

THE GOSPEL OF HUMANITY;

Nº 2

OR, THE CONNECTION BETWEEN

SPIRITUALISM AND MODERN THOUGHT.

BY

GEORGE BARLOW.

"Have faith in God."—JESUS CHRIST.

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At last man wakes from his dream of centuries. He looks back through the receding vistas of the ages, and he understands, by the help of science, how it is that he was made—how the slow, unconscious, creative power toiled upward through lower forms, till it emerged in man, and became, in man, for the first time clearly conscious of itself, and (now) of its own origin. He sees how intellect gradually appeared—how reason supplanted instinct—how the dim germ of the moral sense first glimmered, glow-worm like, along primeval plains and banks of thought—how, when the moral sense had fairly established itself, the con-

* This article attempts to deal with the *theoretical and doctrinal* sides of the subject—which are hardly yet sufficiently discerned by the public—as Mr. Wallace, in his articles in the *Fortnightly Review*, dealt with the *experimental and practical*.

ception of a God, like unto man, only larger and nobler, was not long in following as its resultant—how that idea has gradually become less and less anthropomorphic, till now, at last, man, fully conscious of himself, takes back those attributes of his own which he first, with childish eagerness, transferred to God, and stands forth grand in the simple riches of his own divinity; crowned with the crown of that God whom he first created, and then detected and dethroned; bright with the product of his own fiery, insatiable thought. Man now sees that all the motley crowd of deities who have thronged the past, and made the ways rich with their flashing sceptres and brilliant diadems—the strange gods of India and the East—the Jewish stern Jehovah—the pale, blood-stained Christ of Calvary—the lovely, golden-haired goddesses of Greece, who ruled the hills and watched the streams of that immortal land—the weird divinities of the rough Scandinavian thought—he sees that all these were but the creations of his own fertile brain; that he himself is greater than all these; that they find their fulfilment, as they first had their origin, *in man*.

Now, if this be true; if, as many most able thinkers are now pointing out, the word *God* is a symbol used by man to express all of the highest and widest and noblest that he can conceive, but having no objective significance; if man is, and has always been, the creator of his own deities, and has fashioned them according to his will—that is, according to the measure of insight into what is really true and noble which he has possessed in every age; if the eternal essence or basis of things is, as pointed out by Strauss and others, and hinted at by Mill in his last work, itself unconscious, yet able to evolve consciousness (which then reacts upon its own originally unconscious substance, producing further changes and improvements unlimited in extent); if a personal God is a (necessary) fiction of the human brain, and the eternal power in which “we live and move and have our being” is an impersonal power, which yet, by its upward struggles, blossoms into a consciousness of pure and endless personality at last (a doctrine which the researches of science daily render more probable); if the force which has had no beginning is not a conscious force endowed with will, but an unconscious force possessing attributes, what we call personality and will being not *causes* but *caused*—ultimate results of the action and interaction of those inherent attributes carried on through countless ages; if—to sum the whole matter up briefly, and to set forth clearly the new point of view—the first cause, or rather the perpetual cause, is an unconscious, inevitable producer of consciousness, and that consciousness (our own—upon this planet), again by the inevitable law of things,

turns round, as it were, upon itself, and, naturally ascribing its own origin to a power in all things similar to itself, only greater, exclaims—"I am personal—I have a will and a moral sense—all the elaborate works of human art that I see round me are works of design—therefore I was created, and the world was created, by the authoritative fiat of a beneficent, intelligent, personal God"*—arranging, in so arguing, its inferences, as it is now becoming plain to us, in a most inconsequent way;—if all this, in very truth, be so, what is to be said about our personal immortality? Is that too, as Strauss thought, as Feuerbach seems to indicate, a mere symbol—a mere outward expression of our own intense longing for it? Will our own proper personality be torn away from us along with the personality of God?† Must we acquiesce calmly in ideas of mere impersonal expansion along the tides and breezes of things—a mere unconscious mingling with that unconscious universe whence we proceeded?

First of all I would point out that those who believe (Feuerbach, Strauss, S. Hennell, &c.) that God is a mere symbol—the mere creation of *our* personality—ascribe a tremendous force to that personality. I take, for the present, their view; I take it boldly, uncompromisingly; I say that God does not exist at all—never has existed save in our thought of him—save only in the innermost recesses of those creative hearts of ours which first originated the superb symbol, and then breathed upon it and gave it a glorious life and a glorious kingdom to rule over, even the entire universe—and gave it the sceptre of endlessness and the crown of purity—of *our* purity generously transferred to the symbol, even to the imaginary God. This view I take and rejoice in—rejoicing in the exaltation that it confers upon man, who thus becomes, verily, "the master of things"—creating, not created; bestowing, not gifted; the proud giver and maker, and not the poor, humble, depraved, pitiful receiver of life. I rejoice to restore his dignity to man, and the worth of his attributes maligned and maltreated for ages. But then, doing and feeling all this quite as acutely as the scientific atheists or humanitarians, I go on to ask—Why should we limit the results of the human personality, confessedly in itself so proud and supreme, to this life? Why not extend the line of its majestic continuity beyond the horizon of this life—beyond "the red vast void of sunset hailed from far, the equal waters of

* The Moral and Intelligent Governor of the Universe, at the popular conception of whom Matthew Arnold has launched so many of his keen sarcastic arrows in "Literature and Dogma."

† I am assuming in this article, for the sake of bringing my point of view about Spiritualism clearly to bear, the truth of the modern notion as to the impersonal nature of the absolute essence.

the dead?" If we have, indeed, from the depths of our inner consciousness, *lifted*, with travail and strong effort, as it were, the conception of an external anthropomorphic God, and are now just discovering that this conception was our own, originated from within, not imposed upon us from without, and not necessarily answering to any external reality;—if, so seeing, so knowing, we are now taking back, resuming, with laughter and lordly triumph, that crown and that sceptre of imperial rule *which we first bestowed upon God*—or rather upon our conception of him—how shall not all other things be ours as well, by virtue of our own inherent attributes or those of the universe (the same thing)—even immortality with all its sweetness, and endless love with all its flowers? If man could originate the giant conception of One God (as on the showing of Feuerbach and Hennell he has done), besides creating the countless swarm of smaller flame-winged deities who hovered on innumerable pinions over Greece, over Rome, and the misty recesses of the remote East—if man can do this, he can do something far greater—he can take back from the symbol of God the crown of his own divinity, and pass on in the strength of calm inherent immortality to meet death, which shall be to him as the golden gate of life.

Understand, reader, clearly what I am arguing for. I am arguing for *inherent immortality*—for immortality naturally inherent in man, potentially present in the germ, waiting to be evolved. Just as, according to Professor Tyndall, all our present gifts and capacities were potentially latent in that wide-spread "fiery cloud" whence our visible universe sprang, so, I say, is immortality potentially latent in man. Now, the difference between my point of view and the orthodox point of view is just this—that I look upon immortality as natural and inherent; they look upon it as something inseparably connected with the Incarnation and the Trinity—or even with certain ideas about the Incarnation and the Trinity—as something mercifully given to us by God (and perhaps given only to a few)—something *which we might miss*—which indeed we are all in great danger of missing*—something given by the Eternal King of Heaven as a boon,† for which we have to be ceaselessly and laboriously grateful, lifting up our praises with loud voices and urgent hearts to the Lord for the riches of his goodness—something of which we might have been deprived; nay, were justly deprived by the sin of Adam or our own, but which has been restored to us in the

* See Calvinistic and Evangelical views, *passim*.

† "According to his mercy he saved us . . . that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus iii. 5, 6, 7.) And in numberless other passages of the New Testament.

person of Jesus Christ, and for ever securely sealed to us in him—something which the Son of God came to bring and to bestow. From my point of view on the contrary—a point of view which, I maintain, is strictly in accordance with the most advanced scientific views of evolution and natural development—immortality is not a matter of chance or divine gift at all, but a matter of positive certainty. *We cannot help having it. God cannot either bestow it or take it away from us.** It is wrapped

* Mr Buchanan has reached this idea by poetic intuition, though he has probably never reasoned much about it. In one of his fine "Coruisken Sonnets," he says:—

"All things that live are deathless—I and ye.
The Father could not slay us if he would;
 The Elements in all their multitude
 Will rise against their Master terribly,
 If but one hair upon a human head
 Should perish!"

And in another:—

"I heard a Whirlwind on the mountain peak
 Pause for a space its furious flight and cry—
 'There is no Death!' loudly it seemed to shriek;
 'Nothing that is, beneath the sun, shall die.'
 The frail sick Vapours echoed, drifting by—
 'There is no Death, but change early and late;
Powerless were God's right Hand, full arm'd with fate,
To slay the meanest thing beneath the sky.'"

Surely such lines as those which I have italicised indicate a great change of view now passing over the minds of the thoughtful upon these subjects. We may compare also, in reference to the notion of the inherent inextinguishable immortality of man, several very striking passages in Walt Whitman's poems. Take the following, for example, from "To Think of Time":—

"You are not thrown to the winds—you gather certainly and safely
 around yourself;
 Yourself! Yourself! Yourself, for ever and ever!
 It is not to diffuse you that you were born of your mother and father—
 it is to identify you;
 It is not that you should be undecided, but that you should be decided;
 Something long preparing and formless is arrived and form'd in you,
 You are henceforth secure, whatever comes or goes."

And, from the same poem:—

"I swear I think now that everything without exception has an eternal
 Soul!
 The trees have, rooted in the ground! the weeds of the sea have! the
 animals!
 "I swear I think there is nothing but immortality!
 That the exquisite scheme is for it, and the nebulous float is for it, and
 the cohering is for it;
 And all preparation is for it! and identity is for it! and life and
 materials are altogether for it!"

And if any one should say, as it is likely that those of the scientific and sceptical turn of mind may, that in both these cases the poets are speaking with a fine poetic frenzy, which has little real weight when brought to bear upon objects with which the understanding pure and simple should properly

up, sweetly enfolded, among the nobler necessities of our beings it is as natural, in its place and time, as the visible life. It is evolved at a certain point by necessary law, just as the germs of the lower forms of life were evolved from forms still lower by their abiding impulse of upward progress.* To make my meaning quite clear, I may here quote a passage in Professor Westcott's "Gospel of the Resurrection," in which the view that I am opposing is well stated. He says:—"The Apostles do not teach a redemption to be wrought out by each man for himself, after the example of Christ, but of redemption wrought for each by Christ, and placed within their reach. . . . They do not teach an immortality of the soul as a consequence flowing from any conceptions of man's essential nature, but a resurrection of the body not only historically established in the rising again of Christ, but given to us through Him who is 'the Resurrection and the Life.'" To which I reply generally, reserving for the present what I have to say as to how the details of the resurrection are affected by Spiritualism;—Why is "given to us" better than "a consequence flowing"? Surely our tenure of immortality would be exactly the same in both cases—rather more secure as a natural consequence I should think, being then safe from all personal caprice of the giver. The hell of the churches could never have been a natural consequence of man's nature; so subtle a torture-chamber requires a personal giver and supporter. Briefly, Why is it better to receive immortality than to take it, or win it or earn it or (best of all) *grow into it* by certain steps, *grounded on inherent power*?

So far as regards the possibility of an inherent immortality—"the power of an endless life"—latent in man, without regard

deal—I reply that in this question of our immortality the fine poetic intuition, whether expressed on its religious side by a Christ, or a Paul, or an A'Kempis, or on its more strictly imaginative side by a Tennyson, or a Buchanan, or a Whitman, is just the very thing we need—the very golden guiding-thread whereby we may traverse those obscure cavernous recesses of our nature, wherein the wished-for answer lies, but which the understanding, unassisted, cannot reach.

* The able authors of "The Unseen Universe" hold some view as to the "spiritual body," closely akin to this I believe; only they go on (with strange perverseness!) to deduce the theological Trinity, etc., from their physical and scientific conclusions. It is curious that, while condemning the Spiritualistic manifestations of modern times as having "no objective significance," they should have failed to observe how exactly their own theory of the "spiritual body" corresponds to that of the more thoughtful among the Spiritualists. Miss Cobbe, in the same way, in her last work, "The Hopes of the Human Race," started a theory about the germ of the spiritual body being resident in man and gradually blossoming, as if it were an original one—not aware, apparently, that the Spiritualists, and indeed the Christians, had long entertained and promulgated the very same notion. But these are only instances of how we are all treading over the same ground just now; eagerly, so that we run up against one another.

to capricious external divine beneficence of any kind. I now come to the place at which Modern Spiritualism (as a theory, for I am not here concerned with the truth of this or that phenomenon) comes in to supplement and clinch my argument. As a question of fact it must be investigated further, and the results at present attained must be scientifically tabulated and arranged; but as a theory or doctrine—as a system of belief, the uprising of which *was to be expected and predicted* just at this precise epoch of human development—the thing is perfect. Dr. Westcott, on page 50 of “The Gospel of the Resurrection,” says, in reference to Spiritualism, “Exactly when material views of the universe seem to be gaining an absolute ascendancy, popular instinct finds expression now in this form of extravagant credulity, and now in that. Arrogant physicisism is met by superstitious spiritualism; and there is right on both sides.”

Just so; but what Dr. Westcott does not appear to see is just the very point which I want to bring out in this article, and in which any originality of view that it may claim consists—viz., how beautifully Spiritualism supplements and completes the positive Antichristian scientific teachings of modern times by offering positive, tangible evidence of another world such as science may lay hold of and investigate. We may say that the “five hundred” nameless witnesses to Christ’s Resurrection, whom science has so often longed to have in the witness-box, are really present with us now, only tenfold in number, among the Spiritualists. Let science examine them, and make what it can of them, and let us know the results. I look upon Spiritualism, taken in its healthy and general sense, apart from the impostures and the nightmares of cliques, and rightly understood, *as the other world side of modern positivism*—as positivism, in fact, carried across death’s purely factitious boundary. Of course, as Dr. Westcott (who has, I believe, some affinities with the Spiritualists) would no doubt say, Spiritualism, if proved to be true, would in one sense greatly strengthen the hands of the Christians. It would show that the miracles, and notably that of the Resurrection, are possible. If they happen now, they might have happened then; and the presumption would in such case be that they, or many of them, did happen then. But Spiritualism does far more than this, with its strong, free thought, and its habit of pushing things to extremes. It goes further. In its essence it is pitilessly hostile (as the clergy have instinctively recognised) to things orthodox, and is likely, if once fairly established in England or in Europe, to do even more towards overthrowing the State Creeds than the modern advances of science. It overcomes Christianity, in especial, in this way—*by outflanking it*. If Christianity had miracles, Spiritualism has ten times

as many. If Christianity revealed the other world to us, Spiritualism does so far more clearly and nearly—without a hopeless gulf of eighteen centuries between. It is a mistake to suppose that Spiritualism is merely a *réchauffé* of old supernatural doctrines. It is something more. While, as Mr. Wallace pointed out in the *Fortnightly*, it professes to clear away superstitions by explaining the real *rationale* of former miracles, demoniac possessions, and so forth, it extends a hand to modern positive thought, and asks that that method may be applied to miracles, and extended not only to hitherto unreached portions of this world, but to the whole domain of the unseen. Miracles happen, it says; they have happened occasionally throughout history, but never capriciously, always by law strict and unvarying enough to satisfy the most fastidious positivist or scientist. Immortality will turn out to be a thing natural enough; the Resurrection of Christ was perfectly simple and natural. We hope in time to be able to supply science with the means of investigating its method, and finally establishing it—perhaps even reproducing it. This is the creed of the most intelligent among the Spiritualists, and I do think that the general reasonableness of their system, and its amenableness to the requirements of positive or experiential thought ought to be more widely known and understood. It is not too much to say that that unknown quantity—that residue of fact which we have most of us felt still remains in the early records of Christianity after the utmost efforts of the sceptical school—those occurrences which Strauss and Renan have failed to explain away—may yet be explained (having been accepted as actual facts) by Spiritualism. Another Life of Jesus may yet be written, neither on the orthodox nor the infidel basis, but upon the Spiritualistic; and it may come more nearly than any previous life to the actual truth.

I think I may here be forgiven for quoting a portion of a letter which I wrote to a friend when I first began to study carefully the Spiritualistic literature, expressing the conclusions which I formed at the time.* I see no reason now (the letter was written towards the close of December, 1873—*some months before Mr. Wallace's article appeared*) materially to differ from them, except that I should not now call myself a Theist. The extract will show still more clearly what I conceive to be the relation of modern Spiritualism to that gospel of humanity (as opposed to the gospel of the Resurrection of Christ) which I touched upon at the beginning of this article—that gospel which is being preached, or has been preached, with more or less of

* The contents of the letter have all the freshness and force of first impressions, and I cannot state my case better.

variety, and with more or less of success, by Goethe, Swinburne, M. Arnold, Theodore Parker, Miss Cobbe, Miss Hennell, Emerson, Greg, Mazzini, Feuerbach, Strauss, J. S. Mill, A. J. Davis, F. Newman, H. G. Atkinson, Hudson Tuttle, Walt Whitman, Fiske, Herbert Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, Darwin, Comte,* and others.

"I am now going to talk a little about Spiritualism, upon which subject I have been bringing my mind to bear lately. I think a few observations may interest you, as you have not yet turned the light of your mind-lantern in that direction. The subject is one which all men of intelligence at the present day ought to spend a certain amount of time (*not too much*) in investigating and coming to an opinion upon.

"I have come to the conclusion that there *is* truth at the bottom of it, and that (amidst a *mass* of jugglery, folly, and imposture) many of the facts to which it bears witness will have to be accepted, and added to the sum of human knowledge. I shall give up calling myself a Theist, and call myself a Spiritualist, by which I do not mean an adherent of table-rapping and all that sort of thing, but simply (as opposed to a Materialist) a believer in an unseen and supra-sensual world, *and a believer in the creed which holds that this unseen world has acted upon the visible world in certain exceptional cases, and at certain exceptional epochs, in an abnormal, though not unnatural, fashion.* That is what I mean by Spiritualism; and I shall use the word henceforward (and the word Spiritualist) in this significance, distinguishing the creed of mere table-rapping and its adherents by the words Spiritism and Spiritists. Do you do the same, and then we shall have no misunderstanding.

"Now Spiritualism is an advance upon Theism, and is in excess of it just so far as this—that (while accepting *with* Theism the results of modern criticism and of modern science to a very large extent) it affirms where Positivism denies, and where Theism (your position, if I understand you rightly) refuses either to affirm or deny. Positivism (perhaps I had better say Materialism, as they are not exactly the same thing) denies altogether the existence of the unseen world, and (of course) its influence on ours; Theism affirms the unseen world, but denies that it impinges upon ours in any way (or refuses to predicate anything with certainty concerning this—there is a slight vari-

* I have purposely thrown a large number of powerful names together, as it is interesting to see how extraordinary is the real strength of the new thought of the age, when its forces are combined. Those teachers whom I have mentioned differ, of course, greatly in doctrine; but they all unite in one thing—in prophesying great and speedy changes to the religion of the civilised world, and in pointing towards new conceptions of man as man, and a new vision of the glory and potential holiness of collective humanity, as the means whereby these mighty and inevitable changes are to be finally achieved.

ance among Theistic prophets at this point); Spiritualism affirms positive law and positive criticism (with Materialism, Science, and Theism), affirms the unseen world (with Theism), and (its differentia) asserts that in rare instances and at rare seasons it *does* impinge upon ours. I think it probable that the Resurrection was one of these instances, and a cardinal one. I think it probable that Westcott was *right (so far)* in his book. I do not see any other way of reconciling the three marked books of my this year's reading—Westcott's 'Gospel of the Resurrection,' Comte's 'General View of the Positive Philosophy,' M. Arnold's 'Literature and Dogma'—each of which has had a very strong influence upon me, and in each of which I think I discern several weak points—also noble truth in *each*. I do not see any other way of combining these books than by affirming that the Spiritual world *has* impinged upon ours at given points (Westcott); that *all* worlds are under the dominion of positive law (Comte); and, thirdly, that the critical spirit must be applied to Christianity, that the day for metaphysical dogmas has gone by, and that *all* religion must primarily repose upon *the Intuition* (M. Arnold).

"What do you think of the above generalisation? I do not think it is a small one. It is the result of much thought, and seems to me to contain and sum up a good deal, and to throw great light upon many hitherto obscure subjects. To me some of these new thoughts have been like a flood of light.

"I have long felt that the weak point of Theism lies in the fact that it *affirms* a Spiritual world, and yet *denies* the possibility of any intercourse between the inhabitants of that world and ours. This is the point that even popular Christian writers see so clearly, and make so much of. I think there is sound sense in what they say. That is why I asked you why, if we hoped to see our dead friends some day, we should not see them occasionally now—asking if it was logical (believing in another world) to attempt to draw a hard line of demarcation between that world and this—pointing out what I thought the inconsistency of Mazzini's addressing the brothers Bandiera in prayer, if at the same time he held positive views about the action of one world upon another, and their Spirits upon his. Perhaps you remember what I said. The truth is, that if you once admit a Spiritual world (as you do, and Mazzini and Parker did), you cannot, without giving a larger encouragement to Materialism than any of you three would care to do, get out of the possibility of that world's sometimes trenching upon ours. . . .

"I want now to clear your mind of the misconceptions which probably fill it (as they filled mine up till very lately) on the subject of Spiritualism.

"You no doubt thought (judging from 'Sludge the Medium' and representations of that sort) that Spiritualism was a mere mass of charlatanism, imposture, ignorance, and vulgarity. Now, I find on examination that it is *not so*. Simply *not so*. I was very much startled by discovering that there is a clear scientific tone about a good deal of Spiritualistic writing, and that some Spiritualistic oratory is not unworthy of Parker. There is a Mrs. Cora Tappan in particular, an American Spiritualistic oratoress, who is possessed of real genius, and whose addresses are in every way remarkable.* Some time I will send you out some Spiritualistic papers, and you shall judge for yourself. I was surprised and pleased to find a great deal of sound criticism and healthy thought in their work. I think at present that (for me) Spiritualism supplies the wanting factor—the unknown quantity; it seems to fill the gap of which I have long been conscious in Theism, and which has driven me back to Christianity, only to be expelled again by the want of reason in its advocates. But Spiritualism professes to work upon scientific bases. I thought it was a modern reproduction of the superstitious side of Christianity. I dare say you are thinking the same. It is not so. I find that it is, on the contrary, a genuine product of the age in which we live—that Spiritualists profess advanced philosophical opinions (not unlike those of Parker)—that they consider the Christian dogma of the Trinity as a worn-out fable, and worship Parker's Father and Mother of the Universe. Some of Mrs. Tappan's prayers are quite as beautiful as those of Parker, and very much in the same style. All this was new and surprising to me, and, I think, will be new to you. It is encouraging and reassuring, for I had fancied that Spiritualism went in for patching and bolstering up Christianity. I find, for instance, that Spiritualists talk about the superstitions of Christianity, and that, far from shunning, they court scientific and honest investigation.

"I do not place much reliance upon séances or casual phenomena; my main argument is, as usual, an *a priori* one, and lies higher up. The more I think and read, the more firmly am I convinced that there are only two great divisions of opinion in the world, which have struggled together (like Shelley's snake and eagle in 'The Revolt of Islam') through all time, and have taken ever-varying forms and phases—the Materialistic and the Spiritualistic. Between these two the empires of time and

* This was written, as above stated, in 1873. I regret to have to add that further experience of Mrs. Tappan teaches me that she sometimes talks and writes the most egregious nonsense. Nevertheless, she is a remarkable woman, and her principal book of poems, "Hesperia," has true genius in it, though mixed and overlaid with much that is tawdry, weak, and superficial.

thought are divided. Christianity and Theism, and Spiritism and Comtism and Spinozism, and so forth, are only minor forms of these enormous Creeds—chips torn from the parent rocks. They can always be classified (like stones and fossils in the hand of an experienced geologist) as having originally belonged to one or the other rock-stratum. Theism has hitherto been giving her right hand to Materialism, and all I want to do is to spin the good lady round and give her right hand to Spiritualism, and bestow upon Materialism only the graces of her left.

“Questions like that of Christ’s Resurrection are really utterly unimportant by the side of the question—Is there a Spiritual World at all? Are we to believe in anything besides matter? And the only way to answer this question is to fall back upon the intuition. It cannot be answered (on the one hand) by scientific induction—nor can it be proved (on the other) by historical evidence, though it may be very largely confirmed by this. To this point, I think, men of all creeds and opinions are coming very fast. I find the same feeling among Theists—among Spiritualists—among the modern Christian apologists. They all, with hardly an exception, are falling back upon the intuition, and preaching that Christianity ought to be approached by the intuitional or a *priori* route. To this basis some of them add miracles, and some do not. Once grant the intuition, and this becomes quite a secondary question, and it is coming to be considered so *on all sides*. But, as a secondary question, it is of great importance. I find that the abler Spiritualists themselves are not for pressing the more marvellous appliances of their trade—they, too, preach immortality and the existence of God from the intuition, and only appeal to their modern miracles *in confirmation* of an intuition and a faith previously existent in the mind. (In some instances, no doubt, it may be—and always has been—the other way; startling external occurrences may awake a spirit of enquiry and produce conviction; but the ultimate appeal must always be to the intuition residing in each one’s consciousness; else *how* are you to “try the spirits,” according to the New Testament?) Herein they are in perfect union with the Zeit-Geist, and move in harmonious ranks with the other advocates of progressive thought. The truth is, that though we are “under the dawn,” we are very far from being under the noonday, and for a good deal we shall have to wait. I doubt whether either of us will see in our lifetime a complete ‘System of Science’ or a complete ‘System of Religion’—and the utmost that our modern aspiring philosophico-artistic writers can really hope to do is to lay (perhaps) the stones of a few steps which shall ultimately form a basis for a complete ‘System of Art.’ Now, this fact of our being so far from the noonday bears

upon the question of miracles in this way—that we have not yet got to the end of our destructive criticism, and therefore it is impossible to tell what will be left when that criticism has completed its work and done its duty—namely, its worst. If I may venture to prophesy, I think that the result will be somewhat as follows. A large portion of the results of the destructive criticism will have to be accepted; the mythical theory will account for many of the Biblical legends quite satisfactorily (perhaps for Christ's being born of a Virgin, among others; a prominent English clergyman told me, not long since, that he would be glad not to believe this, and that he thought the time had come for a frank consideration of the question); the naturalistic theory will account for others; but will they account for *all*? I do not feel sure that they will; and I think it likely that a residue of narratives will be left, both in our Bible and the Bibles of other religions, which will never be rightly understood except by admitting the interposition in these rare instances for rare reasons of supernatural (but perfectly harmonious—perfectly *positive*) agency. I really think that the ultimate choice lies between this and sheer Materialism. The Resurrection *may* be one such instance; the Conversion of Paul *may* be another; but I would never press this upon any one as a matter of faith—it is Aberglauke. But where I do not agree with M. Arnold is, that I think the tenets of Aberglauke may sometimes be founded on facts. But I *do* agree with him in feeling that Aberglauke is not of equal force with the Intuition; and this G. MacDonald saw long ago.

“As an example of what I call the Theistic inconsistency, I will quote the following. M. Arnold, talking about the stoning of Stephen, implies that the passage about Stephen's seeing the Lord Jesus sitting at the right hand of God is not to be taken literally. It is to be interpreted, rather, upon the principles of what is called Ideology. Stephen did not behold at that supreme juncture an objective Christ; but he underwent a transfiguration of soul, which he expressed (or which has been expressed for him, by what M. Arnold calls ‘reporters’) in those words. Now I am not concerned to prove that Stephen *did* see an objective Christ—that is a question of importance, but not of primary importance; but what I *do* say—and I think that I have not only true logical argument, but sound English common sense on my side in saying it—is this, that such an objective vision would not be one whit more wonderful than the realisation of the issues which are implied in M. Arnold's own affirmation; for he does (practically) affirm immortality—he affirms “the power of an endless life;” if the feeling of this eternal life never rises in us to a sense of its being inextinguishable, it is, he says, proba-

bly because we fall so very far short of Christ's moral standard that our intuitions are weak, and we feel that we dare not trust them and cast our whole souls upon them as Christ did. The affirmation of the human intuition at all supreme moments is *There is no death*. This affirmation forms the appropriate text and motto of Spiritualism, and stands in precise contraposition to the text engraved upon the banner of Materialism—Nothing exists but matter. Now, all that M. Arnold has shown is, that this broad human intuition, *which reached its personal height (we may say) in Christ of Nazareth*, is the ultimate thing to be relied upon—the primary basis, the ultimate test—and that we are never safe in *basing* any religion upon miracles. He has not shown more than this; he has hardly attempted to show more; and I think that, as far as he has gone, he is on safe ground, and right. His weak point would be, if he ever attempted to deny that the intuition which he affirms may sometimes be confirmed and established (for previous believers in it) by supernatural proofs; at this point you will find (I expect), if you ever read any reviews of his book, that his opponents will get hold of him. They will say (with reason), you affirm a life which transcends this visible life of ours; you assert that Christ possessed in a surpassing degree the intuition of that life, and that we all possess it in our measure, and that it may be largely increased by faithfulness to light or (in your own words) by a rigid attention to conduct—why, therefore, should the Resurrection not be a manifestation—one, probably, among many other manifestations, but the chief one of hitherto accomplished human history—why should it not be a manifestation of that life in which you say that you believe? * Why believe in the life if it is never to manifest itself? Why believe in immortality if you are never to be clothed with it? The immortal life *must have a beginning*. (Turn those four words—*must have a beginning*—over in your mind carefully; I cannot tell you what a force they have to me.) If the immortal life *is* to begin, it is only a subtle form of Materialism to endeavour to lay down the law as to *when* it shall first manifest itself (that is the weak point of Parker and what is called pure Theism). This seems to me unspeakably important. You will find if you take the assertion of pure Theism that there was no Resurrection, † and that the eternal life never impinges upon ours, but that this life necessarily begins at the given point of death, *and not till then*,

* See an article in the *Edinburgh Review* for October, 1873, in which this point is well brought out.

† See for a confirmation of my statement that this *is* the creed of pure Theism—the view as to the Resurrection held by the most advanced Theists—Miss Cobbe's "Hopes of the Human Race," about "Jewish ghost-stories."

you will find, if you patiently follow this thought to its ultimate analysis and proceed to disintegrate it, that you have in reality left no scope for that eternal life or its manifestation *at all*.

"The real difficulty is not to conceive of a spiritual or eternal life manifesting itself in surprising and unusual ways, which to the material eye appear abnormal and monstrous; the real difficulty is to believe in such a life *at all*. Those who have no spiritual vision by nature, or who have lost it for a time through wrong-doing, *cannot* believe in a supra-mundane life; once believe in such a life as a matter of absolute truth, and endeavour to live up to the faith in it, and special convictions as to the truth of the assertions concerning certain ways in which that life is said to have manifested itself upon the earth may well be left to come of themselves—gradually. Here we begin to understand the meaning of 'the natural man understandeth not the things of the spirit—they are foolishness unto him—because they are spiritually discerned,' and the whole mass of evangelical metaphor about the carnal man being like a man who is blind-fold in the midst of a bright room, and similar expressions generated by the seers and sages of all religions through all time."

And again, in another letter written in March, 1874:—"The literature of Spiritualism (of which I have read a great deal lately) abounds with well-attested instances of revelations which you would call 'special' and 'inharmonious.' It makes miracles common, and explains them. This brings me round to the view of Spiritualism which I took at Brighton (when I thought the matter out pretty *ultimately*); I do not know whether it will be my final view. I was attracted towards the subject by my own curious experience; I found that Spiritualists, far from mocking and laughing at such things like the vulgar herd, believed fully in them; nay, dealt almost exclusively in the obscurer phenomena of mind and spirit. I found narratives of experiences not unlike my own. Thus I was led to look further into the subject.

"Next I found accounts of intelligent disembodied agency (you confuse the argument by talking about 'spirit' and 'matter' in that rigid way; we do not know what spirit and matter *are*; what we call spirit may be some exceedingly attenuated form of matter; or, spirits may be clothed in some exceedingly thin tissue of matter—we do not know); I found accounts of intelligent agency acting upon mortals from the outside. I found these accounts confirmed by *hosts* of able and honest witnesses. So I was led to ask myself what would be the effect of this new belief (*if* I found myself compelled to believe it) upon my faith in *Christianity*."

"Now we have got to an interesting point. I saw two ways of regarding Spiritualism (*assuming* its essential truth) in connection with Christianity. The first way was to regard the creed of modern miracles as confirming the old creed. Miracles are performed now; therefore they were performed then. Christ, the incarnate Logos, performed in that capacity the greatest miracles of all—those of raising the dead. This is one view; and it is the view of a large body of men in England and America who call themselves *Christian* Spiritualists. A medium called Harris may perhaps be regarded as their leader.

"This view did not satisfy me, as I then should have had to give up my Theism, with all its attendant liberty and beauty of thought, and regard Christ as an exceptional person, with all the ugliness and bondage of thought attendant upon that conception. Therefore, I sought for another method of reconciling Spiritualism with Christianity. I came to the conclusion that Spiritualism—(I always mean, 'modern Spiritualism' when I use the word in this letter—the modern Science of the Miraculous, dating from Hydesville, in the State of New York, where the rappings began in the Fox family in 1848; I cannot further maintain in writing the distinction between 'Spiritism' and 'Spiritualism')—that Spiritualism must be regarded simply as an expansion of Theism—simply as its magnetic or thaumaturgic side. It seemed to me to fill up a gap which Parker and Mazzini had left unclosed. I do not think Parker and Renan ever fairly explained the origin of Christianity; nor do I think that Arnold has done so in 'Literature and Dogma.' Something more is needed; and that 'unknown quantity' is supplied by modern Spiritualism, which takes up the work where Parker relinquished it. The miracles of Christ and of the apostolic era have never become really plain in the light of modern criticism. It is this fact which has given their strength to Westcott and the defenders of Christianity. As long as they brought strong evidence to show that certain wonderful works were wrought at that time which are not performed now, and have never been performed at any other era, it was impossible to dislodge them from their earth-works; but once show that such miracles are common things of almost daily occurrence, that every religion has had them, and that they are going on *now*, and the whole strength of Christianity, as gained from its exclusiveness, totters and stumbles to the ground. This is the true significance of modern Spiritualism, and this is the view which I finally took of it at Brighton. It is the one thing which was wanting to make the fortresses of Theism* impregnable. It is the one thing which

* It should be understood that, throughout this article, I use the word "Theism" in the sense of the advanced Theism professed and proclaimed by

was needed to make the gateways of the new creed secure. It is the missing factor which I have been looking for so long; which explains the Resurrection, and all books based, like Westcott's, upon the Resurrection. Christ *did* rise; he appeared to his friends; he made his spirit-form visible to them (as many other spirit-forms have been visible in history); but he was *not* the Son of God in any exclusive sense for all that (here Spiritualistic Theism triumphs over Westcott, and maintains the integrity of *man*, while admitting his facts; it is at this point that I claim some originality of conception). Other risen spirits have made themselves manifest to their friends; they are doing so *now*; they are doing so *in London*!

"If they are doing so in London, why should one man not have done so at Jerusalem? and if they are doing so in London, why should the solitary man who did so at Jerusalem be dubbed the Incarnate Word and the Visible Jehovah for so doing? [I cannot resist the conclusion that many of our higher poets, in those most exalted moments of which they have left to us a record—(as, for example, Byron during the thunderstorm on the Jura mountains, his feelings on which occasion he describes so wonderfully in the famous passage in *Childe Harold*; and Tennyson on the night when, as he says—

' Word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touch'd me from the past,
And all at once it seem'd at last
His living soul was flash'd on mine,

' And mine in his was wound, and whirl'd
About empyreal heights of thought,
And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world' *)—

knew something of what the resurrection-life meant. No theories of a swift resurrection and reappearance of Christ could have seemed strange or far-fetched to Byron, after his wonderful experience of the passion of eternal life, as excited and roused into conscious, active being within him in that instance by the marvels of the mountains and the storm; nor to Tennyson, after

Parker in America, by Mazzini in Italy and on the Continent generally, and by writers like Miss Cobbe and Francis Newman in England. But my own faith has, to some extent, veered round lately towards that Religion of Humanity sketched out at the beginning and conclusion of this paper. When I wrote the above letters, "Theism" expressed to me an advanced reasonable creed which should gather into itself all the fruits of the past, and all the young springing blossoms of present thought as well. I now doubt whether "Theism" is a fit name for such a creed. But I thought it best to retain, in the letters, the old expression, while indicating elsewhere the qualifications which I now perceive to be necessary.

* In Memoriam, p. 140. I have been informed, upon good authority, that the brother, and also the sister, of the Laureate are Spiritualists.

his wondrous sense of sudden spiritual union with his dead friend Arthur Hallam upon that memorable night; nor to others who have felt, in their measure, similar hints and intuitions of immortality. I myself had, in early youth, a strange spiritual experience, after which the faith in an immortal life can never seem to me anything absurd or unreal—rather the most natural and obvious thing in the world. The truth is that the Resurrection is not an isolated fact at all. It is confirmed and led up to by multitudes of spiritual experiences in all ages, felt and enounced by those ‘magnetic men’ of whom Mr. Haweis speaks in his recent volume.*]

“I am as jealous to define and defend the boundaries of our beloved Theism as ever Athanasius or Origen or Clement were to guard their Christian creeds. Therefore, I say that a man shall not be called the Living God because he happens, casually, to have risen from the dead, or has had any other abnormal Spiritual experience; and here I encounter Westcott with mutual shock of inwoven breastplates, face from face. But I differ from Comte and Arnold in that I accept the chief of Westcott’s premisses. Only that I deduce from those premisses very different conclusions. I only establish Theism on a firmer basis, and overthrow Westcott more profoundly, in that I am able to accept his Christian Resurrection and add twenty Theistic Resurrections to it. “Let those laugh who win.” The great love wins in the issue, and so does the broad thought. Theism has now finally conquered Christianity; its final victory was to inaugurate a code of miracles of its own, grander and more human than any which preceded it. Andrew Jackson Davis, the Poughkeepsie Seer, is the prophet of this new revelation of unchristian, superchristian miracles; he is your ‘coming man,’ and he comes from America, as you predicted. Of his works and thoughts more anon.

“I argue as to Christ’s Resurrection from my own experience, from the experience of others, from well-attested facts of history and of modern Spiritualism. It certainly seems to me a grand idea that Theism should have its miracles as well as Christianity. If the light that be in Christianity turns out to be darkness, truly ‘great is that darkness.’ Gerald Massey, ‘the people’s poet,’ is a devoted and uncompromising Spiritualist. They say that Tennyson and Walt Whitman are Spiritualists, and Tennyson certainly ought to be, judging from his intercourse with the spirit of Arthur Hallam, in ‘In Memoriam.’ He must have been very near to the spirit of his dead friend at one point in the poem. If Theism can perform even the wonders of Chris-

* “Speech in Season.” Reviewed at length in the *Westminster* for July

tianity (its inferior material phenomena) better than the Christians themselves, it is truly a sign that the power of God has passed over to the New Creed, and that the Ark is no longer in the Churches. It adds the colour that was wanting to Moncure Conway's book,* and wrings the last lingering supernatural dyes out of the Christian flag.

"The great movement of the age (as you have yourself said) is towards *decentralisation*; towards republicanism of thought. Now, modern Spiritualism is simply the most republican creed in its tendency that can possibly be found; for it refuses to recognise any excess of personality—any imperialism of religion—affirming that nascent Mediumship exists in nearly every one, and that each, in his measure, can hold intercourse with the Spiritual world. In all this it is at one with the age. And in all this it is at deadly feud with the orthodox Churches and with Christianity, because it takes even the golden handle of their esoteric thaumaturgic weapon out of their grasp. Therefore, the Churches hate this new movement even more than the simple Theistic movement (which is of a more abstract and philosophical character), and accuse its preachers of holding communion with evil spirits, and being instigated by Satan, and so on—the old story. But some Christians, like Mr. Haweis, have had the sense to see that they cannot maintain their own series of miracles intact, and exclude these modern miracles, and all others,—and they recognise, and even preach, Spiritualism.

"In communications alleged to be from spirits, great stress is laid upon the fact that no *one* person is to be the centre of this movement. This was the mistake the spirits made—so they say—in inaugurating and furthering the Christian movement; and that mistake must not be made twice. Now when one finds thoughts of this kind emanating from the obscure brains of illiterate American Mediums, it makes one pause—and think. There is nothing more remarkable in the history of this movement than the way in which the foremost thoughts of the foremost thinkers of the age have been repeated by ignorant and uneducated men under alleged spirit-influence. It certainly looks as if the *Zeit-Geist* of Matthew Arnold were something more than a mere abstraction. Thoughts are in the air, we all know. But the idea that they are not only in the air, but in the hearts and minds of devoted, earnest, disembodied spirits, intent upon educating us upon earth, and inaugurating era after era, is one of the loveliest announcements of modern Spiritualism, and it is quite as philosophical as the conception of an abstract *Zeit-Geist*. Of course, the idea, in its essence, is as old as the

* "The Earthward Pilgrimage." London: J. C. Hotten. 1870.

hills; Pål had it (compare his 'Cloud of Witnesses'); Swedenborg had it; Christ had it; but some of its developments are new.

"I have now made plain the second view which may be taken of Spiritualism when regarded in close connection with Christianity. It may be called Theistic or advanced or progressive Spiritualism. I thought this view out for myself at Brighton, and, subsequently, upon an examination of the best Spiritualistic literature, could not but be gratified to discover that a similar solution had presented itself to the most advanced among the Spiritualists. There are two parties in their ranks as everywhere else: the negative and the positive party; the obstructive and the progressive; the conservative and the liberal. The acknowledged leader of the Liberal Spiritualistic party is the extraordinary man I spoke of above—Andrew Jackson Davis. He is the author of a vast number of philosophical and metaphysical works, some of which I have been reading lately. He is a man of very real and massive genius—a sort of intuitive Spiritual Comte of the west—and it is an astonishing thing to find this American shoemaker's apprentice (for such he was, I believe), propounding intuitively even in his early days the very same critical Theistic truths, which it has taken M. Arnold a life's perusal of 'the best that has been thought and written in the world' to reach. This, I say, is extremely astonishing; and it is a phenomenon which one encounters constantly in examining the records of Spiritualism."

I have now shown what I conceive to be the relation between Spiritualism, assuming that some of its phenomena shall eventually be proved to be genuine, and modern thought. In conclusion I will briefly recur to the other main purpose of this article, which is to show that if the belief in a personal loving God, constructed after the sanguine fashion of the Christian Church, has to be abandoned, we need not therefore necessarily give up our faith in a personal immortality.

The things, though they may at first sight (naturally) seem similar, yet are in fact totally dissimilar, and have a totally dissimilar bearing. They are based upon different grounds. If it is probable, as maintained at the commencement of this article, that we have ourselves thrown the conception of a giant god made in man's image upon the vacant sky of our own thought; if we have evolved from our own experience of love and tenderness, and the overmastering conviction which we, as a race, have now reached that unselfishness is the one thing superior to all things else*—the one thing passionately to strive after—the one

* Dean Stanley, in a recent remarkable speech delivered at the distribution of prizes to the students of St. Thomas's Hospital, said:—"Whatever course physical science might take, nothing could ever destroy or shake in the least de-

thing wholly *divine*;—if, from this intense conviction (Mr. Arnold's "*Intuition*"), we have evolved the further belief (Mr. Arnold's "*Aberglaube*") in a righteous God who inspires us with the love of righteousness—who wishes to make us like himself, "pure even as he is pure"—and who has sent his Son into the world to redeem us from our sins and to prepare us for the heavenly kingdom—if all this be *Aberglaube*, and only the conviction—the conviction that "righteousness makes for happiness"—based upon experience the one thing sure:—if all this be so, our hope of immortality, based upon that inextinguishable sense of life and eternal permanency which the practice of righteousness invariably gives, remains much as it was before. It is not really shaken in the least. It cannot be shaken. And if Spiritualism can indeed help to explain the Resurrection of Christ upon sober scientific grounds—grounds other than that he was the Eternal Son, the only-begotten of the Father, and therefore could not "see corruption," nor be "holden of death," on account of his aboriginal kingly quality—if Spiritualism can lift us out of the difficulty and clear up, without having recourse to all this *Aberglaube*, the mystery of Christ's Resurrection in a simple human way—as I have through a great part of this article been attempting to show that there is strong hope of its doing—if this, with all its valuable concomitants, shall turn out to be the truth, our hope of immortality will approach an experimental certainty, and we shall be greatly indebted to the much-despised much-calumniated Spiritualism!

In this connexion it is well to say that we do *not* really know, much as has been made of it in priestly argument, that Jesus Christ believed in a personal God at all. Poor Jesus! Centuries of councils and boisterous churches have put so many words into his mouth—so many strange opinions into his heart—that it is becoming a matter of almost hopeless difficulty to know what he really did believe or feel. But this much we may say without fear—that his God was a very different Being from that complex Divinity of the Churches whose body passes into consecrated wafers, and who sustains the lurid dominions of hell with his red right hand!

Christ believed in God as Father—he addressed him as Father, and thought of him as Father, we are told; and it is likely that in this particular we are informed correctly, as the unusual manner of loving and trustful utterance would have rivetted itself in

gree the glory of goodness, the excellence of purity, charity, courage—the immense prominence of the moral nature of man above everything else in the world. . . . The moral being of man and the moral excellence which exists in man are beyond everything else." With this I heartily agree, maintaining as I do that our moral intuitions are the causes and creators of our creeds, instead of our creeds creating and nourishing *them* (see Lit. and Dogma, pp. 290, 291).

the minds of the hearers, and probably have been reported accurately—without additions or misapprehensions of their own. But even then it remains to inquire, what did Jesus mean by Father—did he use the word as we speak of God the Father, the First Person of the Holy Trinity—did he use the word as the Churches have used it, and are using it—or as Milton used it—or as John Knox,—did he use it out of consideration for popular ignorance and superstition (much the same in all ages), as likely to convey the truest idea to the popular mind—did he not, in his inmost heart, mean by it something very like that impersonal absolute power which modern science presents to us as at the root of all things, and which we may call father, or brother, or mother, not because it is indeed as a conscious father, or brother, or mother, but because it (by the final results of the working of its originally unconscious attributes) *produces* fatherhood and motherhood, and all the tender grace of brotherliness—produces and sustains these in us, so that we naturally call this power father, though it heeds not nor hearkens to our voice? Was not (to take a very excellent instance) all that loving-kindness and unceasing pity and tenderness which the late Frederick Maurice used to speak about as residing in the Godhead, and eternally manifested to us by God the Son—was not that principle of eternal, boundless, endless love, which he was never tired of expatiating upon, *really resident in the man himself, Frederick Maurice?* and did he not unconsciously cast his own grand shadow on the sky, and hear his own true voice calling unto him as if from the fairest heights of heaven—more voluble now, being as the fancied tongue of God?

These questions are not intended to be irreverent. They are being reverently, but bravely and persistently, asked on all sides now—they will be asked more persistently and much less reverently as time goes on, if mankind is to be drugged in reply with superstitious fallacies, and put off with petulant half answers. Meantime, pending the full discovery in the depths of man's own nature of the answers to these and similar questions, let us remember, in removal, or at least in mitigation of that principal dread which overwhelms him just now—lest in losing the personal God of his own creation, he has also parted with his own immortality—that all the analogy of nature goes to show that from lesser to greater, from simple to increasingly complex, is her constant plan of procedure—and that there is really little reason to fear that that mingling with the eternal elements, of which all the poets speak in such rapturous terms, means anything like what we can only express as the loss of individuality or of personality. We are not likely to return, unconscious, to that unconscious universe from which, by ages

of upward agony, we have slowly emerged. We are, or have become, immeasurably greater than our prolific mother, and we have no desire to return to the unconscious folds of her embrace. Devoted Pantheists, when they talk about mingling with the universe, continually forget how much greater that thought and moral sense which have been slowly evolved are than the forces which evolved and produced them; they continually, without knowing or noticing it, advocate an immense retrogression—a vast passing from the greater to the less great, from the heterogeneous to the homogeneous—when they preach their belief in the annihilation of man's conscious personality—the very thing which all the strenuous ages have been struggling triumphantly to produce. Do not fear, we shall not lose this. Far more likely is it that further evolution, as yet unseen and unexperienced, will increase and intensify it. The powers of air and earth and ocean shall be ours; but we shall not be theirs. We shall rejoice with the winds and the happy tumult of the breezes; but they shall not exult and triumph over us. We shall hold lordship over them—they shall pass into us and become a part of us—we shall not passively pass into them; the universe may be absorbed, in some strange, sweet fashion, into the human spirit, as it has already in some measure been absorbed into the souls of poets like Shelley and Keats—but it will, *must*, re-issue thence in the victorious utterance of human personality, made greater, not smaller, by the electric human touch. It will not absorb us, but we shall, in the end, enclose and absorb all the blossoms of its manifold and enigmatic beauty. We shall pass onward to become greater and more complex in our powers of thought and love and ecstasy; we shall not flee backward into Pantheistic viewless breezes, or Pantheistic fiery star-dust. We have been these things—yea, all of them, or latent in all of them—but we shall be these no more. We have climbed above them to the conscious, glorious height of man; and our superb self-consciousness shall only widen and deepen and increase; it shall become world-consciousness,* and even the sense of many worlds, without the loss of the central governing self—the central human spirit.

Greater powers of love in especial shall be ours—strange lovely forms of passion unseen and undreamed of as yet—but

* "I do not doubt but the majesty and beauty of the world are latent in any iota of the world;

I do not doubt I am limitless, and that the universes are limitless—in vain I try to think how limitless;

I do not doubt that the orbs, and the systems of orbs, play their swift sports through the air on purpose—and that I shall one day be eligible to do as much as they, and more than they."

Walt Whitman—"Whispers of Heavenly Death."

no loss of passion; no absorption into passionless nature; no eternal mingling with the serene but loveless stars. We pass upward. We win nature; we are not won and conquered of her. It may be that the passions of all planets, or experienced on all planets, shall unite in us, but it will be only to increase and sweetly amplify, as with the sound of many voices, or the scent of many flowers, or the breath of many and lordly mountain winds, the fragrant central yearning and the pure innate desire of each. We shall gain everything by expansion—nothing is to be gained by lingering within the dusty precincts of ourselves. By widening out we gain the universe, but we lose no jot nor tittle of our true eternal selves thereby. These true endless selves abide alway, and they shall not be diminished. Death cannot narrow them; they are unchangeable for all the shocks and perturbations of creeds. The forces of nature must in the end become our servants; they are never (had not Ezekiel the vision of a *man* upon the central throne?) to be our masters and lords. The sea and thunder will not win us, but we may win the passion and the pleasure of thunder, and stars, and sea. When Byron said—

“And this is in the night:—Most glorious night!
 Thou wert not sent for slumber! let me be
 A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,—
 A portion of the tempest and of thee!”

he had a vision of a great ecstatic joy—a voluptuous spiritual rapture in which, too, all the quivering and throbbing senses took part*—beyond the reach of words; and as what he had (and all true poets have had) a prophetic foreglimpse of was not the loss of consciousness, but the splendid presence of a consciousness which, while it grew (and even *in proportion as* it grew) wider and less embodied, became also more personal and more intense, so shall the loss of life bring to each soul in the end a deeper and wider life; more pregnant with sweet and masterly issues; more safely and nobly lifted above all ultimate arrows of adverse fate.

GEORGE BARLOW.

NOTE.

Since the above was written, an article on “Theism” has appeared in the *Westminster Review*, from which the following is an extract:—

“Religions are not made; they grow. Their progress is not from the enlightened to the vulgar, but from the vulgar to the enlightened. They are not products of the intellect, but manifest themselves as physical forces too. The religion of the future is in our midst already, working like potent yeast in the minds of the people. It is in our midst to-day with signs and wonders uprising like a swollen tide, and scorning the barriers of Nature’s laws. But however irresistible its effects they are not declared on the surface. It comes

* See Swinburne’s “Essay on Byron.”

veiling its destined splendours beneath an exterior that invites contempt. Hidden from the prudent, its truths are revealed to babes. Once more the weak will confound the mighty, the foolish the wise, and base things and things despised, it may be even things that are not, bring to nought things that are, for it seems certain that whether truly or whether falsely SPIRITUALISM will re-establish, on what professes to be ground of positive evidence, the fading belief in a future life—not such a future as is dear to the reigning theology, but a future developed from the present, a continuation under improved conditions of the scheme of things around us. Further than this it is impossible to predict the precise development which Spiritualism may take in the future, just as it would have been impossible at the birth of Christianity to have predicted its actual subsequent development: but FROM THE UNEXAMPLED POWER POSSESSED BY THIS NEW RELIGIOUS FORCE of fusing with other creeds, it seems likely in the end to bring about a greater uniformity of belief than has ever yet been known.”—*Westminster Review*, Oct., 1875.

It will be seen that the writer is here pursuing a new line of thought, which runs curiously parallel to that indicated in my own treatise.—G. B., Oct. 23, 1875.

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