, and spent a very agreeable evening with my old friend Nisbet.

On the following day (Thursday) I took train for Aberdeen, being my first visit to this far-famed granite city. The Rev. Alexander Stewart, who had arranged for my visit, and in whose church I was to preach and lecture, met me at the station. It happened that I travelled in the same train with Mr. W. E. Forster, who had been elected the Lord Rector of the University, and who had come down to deliver his inaugural address. The railway station, therefore, was crowded with people, mostly students, who came to meet him. I had but little time to spare, having to lecture the same evening. I therefore made my way to the Royal Hotel, in Union Street, where I was to stay, deposited my luggage, and then went on to Mr. Stewart's residence to take my tea. I had only known Mr. Stewart through reading a debate that he held some years since with Mr. Charles Watts, but I now found him to be a very superior man, a man who, like myself, had gone through the necessary studies required for two different professions, and who in addition to being a distinguished minister in the denomination to which he belongs, the Evangelical Union—better known in Scotland as Morrisonian, having been founded by Dr. Morrison, who seceded from the Presbyterian Church on the ground of the freedom of the will in matters of religion—is an author of some note and a thoroughly scientific man, well posted up in modern

scientific discoveries, and in the fancies with which this age abounds yclept modern scientific theories. The three lectures which had been announced to be given in Mr. Stewart's church were as follows: Thursday, "Secularism a Creed of Negations, a Bundle of Contradictions, and incapable of satisfying the Wants of Human Nature." Friday, "Christianity of Divine Origin, and alone capable of Regenerating Humanity." Saturday, "Theories of Evolution, their Facts and Fallacies." These lectures I gave, with a success almost unprecedented, and which not only astonished me, but which surprised greatly the good people of Aberdeen themselves. Of all the places in Scotland Aberdeen is said to be the most intensely Scotch, and Scotchmen as a rule are not hasty in showing a hearty appreciation of a stranger, more particularly when that stranger happens to be an Englishman. But although I am not Scotch, it is clear that my mind has been cast in a Scotch mould. The whole tone of my thought is Scotch, and hence just as I prefer Scotch audiences to English I receive an appreciation in Scotland far greater than that which is usually accorded to me at home. On the first evening the church was well filled, and the audiences increased nightly—despite the fact that there were innumerable counter attractions consequent upon the presence of the Lord Rector, who was fêted in some way or other almost every night—and the result was that on the Saturday evening it was crowded, as may be gathered from the following short notice which appeared in the *Daily Free Press* :—

Dr. Sexton's Lectures.—Theories of Evolution.

Dr. Sexton delivered his third lecture on Infidelity in John Street E. U. Church, Aberdeen, on Saturday. The subject was "Theories of Evolution: their Facts and Fallacies." The lecturer discussed and considered the theories in respect to the origin of life, finding fallacies in all of them, unless the idea of the Eternal source be admitted. He reviewed the three theories—that of Adaptation, introduced by Lamarck; that of Development, as taught in the *Vestiges of Creation*; and Mr. Darwin's special theory of Natural Selection—and in a most lucid manner analysed the subject, showing that it was impossible by any of these to account for the facts that exist in nature. The church was, as on the two previous evenings, crowded, and the lecture was listened to with rapt attention.

On the Friday and Saturday it had been announced that I should preach in the church twice on the Sunday, and there seemed to be a pretty general impression that the result would be that more persons would seek admission than the building could hold, which expectation was fully realised. In the evening as Mr. Stewart and I approached the church, nearly half an hour before the time for commencing the service, we found large numbers of persons outside the doors unable to gain admission. Clearly not less than five or six hundred people had thus to leave. The *Daily Free Press*, of Monday, 27th, gave a

long summary of the evening sermon, commencing its report as follows:—

Last night Dr. Sexton preached in John Street E. U. Church. The building was densely crowded a quarter of an hour before the service commenced, and hundreds of persons failed to gain admission. The service was the ordinary evening one, but the discourse was intended to show that in Christianity all the great religions of the world culminated, and that it was the only religion which could satisfy the innate religious feelings of mankind.

Hundreds of persons failing to gain admission to hear a sermon from an Englishman, a stranger in the town, was a circumstance so new to Aberdeen that it became the talk of the city. Wherever I went on the following day I was an object of interest; Ministers greeted me, spoke of my triumphs, and said, "God bless you in your noble work;" University Professors shook me warmly by the hand, hoped I would stay a few weeks in their city, and certainly come back again soon; and with the people in general I was a sort of hero. Not content with my preaching twice on the Sunday, the Young Men's Christian Association solicited me to deliver an address in their hall—a large and commodious building recently erected, mainly, I believe, through the instrumentality of Mr. Moody, who collected a great part of the money on his visit to the city—after the evening services in the churches. I complied with this request, and therefore spoke a third time on the Sabbath; this time having for hearers many of those who had failed to gain admission to the church, and who, knowing I was to speak here, had gone direct to the hall and secured the first seats. It had now been decided that I should stay in Aberdeen as long as my engagements at other places would permit me, and lecture every night, which would be to give four more discourses, as I was compelled to leave on the Friday. On the Monday evening, therefore, I again appeared in Mr. Stewart's church, and took for my subject the "Origin of Man, Biblical and Scientific." On the Tuesday evening I lectured for the Young Men's Christian Association, in their large and beautiful hall, before referred to, my subject being "Creation by Law and Creation by God." On the Wednesday and Thursday I was again at the church, my subject on the first night being "Scientific Materialism a Fallacy," and on the second night "God and Immortality." On both nights the church was crowded as usual. Notices of the lectures appeared day by day in each of the Aberdeen papers, too numerous, of course, for me to quote here. I give, however, the following short paragraph from the *Aberdeen Journal*, of November 30th, as a specimen:—

Scientific Materialism.—Last night the Rev. George Sexton, LL.D., delivered another of the series of lectures which he is at present delivering in Aberdeen, in the John Street E. U. Church. Major Ross occupied the chair. The

subject of the lecture was "Scientific Materialism a Fallacy." At the outset the lecturer, in a lucid manner, demonstrated the truth that the state of primitive man was a civilized being, and that savage nations never could have of themselves raised themselves, always depending on something extraneous. The lecturer next proceeded to deal with all the theories put forward by the scientific Materialists, stating them in their own words, and conclusively replying to them upon their own grounds. He showed that the Materialist was incapable of explaining the problem of matter itself, the inner nature of man and moral freedom. The audience, who were most enthusiastic, sat spell-bound for a couple of hours.

This concluded my labours on the occasion of my first visit to Aberdeen. Seldom have I spent so happy a time, and never have I been more successful. The city itself has few equals for the massive grandeur of its buildings and the imposing aspect of the one long principal street in which my hotel was situated. And the people everywhere I found cordial, kind, and sympathetic. I made the friendship of every leading minister in the place and of a great number of laymen. All pressed me very earnestly to return soon, and I have arranged to go back again in March next. That good was done by my visit, and that the blessing of God rested on my labours we know, because instances came before our notice which demonstrate the fact.

On the Friday morning, December 1st, I left Aberdeen and made my way south. I was bound for Manchester, which town I reached late at night, or rather early on Saturday morning, for it was long past midnight. From Manchester, during the day (Saturday) I went on to Heywood, where I had to speak on that evening, and preach on the day following. I had been invited to take part in a public meeting convened by the Liberal Club, and in my speech I took occasion to express my views upon the Eastern Question. I pointed out how absurd was the Russiaphobia from which a portion of the people appeared to be suffering, and how utterly effete, demoralised, decrepid and worn-out was Turkey. I told the audience I feared, despite their enthusiasm, that the recklessness of the Ministers, and the ignorance of the people might plunge us into war, for that I could not forget how the country was befooled twenty-two years ago when the question of upholding this same Turkey was under discussion. I remembered well that those of us who opposed the Crimean war—and I was one who did so very earnestly—were hooted, yelled at, and treated as enemies of our country, and how every Member of Parliament, without exception, who took that view, lost his seat at the succeeding election. The Government and the newspapers bamboozled the people then, and I was very much afraid they would do the same thing again. A full report of this meeting appeared in the *Bury Times* of December 9th, in which my speech is given at considerable length. On the following day, Sunday, I occupied the

pulpit of the Rev. R. Storry morning and evening. The congregations were both unusually large, especially that in the evening.

From Lancashire I travelled to Rushden, in Northamptonshire, the scene of my previous encounter with Dr. Collett, and here I gave a lecture on Monday, December 4th, on "God and Immortality," to a highly appreciative audience.

Returning to London, I gave four lectures in the Workmen's Hall, Stratford, under the auspices of the Christian Evidence Society, as follows:—Wednesday, 6th, "Secularism Deficient as a Moral Guide;" Tuesday, 12th, "Christian Ethics as a Moral Code, a Proof of the Divine Origin of Christianity;" Wednesday, 13th, "Prayer and its Relation to Modern Thought;" Wednesday, 20th, "The Influence of Christ's Teaching on the World, a Proof of its Divine Origin." On the first evening the chair was taken by the Rev. W. J. Bolton, M.A., Rector of Stratford, and on the last by the Rev. James Knaggs, Congregationalist Minister. As discussion was allowed at the close of each of these lectures, I had a considerable number of opponents, most of them, however, very feeble ones, who did more harm than good to their cause.

GEORGE SEXTON.

London, December 21st, 1876.

SWEDENBORG ON THE INTERMEDIATE WORLD OF SPIRITS.

SUCH was the title of a lecture delivered in Auckland, New Zealand, in July last, by the Rev. S. Edger, and a report of which has come to hand in the *Auckland Weekly News*. As there is very much in the lecture that has an important bearing upon the Life after Death, and which may consequently prove interesting to our readers, we reprint what follows:—

"The doctrine of an intermediate world that is neither Heaven nor Hell, into which the great majority of human beings from this world enter immediately after death, will, perhaps, be more contested from the orthodox view of things than any other of Swedenborg's doctrines respecting the future life. And yet it is that which more than any other forces itself irresistibly on the convictions of thinking men, who believe in a future individual life; while it is that which alone renders intelligible certain prominent statements of our New Testament.

To the objection drawn from the orthodox belief, it is enough to answer that that belief is not derived immediately from our Scriptures, but from certain interpreters of those Scriptures, recognised by the Church, such as Augustine, Anselm, Calvin, Luther, &c. ; and that the doctrine of an intermediate state is much older than the oldest of these interpreters. The only legitimate argument from this point of view must be based upon the Scriptures themselves—whether they do or do not involve the admission of such a state. Of that every careful thinker can form his own opinion.

“ Apart from the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory—with which Swedenborg’s intermediate state corresponds in scarcely a single particular—it has long been a growing feeling that the principles of our Christianity absolutely forbid our assigning this human race at death to any such heaven or hell as has ever been believed in by the avowed adherents of our faith. Whether heaven and hell are presented under gross material images, as in the popular preaching, or under more spiritual conceptions, as amongst intelligent thinkers, heaven is complete blessedness, and hell is unrelieved and hopeless evil. The multitudes of this world are seen by the veriest child to be neither bad enough for the one nor good enough for the other : and that any such division of the human race at death would violate justice as much as it would goodness. So far from this being a childish idea, the longer one lives in the world, the more certain it becomes. The many inconsistencies of the apparently good that drive men into scepticism ; the ignorance in which the multitudes are left by those who hold the key of knowledge ; the temptations deliberately thrown in the way of the weak by the powerful ; the social and civil wrongs that irritate men into passion and hence crime, with the utter helplessness of millions under various forms of servitude—all these considerations modify one’s estimate of the guilt incurred on the one hand and the virtue attained on the other. In proportion as these approach each other, and become confounded in an undefinable moral region, it becomes increasingly impossible to believe that the Divine Righteousness—to say nothing of Benevolence—can intend to make so sharp a distinction, to be infinitely and eternally aggravated. The condition of the so-called heathen world, whose virtues often outshine those of Christendom, and whose worst vices result from the action of civilized countries, still further perplexes the question. The many themes which have accordingly been started, to get rid of the eternity of hell, or of hell altogether, clearly enough show the necessity felt by the culture of this age, for some more satisfactory resting place. That, we think, is supplied by this teaching of Swedenborg.

“ From those who professedly base their convictions on the direct teachings of our Scriptures, the following are some of the points requiring consideration:—(1.) Christ draws a wide distinction between those who have broken the Lord’s commandments knowingly, and those who have done so ignorantly, saying, the latter shall be beaten with few stripes, the former with many. To apply the term ‘few stripes’ to an eternity of suffering or evil in its very mildest form, is to trifle with language. The bare exclusion from a higher condition— the crushing of the last hope that would aspire to a sinless condition, unclouded with sorrow—if ‘*for ever*’ is immeasurably beyond ‘few stripes,’ as every man must feel who puts it calmly to his own soul. In fact, ‘few stripes,’ if the words were spoken in earnest, imply a limit in time, which must be either through the possibility of ascending from hell to heaven, or else through some intermediate state. (2.) Christ, in speaking of the unbelieving cities of Galilee, says that had Sodom and Gomorrah, or Tyre and Sidon, enjoyed their privileges, ‘They would have repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.’ Then, where were the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Tyre and Sidon? In a hopeless, eternal hell? The people who with more light would have repented and become holy! Believe that who can; I hope we cannot, for the honour of our religion. The argument is, of course, very much wider in its bearings than to these few cities. An intermediate state removes all difficulty. (3.) Take what Christ says to the dying thief, ‘To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise;’ what Peter says about Christ going and preaching to the spirits in prison (Hades); the representation given in the parable of the converse between the rich man and Abraham in some spirit-world; and must not all these passages be devoid of any genuine and obvious meaning, unless there is some such intermediate state, since to apply them to heaven and hell is quite out of the question? We should not argue the question with those who are willing to treat these expressions as a kind of careless rhetoric. Those who feel that they contain a great meaning may trust to their calm reflection. (4.) The reappearance of the dead, so distinctly asserted on the Mount of Transfiguration, and at the resurrection of Christ, is quite intelligible, supposing the dead to have been in an intermediate state, but much more difficult of explanation on the supposition that they were either in heaven or hell. We should suppose this would be obvious to all, the more so as that intermediate state is understood.

“ It is not, however, from this point of view that Swedenborg reaches his conclusions. He, as you know, was an eminently scientific man, led, as he says, by the Lord through many

scientific studies for thirty years, that he might be able to bring the light of science to bear on Divine truth, so that it might be rationally understood. This fact he at least never loses sight of, and on the strictest and most indisputable principles of science all his theological teachings are built.

“The complexity of human life, the mixture of good and evil in forms often baffling the power of discrimination, the consequent want of harmony amongst the powers and elements of man’s nature render it a very rare thing for the character of a man to be developed to anything like unity on the side of either good or evil; and as a man must be fully one with good for Heaven or one with evil for Hell, because everything in the future world is exactly according to character; therefore, very few in this world become quite fit either for heaven or hell. The few who do, go at once to either the one or the other. All infants go to heaven. There are no ‘infants a span long’ in Swedenborg’s hell. He would have shuddered at any such blasphemy. All the rest enter this intermediate world of spirits, to be more fully developed into harmony or unity of character. *Thus he explains the existence and necessity of an intermediate state:—*

“‘The world of spirits is neither heaven nor hell, but an intermediate place or state between both, into which man enters immediately after death, and then, after a certain period, the duration of which is determined by the quality of his life in the world, he is either elevated into heaven or cast into hell. The world of spirits is an intermediate place between heaven and hell, and also an intermediate state of man’s life. That it is an intermediate place was made evident to me, because the hells are beneath it, and the heavens above it; and because so long as man is there, he is neither in heaven nor in hell. The state of heaven in man is the union of goodness and truth, and the state of hell in man is the union of evil and falsehood. When goodness is joined to truth in a spirit, he enters into heaven, because, as just observed, the union of goodness and truth is heaven within him; but when evil is joined with the falsehood in a spirit, he is cast into hell, because that union is hell within him; and these unions are effected in the world of spirits, because man is then in an intermediate state.

“‘Man has the capacity of thinking from the understanding, and not at the same time from will. He is capable of thinking from the understanding, and thence of perceiving what is true and good; but he does not think from the will, unless he wills, and does what the understanding approves. When he thus wills and acts, truth is both in the understanding and the will, and is consequently in the man; for the understanding alone does

not constitute the man, nor the will alone; but the understanding and the will together; and therefore that which is in both the will and the understanding is in the man, and is appropriated to him. What is in the understanding only is indeed *with* man, but is not *in* him; for it is only a thing of memory and of science in the memory, of which he can think when he is not *in* himself, but *out* of himself with others. It is thus a thing of which he can speak and reason, and according to which also he can assume a feigned affection and manner.

“ ‘ Almost every man at this day is in such a state, that he is acquainted with truths, and also thinks the truth from knowledge and understanding; while he does many of its promptings, or few, or none; and even while he acts against them from the love of evil, and the false faith thence derived. In order, therefore, that he may be a subject either of heaven or hell, he is first brought after death into the world of spirits, and in that world the union of goodness and truth is effected in those who are to be elevated into heaven, and the union of evil and falsehood in those who are to be cast into hell; for no one either in heaven or in hell is allowed to have a divided mind, understanding one thing, and willing another; *but what he wills he must understand, and what he understands he must will*; and, therefore, he who wills good in heaven must understand truth, and he who wills evil in hell must understand falsities. On this account also falsities are removed from the good in the world of spirits, and truths are given them which agree and harmonize with their good; but truths are removed from the evil, and falsities are given them which agree and harmonize with their evil. From these considerations the nature of the world of spirits will be easily apprehended.’

“ Such is the necessity for an intermediate state.”

THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW.

THE Old Year now has run his race,
And joined the thousands gone before;
His son and heir to fill his place
Already stands beside the door.
Although his course has been so brief,
He still has strewn along his path
Full many a joy and many a grief,
In fellowship with Life and Death.

What have we done with all the hours
So bounteously unto us given?
In them have we so used our powers
To make our Earth more like to
Heaven?
“The King is dead! Long live the
King!”
We cry, and favour hope to win;
A welcome merry peal we ring,
And hail with joy the New Year in.

'Tis well if we with loyalty
Allegiance pay; but with disdain,
A greater King by far than he
Regards false vows and homage vain!

T. S.

NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

 DR. SEXTON.

UNDER the above heading the *St. Pancras Gazette*, of December 9th, has the following remarks on Dr. Sexton's recent visit to Scotland:—"Some months ago we referred to this gentleman's life as a remarkably eventful one, and we noticed that after having been the most scientific lecturer in the Secular body he had become a public defender of the faith of Christendom. We then spoke of his ability as a lecturer, and of the way in which he held his audiences spell-bound by his eloquence. We are happy to inform our readers that, after several places south of the Tweed have had the benefit of his knowledge and eloquence, he has paid a visit to the land north of that famous river. The accounts contained in the Scotch papers fully bear out our estimate of his powers as a lecturer. We are exceedingly glad at this time of the prevalence of Scepticism to welcome into the field one who for years opposed the faith, but who now most powerfully defends it. Dr. Sexton, too, is equally able as a debater, and while effectively defending his own position, conducts himself in a most courteous manner towards his opponents. The *Aberdeen Daily Free Press*, of Nov. 27, informs us that he has been lecturing at Aberdeen on 'Theories of Evolution,' and on 'All Great Religions Culminating in Christianity,' and that at these services the places were crowded some time before the lectures began, and that hundreds of persons have been unable to obtain admission. Our friends of the North are credited by those who are supposed to know them best to be more intellectually keen than we of the South, and it is a rare testimony to Dr. Sexton's powers that Scotia's sons have manifested so much interest in his lectures. It is well known that in St. Pancras we have some of the best theological debaters in England, and the Doctor is well known to them, and they all have the highest opinion of him as a debater and a lecturer."

 MADAME CAROLINE PICHLER'S OPINION OF SPIRITUAL
INFLUENCE ON MEN OF GENIUS.

(From the *Denkwürdigkeiten aus Meinem Leben*, vol. ii. pp. 91—97.)

Speaking of the facility of her composition of her romance of *Agathokles*, she says:—"When a thought of this kind has seized upon me, it acts wonderfully on my interior being. In this case I was conscious of no real thinking out of my subject—no invention. I might say that my thought, my whole con-

dition was passive. It was continually as though the whole plan or future carrying out of my work lay already in my mind. It required only the taking up and making more palpable; and I can compare what went forward in my soul to nothing more than the revival of an old picture in it. This is already at hand, and one has nothing more to do than, through the proper means, to freshen it up, so that it may become recognisable. At first the main outlines present themselves, and then, by degrees, the lesser forms become obvious; then, gradually, the colours show themselves; and, finally, the picture in all its features, the drawing, the colouring, &c., stands before our eyes, reveals itself, without one further conscious effort. Thus it was with my work. The whole came forth as of itself in my mind, and appeared to me continually as something given, not invented by myself.

“This process which takes place in the moment of intellectual conception—whether the ideas spring to life in word or in act, in picture or expression—has always had for me something mysterious, something inexplicable, and which seems to point to the higher future of our souls; to the connection with the general spirit-world. The men to whom Nature has given endowments of another kind, can form no conception of that which takes place in the mind of a poet; and it resembles what Fenelon, in one of his remarks on the inner life of a pious soul, says, namely, that men of the world regard such a phenomenon as a dream, or a fancy. There are many such enigmas; and one of them, perhaps one of the most wonderful, is the capacity for music and composition. In an article which I wrote for a periodical, I gave my ideas on this subject. I don't recollect the particular details, but I can repeat in general what I then asserted, and which succeeding experiences have confirmed.

“There is something wonderful and mysterious in this faculty for harmony, and still more in the facility to dictate harmonies and melodies. This shows itself often in men who, except in the region of their heavenly gift, manifest little intellectual ability, and have little education. They themselves have no clear comprehension of their endowments, and as little of the process which goes on in their spirit when they endeavour to make palpable the creations which are fermenting in them, or to express in musical sound some foreign poetical production. Mozart and Haydn, whom I well knew, were men in whose personal intercourse no striking force of intelligence, scarcely any kind of intellectual culture, of higher tendency, or scientific aspiration, showed itself. A common-place turn of mind, empty jokes, and, in the first, a frivolous course of life, was all that you saw in their daily behaviour and converse; and yet what

depths, what worlds of fancy, harmony, melody, and feeling lay hidden in these dull outsides! Through what inner revelations did there come to them that intelligence? How must it have seized on them in order to produce such powerful effects, and to enable them, in tones, to express feelings, thoughts, passions, so that the hearer was compelled to feel with them, and his mind was affected with the profoundest sympathy?

“I knew Schubert, too, and what I have said of these great composers applied equally to him. He, too, produced the beautiful and the moving in his compositions almost unconsciously. And I may here give an anecdote which I had from a celebrated singer, Vogel, namely, that a very beautiful song, which a few weeks before had flowed from the depths of his feeling, Schubert no longer recognized as Vogel pointed it out, and he praised it most cordially as something of another man's! So unconsciously, so involuntarily, do these things originate, that we cannot avoid thinking of magnetic conditions, and of those mysterious capacities of the chrysalis, in which the wings of the butterfly lie folded and concealed till the chrysalis bursts open and they unfold. Here, in their narrow conditions, they are aware of those higher powers only in particular moments, when they become conscious of them; and these are the moments probably of which Fenelon speaks, and which men of the world ridicule because they never knew them.

“Some days after I had written these remarks, I came upon an assertion of Goethe's, in Eckermann's *Conversations*, namely, that the knowledge of the world is born with the true poet. That he himself had written his *Götz von Berlichingen*, ‘without having seen or experienced what he described, and that he was afterwards astonished at the truth of these representations.’ He said that he ‘must have possessed these revelations through *anticipation*; yea, he protested that ‘had he not carried the world in himself, all his researches and experiences would have been a dead and vain endeavour.’ Does not one rather confound these mysterious experiences of the soul, as elucidations of this world, with those of a higher one,—and that what Goethe bluntly and drily calls *anticipation*, we may more properly term *inspiration*? These intuitions are inspired; they are given to the poet without his knowing where or wherefore they come; and on their clearness and breadth depend really the greater or less force of the poet. Probably it is fundamentally indifferent whether we represent these mysterious operations in the soul of the poet by the word *anticipation* or *inspiration*; but I was pleased to find that this great man had had these perceptions, and that he and I were of the same opinion regarding them.”

W. HOWITT.

THE INTOLERANCE OF SCEPTICISM.

The intolerance of bigotry is bad enough, but the intolerance of scepticism is worse. Bigotry is founded on some faith. It has some earnestness and some enthusiasm. Some things are sacred and precious to it. It believes that it is contending for the very truth of God, and whether it is or not, its belief has some moral value. But scepticism, to which the universe is a shadow, thought a phantasy, goodness a dream, and all heroism a sham—what shall we say of its intolerance? Is it not more narrow than that of bigotry? To scorn all human faith, to laugh at all human effort, to see nothing to strive after, nothing to live for or die for, what shall we say of these things, when they are considered the top of human wisdom? Many a noble mind comes into such a state at times, but he does not form it into a creed, a narrow and dreary platform from whence he can flout the beliefs of others. Aristotle says that scepticism is the *beginning* of philosophy; but to make it the *end*, this is to dig its grave, without a flower to bloom upon it. There can be some pleasure and some exaltation in ministering to the most bigoted and superstitious of believers, for there is the promise of some excellence as the result. But to minister, even with one's best culture, to mere scepticism seems a degrading office; for though the result may be a boundless sweep of thought, there is not one whit of action. Simply to overthrow every human system of belief is a thankless task. Let the meanest creed stand if we cannot put a provocative to better action in its place. Let the grandest sink if we have something of superior value to succeed. We should work to bring into play the noblest motives; not to leave men floating on a dark sea with no hope nor aspiration. We must follow our thought; but even when it unfolds to the sublimest visions we should not make it a finality. Much less should we do so when it brings us into universal doubt. To be intolerant, then, is the saddest of all human infirmities.—S. P. PUTNAM.

Correspondence.

"ONE WORD MORE ON HAFEDISM."

To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."

SIR,—We borrow the above heading from a paper by William Howitt in the *Spiritual Magazine* for November. We understood some time ago that discussion of the merits of *Hafed* were closed, so far as this Magazine was concerned; but the publication of Mr. Howitt's paper renders "one word more" now necessary. He has made several definite and, if they were correct, very damaging assertions, but offers no fragment of proof in the way of giving quotations from *Hafed*. He thus virtually calls upon his opponents to execute the rather onerous task of "proving a negative." His former strictures leave

us at no loss in accounting for the absence of any semblance of proof. In ordinary circumstances, one who had read *Hafed* would, on reading Mr. Howitt's assertions, be ready to exclaim, Surely he cannot have read the book! It is, so far, a comfort to remember that in a former communication he tells us he had not read the book, and would not read it, because this leaves no ground for suspicion that his misrepresentations are wilful. We can even see how he could come to utter them in all good faith. His knowledge being limited to what he could gather from the table of contents, and the work being to a considerable extent historical, giving an account of the erroneous systems of belief that long and extensively prevailed in the East, one who looked only at the table of contents might guess that he *upheld* the doctrines which he merely *recorded*, and this, even when in other parts of the book these doctrines were not only dissented from, but placed in contrast with what the writer's own beliefs were. The assertions by Mr. Howitt with which we take and deal, are such as the following:—“Hafedism is an exact re-production of Manichæism;” “For Manes write Hafed and the identity is perfect.” Along with this we are reminded that Manes taught that “the God of the Old Testament was not the God of the New; that “every man had two souls, and after death transmigrated into other men and even into plants and animals; that Manes could not submit to anything so stationary as the doctrine of Christ.

The natural rejoinder to all this would be for us to assert in turn that *Hafed* teaches no such doctrines. But this would leave the readers of the *Spiritual Magazine*, who have not yet read *Hafed*, exactly as wise on this subject as they were before Mr. Howitt or we wrote one word upon it. We are at a loss to know what Mr. Howitt exactly means by *Hafedism*. We discover *no system* of doctrine taught by Hafed, except that he held and taught the truth as concerning God and men, as taught by Jesus, for whom and his truth he joyfully laid down his life. He, as we have indicated, records in part the substance of many *items*, and as occasion offers defends what is good in them and opposes what is erroneous, making the truth as taught by Jesus the standard of appeal, but he gives nothing of his own that should be called *Hafedism*. A few specimen extracts may be given from the book in support of the view we take. Before doing so it may be well to quote from the preface cautions given by Hafed himself regarding the danger of not being at all times clearly understood. Referring to the Medium through whom he had to communicate, he says, “*You must not forget that I had to do my work with an inferior instrument—a medium not of the finest culture—finding it difficult at times to transmit my thoughts.*” As an example of the relation in which Hafed stood to such as Mr. Howitt, perhaps properly enough, calls Pagan priests, we may quote part of what is given as a parting address to the men of Persia by the youthful Jesus when about to return to Judea, “Men, and brethren of Persia, I have spoken to you on occasions such as this before, and as I am now about to leave you for my own land, suffer me once more to give utterance to my thoughts Here I stand, often travelling with my venerated father amongst nations north and south, east and west. We have searched into their *theological systems*, into their modes of worship, and their religious practices; but in all our wanderings and searchings amongst these peoples, though we have seen much that we considered wrong in their doctrines and worship, and much that was foolish and impure in their religious practices, yet we were oftentimes glad to see traces of great spiritual truths in their *ancient books*. . . . Brethren, I must leave you to go home to my own land; and there will I, in due time, proclaim to my kindred the truth I am sent to bear unto them. But the day will come when the message, which I must first deliver to my own nation, will be delivered unto you.” These are surely not such sentiments as one would delight to place on record, who “could not submit to anything so stationary as the doctrines of Christ.”

On p. 179 we have what purports to be a conversation with Paul, whom he had heard deliver his celebrated address on Mars' Hill: it is added, “On returning we sat down and entered into a long conversation. He told me much that was new to me in regard to the propagation of the truth—of the trials and persecutions they had endured, and of the wondrous works that had accompanied their ministry in every place. He afterwards introduced me to others of the

brethren. My mind was now fully made up to join myself to them, and give my remaining life to the proclaiming of the truth." Are these the words of one who on account of his doctrinal system should be classed with "the most detestable sect of the Gnostics?"

On p. 192, speaking of the manner in which he taught a small company at Kroom, he says, "I did not at once rush heedlessly into an exposition of these new doctrines; but taking them back into the past, I brought before them the various philosophies of Greece, of Egypt, of Prussia, India and other nations, and even certain doctrines of the Druids, of which I had recently got some information: and then, having thus prepared my way, I opened up to them the simple, but God-like teachings of Jesus, and left it to themselves to say, which was the best, the most reasonable." It is added a little farther on: "It was worth a lifetime to obtain a victory over the prejudices of these hard-headed men; and I counted the fame which I had won on the battle-fields of my country as nothing when compared with the subjugation of such men to the faith."

On p. 198, speaking of the formation of the first Christian Church in Persia, it is said: "So when we began to preach to the people, it was not so much our endeavour to run down the old views, as to lay before our hearers the new. But it was not long ere they perceived in the truth taught by us an enemy to the prevailing system. Had we come to them as Magi, I believe there would have been no difficulty in the way of the people listening to us; our views would have been accepted, and we should have been praised. But choosing what we considered to be the right course, that is, to appear just as we were, the followers of Jesus, we found we had to labour hard to gain a hearing. However, we laboured on, standing up in the corners of the streets, or wherever we could get an audience, and slowly we began to get a little encouragement by the drawing in of one now and again. I believe the spirit of Jesus was with us, cheering and inciting us to the work, and we felt, indeed, that we stood in need of his strength; *for well I knew by experience how hard it was to break away from an old and time-honoured system, and get men to throw away religious notions in which they had been brought up.*

One question more. At p. 196 we read: "At last, after many years' absence, I arrived in Persia, my beloved native land—that land in which I had enjoyed many happy days, where I had been honoured, revered, and looked up to for many a year, and here it was, I felt, I had to fight my hardest battle. I knew well that some of my old friends would be angry, but that others would bear with me. I was aware that they had long known of my defection. But I boldly went on my way; and, arriving at the city of the grove, I went direct to the Magi, and at once threw off my robes, declaring at the same time that I gave up all for Jesus, *and the doctrines that He taught.*" It is thus that throughout the book the doctrines that Jesus taught are held and defended in contrast to all opposing systems. It is not of his own adherence to them alone that Hafed speaks. He delights, for example, to speak of a young man, Carus Polonius, who, although his father had lost all affection for him, he, the young man, though he well knew his father's antipathy to the new doctrine, still loved his parent and went to him. Having secured his presence, the implacable father at once demanded the doctrine he had embraced. The reply was, "No, father; though thou wert a thousand times dearer to me than thou art, I will not give up one iota of my faith at thy behest; no, not even to save my life. I have sworn to live and die for Him, the blessed Jesus, and I am ready to lay down my life for the truths I hold—the truths which He taught; Who shrank not from death for thee, father, and for me." Where is now the parallel between Hafed and Manes? That Hafed very closely resembles the Apostle Paul in his doctrinal belief and his martyr-spirit is very obvious. We may now be excused for calling to mind certain words of a certain wise man who flourished in the East, "long time ago," when he says (Prov. xviii. 13), "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and a shame to him;" so hazardous a thing it is to pass judgment on a book that one has not read. Without endorsing all the beliefs of Hafed we say that if Mr. Howitt's recent denunciations lead some of those who have not read *Hafed* to peruse it with care, and some of those who have read to read it over again, good will assuredly be the result.

A. N.