

SPIRITUAL TELEGRAPH

FIRESIDE PREACHER

"THE AGITATION OF THOUGHT IS THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM."

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CONTENTS OF THIS NUMBER.

Reductions of Science and Judge Edmonds' Visions.	416	The Infidelity of Medicine vindicated.	439
New York Conference.	447	Dr. Nichols' Faith in the Catholic Church.	451
A. J. Davis and Elvay.	447	Robert Dale Owen's new Book.	461
Dates worth remembering.	447	The Telegraph given to skepticism.	451
The Boston Investigator and Spiritualists.	448	Spiritualism in all Ages.	451
Idols.	448	Spirit Seeing and Hearing.	452
The Slaveholders justification reviewed.	448	Hasidish Vision.	452
Francisism reviewed.	449	Astrology and Magic.	453
The Rights of the African Race.	449	An Apparition.	453
A Forerunner.	449	Oculisteleia in the Fifteenth Century.	453
		News Items, etc.	454

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This paper is not given to light reading, in the form of seductive and exciting stories; neither is it cramped by allegiance to any sect or party. On the contrary, it is the organ of a free interchange of experiences and inspirations, as connected with significant current phenomena, and is the vehicle of new and earnest thoughts, respectfully uttered pro and con, on all subjects tending to instruct and elevate mankind. It is especially earnest in the evolution of truth tending to practical reforms in the social, moral, industrial, intellectual, governmental and religious departments of human life. Hence it relies for its support on all those who are willing that truth shall prevail, and that practical righteousness shall be inaugurated among men. We recommend, to all our patrons to keep and bind up these volumes for reference, and as the most important records of current unfoldments and the deepest, most earnest and most progressive thoughts of the age.

DEDUCTIONS OF SCIENCE AND JUDGE EDMONDS' VISIONS.

In a former article I referred to Judge Edmonds' Vision, in which he saw, through a series of telescopes, worlds in process of formation. The question arises, Why has not the astronomer of earth seen something of this world-making? It seems to me that too much light can not be thrown on this interesting subject. I have the following facts and speculation to offer:

The reason why the astronomer has not seen such things is, that the stary cluster to which we belong are so extensive that no earthly telescope has yet been able to penetrate through more than a few places in it; and even then the observer can only see the suns to their systems, and not the planets. The science of optics, or the laws of light, can not be different there from what they are here, and we must hence look to the power of the telescopes which the Judge used (which, by-the-by, he says, exceeded anything that has yet been constructed on earth) for the satisfactory views which he obtained—it being more than probable, however, that spiritual vision is more acute than physical. It is a question with some astronomers whether the power of the telescopes can ever much exceed the limit which it has now reached. But does not the vision of the Judge indicate to us what may yet be accomplished here? Should it

not lead us to hope that its power may yet be much extended beyond what it now possesses?

But to understand the above explanation more fully, it will be necessary (since it is not supposable that every person is an astronomer) to give something like a definite view of the magnitude of the island universe to which our sun belongs, and thence of the magnitude of the visible universe. To do this in an intelligible manner, I know of no better way than to commence with small magnitudes, and then gradually move onward to larger ones. The contemplation of the works of God—the magnitude of the visible creation, and the smallness of the earth in comparison—can but have an elevating effect on our moral and religious sentiments.

The full extent of the universe is not known. The only part that we have any conception of is that laid open by the perseverance and ability of the astronomer, assisted by optical instruments of great power. We have no definite knowledge or conception of the visible creation. Numbers can only represent our knowledge of its proximate magnitude; but to get our best ideas of the extent of the visible universe, we are obliged to employ a standard of reference, or unit of measure, that actually overpowers our highest conceptions of greatness. We are somewhat familiar with the extent of one, two, or three miles; but when we wish to grasp a definite idea of ten miles we find it a considerable effort of the imagination. Extend the measure to a hundred, a thousand, or to ten thousand miles, and it is really beyond our definite conception. What must we say, then, of this terrestrial globe when considered in all its extent? And then let us extend our observations to the vast globe of the sun. What do we here find? A little universe within itself—a globe, whose diameter exceeds that of our terrestrial sphere a hundred and twelve times; whose surface is more than twelve thousand times that of the earth, and its solid contents one million and four hundred thousand times the solid contents of the earth. Were it hollow, except a thin surface, and the earth and moon—separated as far as they now are—moved within it, the earth occupying the center, there would be ample room for the moon to revolve around its wonted center—yes, to leave two hundred miles beyond on every side.

While the diameter of the sun is but one hundred and thirteen times the diameter of the earth (895,000 miles), its distance from us is 12,133 times the same unit (95,000,000 miles). Such vast numbers are completely beyond our comprehension in this sphere of life, and hence astronomers are wont to employ a standard of measure, large in itself, so as to form some conception of distances so great.

Observation shows that light moves with a rapidity so great that it sweeps over a space of 192,000 miles in a second of time. In other words, were a taper lighted 192,000 miles from us, in just one second we could see the effect of its blaze.

Vast to us as such numbers appear, it actually requires light about eight-and-a-half minutes to come from the sun to the earth. To employ a standard brought down more nearly to our comprehension: Suppose a steam-carriage to move without intermission, day and night, at the rate of twenty miles an hour, till it reaches the sun, several generations must needs pass away during the time, for it would occupy about 550 years. Such, then, is the interval that separates us from our solar orb. Is it a wonder that the sun is really so large, while its apparent dimensions are so small?

But we have not yet gone beyond the limits of the sun to earth. Our planetary system is vast in extent beyond these. The space that separates Neptune, the farthest known planet from the sun, is equal to thirty times that which lies between us and the sun. Start from the great central luminary on your steam-carriage, as above supposed, and let your course be toward that distant planet to which I have just called your attention; travel a thousand years, and your course is yet onward—onward still, till another, and another, and another thousand years have elapsed, and only one quarter of your journey is performed. Sixteen thousand five hundred years must sweep into eternity ere you arrive at your journey's end. But the position that you now occupy only marks the limit of one side of our system of sun and planets. The orbit of far-off Neptune extends as far on the other side of the sun as you are now supposed to be on this. Hence, to travel from one side of the known planetary system to the other would require twice 16,500, or 33,000 years.

Beyond this other planets are still suspected. Light, even with its amazing velocity, could not pass from one extremity of this system to the other in less than eight hours. Even this is not the limit of our solar system. According to the computations of astronomers, the splendid comet of 1680 requires 8800 years to complete one revolution around the sun. The mighty space that this sweeps over in passing around the sun is yet but a point. When it is at that part of its orbit farthest from the sun, it would require about four days for light to reach us from it. Such, then, is that space throughout which the sun's attractive influence is felt. Great as this space is, it is only one-two-hundred-and-fiftieth part of that which separates our sun from the next nearest sun in the universe.

But let us stop one moment to raise our eyes to the vault of heaven, and notice these sparkling points which are scattered promiscuously over the nocturnal sky:

"O, what a confluence of ethereal fires,
From suns unnumbered, down the steep of heaven
Stream to a point, to center in my sight!
This prospect vast—what is it? Weigh'd aright
This nature's system of divinity,
And every student of the night inspires:
'Tis elder Scripture, writ by God's own hand—
Scripture authentic! uncorrupt by man."

obliged to express the distance by the time required for light

