

No. 1.]

DR. SEXTON'S ORATIONS.

[Price 1d.]

THE CLAIMS

OF

MODERN SPIRITUALISM

UPON

PUBLIC ATTENTION.

AN ORATION

DELIVERED IN THE CAVENDISH ROOMS, LONDON, ON
SUNDAY EVENING, MAY 18TH, 1873,

BY

GEORGE SEXTON, M.A., LL.D.

ETC., ETC., ETC.

"Reformers fail because they change the letter,
And not the spirit, of the world's design.
Tyrant and slave create the scourge and fetter:
As is the worshipper will be the shrine.
The ideal fails though perfect were the plan;
World-harmony springs through the perfect man."

T. L. HARRIS.

LONDON:

J. BURNS, 15, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, HOLBORN, W.C.

WORKS BY DR. SEXTON.

GOD AND IMMORTALITY VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

A Discourse delivered in the City Hall Saloon, Glasgow, on Sunday evening, February 23rd, 1873. Price 6d.

*Now issuing in Parts, 6d. each; to be completed in one Vol.
cloth lettered, price 5s.,*

THE LUNGS IN HEALTH AND DISEASE.

Comprising the Anatomy and Physiology of the Organs of Respiration, and the Diseases to which they are liable, with Eclectic and Hygienic Treatment, showing that Consumption is not Incurable.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MACBETH:

A Lecture delivered before the Psychological Society of Glasgow, on May 4th, 1869. In wrapper, price 3d.

"We advise all playgoers and dramatic readers to give a glance at the pamphlet; they will be well repaid for their trouble, and will see the phases of Macbeth's character far better than any actor of the present day can delineate them."—*Theatrical Journal*.

Recently issued, Third Edition, price 4d.,

THE ANTIQUITY OF THE HUMAN RACE.

DR. SEXTON'S ORATIONS.

No. 1.—THE CLAIMS OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM ON PUBLIC ATTENTION. 1d.

No. 2.—HOW I BECAME A SPIRITUALIST. 1d.

THE NEW ERA.

A Magazine devoted to Eclectic Practice, Medical Freedom, and Anthropological Science.—*Monthly, price 2d.*

ON sending their address, and a stamp for postage, to Mr. J. Burns, Spiritual Institution, 15, Southampton Row, London, inquirers into Spiritualism will receive per return of post a packet of necessary information. The following works are recommended:—

RULES TO BE OBSERVED AT THE SPIRIT-CIRCLE, by Emma Hardinge. 1d.

MEDIUMS AND MEDIUMSHIP. An exhaustive narrative of the difficulties that beset investigators, and how to avoid them. By Thomas Hazard. 2d.

WHAT IS DEATH? By Judge Edmonds. 1d.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF DEATH. Gives a clairvoyant description of death-bed scenes and the condition of the departed spirit, by A. J. Davis. 2d.

Read and promote the circulation of

'THE MEDIUM AND DAYBREAK,'

The Weekly Organ of Spiritualism. To be had of all Booksellers. Price 1d.

LONDON: J. BURNS, 15, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, W.C.

✓

THE CLAIMS OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM UPON PUBLIC ATTENTION.

*An Oration delivered at the Cavendish Rooms, London, on Sunday
Evening, May 18th, 1873.*

ONE of the greatest German thinkers, Schiller, remarks, "As the image of the sun paints itself on the mist before his rising, thus foreboding spirits precede great events, because the future is already moving in the present."* This has been true in all ages, and is especially so to-day. Anyone who glances at the various phases of society, considers the aspects presented, and the modes of thought engaged in, may easily see what the future is likely to be. We are drifting in a particular direction, and it is not difficult to discover the course we are taking. The "signs of the times" are numerous and very clear, and he who disregards them does not act wisely. Amongst the phenomena that stand out in bold relief to-day, indicating clearly what is likely to spring out of it in the future, is the movement known by the name of "Modern Spiritualism." This is especially one of the "signs of the times." It has made its appearance under peculiar circumstances, and at a period when there was perhaps a greater need of it than at any other time in the history of the world, and the influence it has already exercised over society is extraordinary. With a great number of persons it is considered the proper thing to do to assume a preëminence of intellect over the believers in Spiritualism, and to treat the whole thing with contempt. The phenomena, it is said, are so puerile and insignificant that it is not worth one's while to take the trouble to investigate them. The movement, it is declared, is only favoured by a few of the most ignorant and unlettered, and is utterly beneath the notice of rational men. Such persons, in pursuing this conduct, arrogate to themselves a superiority over Spiritualists which their position and character in no way warrant, and which only indicates how exalted an opinion they

* "Wie sich der Sonne Scheinbild, in dem Dunst-kreis
Malt, ehe sie kömmt, so schreiten auch den grossen
Geschicken ihre Geister schon vorans;
Und, in dem Heute wandelt schon der Morgen."

have of their own mental powers, and how large a development of "self-esteem" they are blessed with. They do not care to reason on the subject; they can only ridicule the phenomena, and laugh at that which they are totally incompetent to understand. A day or two ago I was with a party of friends, when the subject of Spiritualism formed the main topic of conversation, and one and all joined in laughing heartily at the "absurdities," as they called them, of what are termed spiritual phenomena. I asked them if they knew of any set of principles that could not be made the subject of ridicule, if one were disposed to apply to them that very questionable mode of eliciting truth, and whether the laughing at the "absurdities" of Spiritualism, as they were pleased to term them, did not assume an intellectual superiority on their part over all believers in Spiritualism, which facts in no way justified. Spiritualists are not all fools; they number in their ranks some of the brightest intellects of the age; men who have devoted their lives to scientific investigation and discovery, and who are therefore assuredly as competent to judge of the genuineness of the phenomena in question as those who have never taken the trouble to examine them, nor bestowed five minutes' thought upon the subject. But in truth the ridicule usually comes from those who know nothing whatever of the matter, except what they have learned from hearsay and the garbled and fabulous statements in newspapers. It is so very easy to form an opinion without taking the trouble to ascertain whether it is well founded or not: no thought is required, and no labour is necessary; brains may be therefore altogether dispensed with in such a case. These persons illustrate admirably a well-known aphorism, "There came a wise man and a fool: the wise man heard, investigated, decided; the fool decided." We do not ask such persons to accept Spiritualism as true because great men have embraced it; but we do ask them to investigate its phenomena or hold their tongues. It is quite clear that they cannot be in a position to judge as to whether it is true or not; and the fact that men of far higher intellectual calibre than themselves have come to recognise it as being everything that it professes to be, should at least lead them to treat it with some degree of respect. "Not the feeblest grandam," says Emerson, "not the mowing idiot, but uses what spark of perception and faculty he has, to chuckle and triumph over the absurdities of all the rest. Difference from me is the measure of absurdity." It is men of this class who, while they will not bestow ten minutes' serious thought upon the subject, are ever ready to make fun of that which they cannot understand—to joke about things beyond their limited comprehension—and to ridicule everything that has occurred outside of their own narrow experience.

The statement that Spiritualism deserves to be treated with supreme contempt, and that the movement is so utterly insignificant as to be unworthy of notice, is moreover not at all in keeping with the conduct of those who make it. Why do they take the trouble to meddle with it at all? Why kill the dead lion? Why con-

stantly attack that which is already defunct, or at least in a fair way of becoming so very soon? Dr. Carpenter puts the whole thing down as a species of mental epidemic, subject to laws very similar to those which govern epidemics of a physical character. There have been such things in the past, although it is very questionable whether Dr. Carpenter's explanation will account even for these; we have had the dancing mania, the preaching mania, the flagellants, and a host of other manias of a similar kind, in which the epidemic has spread from one to another by a sort of mental contagion. One person in an assembly is attacked with hysteria, another is affected from mere sympathy, then another, and another, until a large portion of the audience becomes hysterical. Well, this is how these mental epidemics are said to spread, and this is how Spiritualism is extending itself to-day. It is a sort of mania. One person took it up, then another; by-and-bye several became affected in the same way. The movement—I mean, madness—goes on, and in a short time there seems to be a fair chance of having the great bulk of society composed of madmen. This is consoling—very. Well, then, Spiritualism, being a mental epidemic, can only run a certain course like other epidemics, and must in the end pass away, to be remembered only as a matter of history. It is fashionable to-day with a certain class, but to-morrow it may have passed its culminating point, and be on the decline. It cannot affect society permanently, but will, after bringing under its influence a large number of weak-minded persons, gradually lose its power, wear itself out, and disappear. These are the sort of statements that a certain class of opponents make, but their conduct gives the lie to their words. If Spiritualism were this kind of thing and nothing more, think you that they would waste so much of their time in attacking it? Not they; they would leave it alone, to die out of its own accord. They tell you that the whole thing is beneath their notice, and yet they keep on noticing it continually. Almost all the newspapers in the country have recently been dealing with the subject, from the *Times* downwards. Leading articles have appeared by hundreds in the Press; and the correspondence that has taken place on the question is of marvellous extent. And all this for the purpose of discussing and opposing a movement which is not worth a moment's thought, and which is so insignificant as to deserve to be treated only with supreme contempt. Such conduct is exceedingly inconsistent, to say the least of it. The Secularists indulge in the same kind of talk, and yet Sunday after Sunday they keep on hammering away at this very contemptible Spiritualism, as though they believed it to be a most formidable opponent. I told one of their leading men the other day that Spiritualism had been a perfect godsend to them; what they would have found to lecture about if I had not embraced Spiritualism, I was at a loss to imagine, considering how from the highest to the lowest of their teachers this subject had formed their stock-in-trade for the last few months. All this, however, shows that they do not believe it to be the contemptible thing that they

pretend. They know well enough that the movement is taking deep root in the English mind, and that its progress is most rapid. It is not my intention in this discourse to deal with the phenomena of Spiritualism, but with its claims on society. These are various.

I.—IT DEMANDS INVESTIGATION AS A SCIENCE.

The facts and phenomena are of precisely the same character as those upon which other sciences are based, and we require them to be dealt with in the same way. Upon these facts we take our stand, and maintain that in the conclusion that we have arrived at we are following out the strict Baconian principle of induction. A score of other theories have been invented to account for spiritual phenomena, but the objection to them all is, that even if true they are totally incompetent to explain all that takes place. The spirit hypothesis alone will cover the ground occupied by all the facts, and as that is the case we are following the strictest principles of scientific reasoning in adopting it. The Copernican system of astronomy is only known to be true upon this principle, and the same remark will apply to every recognised law of nature. I maintain, therefore, that we are acting in accordance with the true spirit of scientific investigation in coming to the conclusion that the theory of Spiritualism is true. And we have no more right to set it aside in consequence of difficulties, imaginary or real, that may happen to accompany it, than we have to relinquish any other well-recognised law of nature—say, in chemistry or geology—because we may not be able to fully comprehend all that it involves. There are a large number of persons who profess to be able to explain all the phenomena of Spiritualism by some fanciful hypothesis of their own, but these are generally persons who are thoroughly ignorant of the facts. They have never seen what really takes place in the spirit-circle, and are therefore totally incompetent to set up a theory of any kind on the subject. To such we say, The facts are ours, not yours, and we are the only judges as to what theory will be found sufficient to explain them. You know nothing about the matter, and cannot therefore be allowed to have an opinion that shall be considered of any weight. You are in the position of the man that stated to Sir Charles Lyell that geology was false, and that he didn't believe one word of it. "Do you," inquired Sir Charles, "know anything about geology? have you ever read anything on the subject, or studied it practically?" "Not at all," said the objector; "why should I study it, when I don't believe in it?" "Well, then," replied the geologist, "you are incompetent to discuss the subject, or to have an opinion on it. Go and study geology, and then come to me, and I'll listen to your objections. It will, however, be needless then, for you will be of the same opinion that I am." We say the same to these objectors to Spiritualism.

We have, first of all, a large amount of indifference on the part

of scientific men to complain of. They do not know whether Spiritualism be true, neither do they care. It is a subject in which they take no interest, and will not, therefore, devote any attention to its study. Indeed, to do so they would consider a great waste of time. Professor Huxley declares that the phenomena, even if genuine, do not interest him, and that he has better things to do than to investigate them. Is this fair on the part of a scientific man? Suppose other men were to decline to investigate the facts mentioned by the Professor regarding his favourite branch of science, what would he say? He would most assuredly condemn such persons as blinded by prejudice, and unworthy the name of men of science. The real business of a scientific man should be to investigate all facts, no matter what their character, nor whether they particularly interested him or not, so as to arrive, if possible, at a sound conclusion with regard to them.

The actual opposition that we have to contend with is more from *pseudo* science than from real science. I call it *pseudo* science to invent a large number of long, crack-jaw words, frequently meaningless ones, for the pretended purpose of explaining facts, but with the real object of throwing dust in the eyes of other people. We have the terms electricity, magnetism, mesmerism, unconscious cerebration, ideo-motor motion, psychic force, and suchlike names bandied about, as though everything could be explained by the use of a word which very frequently itself requires defining, and in every case its applicability to the subject shown. What is unconscious cerebration? What is cerebration itself? Cerebration means thinking; that is the materialistic way of expressing it. One writer says that the brain (*cerebrum*, hence cerebration) "secretes thought as the liver secretes bile." Is this science, or nonsense? The bile secreted by the liver is of as material a character as the organ that secretes it, and can be handled, weighed, and measured after it has been removed from the organ producing it. Is there any analogy between this and thought? Have you ever weighed out an ounce of thought, or measured and cut a yard of it? If the brain secretes thought, it clearly does it upon a totally different principle from that on which the liver secretes bile. Well, cerebration means thinking, and thinking most certainly involves consciousness, for without consciousness there could be no thought. Unconscious cerebration, therefore, means unconscious thinking, that is, unconscious consciousness. And this is one of the theories that is to explain Spiritualism. The men who propound these whimsical notions call themselves sceptics; verily they are the most credulous people on the face of the earth. Then take mesmerism. If you describe spiritual phenomena, the remark called forth is generally, "Oh, that's only mesmerism." "Just so," I reply; "and what, pray, is mesmerism?" "Oh, mesmerism, why that's—that's—mesmerism." "Exactly." "Well, it's animal magnetism." "And what's that?" Here there is silence again. Mesmerism covers a

class of phenomena which can only be explained by the agency of Spiritualism, and animal magnetism is a term that needs defining, because we know of no force in the human body at all analogous to the recognised magnetic force. If, therefore, you apply the term magnetism to any vital phenomena, you use the word in a new sense. Mark, I have no objection to this, but if it be done the word must be defined. In no case, however, are either of the terms of the slightest value as an explanation of spiritual phenomena. Then, again, we have psychic force. What, in the name of all that's rational, is that? Psychic force means soul force, for $\psi\chi\eta$ means soul. Now if by this be meant any material force at all analogous to electricity or magnetism, we simply demand proof of its existence first, and when that is supplied we shall require to be informed as to how it can accomplish the results that we know to take place. If, however, as its name implies, it be intended to describe a real spiritual power, then that is to admit Spiritualism. This psychic force is curiously dealt with. The believers in it seem to have a most singular view of its power. I have a friend who clings to the psychic-force theory, and he calls this said psychic force by a well-known Christian name. He inquires if Psychic Force is happy; asks him (the force) how he is getting on in the next world; whether he has improved since he left this; what sort of society he has; and a score of questions of a similar kind. Psychic force acts most rationally, and displays frequently more intelligence than those who put the questions to it. Psychic force has a personality about it quite human, and a capacity of action that is superhuman. Now what does all this mean? I tell you it seems to me that the believers in psychic force are really Spiritualists, but are desirous of avoiding the odium that attaches to the name. All this idle speculation about forces and meaningless names is hardly worthy of consideration. We offer opportunity for experiment and investigation; let that be accepted, or let those who refuse to examine cease to talk of that of which they cannot possibly know anything. "We learn," says Dr. Chalmers, "by descending to the sober work of seeing, and feeling, and experimenting. I prefer what has been seen by one pair of eyes to all reasoning and guessing."

The great objection urged here, however, against Spiritualism, is that it is opposed to the laws of nature. What laws of nature? The people who talk thus would seem to wish to have it thought that they had explored the profoundest depths of the universe, and were conversant with every law that operates in that mighty domain. Human experience of laws of nature is exceedingly limited, and no one can tell how numerous or how powerful are those that are in action outside the precincts of the general knowledge of mankind. When a man talks about certain phenomena being opposed to the laws of nature, he assumes that he knows the whole of such laws; because if there be one with which he is not acquainted, that very one might perchance be at the bottom of the facts in question. The opposition offered to Spiritualism on this

score is precisely the same as that which has been raised against every fresh discovery in science. In the history of the past, whenever a new theory has been propounded with regard to natural phenomena or a new discovery made, the objection urged has always been that it was at variance with the laws of nature, which simply meant that it was opposed to previous experience and to the preconceived opinion of the objector as to what the laws of nature were. When we hear a man declare that Spiritualism is opposed to the laws of nature, we take it to mean that the phenomena are outside the domain of his experience—in other words, that he knows nothing whatever about the subject, and that his preconception of nature's laws does not include these manifestations. The term, "laws of nature," hangs most glibly on the lips of those who hardly know the meaning of the words. Such people speak of laws as though they were powers, forces, or even entities, whereas they are nothing more than observed orders of sequence. A law of nature is not an entity, neither is it a power; it can do nothing whatever. It is simply the mode of action of a force that lies behind it—that is all, and hence must not be referred to as though it were capable of producing results, much less quoted as a something on whose behalf even facts must be rejected. As a modern poet has said, addressing God—

"The laws of Nature are but Thine,
For Nature! Who is she?
A name—the name that men assign
To Thy sole alchemy!"

Besides, the facts and phenomena of Spiritualism are in no sense opposed to the laws of nature; they only show the operation of higher laws and forces than those which modern science is acquainted with. These do not oppose, but only subjugate the others. If I let this glass fall from my hand (taking up a tumbler), it goes to the floor and probably breaks. Why does it so fall? By virtue of the law of gravity, you say. Very well. Now, as I hold it firmly in my grasp it does not fall. Is that because the law of gravity is suspended? By no means. The law of gravity operates as powerfully whilst I keep the glass in this position as it would if I let it fall to the floor. But here is the difference between the two cases. In the one it does not fall because the law of gravity, although in operation, is controlled and overcome by a more powerful force—the force springing from my volition, and acting through the mechanism of my arm; and in the other, there being no such check, it exerts its full sway. There is no opposition to law in the case; neither is there in the spiritual phenomena. If that table be raised from the platform, it no more opposes the law of gravity in so doing than I do in lifting the glass. In both cases a more powerful force than gravity steps in and exerts its sway; in both cases it is human volition that is seen in action, the one in a material body, the other in its purely spiritual state; in other respects they are exactly analogous. Spiritualism, therefore, in no sense sets asides and opposes laws of nature; all that it does is to

bring to light other and more powerful agencies than those usually recognised, and to make manifest higher laws than those laid down in the code of Materialism.

II.—IT DEMANDS ATTENTION ON THE GROUND OF ITS PHILOSOPHIC PRETENSIONS.

If Spiritualism be true, it propounds a new and most important system of philosophy. This of itself should be sufficient to entitle it to examination. Philosophy may be said to have become almost defunct in modern days. Science has, in truth, usurped its place very unjustly, because the mission of each is different, and neither can legitimately perform the function of the other. Mr. G. H. Lewes, in his "Biographical History of Philosophy," endeavours to show that in modern times philosophy is impossible—that all that it has done in the past has been to land us in positive science, and here we are to be left. This is quite in keeping with the materialism of the age. Philosophy, properly viewed, has little or nothing to do with positive science, and most assuredly cannot culminate in it. In the ages of the past, when metaphysics was made the main subject of study, man was said to be the measure of all things, and his nature was viewed from the internal and not from the external standpoint. This order has been reversed in modern days. Now man is made a part of the great scheme of material nature—one of the cogs, in point of fact, of her mighty wheel, with no more power to alter the arrangements surrounding him than a clock or a steam-engine. Mind is said to be a function of brain; and volition, instead of being an originator of force, is held to be simply one of its forms driven into action by external circumstances, in the same way as the electricity evolved from a battery. The freedom of the will is, of course, strenuously denied, and man is degraded down to the condition of a simple automaton, which has to be put in motion by some power exterior to itself. Speaking with a friend the other day who holds this view, I inquired, "What is the difference between you and a clock?" "Not much," he said, "when the clock runs down it stops, and when I run down I shall stop." "But," said I, "when the clock has run down you will wind it up again." "Yes," he said, "that's exactly what I do with myself when I have exhausted my force; I obtain more from beef-steaks, mutton-chops, and bread." "Just so," I replied; "then see the difference between you and the clock. You wind up yourself; the clock can't—you must wind that up too." And here is a difference of a most essential character. Mind is an originator as well as a director of force. In fact, all force must have its origin in mind, and but for mind, force would be non-existent. The inference from this is obvious. All Nature is governed by a Supreme Mind, whose will is expressed in physical law. Whether you view the revolutions of a world, or the motions of the smallest dust that the microscope reveals to our sight, the same indications of the Infinite mind are manifested; "a grain of

sand would tell you of a God, were there no other proof." Spiritualism declares that the material part of the man is not the man himself, but only the covering in which he appears in this state, and that therefore the real basis of all sound philosophy is spirit. The external man does not produce the internal, but, on the contrary, the internal moulds and governs the external. 'Tis true this doctrine was taught before the movement known as Modern Spiritualism commenced; but then it was by a Spiritualist of a very superior character—Emanuel Swedenborg—one of the greatest men that have ever blessed our earth with the fruit of their talent and genius, and what was higher than both was present in his case—inspiration. This extraordinary man lived half of his time in such direct communion with the spirit-world that he may almost be said to have become acclimatised to it, if the expression may be allowed. He taught most plainly what Modern Spiritualism has since demonstrated to be true, that the real man is the spiritual being, not the material. The people said he was mad, as they to-day say we are. Would that we had many such madmen as the great Swedish seer! One of the most practical men that ever lived, too, was he, despite the fact that he was gifted with such extraordinary insight into the spirit-world. He studied the natural sciences until he knew them better than their professors, whilst he daily walked, as our beautiful hymn has it, "hand in hand with angels." His philosophy is being proved true every day by spirit-manifestations, and we doubt not that it will hereafter revolutionise all other forms of thought, and drive materialistic theories into oblivion. Spiritualism claims, on the ground of its philosophic pretensions alone, sober and serious investigation.

....—IT CLAIMS CONSIDERATION AS HAVING SOLVED THE
PROBLEM REGARDING THE FUTURE LIFE.

This is surely a matter of the very greatest importance. With a cold, blank, cheerless atheism on the one hand, and the stern and cruel dogmas of the churches on the other, it is assuredly something to obtain a clear insight into the spirit-world. Spiritualism came at a time when it was most of all needed to enlighten the minds of men on this most important subject. Here you had the rotten worn-out churches preaching about their everlasting brimstone lake, into which all were to be plunged for ever and ever who did not accept certain dogmas, of which one of their own advocates had said "reason stands aghast and faith herself is half confounded;" and there a grim and ghastly Materialism, declaring that at death consciousness would be extinct, and that annihilation was the fate in store for all of us. Between these two horrible destinies we scarcely knew which was the worse; both were bad almost beyond conception. The church attacked atheism because it attempted to destroy man's brightest hopes, and crush out every noble aspiration of his soul; and atheism attacked the church because she laid heavy burdens on man's shoulders too

grievous to be borne, ruled her subjects with an iron rod, exercised over all those belonging to her fold a despotic tyranny, and hurled her cruel and vindictive anathemas at all outside her pale, threatening them with the tortures of hell for ever. An internecine war was raging between these contending parties, when Spiritualism stepped into the breach between them, crying, "Stay your fighting; you are both right and both wrong: you, atheism, are right in endeavouring to bring to an end the undue power of ecclesiastical tyranny; and you, the church, are right in using your utmost power to destroy the black, cheerless prospect of annihilation. Beyond that you are both wrong." In this matter Spiritualism did good service to mankind. She opened up to men's eyes the way to the spirit-world that had been so long closed by priestly dogmas on the one hand and dark scepticism on the other. A brilliant flood of light followed in her train, and the nations became illumined by its beams.

It is assuredly something to know that life eternal is in store for each of us, and that we need no longer have any doubts on the subject; that the road to immortality lies open before us, and that there is no longer any danger of our mistaking the path which we should take. Spiritualism came to bring back to man these grand and glorious truths, that had been so long lost sight of, and to restore those primitive doctrines taught so divinely eighteen hundred years ago. Annihilation is a terrible prospect; so terrible that some writers have even declared that they would prefer eternal torment to the loss of consciousness. Be that as it may, I say from experience that no man can look it calmly in the face without feeling a shudder of horror as he contemplates such a termination to his career, his love, his wisdom, his knowledge, the accumulated treasures of the mind, the result of years of toil, struggling, and sorrowing labour, all to be blotted out in an instant. The thought is one to drive to black despair, and cause melancholy to take up her permanent abode in the mind.

"What is the bigot's torch, the tyrant's chain?
 I smile on death if heavenward hope remain!
 But if the warring winds of Nature's strife
 Be all the faithless charter of my life
 If chance awaked—inexorable power—
 This frail and feverish being of an hour;
 Doomed o'er the world's precarious scene to sweep,
 Swift as the tempest travels on the deep;
 To know delight but by her parting smile,
 And toil, and wish, and weep a little while,—
 Then melt, ye elements, that formed in vain
 This troubled pulse and visionary brain;
 Fade, ye wild flowers, memorials of my doom,
 And sink, ye stars, that light me to the tomb!"

Men profess to regard this question with indifference, to be careless whether there is a life after death or not. Secularism says, Let's do our duty here, and leave the problem of the future world to be solved when we reach its shores. This is all very fine,

but can you so leave it? I think not. At times the dread questions will rise up unbidden in the mind, and will force themselves upon the attention whether we will or not, What is to be my destiny hereafter? Whither am I tending, and what is the end and object of existence? These are problems which, if you cannot solve them, will haunt and trouble you at times as long as you remain on earth. Spiritualism, in furnishing a solution to the problem, has conferred a benefit upon mankind which it is difficult to over-estimate. "Spiritualism," writes William Denton, "says, Come hither, ye sceptics; hear, see, feel, and know that your departed friends still live; and because they live, receive the assurance that ye shall live also. The riddle of the universe is read, the mystery of ages is revealed; the question that we have been asking with tearful eyes for long millenniums is answered in the affirmative, and we are men for the ages to come. Tell the Indian it was not all a delusion that his medicine-man taught him; the Indian lives where the paleface interferes not with his domain, and the hell of the Christian is unknown. There is a paradise for the Mohammedan better suited to his soul's needs than the one promised by Mohammed to the faithful. What Socrates hoped for, Jesus taught, and Paul believed, we know. Death is swallowed up in life, joyful life." Of course I do not mean to say that immortality was not known until Spiritualism came to teach it, but I do say that there are classes of minds that this kind of evidence alone can reach. The age is terribly matter-of-fact, and only such evidence as Spiritualists can furnish is calculated to do battle with the lowest form of materialistic philosophy. Atheism demanded the evidence of sense, and declared she would be satisfied with no other, and here she has all that she can desire. Speculative opinion she ignored, philosophy she would none of, theories suited her not at all: "Give me," said she, "demonstration, that is what I want." Well, then, here it is, the strongest and most conclusive that you can conceive of, the most overwhelming that the most extravagant demands can make. All this is now easily furnished by spirit-manifestations. Let the sceptic ask for what evidence he pleases, it can be forthcoming. Spiritualism, therefore, confronted atheism in a way that nothing else could do—attacked her on her own ground, and strangled her with her own weapons of warfare.

IV.—IT HAS A CLAIM ON SOCIETY IN REGARD TO THE SOCIAL DOCTRINES IT PROPOSES.

The influence of Spiritualism on society, were it more generally accepted, would be very great indeed. Its teachings in regard to many great social questions are of a most important character, and calculated to effect great changes for the better amongst mankind. It enunciates the great and glorious principle taught so divinely in Judea eighteen hundred years ago, but which has been almost lost sight of by churches professedly Christian since that time—that

all men are brethren, and should act towards each other as such. There is a bond arising out of the common humanity and immortality of man that binds all human kind in one close union, that should destroy discord and render war impossible. Man, wherever he is located on the earth, whatever may be the colour of his skin, the texture of his tissues, or the capacity of his brain, is still a human being, a child of the same Infinite Father, and destined to the same immortal life in the great hereafter. Let him in all his dealings with his fellow-men remember this, and society is likely to be greatly a gainer in point of morals. The angels in the heavens were human beings once, are our brethren still, loving us, caring for us, watching over us, and taking an interest in all that we do to benefit our fellow-creatures. They come on errands of mercy from the bright Summer-land, and bring to us messages of peace, goodness, and truth. Love, the divinest principle in God's universe, is the leading characteristic of the highest forms of spirit-teaching. Sectarianism, that bane of the churches, should have no place in the spirit-circle. Being human, we are necessarily imperfect and liable to error, and from this fact, therefore, we should learn to look leniently on the errors of others. None of us can be infallible—no, not even his Holiness of the Vatican, despite his pretensions—and dogmatism should therefore have no place in our teachings. Spiritualism informs us that errors in judgment frequently pertain to those who have passed to the other side of the great river, and that consequently the chances of our holding some wrong opinions here are so great that the utmost toleration should be practised towards those who differ from us. Let Rome and the rest of the old churches dogmatise and hurl their anathemas about as they will, we care not for their cursing, and will employ none of it ourselves.

“Bound to no party, to no sect confined,
The world our home, our brethren all mankind.
Love truth, do good, be just and fair with all,
Exalt the right, though every ism fall.”

The grand doctrine of progress is enunciated more thoroughly in Spiritualism than anywhere else, because a belief in eternal progress is one of its most distinguishing features. Standing still may suit others, but is utterly repugnant to the Spiritualist. Growth in knowledge, wisdom, and love, advancement on the high road of God's truth, and elevation of soul, are the principles to which he clings. Spiritualism is a “philosophy which never rests; its law is progress; a point which yesterday was invisible is its goal to-day, and will be its starting-point to-morrow.” Its motto is “Excelsior,” and its leading spring of action, improvement.

“Go, bid the ocean cease to heave,
The river cease to flow;
Bid smiling spring retrace her steps,
And flowerets cease to blow.”

Go, drive the wild winds to their home,
 The lightning to its nest,
 Then bid the car of progress stay,
 Whose coursers never rest."

In the future world progress goes on for ever; and happy are they who have made a good commencement of it here. Reformers of all shades can obtain aid, if their objects are good, from our movement; since not only may they have the assistance of Spiritualists, but of the spirits themselves, to enable them to accomplish that for which they are labouring. Such assistance, believe me, is not to be despised nor treated lightly. The agency of spirits in mundane affairs is far greater than many of you imagine, and their power is sometimes enormous. We do well, then, to enlist them on our side in the great work of reform. Progress is a law of their being, as it is of ours; and they, like ourselves, are happiest when they are endeavouring to work out their mission in this respect. They are consequently always ready to lend us their aid, and with such a power behind us we may achieve much that would otherwise remain undone.

V.—IT CLAIMS ATTENTION ON MORAL GROUNDS.

The moral effect of Spiritualism is very great. It is difficult to conceive of a man who will not be greatly benefited by its influence. The knowledge that our loved ones who have passed away are still with us, hovering around us, interesting themselves in our well-being, watching carefully over us, and eye-witnesses of all we do, cannot but act beneficially on society. When we are tempted to do a wrong, the thought that those we had loved dearly on earth are standing by our side, feeling deeply interested in our welfare, is likely to make us hesitate before we commit an act that might give them pain, and that we should be ashamed to have known to our fellow-creatures. Only let Spiritualism become general, and we shall find a wonderful improvement in the morals of society. The doctrine that in the future state our position will depend entirely upon the life we have led here, and that our condition there will be just suited to our moral nature, whether elevated or degraded, is calculated to lead us to strive to make ourselves as perfect as possible before we land upon the eternal shore. Every act of self-denial, every good deed, every generous impulse, every virtuous action, every manifestation of love to our fellow-creatures, raises us higher in the scale of being, not by any external reward that is to be purchased by doing our duty, but by the change in our own moral nature, that renders us more capable of a higher class of enjoyment, and of a more exalted position in the spirit-spheres.

Spiritualism has given unbounded satisfaction to all who have investigated it, and the only regret they have experienced has been that they had not considered its claims earlier. It has conquered some of the most obstinate and stubborn natures, convinced the most determined sceptics, confounded the hardest-headed and

coldest atheists, brought consolation to the down-trodden and the sorrowing, enlightened those who were in darkness, instructed the ignorant, soothed the suffering, cheered the despairing, and opened so wide the gates of heaven that the dwellers on earth could catch a glimpse of the brighter and better land to which all are tending. The movement goes on increasing day by day. It has the eternal truth of God for its support, divine love for its guiding principle, and the making clear the immortality of man for its main object; and its ultimate triumph is certain. It extends itself rapidly in all the countries of the world, brings into subjection minds that one would have thought least of all likely to be impressed by it, and thus the leaven spreads until the whole lump shall be leavened.

"Humanity sweeps onward—where to-day the martyr stands,
On the morrow crouches Judas with the silver in his hands;
Far in front the cross stands ready, and the crackling fragments burn;
While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return
To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden urn.

* * * * *

Truth for ever on the scaffold, wrong for ever on the throne;
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown
Standeth God in the darkness keeping watch above his own."