

Disciples of Christ Historical Society

Digital Commons @ Disciples History

Christian Magazine

Stone-Campbell Movement Periodicals

12-1852

Christian Magazine "Extra" December 1852: The Attacks of the Millennial Harbinger upon the Christian Magazine and its Editor

Jessie Babcock Ferguson

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.discipleshistory.org/christianmagazine>

CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

EXTRA.

DECEMBER, 1852.

The Attacks of the "Millennial Harbinger" upon the Christian Magazine and its Editor.

To meet his repeated demands and the desire of his friends, we publish below the essays of Alexander Campbell that have called forth the articles under the above head, in the present volume of the Magazine. We remark that all that follows was written and most of it published before we offered a single word, except privately, in reply. We would have published it at first but we hoped to prevent a controversy that seemed personal from its very commencement. We never, even in intention, refused to publish them. What Mr. Campbell has admitted to his columns since is less worthy of a place in any respectable paper than even what follows. We have not room for it all, but we insert all that has called forth any reply. Our readers have "both sides," and we are willing in silence to wait an unprejudiced judgment. We expect to publish and review the whole when he gets through.

J. B. F.

From the Millennial Harbinger for June.

"A NEW DISCOVERY."

Speaking of our exposition of 1 Peter iii, 18, as found in our April No., he says:

MANY a theological telescope has been directed to this imaginary constellation in the ecclesiastic or theological heavens. Spiritual astronomers have reared their towering observatories, furnished them with large and costly instruments, and brought to bear upon it glasses of vast magnifying powers. Still it is not yet satisfactorily ascertained whether, in fact, it be a meteor, a star, or a constellation. It is now attracting some attention in the western hemisphere, but not yet in such a position as to enable our spiritual astronomer to make any

satisfactory calculations as to what system it belongs; or, indeed, whether it belongs to any well defined locality in the unmeasured fields of space. Some will have it a very bright star—a sun, indeed, of some new system. Others regard it rather as a new comet of a very elliptical orbit. A third class say that it is but a meteor of large dimensions; and not a few suppose it to be a fragment of some dissolved sun, or system, floating in space, or a remainder of celestial matter that could not be worked up into any sun, moon or star—a floating surplusage undisposed of—indicative, only, that creation is yet in progress, and that there is some material remaining unsorted, which may hereafter receive accessions and become a new orb or world, in some yet untenanted field of space.

Baron Swedenborg and mystic Babylon, have made some considerable capital out of it, in justification of their speculations about some intermediate state, or purgatory lying equidistant from heaven and hell—a sort of spiritual ark, carrying a portion of earth's tenantry from one world to another, assimilating them by a progressive metamorphosis for the one or for the other, as the case may be. But it appears more tedious and laborious than profitable, to descant upon all the visions, theories, and day-dreams which have been, from time to time, originated, cherished, defended, and ultimately exploded on this lone star in our theological heavens.

Our very estimable and eloquent Bro. Ferguson, of the *Christian Magazine*, has, it would seem to himself, come to a very satisfactory conclusion on this subject. Still, after several careful readings of it, I sincerely wish that he had yet kept it to

himself, at least a little longer. He has cherished it for some *eight* years or more, as he declares, intimating it "only to a few *personal* friends." It has now become public property, and already have brethren of different States called our attention to it, and called for some review of it, because, in their judgment; of anti-evangelical tendency, end of no value to any human being. How this may be, it is not for me to dogmatically affirm; but as in duty bound, I have laid the whole subject before my readers, and will accompany it with a few remarks, which I conscientiously and fraternally feel to be due to its author and to our common readers.

As cherished by its author, this theory, or comment upon a single passage, has become to him a perfect solace—a comfort, which recurs at every funeral he attends out of the church. It will, no doubt, as far as received by the world, be to them, especially in the close of life, a cheering hope, even when dying in their sins. They will, while shuffling off their mortal coils, flatter themselves that they are yet to hear a posthumous gospel, to be preached to all that die in their sins, and perhaps by Bro. Ferguson himself, who seems to expect or to hope for such a mission to "the imprisoned dead as his congregation."

His style, though highly pleonastic and rhetorically declamatory, has made him, as fame reports, a very popular pulpit orator; and, indeed, though not so effective in immediate results, it is, nevertheless, the most pleasing, and sometimes most edifying, oratory. His written statements, though partaking of the same characteristics, are perspicuous and definite, and leave no ground nor occasion for misconception or doubt as to their meaning and intention. He indicates a full conviction that Christ, in or by his spiritual nature, did, after his death, actually and personally descend into hades, usually called hell—the invisible world of wicked spirits, embracing both ante and postdiluvians; but especially in the case before us, to *preach the gospel to all the dead*—not to those in the flesh, but actual-

ly to spirits then in prison. Indeed, he says he preached to the imprisoned dead as his congregation. And this he did as much in justice as in mercy, because he is appointed the judge of the dead as well as of the living—many of whom, then as now, never heard of him while in the flesh, and therefore, in justice, they must hear him in the spirit, in order to their just and honorable acquittal or condemnation. This is all definite, perspicuous, and perfectly intelligible, though to us all quite a new revelation. It is, therefore, no mere fancy or mere opinion, but a practical and important view, essential, in his judgment, to a fair and honorable acquittal or condemnation of the great majority of all mankind. This posthumous gospel will then be one, not of faith, but of vision, and consequently, all subterraneous spirits *will be saved by sight, and not by faith*. As an Apostle has said that after death "comes the judgment," and Solomon has said "where the tree falls there it lies," the mission cannot, in his judgment, be one of long continuance. Not a nation, then, but a world, will be born, not in a day, but in a moment. It will be a large congregation, a short sermon, and a universal conversion! This is, indeed, a brilliant idea. It leaves purgatory and all forms of Universalism at an infinite distance behind. No long missionary train, no oceans to cross, no travelling equipage to encumber—as lightning gleams the mission will be consummated.

"How fleet is a glance of the mind,
Compared with the speed of such flight;
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift winged arrows of light."

No one of mature age and reason could think that any arguments or motives would be needed in hades. The region itself, dark as Erebus, would in a moment be illumined, regenerated and saved, by one glance of the great missionary. The greatest wonder to me is, how our perspicuous brother could flatter himself in the hope of "entering," as he says Christ did, "upon an extended ministry among the dead"!! I can hardly refrain, in full view of his eloquence, from feeling myself in a vision, perfectly

enwrapped, as Paul said, "whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell," in the mere imagination of such a scene! I am sorry to turn away my eyes from such a scene, but, for my life, I cannot but fear, that with all its brilliancy, it is a pure fiction.

However reluctant to myself or the reason, I must examine the grounds and reasons alleged in its behalf.

It is alleged, that it is absurd to define "the dead," in this passage, "as the *spiritually* dead." Grant it. But as the poet says,

"If weak thy faith, why choose the harder side?"

This is just the logic of the English Unitarians, and the German and American Neologists. It is true of them all. They all choose the harder side.

Is it not still more absurd, to define the dead here as the objects of preaching—the literal dead! They are called *spirits* in prison. Can spirits die?—! But there is no such contrasts as is assumed by our too imaginative brother. No such contrast philosophically, philosophically, or theologically, is found in the passage. This we presume the sequel will demonstrate.

But a third argument is—It accords with "the general teaching of Scripture." He gives in evidence, that Christ died to reconcile not only things on earth, but things in heaven. This, to me, seems exceedingly far fetched. Ought it not to have read to suit the interpretation given *things in hell and things in heaven!* Did Paul mean to reconcile heaven and hades! or heaven and the grave! But we must hear the interpretation given: "Not only the visible alienated creatures of God." But why suppress the term *alienated*, in the one clause and insert it in the other! Is the controversy between the visible and invisible creatures of God? Imagination, like love, is sometimes blinded by beauty.

We may comprehend words when we cannot comprehend the ideas intended to be communicated in and by them. In astronomical language, the earth itself is a part of heaven; for as many stars are under

our feet, on our right and left, as over our heads. But the grave, nor hades, nor tartarus, sometimes called hell, in the Scripture style, is no part of our spiritual and evangelical heaven. I am sorry that so important a portion of this subject should have been passed over so slightly and so unsatisfactorily, at least to me. If the work of reconciliation continue after death, and a new system of reconciliation be introduced, it should have been more explicitly stated, and at least defined.

In the evangelical spiritual universe there will be angels, authorities, principalities and powers celestial, united with ransomed humanity—one grand family of God, composed of all ranks and orders of intelligences. Hence, says Paul, in coming to Christ, and on entering into his church, "We are come to mount Zion, even to the city of the living God—the heavenly Jerusalem—to an innumerable multitude of angels; to the general assembly and church of the First Born enrolled in heaven; to God the judge of all; to the spirits of just men made perfect; to Jesus, the mediator of the new constitution, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaks [indicates] better doings than that of Abel." This is the evangelial reconciliation of things on earth and things in heaven. But neither hades or tartarus are found in this group of reconciled earth and heaven. On the contrary, if the Lord Jesus Christ, the final judge, be regarded as plenary authority in the case, there will be heard on the *last day*, "*Depart ye cursed,*" and "*Come ye blessed.*" Do these words either indicate a universal reconciliation of God, angels, men, demons, Satan and his messengers? Or do they indicate that a second remedial institution shall be introduced, a new mission commenced, and a new mode of reconciliation adopted, and another last judgment!!

I cannot imagine a more clear, definite, revelation, than we have from Paul on the premises. But it is Peter's allusion to a dispensation of the Holy Spirit, in connexion with the Messiah's mission, that has bewildered some few prominent men in eccle-

siastical history of vivid imagination and unsettled judgment, to tax their wits to find either a purgatory or a fourth dispensation of salvation to mankind. Hence "the spirits in prison" becomes a most rhetorical theme, and a pinnacle on which to build a more splendend spiritual temple than Solomon reared, or than John saw in the Visions of the Apocalypse.

We shall, therefore, presume to review the version of this passage, which has so romantically bewildered our too ardent and speculative brother editor. He has, unfortunately for himself, adopted a new version of it. New versions are not necessarily true versions, nor improved versions. This one is as loose as the four winds that once strove upon the Mediterranean sea. We shall here again present it to our readers:

"It is better to suffer, doing well, (if the will of God be so,) than doing evil, because even Christ once suffered about sins, the just over the unjust, to bring us near to God; put to death, indeed, in consequence of flesh, but made alive in consequence of the Spirit, in which Spirit, also, he went and preached to the spirits now in prison; to those once rebellious, when the long suffering of God waited out in Noah's days, while the Ark was being prepared, entering in which a few, that is eight souls, were brought safely through the waters; corresponding to which, baptism also now saves us, (not the putting off the filth of the flesh, but the asking of a good conscience after God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven, angels and powers being arranged under him. Christ, then, having suffered over us in consequence of flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, (for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,) that you no longer live the remaining time in the flesh after the lusts of men, but after the will of God. For the time past is sufficient to have wrought the will of the Gentiles when you walked in excesses, lusts, revellings, and lawless idolatries. On which account they stand astonished, that you no longer run in to the same profligate dissoluteness, mock-

ing you, who shall pay their reckoning to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead. For to this end the gospel is preached to them that are dead, that they might be judged like men in the flesh, yet live after God in the Spirit."

I fearlessly assert, that no man of literary pretensions in Christendom will undertake to sustain such a version of Peter's language. Bro. Ferguson did not make it, and he will not defend it. *The vital doctrine of Christianity is Christ's death.* It is the centre of of the whole circle of revelation. Whatever takes away its sacrificial and reconciling virtue, its remedial power and efficacy, is, of all errors in religion, the most fatal. "There is but one mediator" as certainly as there is "but one God;" and but one sacrifice for sin, as certainly as there is but one Sun of Righteousness in our spiritual universe.

It was not *to* sins, nor *about* sins, but *for* sins, that Jesus, my Saviour, died. He wept *over* Jerusalem, but he did not only weep *over* the unjust, to bring them near to God, but he died *for*, not *over*, the unjust. I know, indeed, that in some Greek texts it reads *peri hamartioon*, instead of *huper hamartioon*. But *peri* is, in many passages, translated *for*, as well as *huper*. Take a few examples: "Search *for* the child;" "shed *for* many;" "care *for* no man;" "offer *for* cleansing;" "do *for* him;" "I pray *for* them, not *for* the world; nor *for* these alone, but *for* them given me;" "I pray always *for* you;" "*for* which hope's sake," &c., &c. I know, also, that we sometimes, in vulgar parlance, substitute *about* instead of *for*. "A child weeps *about* its doll;" "I am in trouble *about* my debts;" "he has gone *about* his business." When such terms are resolved into their meaning, they are mere vulgarisms, substituted instead of *for*.

The translation given by Bro. Ferguson is borrowed from a school that wholly annihilates the sacrificial death of Christ; and all sound and substantial scholars know the shifts and subterfuges which they have adopted to annihilate the idea of vicarious sufferings, in despite of a thousand oracles

of God. They palm the most silly nonsense upon the ready ear of scepticism, touching all sin offerings, in such terms as he has quoted: "Christ once suffered *about* sins, the just *over* the unjust." "The babe cried *about* its doll, and wept *over* it." May the Lord save the church from such brainless and heartless translators!

Akin to this is the remainder of this ready-made version. "He was put to death *in consequence* of flesh!" "But made alive *in consequence* of the Spirit!" This cannot be called an *ingenious* evasion of the truth; it is too palpably void of point to be a subject of criticism.

But yet the worst is not shown. It has interpolated the word *now* before prison. "*Now* in prison." It has also prefixed *the* before spirit. Instead of the inspired words "Because even Christ once suffered for sins, a just person for unjust persons, that he might lead us to God, having, indeed, been put to death in flesh, but made alive in Spirit; by which, having gone to the spirits in prison, he preached to them, formerly disobedient, when the long suffering of God held back, in the days of Noah, while an Ark was preparing, by which a few (that is, eight) souls were saved through a flood." This I give as an exact, literal, word for word version of the passage, which should always, in justice, be done in such litigated matters. It may seem somewhat rough and unpolished in our ears, but I challenge criticism as to its exact and faithful representation to an English reader, of the passage in discussion. *It is literally correct.*

But the true meaning of this litigated passage would stand out still more prominent to some minds by one license, which I have not yet taken, and which I am, by high authority, allowed to take. That license itself dissipates all the false glosses put upon the passage, and most appropriately disposes of all glosses, debates and stifes, on the words "spirits in prison." Romanists and Swedenborgians may croak against it, but they cannot successfully assail it. It is this—*ote* after *pote*, defines its latitude.

while, rather than *when*, indicates its meaning. Thus the Lord once waited *while* (not *when*) an Ark was preparing. The passage fairly construed is this—He warned the spirits in prison that were once disobedient, while the Ark was preparing, in which few (that is, eight) persons were saved through the flood, or through the water, that unless they would repent they should all perish.

These spirits, then, were Noah's contemporaries, and were addressed by Noah, speaking through the Holy Spirit, which emphatically is, and ever was, dispensed officially by the word, which became flesh and dwelt amongst us. So that during one hundred and twenty years this great preacher of righteousness, through the Spirit which was in Christ, announced repentance, or ruin, to his contemporaries, then confined, or in prison bounds, during the time the Ark was in building and furnishing. This being admitted, what comes of that purgatorial dispensation upon which our Bro. Ferguson has been speculating, and on which certain Restorationists have been building a new dispensation and a new gospel, for those in this newly discovered promontory in heaven, called Tartarus, in which fallen angels are enchained to the judgment of the great day, or until a new mission is instituted and set on foot "to reconcile things on earth and things in heaven," for the conversion of hades, and the unpeopling of gehenna?

I can, if called upon, show that my canons of criticism on this passage are orthodox in Grecian usage; and also, that my conclusions as to "the spirits in prison," are sustained by the ablest and most learned interpreters. I substantially gave these views several years since, and although I knew not then the fact, I have since found several very learned and able commentators sustaining them.

I have not speculated nor luxuriated upon these beautiful fancy sketches of our very eloquent and popular fellow-laborer of Nashville. And I cannot soar to the summit of that Parnassus, on which he sighs in pity

"for the spiritual darkness of any man or set of men, whose earthly and selfish views limit the benefits of the mission of Christ to the comparatively few who hear of him and learn of his ways while they remain in the flesh." No indeed: he sees from those lofty pinnacles more than Satan showed our Saviour on the summit of an exceeding high mountain, when a gilded panorama of the whole world passed in all its gorgeous grandeur before the Son of Mary.

He, from the centre of the great west in this new world, has surveyed the vast regions of hades, and has seen troops of missionaries perigrinating the nations of the dead; amongst whom, he one day hopes to take a conspicuous part, in preaching a new gospel to those enchained in darkness to a future judgment.

Rapt in sublime vision, he sees not merely the present or future living nations of earth converted to Christ, but in the far distance of coming cycles of ages without end, he rejoices to see obstinate Jews and idolatrous Pagans, who heard in vain both Moses and the Prophets, bowing to the ghostly ministers of mercy sent from the schools of hades.

These, indeed, I am pleased to learn, are wholly original views, which he says he "gathered from no human teacher, but which have been forced upon him the moment that he freed himself from them all, in his examinations both of the word and works of God." This, I have no doubt, is strictly true—alas, too true! And therefore, he adds, "we never commit the body of a single human being to the grave, for whom it is not a pleasure for us to know that his soul has already entered where the knowledge of Christ *may* yet be his, and that if at last condemned, it will not be for any thing that was unavoidable in his outward circumstances on earth." This is rather enigmatical to me! Has not every citizen of Nashville, and all persons around those fields of evangelical labor, entered life where the knowledge of Christ may be theirs! I think it is due to the Christian brotherhood that this matter should be con-

sidered. It is a new revelation. Its herald frankly confesses he has not received it from man. It has been "forced upon him the more he has freed himself from them all."

This is so perpendicular, that it seems to lean a little the other way. While mental independence is both useful and commendable, it is in early life not a very great advantage. It is a great misfortune to most young men to free themselves, from all human teachers. While we should advise the young to receive nothing without proper evidence, it would be most disastrous to their education and development, to encourage them to free themselves from all human teachers. A man must have been born very rich, who is absolutely independent of all men. I have always held in long and severe abeyance any, and every view of Divine truth, that seemed to be new. Solomon's Proverbs, all of which I learned when a child, admonished me to take care of being wise too soon.

New ideas upon Bible themes, of vital importance, are very rare, and still more rarely useful. They are dangerous guests, and ought to be entertained with great caution. I have reverence for good men, for great men, and for their conceptions, especially if they are learned men. If I differ from them, it must be upon invincible evidence after having heard their last argument, and even then with diffidence, if not with reluctance.

But it is not enough to demolish one theory or one interpretation, without giving or offering a substitute. A true exegetical, or, indeed, historical development of "the spirits in prison," will dissipate the whole theory adduced. It is always dangerous, sometimes perilous in the extreme, to found a new theory and a new practice on one passage or one sentence. Doctors of medicine have sent myriads to the grave by indulging, or broaching a new theory of some new disease. I fear many will eternally deplore such hallucinators and reckless adventurers, the votaries of some golden dream, who have put an ignis fatuus into

the hand of the pilgrim, instead of the lamp of eternity. Let us, then, in the most elementary way, attempt to ascertain the true and real "spirits in prison." Not the spirits "now" in prison, but the spirits once in prison, while the Ark was preparing, which is, indeed, the key of interpretation. Peter's key must open Peter's lock.

In ascertaining who these spirits were, it is essential that all the characteristics and circumstances associated with them be severally considered. 1. They were spirits of a former age. 2. They were not all the spirits of that age. 3. They were those, then addressed by the Holy Spirit. 4. They were those addressed while Noah was preparing an ark for the salvation of his family. 5. They were disobedient spirits.—6. They were then confined, or in prison. 7. But that prison did not preclude them from hearing Noah, the preacher of righteousness. 8. Therefore, it was a figurative prison, and here we are obliged to ascertain the character of that prison.

In ascertaining the nature or character of that prison, the use of the term *phulakee*, here found and used, must be decided from the *usus loquendi*, or its current acceptation in the holy Scriptures. For this purpose, we are indebted to the contexts in which the word occurs, and also to the judgment of impartial translators. In a case of this sort, the Common Version is a fair exponent of its different significations, there being nothing in the tenets of the translators that could at all bias their minds, there being no controversy pending upon any special preference. These are the long established laws of sound criticism.

There are six versions of this word in the Common Version—1. *Prison*; 2. *Wath*; 3. *Ward*; 4. *Hold*; 5. *Cage*; 6. *Imprisonment*. Of the same family we have *phulakizoo*, to imprison; *phulassoo*, to keep; and *phulax*, a keeper. The specific idea is *confinement*.

But confinement has respect to time, as well as to place. A prisoner at large, is as much a prisoner as one in a bastile or a

common jail. Paul was a prisoner with a chain and guard.

From the declaration of the judgment of God upon the antediluvian sinners until its execution, was the term of imprisonment. The period named was one hundred and twenty years. Thus the contemporaries of Noah were confined, or imprisoned, on pain of destruction by a deluge, unless they repented during the aforesaid term. Now, this was the time within which "the long suffering of God waited," and during which Noah, by word and deed, preached to them repentance or death. Hence he is divinely called "a preacher of righteousness," by Peter himself.

Again, when alluding to the catastrophe of angels, the same Peter uses the same figure. His words are: "If God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them to hell, [tartarus] into chains of darkness, until the judgment of the great day." Now, what is the difference between casting human spirits or men into prison, and casting angels into chains of darkness?—! In the former case, into prison until a day of judgment by water; in the latter case, into chains of darkness, to a day of judgment by fire? The difference between the wicked men and wicked angels, is, that repentance was preached to sinning men, but no repentance to rebelling angels. Would it be saying more than modesty permits, with these premises before us, to affirm that the case is now fairly made out, and the assumption and use "of the spirits now in prison, demonstrated to be a mere speculative fancy!!

But two questions must be answered, to place this matter in bold relief before a reflecting mind. These are—1. Why does Peter precede this statement by affirming that Christ was quickened, or made alive by the spirit? And the second is—What means the words, "by which also he went?" Of these two the second is the most important and the least understood.

The dead Jesus was made alive by the Spirit of God. It is God alone that makes alive the dead.

But why should this be affirmed, especially in relation to Christ? He that opens the prison discharges the prisoner. He did not, then, by his own proper humanity, nor by his own proper divinity, break the prison doors of death.

Paul would not leave a Phillippian jail at the bidding of a keeper. He demanded that the magistrates themselves should come and lead him out. The magistrates were in strict conformity to the law in the case, obliged to come in person and open the prison doors themselves and lead them out. They did so, and Paul walked out honorably. So God the Father; by the Holy Spirit quickened the Lord Jesus, and his angels rolled away the stone and sat upon it, to publish that God had raised him from the dead, and that he had not raised himself. Hence the Divinity in the personality of the Holy Spirit raised and discharged from the prison the hero of our redemption—the Lord Jesus Christ. The third personality of Jehovah.

But still more sublime. The same Holy Spirit that raised him from the dead, had always borne witness to the Lord Jesus. He opened the eyes of the holy bards and seers of Patriarchal and Jewish ages. Noah, Job, Abraham, David, Daniel, &c., bore witness to him *by one and the same spirit*. Indeed, the holy men of old spake the word of the Lord by the Lord himself. Hence Jesus, before his incarnation, ever was the word—THE WORD OF GOD. It was his first name. And it will be, and now is, his last and most awful and glorious name. In the Apocalypse his name is again proclaimed the “word of God.” John saw him clothed in a vesture baptized in blood, and said, “his name is called the word of God.”

The sublime views and principles of Christianity have been greatly obscured in the unhappy debates called Unitarian and Trinitarian. Extremes beget extremes.—John the Apostle, settles all controversy on the eternity of THE WORD, saying, “In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. All things were made by him.” And Paul says, “All

things were made *for* him;” “and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” “His delights were” “from of old, from everlasting,” “with the sons of men.”

All the ransomed sons of men are saved by him. Hence his sacrifice was in prospect, before the foundation of the world.—Eternal life was promised through him, from the foundation of the world. He is the Alpha and Omega of the spiritual and material universe. He is the end as well as the beginning—“the First and the Last.” In the consummation of redemption, he is all in all. The ancient Prophets spake by the Holy Spirit of him, and for him, and by him. He therefore, preached through all the Prophets, as the oracle of God. This unfolds the scope of Peter’s allusion in the passage in debate. The same Jesus, as “THE WORD OF GOD,” before his incarnation, went in the person of Noah, by the Spirit, to preach to those antediluvians who were doomed to destruction, unless they repented. Their bounds were “while the Ark was preparing;” the whole prison bounds being one hundred and twenty years.—Such are the facts and such the oracles of God pertaining to them. Thus he was quickened by the Spirit, through whom, in the person of the prophets, he spake as the word of God, before he became flesh and dwelt amongst us.

The radical misconception of this passage on the part of our brother Ferguson, is in assuming that the spirits in prison were *disembodied spirits* when preached to. And yet there is not one passage, from the Alpha to the Omega of the Bible, intimating that ever Prophet, Apostle or Evangelist, at any time, preached to a disembodied spirit. It is purely a figment of a daring imagination.

It is, indeed, a very poetic imagination, but as baseless as a dream of the morning. How often do we, in sacred and common style, by a rhetorical license old as the Bible, call men in the flesh *souls*, or spirits. Soul and spirit are often used to represent *persons*.” “Abraham took the *souls* that he had begotten in Haran;” and he said to the

King of Sodom, Give me the *souls*, (Hebrew,) the spirits or persons, and take the goods to thyself. Leah gave thirty-three *souls* to Jacob; Zilpah bare to him sixteen *souls*; Rachel gave to him fourteen *souls*; Bilhah seven *souls*. Hence, Jacob took with him sixty-six or seventy *souls* into Egypt. (Gen. xli.) Even in New Testament Greek, we are told that on Pentecost 3,000 *souls* were added in one day to the church. We are, moreover, commanded not to believe every *spirit*, or person; but to try *the spirits*, because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

May we not, then, strongly affirm, that the foundation being a palpable assumption, and one purely imaginative, our too ardent and imaginative brother has indulged his imagination at the expense of truth, and of our reputation as a community, in the esteem of all learned, well informed and reflecting men? It has been to me one of the most painful duties that I have found myself called upon to discharge to the cause of truth, either on my own suggestions or on those of well informed brethren of different States, who, as well as myself, regard such a development as exceedingly unhappy, tending to neutralize the influence of the gospel by impairing its sanctions and of weakening the efforts of those who are teaching sinners, that unless they repent they will assuredly perish; and that in some cases, even in this life, it is impossible to renew some men to repentance, and that nothing awaits them but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and of a fiery indignation, which will devour, or destroy, the adversaries of the gospel.

Solomon, in all his wisdom, never indulged in any such dangerous speculations. On the contrary, he said in his Ecclesiastes, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom"—and, therefore, no repentance—"in the grave whither thou goest."

For my own part, could I entertain such a speculation, preaching and exhorting men to flee from the wrath to come, and telling

them that unless they repent, they shall all perish, would appear downright hypocrisy and sinful trifling. And with what force of sincerity could I say, with Paul, if even Christians wilfully renounce Christ after having received the knowledge of the truth, there remains for them no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain looking for of judgment, which shall devour the adversaries, &c.

There is no one that can regret, more than myself, the task which I have found myself, in this instance, called upon to undertake. Such romantic speculations, like "the endless genealogies and fables" inhibited by Paul to Timothy, in the very opening of his first Epistle, minister questions and debates more than godly edifying. They also encumber and retard the great cause of Reformation. They give occasion to our adversaries to assail our whole community, and to decry all our efforts. We must all bear the shame of such extravagancies. If we remonstrate against them, we wound their authors; if we do not remonstrate against them, we wound the cause. I affirm, before heaven and earth, the conviction, that the speculation which I have been reviewing saps the very foundation of Christianity, and unnerves every man who quotes Christ's own words, "Unless you repent you shall likewise perish." "He that believeth not shall be damned." "He shall not see life—the wrath of Jehovah resteth upon him." This speculation saps the whole foundation—the strongest argument for obeying the gospel. We have never read, from any quarter in our ranks, an essay of a more vulnerable or a more censurable character.

Dr. Thomas, in his vainglorious speculations, terminating in his *Elpis Israel*, rather than in the discovery of some new world, on which to inscribe his fame, has covered himself with shame, and reduced his metropolitan church in Richmond to less than half the twelve apostles. In such cases, with a slight modification, we may say with the poet—

"O sons of earth, attempt you still to rise,
By fables piled on fables to the skies,
Heaven still with laughter the vain toil surveys;
And buries builders in the heaps they raise."

I have no apology to offer to any man, for the task I have now performed. It is more painful to myself than it will be to any one, not even expecting the subject of it. I have been admonished by my own neglect, on former occasions, through a false delicacy, in not timidly noticing some such matters, and by experience, that great teacher, have been admonished to do so no more.

We may have indiscreet preachers. Indeed, I know we have more than a plurality of them, that ought to be somewhere else doing good than in the pulpit. But there are two consolations in their case—their voice does not extend over the continent, and it soon ceases. But not so our editors and scribes. The *picta tabula manet*—the printed sheet remains; and after they have died, the leaven lives and sometimes works.

I ask no pardon on the present occasion. What I have said, I can assure all my readers, I have said in Christian benevolence, and from a conscience that could not otherwise approve myself.

A. C.

From the Millennial Harbinger, for July.

THE CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.—NO. I.

The flattering reputation of the editor of the Christian Magazine, both as a writer and an orator, and his recent developments of a speculative character, touching the most vital doctrines of Christian institution, constrain us to pay to him a more special regard than we are wont to volunteer, or even when solicited, to grant to any of our contemporary editors. The tongue of the eloquent orator and the pen of the ready writer are the two most potent instrumentalities of moral good or moral evil in the world. To have them consecrated to the gospel of man's redemption, and to his purification and perfection, is the greatest blessing to the Christian church, as to have them devoted to error and schism is to the church and to the world the greatest calamity.

The current reformation has always had more to fear from its friends and advocates than from its opponents. "Save me from my friends, I care not for my enemies," was

an exclamation of a man alike distinguished for talent and virtue.

The unlicensed press of the present day, and especially in our department of reformation, is the most fearful omen in my horizon. Amongst the calamities and judgments threatened against God's ancient people was the withdrawal of the honorable and the mighty men—"the judges and the prophets, and the eloquent orators" of the nation, and the calamity of filling their places with *children* for leaders, and *babes* for rulers over them. The consequence was, "the people were oppressed by one another; the child proudly contemned the ancient; the mean and base withstood the honorable." Jerusalem was ruined, and Judah became prostrate in the dust. See Isaiah iii. 1-8.

As a community we have been the most reckless in choosing our editors, our scribes, our elders and our preachers. I know that in all revolutions, reformations and changes in society—political, ecclesiastical, or moral, this is an accident or contingency almost inevitable. Time, however, that great teacher and revolutionist; in other words, human experience, will, in the long run, correct and redress these wrongs and aberrations.

We have had a brood of periodicals the most voluntary and irresponsible that I have ever known. We have editors just out of the shell of conversion; a youth converted this year, the next a *preacher*; and next a *scribe*, then an *editor*!! What a brilliant climax! But, alas, for the anticlimax!—"Alas, for thee, O land," said Solomon the wise, "when thy king is a child, and thy princes revel in the morning!" Have we not already paid a large price for this lesson!

I do not wish to call names, nor to relate the comic-tragedy of our fallen scribes and infant sages. We have never needed, nor shall we ever need in the present generation, but three periodicals—one weekly, one monthly and one quarterly. The weekly sheet, with departments for every State, as to important movements, meetings, news, passing events, &c. &c. These ably conducted, well sustained, and widely cir-

culated, with reputable contributors from all the land, would meet the entire wants of this age, and save the community many thousands of dollars per annum for better purposes than for the readings of diluted ideas in Homeopathic doses, as we now have them dispensed in invisible pills, in the ratio of one to a gallon of water. I have seen one idea returning from an extreme State—and a pilgrimage of thousands of miles—so metamorphosed and so evaporated that I did not recognize it, although an old acquaintance, familiar as household words.— Truly, this is an age of progress, a prolific age; a wonderful country and we are a great people!! I have been, from my critical situation, travailing in birth, for seven years, to be delivered of this one idea, and, now that it is born, I fear for its fortunes. I can only beseech my numerous friends and brethren to throw the mantle of the charity around this bantling of my old age; take it home, cradle it, nurse it, cherish it, and if I cannot pay you now I will bequeath you a few volumes out of my library for the benefit of yourselves, your heirs, or your legal representatives.

But now for a few remarks on the Christian Magazine and its highly esteemed and estimable conductor. We have not had a more respectable looking monthly in this valley. It is conducted with a free pen and a facile style, and with the essential elements of a popular journal. We would, however, have still been better pleased had it elaborated with more conspicuity and point the distinctive characteristics of the current reformation.

We often, indeed, desire to scale the heights of Zion, and stand in solemn contemplation upon its hallowed summit. We would, too, occasionally ascend Mount Pisgah, and with the telescope of faith and hope survey the beauties of the promised land. Again, in a contemplative mood, we are delighted to wend our weary way through its deep valleys, and to trace its meandering streams which refresh the weary pilgrim and make glad the city of our God, up to the stricken rock whence they spring

with unwasting fullness. 'Tis there, where many a pilgrim sat, we find the perennial fountain, the placid stream and the bowers of sweet repose. Here and there the Rose of Sharon greets our eye, and the Lilly of the Valley cheers our path.

But we always need the bread of life. We need the solid food, the hidden manna, which gives health, and strength, and beauty to our feeble and fading frames. We need, too, to have some outposts near the walls of Zion to protect its sacred shrine, and to repel the assaults of her invading foes. We are "to fight the good fight of faith," and "to lay hold on eternal life." Error must be assailed, and our spiritual armory employed in its assault, as well as in our own defence, and that of eternal truth.

Hence our mortification in seeing our fellow laborer lending his strength to the enemies of soul redeeming truth, by impairing the sanctions of the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Without intending it, the sanctions of the gospel are impaired, the bow of truth unstrung, and its arrows are so blunted as not to pierce the hearts of the king's enemies. Still I had (and still wish to cherish) a flickering hope that he has only fallen into company with the spirits in prison, and that they have yet feebly laid their unsanctified hands upon him. I fear the indications of the June more than those of the May number. Still I will not despair; therefore, I will urge some reasons for a reconsideration. But that I may yet be assured that there is some way of escape I must offer to its editor, and those who read it and the Harbinger, a few of my thoughts on this essential doctrine of our most holy faith.

Eternal life and eternal death are the two essential arguments—in other words, God's own two great motive arguments, annexed to the Christian gospel. These severally imply each other. The denial of the one is the denial of both. There cannot be eternal life if there be no eternal death, and there cannot be eternal death if there be no eternal life.

Before instituting a formal review of this subject I five times read his last essay on "*The Rewards and Punishments of the Life to Come*." I should, from all my premises, conclude that this essay was occasioned by some indications of public feeling on the developments of the essay on the "Spirits in Prison." It is, therefore, presumed to be a defence from the imputations arising from his views of a posthumous mission to the dead, in order to translate them from a miserable prison to heaven. We should think, indeed, that it must needs be a short mission and a universal conversion. For, who in a place of torment, or in any uncomfortable position in hades, would need much urging to accept an invitation to come out, and to ascend to heaven?

But as our manner is, we must quote of this last development so much of it as we can at present review:

"Speculations as to the exact nature or duration of punishment are unwise, because neither is clearly revealed. The spirit which dictated the Bible seems to have intended that an indefiniteness should spread itself over the whole subject, while the impression is fully made that it is an evil thing and a bitter to depart from the living God."

"The rewards and the punishments of the life to come," at the head of this article, led me to expect, as I presume it would lead any other reader to expect, an assertion and a development of these future rewards and punishments. I read it once, and then a second time, and then a third, fourth and fifth times, and, if my life were at stake, I could not decide whether its author believes at all in any form of future punishment, in the literal and common import of these terms. Far be it from me to say he intended to conceal his views; but, certainly, whatever his intentions were he has done it. The style is smooth, facile, rhetorical. I understand every word in it; and, yet, that he believe or teaches, endless punishment I could not, I cannot decide. But the whole drift leads me to doubt it.—The terms used rather suggest to me that

he does not. There is a caution and an ambiguity so evident as to create a suspicion, which I do not wish to entertain, and yet I have, in vain, sought to be relieved from it. He, indeed, affirms that the "*duration*" as well as the "*nature*" of future punishment are not clearly revealed. Concerning the *nature* of it, had he said no more, I might have been somewhat relieved from doubt; but when he says the *duration* of it, I am made seriously to doubt. If the *duration* of punishment after death is, in his judgment, not clearly revealed, neither is the duration of future happiness clearly revealed, *because the terms that define the one define the other*. And then, Paul is a deceiver when he says: "Life and immortality are brought to light in the gospel." I cannot reconcile Paul and brother Ferguson. I must, then, call for help. If *eternal* and *everlasting* do not define the duration of future punishment they cannot define the duration of future happiness; and hence he has, in this saying, taken away my hope as well as the sinners fear!! That punishment and happiness are coeternal or cotemporary, is, according to him, *not revealed*; and Paul and his master are charged and chargeable with ambiguity and indistinctness; indeed, with deception. The whole matter is but a rhetorical flourish.

By fair grammatical and logical interpretation he does not believe, and, consequently, does not teach *everlasting* punishment to wicked men, unless everlasting in one and the same sentence, means both temporal and eternal.

But there is one hope in our brother's case, and that is this, he does not always use language understandingly. This I shall be at some pains to demonstrate. He says, "that literal and definite ideas of future punishment, or reward, are not attainable in this life." Does he mean the *character*, or *degree*, of them may be a questionable matter? If he mean *character*, then why does he call both "*moral*?" And if he mean *continuance*, why does he use the word *everlasting* as the definition of either? And, still worse, why affirm the conviction,

that, "the spirit which dictated the Bible seems to have intended that *indefiniteness* should spread itself all over the subject?" And this is his proof—"that speculations on the nature and *duration* of punishment are unwise," as "it is not revealed." Then the perpetuity of future punishment is, in his best judgment, unrevealed!! It may, indeed, be, in *his* best judgment, yet *unrevealed*; but not in the judgment of our Christian Brethren: for if *everlasting* punishment is not revealed, neither is *everlasting* life and happiness revealed. And we are all hitherto in the dark!!

But again he says—the gradual progress of human culture will strip the idea of its imagery and find a beautiful and impressive truth in it. "This gradual progress," then, is, to us, to be a future revelation. This is a new species of revelation. I fear, however, that few of us will live long enough to have a new revelation on the subject! It is clear that our brother has not yet had a revelation of it, and whether any of us ever can, on his premises, is superlatively doubtful.

Indeed, our brother Ferguson is very much at sea, and far from the port of clear vision, on this greatest of subjects, if the following language clearly indicates his attainments on the premises. I will quote the whole passage, for the sake of giving it due emphasis.

"Though the doctrine of a future life is now, ever has been, and ever will be, as various as the aspects and modes of the human mind, yet the vital and effectual element of that doctrine is the same in every age; and I will add what every philosophical student of history must know, it is the same in Judaism and Christianity. That vital element is that the distinction in the future life, *is moral*. This is the heaven and hell of the religions of all dispensations. The distinctions of happiness or misery are *moral*. They mark the evil and the good."

I here turned to the word *moral*, in Webster's Dictionary—the best extant—of our present vernacular. In his seven defini-

tions, with examples annexed, there is not one that meets this case.

The *social* qualities of human actions is of the essence of every definition. It relates exclusively to the actions of men as social beings. A moral law is a rule of social actions—a moral government is a government that takes account of human actions according to their social bearings, and rewards or punishes them according to their social good or evil.

In its essence and form it represents social actions. Rewards and punishments are based on moral character, when men are treated according to the good or evil social qualities, or tendencies, of their actions. A mere moral distinction in a future life, is rather beyond the sphere of physics or metaphysics, especially as respects rewards and punishments, then and there accruing from the social rights and wrongs there occurring. Here we are under a moral government where moral actions are mixed, sometimes good and sometimes evil, in whole or in part. But that there is a moral government in heaven or hell, or that men are there under a system of moral government, will require a little more philosophy and theology than that of brother Ferguson, or any other philosopher now living to demonstrate. And that a purely *punitive* government, as that under which fallen angels and fallen men are placed in another world, can be called a *moral* government will require more learning and more Bible than any living man now possesses.

Chastisement is moral, but punishment is not. Our brother Ferguson's hell may be a place of chastisement; ours a place of punishment. I use the word *place* for the word *state*, because of the grossness of some men's education. *Place* has respect to *presence*. There is no *place* where there is no *presence*. In his presence there is fullness of joy—not in his presence there is fullness of pain. In his absolute absence there is literally no place. But he is present in hell to punish as he is in heaven to bless. Here we are under a moral govern-

ment. After judgment there will be no moral government over the lost, any more than there is now over the angels that kept not their first estate. They are reserved in chains of darkness till the judgment of the great day. There is, therefore, now no moral government over them; and hereafter there will be none over men condemned "to everlasting punishment."

According to all our reasonings, on law and gospel, there can be no sin committed by angel or man, in a state of absolute exclusion from law and grace. Consequently, in all the descriptions of hell, or of eternal judgment, or of expulsion from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, neither angel nor man is represented as capable of sinning or increasing transgression. "Where no law is there can be no transgression;" and certainly, more evident it is, that where there is neither law nor gospel there can be no condemnation. *Sin is possible only under a dispensation of goodness or of mercy.* Hence there is no moral government, no moral discipline no moral law in hell. And therefore, all reasonings from a remedial institution, and those under it, to a punitive dispensation, and those under it, are wholly sophistical and erroneous.

The fundamental idea cherished by our brother Ferguson of a state of punishment being a moral instrumentality, are at variance as much with reason and fact as with revelation. The purgatory of the Papist is not more baseless nor more visionary than that of a future state of penalties as remedies or chastisements. It is, therefore, a sin against language, reason, and the Bible, to cherish or inculcate the idea of hell, or the grave, of a separate, or a future state, as being only a moral instrumentality, or as justifying the use of the word *moral* at all, in connexion with a future state of existence and retribution.

"There remaineth nothing, therefore," to those who live and die in their sins, "but a certain fearful looking for the judgment and of a fiery indignation that will devour the adversaries." To hint any ray of hope to

a man, living and dying in his sins, is as dangerous and soul ruinous a speculation as was ever spoken or written. "He that believeth" not shall be condemned, and the wrath of God shall abide forever upon his rebellious soul. Better warn every man out of Christ to flee from the wrath to come than to encourage him with a single ray of hope, that though he dies in his sins he may be brought to repentance and eternal life, under another dispensation. "Say to the wicked man that it shall be ill with him, dying in his sins, and that where Christ is he can never appear.

Hell is not a moral school, but a punitive prison. I would be obliged to our brother Ferguson for a glossary to explain his terminology.

We are not sure that we rightly understand some sentences in this essay. I do not know exactly what our brother understands to have been the Jewish notion of *Hades*, which he reprobates. A little light on this subject would be of some use to some of his readers. His allusion to the state of the heathen, and his complaints against certain Missionary appeals, presented in Nashville, for sending the gospel to Paganism, demands a full development. What means the word *perish* in the phrase "where no vision is the people perish?"—What does he mean when he says: "Heaven and hell are in our midst every day," indeed, in his own church and in the same pew during service? Do such forms of speech explain to us the heaven and the hell of Christianity!

I am glad to see that he admits "a retribution of sin" as inevitable, and that all reason and revelation call upon us to fear continuance in it. But inasmuch as the grossest Universalists speak in this style, we want in such a case as the present more than a few generalities which may mean any thing called physical or moral pain, such as self-reprobation, remorse, shame, fear, physical diseases, premature death, &c. These are all the damnation and everlasting punishment of some Rationalists, and more or less of every school that denies "an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power." It is, therefore, due to himself, to his brethren, to the cause of truth that brother Ferguson relieve himself from his present ambiguous and inauspicious attitude, which none of his friends regret more than myself, although

they may not all feel themselves in duty bound, as I do, thus publicly to note and rebuke an error and a system of Bible interpretation subversive of all definite, perspicuous and satisfactory views of the Bible in general, and of the remedial system and man's salvation in particular.

This thing of being continually at sea in quest of new discoveries, however useful it may have been in the days of Christopher Columbus, is not in reference to a territory that has been circumnavigated and explored ten thousand times by innumerable circumnavigators so useful, or at all useful, now. The gospel and its institutions, its rewards, its chastisement and its punishments are not now its *terra incognita*, a matter in debate, in doubt, or any sort of ambiguity, amongst us as a people. There was, indeed, under the eye of apostolic teachers, a certain class that were ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. And I am sorry to say, that we have yet both teachers and taught that, in more points than one, resemble that same untractable class.

I do hope that our brother Ferguson will be more explicit on these grand points of Christian learning, and that he may relieve us and himself from the unenviable attitude of holding in high esteem those who hope to be ambassadors of Christ, after death to visit the regions of the damned, to convert them and bring them thence to heaven. Certainly such a presentation of Christian missions, in another world, demands an apology to the whole brotherhood, and ought to be as public as the offence against truth and good morals was spread over the whole community, to the mortification of our whole brotherhood. If it be his settled judgment it ought to be known and publicly reprobated. If were an impulse of an exuberant and wild imagination, it ought to be confessed, retracted and forgiven.

A. C.

From the Millennial Harbinger, for August.

THE SPIRITS IN PRISON.

"I have received from all quarters, except one, an approval of my remarks upon the unhappy developments of our brother Ferguson. It is not the single mistake of a passage of Scripture—a mere misapprehension of the meaning of a verse, of which the wisest, most learned, and pious amongst us, may occasionally fall into; but, in some instances of this sort, there is a radical and fundamental unbelief or misconception of the whole Christian Religion. Sup-

pose a professed teacher of the Science of Geometry should, in a single case, affirm the opinion that all the angles of any triangle were only equal to one right angle, could a mathematician need any further proof of his incompetency to teach the science of mathematics? It is, indeed, only one mistake, but a large plurality of errors might be named, not all of which would so irrefragably demonstrate his utter incompetency to teach mathematics as this one error. I am doubtless understood, and, therefore, I have no apology to offer for either the promptness or the positiveness of my review of the essay laid before the public in the Christian Magazine, on the fortunes of "the spirits in prison." If it were not a State periodical, and representative of the religious views of the brotherhood that sustain it, or had it been a private communication, I might, could, would have chosen a different course. But such is neither my conscience nor, I hope, my character. The whole brotherhood, North, South, East and West, so far as I have heard from them, are unanimous in the opinion, that the avowals on this subject, as set forth in that essay, and as further indicated in subsequent essays on Rewards and Punishments, are subversive of all that is vital in the sanctions of the gospel.

It is, therefore, due to himself and the brotherhood, candidly to retract, or boldly and unambiguously avow, his views of heaven and hell.

Heaven and hell, as developed by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, are fixed and established items of Christian faith, understood alike by all Protestants—Baptist or Pedo-Baptist; the one as indicative of fulness of joy and *everlasting* pleasures in the presence of the Lord; the other, as indicative of *everlasting* torment, in utter seclusion from the presence of the Lord, and of everlasting agony, without one ray of hope for ever and ever. The dreams and figments of Swedenborg, and of Universalists and Restorationists, are understood and repudiated by all well read, true Christians of every name in Protestant Christendom.

We, therefore, see no advantage to be gained by introducing such speculations amongst us as themes for essays or discussions for the edification of our brethren on *Bible Christianity*. I have therefore, touched the subject very slightly—merely as indicative of how much more may be said, and well said, on the premises to which I have adverted. I, therefore, lay before my readers a still more exegetical

development of the grossness of the conceptions to which our bro. Ferguson has so inconsiderately given utterance. If we can not find ailment for our faith, our hope, our love, our zeal, in the glorious facts, precepts, promises, objects and motives of the Christian Scriptures, we had better lay down our pens than set the minds of men adrift on oceans of unfathomable speculations, as utopian as the philosopher's stone, which professed to transmute brass into gold; or as the wand of the enchanter, that presumed to divine the future destinies of man.

Oh that this had been but a private offence against good taste, good morals, and sound learning, and then our remonstrance had been as private as the offence: then would not have been applicable to us the Apostle's injunction, "Them that publicly offend publicly rebuke, that others may fear."

Were it a mere speculation, however visionary, we should allow it to evaporate according to the laws of nature in such cases. But such is not its character. It is an avowal of the want of faith in future state of retribution, and is as clear a nullification of terrors of the Lord as can be found in the English language. It places the vilest rebels on earth under a new dispensation of mercy after death, and opens a door out of hell to the vilest inmate that ever died. I do not think that its author so intended, else I should not call him bro. Ferguson; but what he has said is not to be interpreted by his good intentions, but by its true meaning and its inevitable tendencies. It is a paralyze upon the tongue of every man who would say, "unless you repent you shall perish for ever." It, therefore, subverts all the terrors of the Lord, and gives a hope to the vilest wretch that dies, that after a period of future chastening, he shall find a home in Abraham's bosom. Nothing can undo its mischievous tendency but a formal renunciation.

A. C.

From the Millennial Harbinger, for August,

I have given a sample, but a sample, of the communications received on this subject. Greater unanimity is rarely manifested on any subject, than is now manifested on this. I will close with a communication which would, but for accident, have appeared in its proper place in this number. Bro. Johnson, and all that have communicated with us, seem to have but one and the same spirit and aim in their communications, as they are all of one mind and judgment. I have much reason to think that

our bro. Ferguson will, on a calm deliberation on all the premises, see good reason to coincide with the brethren, and reprobate a fanciful exposition of a mere phrase; which speculation would annul the explicit declaration of "an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." Bro. Ferguson is, I learn, a very amiable person, as well as a very acceptable orator. He is a young man, and, however diligent in his studies, has had neither the time, the means or the education necessary to give to himself or to others a full assurance of understanding on all that is taught in the apostolic writings. We have young men and fathers, as well as children and babes, in Christ. His reading is to be inferred from his writings, as well as his speeches. It has not been so critical or so profound, as it has been popular and versatile.

One of the besetting frailties of human nature is, that children soon outgrow their parents, especially in America. And they think correctly, too, when they think they have better means of education than their fathers enjoyed. But there are no royal nor hereditary titles in this country to aristocratic knowledge or learning. We must all dig for ourselves, and dig, too, as for hidden treasure. It is knowledge that puffeth up, and not charity. It is charity, and not knowledge, that buildeth up; though both are sometimes united, and hand in hand co-operate. I only regret the publicity which this subject has obtained in being so prematurely pressed upon our attention; but for this neither myself nor my correspondents can, with any show of reason, be chargeable. If these speculations should be pressed upon public attention, it is a duty indispensable that they be probed to the bottom. And this has yet been done but in a measure, with the developments made. What has been written, I hope will suffice to justify a retraction on his part, which I doubt not, will be essential to his usefulness, holiness and happiness, and will as much exalt him, in the esteem of all, as it will gratify his most sincere friends and brethren in the hope of eternal life, which as much implies an eternal death as does the word of life itself indicate the certainty of death, that too, on both sides, natural and spiritual, temporal and eternal: for, as adjuncts of life or death they are as inseparable as that the tree of the knowledge or experience of good must also be the tree of the knowledge or experience of evil.

A. C.

From the Millennial Harbinger, for July,

"THE SPIRITS IN PRISON."

WE are still in receipt of letters from all quarters, in strong reprobation of the views of Bro. Ferguson, developed in his speculations on the spirits in prison and a posthumous mission to the dead, which, as a leprous spot on the skin, indicates a vitiated state of the humors of the system, according to all the oracles of Nosology and Pathology. It is required and fondly hoped, that a retraction of them will be as public as was their promulgation. As a specimen of these communications, we select one from two sections of our brotherhood, eminently distinguished for their love of truth and Christian urbanity.

Bro. Church, of Pittsburgh, under date of June 23d, writes:

"I am truly sorry to see that Bro. Ferguson has got a maggot in his brain. This will destroy his usefulness and influence, and probably end in his becoming a wandering star, like Mr. Thomas. Whenever men permit themselves to stand before the public as advocates of some unprofitable speculation in religion, and then pride becomes enlisted, it is generally the case that their usefulness ends. This figment of Bro. Ferguson's is, in my estimation, infinitely worse than Thomasism. If there be a 'damnable heresy,' this is unquestionably one. I can see in it a perfect Pandora box. I regard the propagation of such a sentiment as the destruction of all that is vital in religion. I commenced an article on the subject for the Harbinger, which I may send you."

Bro. John Rogers, under date of June 22d, writes:

"I have seen your review of Bro. Ferguson's new discovery. It was loudly called for by the circumstances of the case. Most deeply do I regret this serious, and, I fear, dangerous aberration of our much esteemed and highly gifted brother. Though I never saw him, I have loved him much for his work's sake. Oh, if I could blot out the lines he has written on this subject with my

tears, most gladly would I do it. I love the cause of Bible Christianity, I trust, better than all things else, and therefore, am afflicted to see a weapon put into the hands of enemies. I can see no possible good that can result from the avowal of such a sentiment, nor a particle of testimony to support it. But that a vast amount of injury to the souls of men may be the consequence, seems to me inevitable. Oh for the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove!"

I have not had time to confer with these brethren as to their consent to publish their conceptions of these developments. But I know them devoted to the truth and the cause of Reformation, so well as to feel assured that they would not object, as their devotion to truth is paramount to their respect of persons or of their feelings, when the gospel and its sanctions are at stake.

I trust that our brother of the Magazine, on reconsidering the matter, will see cause to relieve himself, as well as the feelings of his brethren and the great cause of Christianity, from the injury done to himself and to the cause, by giving these crude and undigested speculations to the public, instead of gospel truth; indeed, alike subversive of it, and of its awful and glorious sanctions.

A. C.

Since the foregoing articles were prepared for the press, the Millennial Harbinger for November has come to hand. We are called upon to publish the following which we do with our response.

From the Millennial Harbinger, for Nov.

THE CHRISTIAN MAGAZINE.

1. We confess both disappointment and regret at the anomalous and ungracious course of the Editor of the Christian Magazine. Instead of meeting our expostulations of the tendencies of his new and foreign doctrines and anti-evangelical speculations, touching a posthumous mission to hades, and post mortem gospel for the benefit of infants, idiots, pagans and other condemned unfortunates, or of taking them back, with a candid avowal of his inability to sustain them, he has chosen and commenced to represent our essays as a personal "attack," or rather an "assault" upon himself—an act of great injustice, proceeding from some unknown cause, some unkind, ungenerous, or invidious feeling of myself to him personally, emanating from any thing but a Christian spirit and a Christian benevolence.
2. And if intent on producing this impression, (I will not say to cover a retreat, or maintain his dignity and authority with his readers,) he has up to this date, carefully and cautiously withholden from their eyes every essay and remonstrance that I have written on his positions and defences. This he has effectually done, so far as the circulation of the Christian Magazine extends. Need I ask, is this Christian justice and righteousness.

Nay, is it truthful and honorable amongst philosophers of this world?

3. That I may not appear to speak from my own inferences, I will give a few samples from his own pen:—"The September Parbinger," he affirms, "is crowded with persistent assaults upon us and our view," p. 17.—that is upon the man J. B. Ferguson and upon his views. "The content was not of our seeking, and no one can regret its personal character more than we," p. 314. "We have no room for personal contests," p. 317. Let our readers turn over to his twelve specifications, page 88 M. H.

4. Of these, the seventh affirms that *I have made three attacks on his personality.* Again he asks—"Why can the matter be—will a few more cry crucify him, crucify him?" He says he says, "papal authority from Rome or Babylon."

5. Now courteous reader, let me ask you. What does all this mean? This papal authority! This "crucify him, crucify him!" What has given rise to this prodigious alarm! Why, forsooth, we were not so arrogant as to call in question the opinions of Jesse B. Ferguson of Nashville, touching his suberraneous discoveries. And, indeed, they were not his! Not he only adopted them from some neologist pen. I use the term rather to his unfortunate readings, than to his own imaginations. He has never done nothing. He has only adopted and newly named an old heresy. Were I in Nashville, I could not need to inquire at the post-office or Elder Ferguson's periodical readings. We know full well his illuminati. But forbear. We have said that he is a fluent writer, and they say he is a fluent speaker; and both of these are gifts which are worthy of respect.—But I also know that he grasps too free a pen and his imagination anticipates his facts and reasonings, and sometimes furnishes them. It has furnished him with all my "personal assaults" and "attacks," and the alleged injure of my course. On these points I only add, that I not one word of truth in his allegata, so far as I am posted in all that is on record. I therefore, call for his personal injustices and these personal attacks. Let him make out a full statement of them, giving page and page. I will then prove them to be his own figments, or make them honorable amends. But, till then I must regard him as laboring under a morbid state of the imagination, for which I would prescribe gratuitously to abstain from theology, and a more discriminating attention to the difference between faith and opinion, reason and imagination, facts and fancies, testimony and inference, the words of inspiration and the diet of the schools of this new philosophy, whether of New England or Old Germany.

6. I can not as yet informed, discover any point in which he has been misrepresented, or made to assume any other attitude than that which he has been pleased to assume. But having drawn so freely of the rectified spirits of sublimated philosophy, he imagines more than he sees, and regards his best friends as about to crucify him. No one, not so excited, could see racks and inquisitions, and crosses, at Pittsburgh, Memphis, Cincinnati and Bethany. We would say to his pain-stricken soul be calm, be self-possessed. There is neither cross, nor guillotine, nor racks, nor a Father-in-law, standing over you panting for your blood!

7. But perhaps he has David in his eye, when in the presence of Achis, King of Gath. David was terrified in the presence of that prince, and changed his behaviour; feigning himself mad, scrambled on the door of the gate, and let his spittle fall down on his beard. It was, indeed, good policy, but bad taste. It saved his life: for the King said, "So you see this man, that he is bereft of his reason. Why brought you him to me? Have I need of such men as he! Send him away!"—Surely our friend Ferguson sees crosses, and stakes, and inquisitions, only politically or for effect, as King David did. (1 Sam. xvi. 12, 13, 14.) Well, seeing he has thus humbled himself, we, too, will dismiss him from this dilemma, only adding, that we are sorry to see him so nervous and reduced to such embarrassing shifts. It is bad company that has wrought this mischief. A change of reading, better company, a purer atmosphere, and more poised than poetry, would be a very happy change in such a case.

8. From the days of the Christian Baptist till now, we have occasionally more or less, acted the part of a reviewer. Nor do we yet design wholly to abandon it. We can see faults in those we yet delight to honor, and virtues in some we cannot admire. We never were so partial, so one-sided, as to blink the errors or follies of a brother, while peering in on those of the sects around us. But now for the first time in my life, on the part of a brother editor, my motives are impeached, and my public notice of public documents is censured as an "assault," an "attack," a "misrepresentation." To all of which, we plead not guilty.

9. We advocate a cause, the greatest, the best, the

dearest on earth. Our partiality, our respect, our reverence for any living man must give place and precedence to our devotion to the glorious gospel of the blessed God—the charter of immortality to man—which we do most sincerely believe to be seriously assailed, if not in its dispensation, practically nullified in the visionary speculation and undecoded assumption of a future gospel and mission to the dead. To me, this appears to be rather more than a mere inoperative human opinion. It is equivalent, in effect, to the assertion of an the gospel to be preached in another world. And of course, to let it live before the flood, as well as to let it live at, or since the flood.

10. As great a heretic as I am supposed to be, by some of our contemporary Protestant sects—as ridiculous as some of them may be to myself, or my views on some points—I could fearlessly refer them to the question, and abide the issue: *Whether this may not be regarded as an opinion concerning a new dispensation of the grace of God, equal to a new gospel,* and tending to weaken the immediate claims of the gospel on those to whom it is dispensed? In one sent me, is it not practically a new and substantive form of Universalism? Universalists so believe. Are they right?

It is not difficult to assume an air of self-complacency in a very pleasing artistic evasion of the merits of an issue, involving very fundamental views of all that is soul-redeeming and soul-sanctifying in the person, mission, sacrifice, and work of the Lord Jesus—making a new mission of the spirits in hades to the spirits in hades, essential to save those that were not saved here under a full the power of the present Christian dispensation.

11. It yet appears to me rather a hard task to reconcile this theory, borrowed from the Unitarian Neologists of Sweden, Germany, and New England, to faith in the personality, sacrifice, and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the preaching and teaching of our great Apostle Paul. I do not think that even Elder Ferguson himself could do this to the entire satisfaction of an enlightened class of able students.

12. But, under this neologist disease, I am not the only sufferer. Elder Church, of Pittsburgh, has fallen into very bad odor at Nashville, as well as others who have republished these undeplorable. Public opinion so far as it has reached my ears, from Dan to Beersheba, condemns, without a dissenting voice, "the gothic attack" on Elder Samuel Church. But "pre-occupied" Solomon has said, "will make a wise man mad." And whether real or imaginary, it is alike onerous and grievous to flesh and blood.

13. We will not, we cannot justify Elder Ferguson, till he lays out essays before his special readers, as we have done his before ours. We cannot think of him as we wish to think of every Christian brother, till he asks a this honorable amendment.

14. This volume is coming to a close, and he will not crowd his pages with such matters. He promises to "strengthen the Divine power of silence."² It is now, alas, too late! What a mistake that he had not tried his Divine power at an earlier date!

15. But perhaps this is a condition intended as a guarantee to the Board for editing the Magazine next year. Still I must insist on the justice of a full hearing on its pages, as I have been on them post-die over Tennessee, as making a personal attack and assault on Elder Ferguson. This is a right that I trust will not be denied me, into whose hands soever the Magazine may fall.

I am, indeed, sorry to say, that in my whole editorial career, so far as our brotherhood is concerned, I have not encountered a more apparent evasive and artful opponent than he, according to the measure and degree of his talents natural and acquired. If candid and sincere in his positions, he does himself the greatest injustice. For example, he is ever complaining of my injustice to him, as if I had some special injury or grievance to avenge, or some wrong sustained from him to redress.

² "The Divine power of silence." Nothing was created by silence. In New Testament history, the Sadducees were the only people that took refuge in the "Divine power." (Matthew xxii. 24.) According to King Solomon, "The wise is a time to keep silence, as well as a time to speak;" and the wise is as much wisdom in knowing when to be silent, as there is knowing when to speak.—There is one case, however, in which silence is perfect weakness, and a case in which it is no virtue. The former we pity; the latter we condemn. It is not in good taste, to accuse any one of any thing unbecoming, and when called for the proof, to fly to the "Divine power of silence." Whether that be the present case, we presume not to say. This we leave to the reader. And most sincerely desire, that we all may be clothed with humility, seeing that, according to Solomon, "a haughty spirit goeth before a fall."

Let me, then, attempt to dispossess, if possible, this spirit of evil surmises. And should I fall in his case, I may, perhaps, save others from its maledictions.

16. In a few words, then, be it observed, that I never had any personal acquaintance or intercourse with Elder J. B. Ferguson. He never did me any personal injury, or said any thing about me, so far as to me reported that caused any unpleasant feelings, or made one ungracious impression. I knew him out, through his writings, and these were rather sparingly read. I never found any thing very decisive of his faith in the capital doctrine of the divine Teron, mission, and sacrifice of the Messiah, nor decisive of his views of the great characteristics of the Christian dispensation, as asserted in the current Reformation. In this I may be at fault rather than he, in not having more attentively examined them. I occasionally saw or thought that I saw, indications of too strong leanings to the opinions of Methodism, and some other Swedenborgian and Unitarian theorists. In this, too, I might have been mistaken, for there was nothing very positive or negative in the Christian Magazine. It wanted both force and point to make it a credible and useful journal. So I thought and do sometimes speak of it down to the time of the new revelation of the spirits in prison and a new mission to the ghosts of

17. I am, indeed, somewhat confounded and astounded at the new gestures and movements of its editor, since my first notice of this important affair. It was, I confess, to my vision, like leprosy on the skin. That indicates a dangerous condition of the humours of the system. I would not hastily pronounce it leprosy, but yet I could not firm y say that it was not.

18. We need reviews in the sciences, the arts, the literature of the 19th century. The religious press, as well as the political, the literary, the scientific, needs its reviews. I do not assume such a position nor such a work. Occasionally I have done something in this line, and, till we have more competent tribunals, I may do a little more.—We all belong to the church, as well as to a church of Jesus Christ. Every citizen belongs to the State as well as to his borough or township. The State has property in him, and he must, when called upon, serve it. It must serve him. We ought, therefore, as Christians, to seek the good of the whole church.

19. In the Church, "We are come to Mount Zion, even to the city of the Living God—the heavenly Jerusalem—and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first born, written in heaven; to God the judge of all; to the spirits of just men made perfect; to Jesus, the mediator of the New Constitution, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than Abel's."

20. To this grand society every Christian belongs, and all its privileges and honors belong to him. As a member of the Church of Christ, or as citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven, we think, feel, speak, and act. Its honors are all ours. Therefore we will, as we should, always seek her good. They that love Jerusalem shall prosper. We take pleasure in her prosperity and identify our fortunes and our destiny with hers, henceforth and forever.

I am not a member of the Church of Christ in Nashville, and, consequently, have no authority there, any more than I have in Rome, Edinburgh, or London. But if the Spirit of the Lord is in the church of Nashville, Rome, Edinburgh or London, and if I speak of and from that spirit, in any matter pertaining to the duties, privileges, honors and profits of these churches, and speak as the Oracles of God require, I will be heard, just as certain as the Spirit of God is there.

If that spirit be not there, and I speak of, or according to, that spirit, I will not be heard there. I presume that I am now understood, and will not be misrepresented when I say, that if I have now spoken and written in harmony with the teachings and inspirations of that Spirit, recorded in the Christian Scriptures, the church of Nashville, being under the influence of that Spirit, will hear what I say, and act faithfully to the Lord and Jesse B. Ferguson, and will constrain him to preach the word, and not old men's genealogies, nor old wives' fables, nor young men's dreams and visions.

If Elder Ferguson be of the right spirit, he will hearken to the church, and to its Head, and then I care not how he treats me, except for his own sake. I will be heard in Tennessee, just as certain as the Lord is known, feared, loved and honored amongst the churches in that State, to which these presents may come. I ask no more.

Elder Ferguson has, under the sanction of our brethren in Tennessee, introduced a new doctrine, untaught in the Holy Scriptures, and not believed by a Christian church in America, known to me. He proposes now to be silent on the subject, and of course it will be expected that brethren abroad will be silent too. But he has never permitted those who read his assumptions and reasonings to read my responses. And he has promised no more than silence. He still cherishes the hope of being an evangelist

in hades, and to preach pardon to those who would not listen to him here. And will not his silence on one half the premises oblige him to be silent on the other? How can he say with Paul, "knowing the terrors of the Lord, we now persuade men to be reconciled to God;" for it not, "they shall be destroyed" with an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power," in the day of his coming. Or how can he read with emphasis, a portion of the final judgment—"Depart ye cursed into the eternal fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels?"

For Elder Ferguson I cherish not one unkind, ungenerous, or unchristian feeling. I have discharged my duty, painfully to myself, but faithfully to him. I would that I could have done it all privately. But his printed and published editions of his views and teachings could not be reached by any private remonstrances to him. I am pleased to receive from various and far distant localities the thanks of very many brethren, for the notices I have taken of this subject, and the assurances afforded me of the need there was for such expositions as we have given. I think I am just as much entitled to the thanks of Elder Ferguson as I am to any other living man. Still, I do not exact them; for in that case, to me, they would be no pleasing offering—no sweet incense to my soul.

Of the present church of Nashville, I know but little. I knew the fathers of that church, and labored among them some five and twenty years ago. They were, at that time, a precious band of brethren and sisters, and all my associations with them were not only then pleasing, but the remembrance of them still breathe fragrances more aromatic far, and redolent of bliss, than were the mountains of myrrh, the hills of frankincense, or the groves of Lebanon, to the cultivated taste of Israel's wisest and greatest prince.

But perhaps another king has arisen that knew not Joseph, or years of success and prosperity have obliterated the scenes of tranquility—those spiritual joys and pleasures that always gladdened the city of our God, and accompany the first love of the Christian bride in the day of her espousals. Still we shall pray that grace, mercy and peace, may be multiplied to them all, and to all that love our Lord Jesus Christ sincerely!

A. C.

Reply to Alexander Campbell.

Such, to our observation, is the common course of bro Campbell as a disputant.—

His opponents are ever confounded and ought candidly to own their inability. It is a matter of temperament and not principle, we think, and is easily accounted for. He has lived in war for thirty years, and he seldom has an opponent that does not prove in his estimation, either a knave or a fool. This fact will explain all that is "anomalous" in our course. Bro. C. never can be like the rest of mortals, partly right and partly wrong. He is always right, and knowing this we ought to bear his "rash humor." When he chides, therefore, we will remember that it is not bro. Campbell, the man and the Christian, but bro. C., the debater and "leader of a great party."

2. Still he is mistaken in supposing we desire a retreat, or to cover a retreat. We are heartily ashamed of his kind of controversies and would gladly cover them for ever. We had no fondness for a skirmishing warfare, and were unwilling to fill the pages of a State paper with the long and, as we

thought, useless essays of himself and his correspondents. Nor did we desire any controversy with a man of his age and claims; for we saw by his first article that there was no way of conducting it that would not be offensive to him and his friends. We have long thought a man not a very civil debater, who makes the largest conceivable claims to learning and the rights of age and experience and uses them to the destruction of the reputation, not the arguments, of his opponent. If he show that his opponent is without understanding, faith or character, of course he is defeated and ought to confess and utter forth his thankfulness. In the unequal attitude, therefore, in which we stand to the brotherhood, we could not desire a controversy, and especially when in his first article he pronounced us necessarily infidel and hypocritical. How strange his course would appear if pursued by any other man. He cut us off from all honorable controversy in the onset. He ranked us with infant scribes and brainless preachers, to which he gave every hard name of odious ecclesiastical memory, in his first reply. Before we uttered a word in response, he published five essays of his own and four extracts and articles from others, in no one of which did he even indirectly allow us the right to differ and hold our fellowship. Our views must be "renounced;" our errors "confessed." He called on the churches to "rebuke and disown" them. He said we were not qualified to understand our own language and used every disparagement to our prejudice. And now he blames us for not controverting with him!

We can not approve such a course. Nothing was left for us but a defence against assumptions over our faith that we did not and could not recognize. Long had we seen the evils of such foolish assumptions. We knew also that the better part of every community looked upon a recriminative controversy of the character he had precipitated, as the veriest special pleading, more becoming an intellectual bear-garden than a religious periodical. They were pained

and grieved with the spirit and manner of his articles. They know that they do not advance truth on any subject one inch while they separate friendship and destroy the usefulness of men who ought to be brethren indeed, as well as in word. Investigation is asked for and is needed on all subjects that affect the peace and joy of men. But the age demands an investigation that shall do justice to the standing of those engaged in it. Men professing to have the most solemn and sacred interests of large communities in their charge are expected to be men of calmness and candor, who will use words that shall come down upon the heart of struggling humanity with healing and gladness. When, therefore, a man of high position would make out his brother, however humble, an infidel, while that brother is laboring day and night for the religious interests of a large and enlightened community, a worthy investigation between them is impossible. We saw it so; asked privately with others for a mere correction of his unwarranted statements; received additional disparagement and insult in return; and declined the controversy. We went on, however, as in duty bound, to present our views that no one should fellowship us without knowing them; that if they made us infidel as alleged, they could say so and no longer be responsible for their fellowship hitherto so generously and fully rejoiced in. We accepted the question as a question of right. Could we give an exposition of a difficult scripture differing from bro. Campbell, and hold views of the future world that looked to it as a world of progress and still retain our association with a professedly Christian people? That question is still open. The effort to destroy that fellowship is continued and we still ask for the tribunal to decide it. State meetings and churches are called upon to decide it. Where they understand the basis of all individual and Christian liberty, they say "they have nothing to do with it. Let the church of which bro. Ferguson is a member, decide it. It has the right; none other can have it."

3. Meanwhile bro. C. continues the con-

test, and avows that it is not now, and has not been a *personal* one. Upon this subject it would be disrespectful to make an affirmation, where he so positively denies. But we would ask, what meant his efforts to prove us infidel in the beginning? What mean his allusions to Dr. Thomas and the fall of his Metropolitan church, which the Dr. since so unequivocally denies? What mean his efforts at ridicule; his publication of private and offensive letters, just such, too, as his article was calculated to call forth? What mean his recent allusions to a "certain Fisher case?" What mean the low and false publications with regard to the kindness of our friends in bestowing house, &c.? What mean his insinuations against the character of our preaching, our defective studies and education? What is it he calls *personal*? If he can find in any respectable paper, orthodox or heterodox, an attack half so personal upon any preacher or editor, recognized in the fellowship of the same religious people, we will agree to be his bond-slave for life. What mean, also, his evasion with respect to the letter addressed him from this place by which he would more than insinuate that we told an untruth? We repeat that he did receive a letter appealing to his second sober thought, to induce him to correct his representations of our faith and character. He did receive it, and we hold his reply. Indeed it was the apparent personal character of his review that caused his friends here to believe that it was not of himself that it was written. How could we or they believe it any thing else after the use of the following epithets and statements every one of which are to be found in his reviews before we published a word in defence: "Our too ardent and speculative brother;" "brainless and heartless translations;" "not even an ingenious evasion of truth;" "he hopes to take a conspicuous part in preaching a *new gospel* to those enchained in darkness;" tongue and pen "devoted to error and schism;" "irresponsible editors, just out of the shell; comic scribes; infant sages;" "before heaven and earth I affirm

his speculation saps the very foundation of Christianity;" "It appears downright hypocrisy and sinful trifling;" "lending his strength to the enemies of soul-redeeming truth;" "we hope for him for he does not use language understandingly; "we will offer him a way of escape;" "ever learning, never able to come to the knowledge of the truth;" "his views demand an apology to the whole brotherhood;" "it ought to be publicly known and reprobated; or confessed, retracted and forgiven;" a "radical and fundamental unbelief of the whole Christian Religion;" "incompetency" to teach religion; "it is subversive of all vital sanctions of the Gospel;" "cordially retract;" "O that it had been a private offence;" "those that sin rebuke before all;" "it is an avowal of the lack of faith;" "nothing can undo its mischievous tendency but a formal renunciation, a retraction on his part;" "very amiable, but neither the understanding nor education." Such are a specimen of what he calls "reviews." Now he had the right to decide such questions for us and the church we labor with, or he had not. We called in question that right, declined a controversy till it were settled or was no longer assumed; defined our position, and stated our views. Our defence is now an "attack," and all the above is not an attack but a "*benevolent review!*"

4. We do most seriously resist his assumptions of authority over the consciences and character of his brethren. We will not decide whether it be *papal* or not, but surely it is not very *PATERNAL*. But if not *papal*, what mean his demands of confession and renunciation? What mean his appeals, and especially his sentimental ones, to the churches and to the church of Nashville: particularly, to the State Co-operation, the publication committee? Have the churches yielded their discipline into his hands? Or does he think they need a guardian and can not take care of themselves?

5. He is equally mistaken in saying we adopted our views from some Neologistic pen; that they are the result of "unfortunate readings," &c. At first he ascribed them to

too fruitful an imagination, but now to "unfortunate Neologistic readings." He ought to save his consistency. But he is mistaken in both cases. We hold no view that we did not hold and express for years before we ever read what he calls Neologistic authors. And we have yet to read such an author on the subject in dispute. Bro. C. we fear has, also, a fruitful imagination; for he coins his facts as well as his insinuations out of it. We have never read a German theological work save the orthodox ones; but we are fully aware that there is no respectable critic of Germany that would not repudiate his notions of a future world as alike unscriptural, superstitious and absurd.

6. We are not so panic-stricken as our venerable brother appears to hope. We know the depth of the fears, excitement and denunciation of his pages. We assure him we were never more calm, and we cannot be excited by his pen except in sorrow for its, to us, mistaken use. All we have said, however, with respect to this affair having originated in Memphis, is true, every word of it, and we are prepared to prove it. What bro. C. says of cabals, racks, &c. is gratuitous. We hold a letter in our possession that states: "An effort will be made here to have your article on 'spirits in prison' reviewed by A. Campbell. Several of your professed friends are in it." Three weeks before it appeared, it was predicted in our city. These facts cover all our statements. And we regret the duty that compels us to say that there is not a statement made with respect to this affair or his "certain Fisher affair," that we are not willing and ready to prove before any impartial tribunal bro. Campbell may select.

7. His allusions to the disgraceful conduct of David is unfortunate. He ought to pity us if he consider us insane. It wears the appearance of a desire to degrade and injure. We can not retort. We despise such allusions and regard them as mere shifts when men are pressed by difficulty. Talk of dignity when a brother compares his opponent to an affected madman with the

rue streaming from his mouth! Oh, shameful

8. Bro. C. disclaiming his assumption over us or the churches says he only took the office of a "reviewer." It strikes us that he is a curious reviewer, who, before he allows his opponent a word of explanation, calls upon him to acknowledge his infidelity, confess his mistakes and renounce them on pain of *his* denunciation. We admire an able critic and reviewer who knows how to expose error and establish truth; but from all infallible assumption in matters of acknowledged difficulty, we pray to be delivered. But he says he has not misrepresented us. Then why not leave his criticism to the judgment of his readers without his association of us with the people he accounts no better than infidels? What means all his talk about a posthumous mission for the dead and damned? Why take advantage of the indefiniteness of all spiritual and invisible realities to our prejudice? Why not state that the question upon 1 Peter is one purely of Exegesis as he knows it to be upon which men of the most acute learning differ, and can not be one of either faith or opinion, so far as either affects church relationship? Why not allow us to state our views of the future world in our own language? He knows that our whole view may be expressed without exciting vulgar prejudice, and the doubts and distrusts of ignorance. Why then so continually appeal to these? We believe the future world to be one of progression; and, to us, our faith is consistent, and confirms our confidence in the truth and extent of Christ's redemption. Why must he then question our faith? He may have the right in the estimation of a few, of stating it for us, but we can not acknowledge it and know that he has not represented either us or it so as to make a truthful impression. Hitherto, there are no words that he does not pervert and make to assume for us what we repudiate. He sought to hold us up to ridicule from the first. We will not complain of it, for it is a matter of taste. But does he not know that there is no view of the future world that can not be held up to ridicule? Who has not heard

heaven, in the popular idea, ridiculed as a place of eternal psalm-singing, and hell as one of vindictive torture. To us this spirit of ridicule is as foolish as it is irreverent. The subject of man's spiritual destiny is the most solemn and serious subject of human thought. There can be no fair discussion of it that is not serious. And, as we feel upon it, we would leave both press and pulpit to-morrow if we could not resist the temptation of ridiculing any man's honest convictions upon a theme so all-engrossing, and necessarily so indefinite. He that has seriously reflected upon it has no need of affected humility when he contemplates the loneliness of death and the great beyond. His quondam brother Thomas, for example, speaks of his "Bethaninan sky-kingdom;" his "ghost-kingdom round the earth;" his "omnipotent devil," &c. &c., in just such a style as bro. C. uses toward us; calls in question his learning also, and laughs at his supervisory assumptions. Much of which we regard as puerile, and bro. C., no doubt, would call it contemptible.

9. We have not impeached Mr. Campbell's motives, but we have resisted his assumptions; and he was never more mistaken in his life, if he suppose that ours is either the first or fifth time his "Brother Editors" have felt those assumptions. It is possible for a man in his situation to imagine himself the cause and act accordingly. It is his actions in an unnatural attitude that involves him in such difficulties. It is that attitude that causes him to magnify our defence against it into a personal attack upon him. We hope he understands us.

10. Then he courts our opponents to decry the Reformation on our account. He has said and they have repeated, "that we have all sorts of men preaching all sorts of doctrine." He seems to desire to have us ranked in the same honorable class. But he can not get up the cry. They have spoken of both us and our views with a respect we do not claim. We have notices from Methodists, Presbyterians and Universalists, and no one of them has a single disrespectful epithet; and this is something in

religious dissent the "Harbinger" might reflect upon to advantage.

11. We may be very silly, as bro. C. would charitably represent us; but it is a little strange that one so silly should be capable of "a pleasing artistic evasion," such as he ascribes to us. Why necessary to speak so often of our rhetoric, or style of writing and preaching. We have claimed nothing on the score of learning—have nothing to claim. Our good brother ought to pity our deficiency, and if not considered too weak, give us a place at Bethany beside the streams of wisdom and knowledge that flow so perennially, if not so noiselessly there. It would be kind consideration to represent us as weak and incompetent provided the purpose were to intall himself our guardian! This is what some would call "precious friendship!" If our gratitude should not spring spontaneous he can kindly attribute it to "unfortunate readings" of the late "*Millennial Harbingers!*" And to the fact that such friendship may become the last ounce that breaks even the *camel's* back.

12. Again. His insinuations that we do not believe in the "personality, sacrifice and work of Jesus," can have no object, that we can see, unless it be to raise a vulgar prejudice. We believe in these, though we reject much of his phraseology upon them, and think it a little strange that he should avow his faith so often and so positively. No one has called it in question in this warfare. His frequent allusions to Unitarians, Swedenborgians, and Universalists are of the same character. These are hard if not horrible names with him, and hard names are ever thrown at dissent when we have nothing harder to throw. They are meant for clogs to investigation; and so they are for a time. But even under the clog it will go on and the name sometimes becomes both a girdle and a crown. If a view of the divine government secures our faith, love and work, the name given it may be made dear by its reproach, for it puts our sincerity and self-denial to the test. We know some Unitarians and Universalists whose spirit would not injure the atmos-

phere of Bethany, though it might make it explode. We have felt the wide separation between such men as Channing, the Wares, Dewey, and even Balfour and Ballou, and bro. Campbell, but we had attributed it to the power of circumstances and artificial position, rather than even constitution and temperament. We are by no means alone in this feeling, whether it look to accuracy of scholarship and research; genuine independence of thought, or the spirit of reverence for the character and work of Jesus, and of self-denial under reproaches. Call us Unitarian, &c., if you must, bro. Campbell; it is not half so hard a term of reproach as the term "Campbellite" in the estimation of all who have observed the spirit and bearing of your writings and theirs. The day has passed for terrifying men with such names. The greatest, purest and most consecrated men of the past three centuries have been at times reproached (?) with that name. It is bad taste, bad judgment and bad rhetoric to call hard names. It originated in a time when to assail, vilify and circumvent were considered greatness in a discussion. But truth was never indebted to such discussions, and the day is passing when enlightened communities will tolerate them. If we seriously wish to make the greatest impression, we must do justice to the character and arguments of our opponents, even if they be called Unitarian or Universalists. Mr. Campbell has been for twenty years called a Unitarian. It is unjust, for he disowns the name. It betrays the weakness of a cause that requires hard names as names of reproach.

13. We have never attacked Eld. Church. We used his own figure, not knowing that it could have a personal reference. He needlessly interfered in an unworthy controversy; he gave evidence that he did not appreciate the questions involved. We said so, and it is ungenerous in Mr. Campbell to seek to place him with himself to prove a "personal attack." All that we write, however long we wait under all sorts of disparagement and misconstruction, is an attack; but his essays are the result of *Christ-*

ian benevolence! We have had a good share of this benevolence and a little more might make a "wise man" not "mad" but sorrowful and excite a desire to be delivered from its *tender mercies*.

14. We never refused to publish his essays. We have laid them before our readers not as an "amende honorable" for we have none to make. We are ashamed of them, for they expose the inconsistency of bro. Campbell's professions of the principles of religious freedom, and show a spirit that never, never can be justified either among critics or Christians.

15. His insinuation that we offered any guarantee to the board for editing the "Magazine" is without foundation. It has been known to every member of that board that for two years, owing to heavy domestic, pastoral and citizen duties, we had asked to be released. In view of these we resigned at the State meeting. We have been called upon by the committee since to continue our connection with the paper. We have declined editing a State paper mainly in view of the fact that bro. C. will make the brethren responsible for our views—a principle we utterly repudiate. We have, however, consented to edit it as an independent Journal. Shame on such intimations! Why need they be made? Can any cause, not built upon doubt and distrust, require them?

16. His allusion to silence and the Saducees is a ~~like~~ ungenerous. We were silent in one view of circumstances. Bro. C.'s Master and ours was once *silent* so "that he answered never a word." It was when he was accused of blasphemy by a church court. He was silent because the questions they propounded betrayed a desire to find cause of condemnation. In view of that silence we confess we could wish we had allowed our assailants to say of us and to us whatever seemed to them right. But it is now too late. We shall not, with their charges before us, ever yield our right of self-defence.

17. If our humble writings were so unsparingly read by our supervisor, why does he pronounce so positively and dogmatical-

ly upon our faith and its tendencies? Surely he does not claim the power of discerning spirits. But how knew he our leaning to the opinions of Dr. Bush? We never read a line from Bush on the subjects in dispute. When he was an orthodox commentator we read him, but never since. We expect to read him, however, if allowed, as it is said he is of a good spirit, though a Swedenborgian.

18. Better call our disease a leprosy than insinuate it. It is more honorable if not more Christian.

19. We too believe that we belong to the Universal Church, but we have not accepted bro. C.'s metes and bounds for that church; and we know of no organized body in it having authority over our faith or manners save that to which we are voluntarily connected. We have never considered bro. Campbell orthodox on the question here involved. His ideas of Appeals and Supervisory Ecclesiastical Tribunals, we read years ago, studied and could not accept. We thought some of his positions in reply to Dr. Rice in the long debate inconsistent with his own practice, and could not be sustained. We must take the right of private judgment in its legitimate issues, or deny it and prescribe its limits. We must make a creed, or make conduct and character the test of associated fellowship. All essays on the principles and purposes of the "Reformation," will not blink the question involved, whether addressed to Old England or New.

We, also, love them that love Jerusalem, but our Jerusalem "is above, is free, and is the mother of us all." Her children are not confined in the narrow shores of any written or unwritten human creed. They are the family of God in all churches, in all ages, and over them Christ is head, and as the head, says, "call no man Master or Father on the earth."

20. We hope the spirit of that head is in the churches of Tennessee; but we know that we need more of it; and we fear that the contest the "Harbinger" has precipitated will not greatly promote it. Still will we labor to counteract its evil effects. The

brethren, so far as we know, think they have no difficulties they can not settle among themselves; and should they feel the need of a guardian, they will, doubtless, have some voice in his selection. Bro. Campbell's call upon the church of Nashville to regulate our preaching will not be answered. We have never preached and never expect to preach for any people that would assume such authority. We were not even advised in this case. We would listen to his advice, or any, and strive to see the weight of every well-meant suggestion; but we desire to go into the pulpit as no man's man; no, not our own man, and would be conscious of no desire above being a servant of Christ by serving the humblest of his people. The church of Nashville, however, knows and loves its brother Campbell. Nothing has ever been done, or will be done by us to lessen its admiration. But we have no kings here either that know or do "not know Joseph!" And were bro. C. to visit us again, no doubt he could again renew the spiritual joys and pleasures of which he so eloquently speaks, and perchance they could be made so great as to allow even us a share of the crumbs that might be gathered under the table. He has done some things that sadden the hearts of his brethren here; some that might have crippled the influence of their preacher; but he has done many that command their highest applause and love. Let them forget those and cherish these!

J. B. F.

Rights of Christian Editors, as Defined by
A. Campbell, A. D. 1840.

Bro. Campbell was once in debate with Elder Walter Scott in which he used the following expressions which are much to our taste. We commend them respectfully to his reconsideration so far as they reflect upon the recent course of the "Harbinger" toward us. We have a good deal more of the same sort from the same source whenever it shall be needed:

"The subscribers to the Evangelist certainly did not covenant and agree with its

editor that it should be used as a *rod to chasten* me or any public brother whenever its editor took it into its head that we needed it according to the law of his suspicions. *I contend that no Editor of this Reformation has a right Scriptural or by covenant, to prefer any charge upon its pages in the least implicating the moral excellence or purity of a brother.*"

"If speaking evil, one of another, be unscriptural, and if *dogmatically affirming our judgment against a brother*, without the intervention of any tribunal, be unscriptural, then are these proceedings to be discounted and disallowed by all lovers of Christian discipline and good manners." "I do not recognize the tribunal before which I am arraigned, as one constituted or authorized by our Lawgiver and Judge. I am a member of the *Church of Christ, at Bethany, Va.*, and a law-abiding citizen of the Messiah's Kingdom. To that tribunal I am amenable. The Evangelist, to my mind, is obviously in a very singular dilemma. I have transgressed some law of Christ in the case, or I have not. If I have not, he is culpable for arraigning me before the community for no transgression; and if I have transgressed any law, he is culpable for telling it to the world before he told it to the Church, and for compelling me to appear before a tribunal which the law of our King forbids." "Editors and preachers may entertain and express contrary views and opinions on any debateable question that may come in their way, but they have no more right than other men to assail the moral and Christian character of another before the public, either in word or writing. I may have erred in noticing these things in the public manner I have done in self-defence, but if I have I shall do so no more."

So wrote Alexander Campbell M. H. vol. 4, page 418—19, when he regarded *his case* as one of self-defence, and so he defined the duties of public brethren, and the authority of the church to which he belonged. Wonder if the change of persons changes the principles of the Harbinger?

The last view of our case.

A correspondent of the Ecclesiastic Reformer," says, in a labored article on the great themes of "Mesmerism, Clairvoyance and Spirit-Rappings," that "the word of God has too much brimstone in it for the rosy imagination of the Magazine. A demon (devil) knew this and suggested the idea of redemption from hell," &c. Our views have been ascribed to a variety of causes by our sapient scribes, but this we think is the *last*. In the days of Salem witchcraft, men undertook to cast out such dæmons, and when they failed by the use of prayer and fasting, they called to their aid the veritable hemp. Hope our Brother does not desire to become an exorcist of the Salem character; but if he will favor us with a visit, we will submit to any peaceable manipulations by which the "demon" may be cast out.

We are sorry to give our good Brethren so much trouble in accounting for our opinions. Perhaps they had as well attribute them to our investigations being a little different from theirs, and allow us the privilege of entertaining them until at least they can show better reasons against them than to suppose us possessed of a dæmon. It is written of some enemies of Christ, that they said "thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil."

J. B. F.

ANOTHER

Correspondent (Z. Carpenter) of the same paper calls upon the churches and State meeting of Kentucky to put its veto upon our views. When our churches and State meetings shall begin to prescribe or proscribe the views of a Brother in full fellowship with a church of another State, in how much will they differ from the ecclesiastical courts and legislative religious assemblies they once denounced so heartily? We can only say that if said churches or meeting adopt the suggestion of the correspondent, and will give us due notice, we will be glad, if life and health permit, to attend and save them the shame of judging a man before he is heard. We do not believe,

however, that any enlightened assembly would attempt such a work, no matter by whom suggested, so long as they do not openly assume the functions of a court, having charge of men they have never seen. Of all irresponsible courts under heaven, whether civil or ecclesiastical, there are none more to be dreaded than those which decide causes without a hearing from the condemned party. The correspondent referred to may be a good man, for he speaks of the fear of God and prays publicly for our reclamation, but he has made at least three charges in his brief notice that can never be proved either in court or out of it.

J. B. F.

Proposed action respecting our Views.

At a recent Co-operation meeting in Southern Kentucky, a series of Resolutions dissenting from our views of the future world, were presented and we are informed the President of the meeting declared his intention to resign his presidency over it, if they were passed. They failed as all such efforts must fail, where the principles of gospel liberty are understood, and the people are unwilling to submit to human dictation in matters of conscience and conviction.

A brother proclaimer of this State, who may be called one of the Fathers of our Co-operative system,—than whom there is no man who enjoys a more enviable reputation for sound scriptural knowledge and sincere devotion to the religious interests of men—when it was thought that foreign influences would induce our State Meeting to take the matter in hand, avowed his determination to offer a resolution in opposition to all such meetings, believing that whenever they take under their charge the faith or opinions of their Brethren, they would become curses instead of blessings to the cause of genuine Christianity.

Indeed, the wisest and most experienced of the ministers of the gospel in our acquaintance are of but one mind on this subject, however much they may differ upon the theological questions of the times. Let the Brethren allow themselves to depart

from their often avowed principles of the right of private judgment and the independence of the churches, and they will let spirits out of prison that can never be confined again. I hope it is no trespass upon personal confidence to say, that among the preachers of my acquaintance, three of the most prominent are Destructionists, another denies the personality of the Holy Spirit as presented in orthodox creeds and especially in recent essays of Bro. Campbell—another whose position is second to few, regards the current views of atonement presented by Bro. C. as unscriptural and irrational. Now attempt the proscription of any man's views at your State meetings, or any other meetings, and you will see, when it is too late to save your cause, where it will lead. We must occupy the broadest ground of Christian liberty, or go back to the creed system. There is no middle ground that can be maintained with any consistency in the presence of discerning men. Indeed there is scarcely a Protestant church in my acquaintance that does not hold men of the most opposite opinions in religion, despite the accepted creed. And there is not one which does not make a virtue and honor to possess a liberal-minded preacher. Whenever a church holds a preacher of ordinary liberal sentiments, their membership always boast of it, and thus show the spirit of the age. Religious knowledge, social reforms and all schemes for human amelioration, have their dependence upon the liberal spirit of the times; and the most vociferous denouncers of the opinions of men they cannot and will not understand, feel it and sometimes acknowledge it. A brother of no mean labors in the cause of "Primitive Christianity," an Editor amongst us, has several times said to me, "we cannot refuse church fellowship upon our principles to Paido-Baptists, who conscientiously believe they have obeyed the Lord." What means this but that he feels his position a cramped one as well as inconsistent. Again, we say, we must be creed-men or carry out the principle of all genuine Protestantism in the right of private judgment. Timid and ner-

vous men may tremble at the logical result of that principle, but it is as true as it is searching; and it will be sustained. For myself personally, I have no anxiety on the subject. If every church and State-meeting in "the Reformation" were to repudiate both me and my views, it would not materially change my course. And if all knew the half-mirthful and half-compassionate feeling their vain pretensions to uniformity excite, they would save themselves the trouble, and many sincere men amongst them the mortification, that grow out of their proposed assumptions over the convictions and consciences of their brethren. The day is past, in this country, for proscription for opinion's sake, and men only make themselves ridiculous by attempting it.

We know, and every observing man knows, that we have associated with us, in full fellowship, highly respectable persons who are in their speculative opinions, Unitarians, Universalists, Restorationists, and Destructionists. It is either right or wrong. The fact is indisputable. It has been our glory to boast of it, and we will have to see something more convincing and consistent than has yet appeared before we can believe that a uniformity in speculative opinion or faith, if you had rather, is either desirable or practicable. The principle that requires it we are sure is unsound, unevangelical, and pernicious. Every effort to realize it has ever aggravated the evils it sought to remedy, opened a war against human nature and human liberty, produced incalculable mischief and proved a miserable failure. The Church of Rome has tried it for hundreds of years; has called to its aid the collective wisdom and imposing authority of world-renowned scholars and councils, and with all the terrors of earthly and eternal torments, ferreting out every by-path of heresy and schism, has failed. Protestantism, in many of its forms, has tried it; convened her Synods, published her confessions, and opened her revilings and persecutions, but the end is a FAILURE. Luther and his noble coadjutors

tried it and failed. Calvin and his disciples have met the same failure. Every act of intolerance has only given birth to a new heresy; every blow for uniformity has opened a new seam in the Church, and thrown off a fragment from the mass.—Every modern creed, and every exhibition of intolerance in our day are but the indications of the same hankering after a chimerical uniformity, and they also FAIL. There is no such thing as uniformity.—And those who hold that Christ requires it, must ever present themselves in the ridiculous attitude of making their own opinions the standard of uniformity. They must, also, assume that they are authorized by God to hold every dissenter as an infidel, an alien and an outlaw, as they usually do. And of course every dissenter has equal counter authority with respect to his opponents. Where, then, is unity to be found? Not in speculative belief or opinion, but in an agreement to receive each other without regard to such differences.

J. B. F.

The Origin of our Views.

A variety of causes have been sought out by my Brethren for the Exposition of i. Pet. 3: 19-20; 4: 6; and my expressed views of future rewards and punishments. We enumerate a few of them as matters of curiosity.

I. *Too much benevolence.* That is, a belief that the Universal Father of mankind will not condemn any creature, even the weakest and most benighted, for what it could not avoid.

II. *Over excited imagination.* That is, a faith that delights to feast upon the infinite resources of inexhaustible wisdom and the boundless appliances of redeeming love.

III. *Too much respect for Unitarian and Universalian Theology, as presented in German and New England works of criticism and research.* That is, a willingness to "try all things and hold fast that which is good," in all.

IV. *An insubordination to the leaders of opinion (what they call faith) in the Reformation.* That is, a refusal to take men's *ipse dixit* without reason or authority, on matters open to universal investigation.

V. *Pride, growing out of popularity and public favor.* That is, if some of my opponents had my situation, they would be proud, and therefore I must be. Would that they knew its trials, its labors, and they could never envy either it or its occupant. There have been no statements more foreign to truth than theirs with respect to my earthly prosperity. True a few men have stood by me in all the embarrassments of my situation, whose greatness of mind and goodness of soul have not been moved by the insinuations and hard speeches I have been called upon to bear. May the Lord reward them for favors I have not deserved.

VI. *The possession of a demon, (devil.)* So said they of Messiah "he hath a devil and is mad." Would that I were worthy in any measure of this association.

VII. *Too much familiarity with Mesmerism, Clairvoyance and Spirit-rappings.* It is true that privately and in the sacred retreat of one of the best families of America, we once examined the subject of Mesmerism. We think we understand all that is known of it. But we have never witnessed Spirit-rappings. There are some fleshly ones we are daily witnessing that would be the better of being more *spiritual*.

VIII. *The desire to lead a party.* The day of partyism with us, we trust, is past.—A true Christian feels himself dishonored by personal homage. There is no party under heaven we desire to lead. We are willing to work with any that will allow us, in the cause of truth and righteousness. Our abhorrence of self-inflated Orthodoxy would make us opposed to all personal pretension. Conformity to the true spirit of Christ, which is the spirit of humanity, forbids a desire to be master. Never was there a time when the immense reality of that spirit needed more to be realized; for

it alone can give a man serenity under the misconstruction and reproach that must ever attend the advance of mind beyond its accustomed shackles.

IX. A careful and honest investigation of the prevalent opinions upon the Scripture and the subject of future rewards and punishments, and candor enough to avow the result; and confidence enough in the generosity of those who might differ to believe that they would agree to differ.

We have but a remark to make upon these reasons. They expose their origin. Some of them are ignorant and foolish, and should be forgiven. Some of them are deliberate and evil, and should be temperately exposed, while their authors may be left to their own consciences as to the worst chastisement they need. We forbear to speak of them, for all speech seems only to irritate. We can abate a just resentment, and bear with the unreasonable and unfriendly; for it is written: With what measure you meet it shall be measured to you again.

We can only say further that we are confirmed in every position that we have assumed in the whole premises, and feel it our duty to reiterate every statement we have made, both as it respects men and things, believing them to be true to the letter, and that every subsequent development goes to establish them. While, therefore, we feel willing and ready to do any thing that is honorable for the peace and prosperity of those who have sought to destroy us, their demands upon us at present appear in no other light than that of insult, beneath the dignity of men and Christians.

J. B. F.

Our Final Statement.

The true Exposition of the Scripture; our Views of the Future World—Observations upon the Difficulty Involved.

I. The doctrine that Christ preached to Spirits in prison was a doctrine universally popular in the early Christian Church.—There was, perhaps, no doctrine more common. It commended itself to Chris-

tians in every way. It suited their Jewish ideas of Hades and their modes of thought upon the spiritual world. We find allusions to it in every part of the New Testament, while Peter's direct statement of it, without argument, shows the universality of its acceptance. *Matthew* represents Christ as predicting his descent into the "heart of the earth." Matt. 12: 40. *Luke* presents Peter as quoting the Psalm "thou shalt not leave my soul in hell," (Hades) and applying it to Christ. Acts 2: 27. Paul refers to Christ's descent into the deep, (*Abusson* abyss or under-world.) Rom. 10: 7. His being "seen by angels" is understood by very respectable critics to allude to the lower angels in which the Jews believed, in contrast with his after reception into glory. 1 Tim. 3: 16. John speaks of the creatures "under the earth," giving glory to Christ. Rev. 5: 13. Surely we could not envy any Theologian's literary reputation who would deny these facts. The idea was wide-spread and well understood. The Jews who believed in Spirit at all, believed that the souls of men, after death, visited the under-world. The Christians did not abandon the idea, but thought in accordance with it that Christ's soul so "descended" and there "preached." It is not stated as a doubtful or disputed matter. All the early, and late fathers, also, taught it. No man who ever read them will deny it. They carried the idea to foolish and superstitious extremes, as they did every idea; but their teaching it shows its universal prevalence. *Hermas* taught that the Apostles occupied themselves in Hades in teaching and baptizing! *Clement*, that Christ, as the minister of circumcision, there preached to Jewish, and the Apostles to Gentile souls! *Origen*, that he went there to open the way to Paradise. *Tertullian*, to open that way even to Patriarchs and Prophets there confined. *Irenaeus* and *Lactantius* taught the same. We have not room nor is it necessary to quote them. *Epiphanius* says: "Christ descended into the lower parts of the earth to rescue the multitudes bound

in chains; which having done, he led forth the captive souls, and emptied hell." It was inserted in the Apostles' creed, and in every creed of Christendom for hundreds of years. No scholar will deny these facts. They are the common observation of the most superficial reading in dogmatical knowledge.

Again, I say the view may be irrational; for the Spirit was not given the Apostles to correct their notions of Astronomy or Pneumatology. It spoke in the language of the times of the future or spirit world, as upon all subjects. It was this view that led us to what we considered more enlarged views of that world, views more in accordance with modern scientific investigation. We sought the true spiritual idea under the language of the times, and thought that idea the idea of a progressive spiritual state. Stripped of the verbiage of Judean notions of Hades, this we believe to be the true view. We will progress in knowledge and power in the spiritual state. The inferences that we will "preach" there, and the other ridiculous ideas attributed to our view, only show that the language of earth applied to a spiritual state cannot convey a true idea. Any view may be ridiculed. But it is more the office of a scoffer than a Christian to ridicule when he cannot answer. No view of the spiritual world has been received that cannot be made ridiculous by giving too literal a meaning to the words used to describe it.

In a word, we believe in common with modern critics, that Peter and the early Christians taught that Christ preached to Spirits in prison—to the dead as dead in consequence of flesh, but alive in Hades. This is a question of Exegesis and not of Christian faith or opinion.

2. That the future world is one of progression to all, but especially to such as know not of God through Christ while in the flesh.

At the request of others, we published an exposition of the Scripture in dispute that differed from those received by our brethren. In so doing we expressed a

somewhat different view of the future world. We gave both in language of respect and affection. For this we were assailed as infidel; our right to our opinions was called in question, and we were required not by our Church, but by A. Campbell of the Bethany Church, to confess and retract. We waited to see what it meant, and the requisition was repeated and insisted upon. We bore, meanwhile, all sorts of disparagement and reproach. We repelled the requisition, defended ourselves from misrepresentation, and expressed our sincere and deep regret for Mr. C.'s course. And now we are represented as unwilling to defend our views and as seeking a retreat. We insist that before we can defend them otherwise than we have, our right to hold them being called in question, that right must be settled. A new question was sprung in the beginning. That question involves the right to a speculative opinion differing from my brethren—a far more important question than any "exposition" of difficult Scripture; for it involves the privilege of thinking upon all difficulties.—Meanwhile, it is now assumed that our views are shown to be utterly untenable, and we ought candidly to acknowledge it. Utterly untenable! Then what mean the shifts to which our plain statements, without an attempt at argument, have driven our "reviewers?" Mr. Campbell repudiates his former view of the passage, so far as it relates to the *time* and *place* of the imprisonment, and calls it a figment of the imagination! I allude to the phrase "now in prison." His correspondents also feel compelled to assume another view.—He is driven to the assumption that the prison was the prison-bounds of one hundred and twenty years; that the Spirit was the Holy Ghost, the tri-personality of Jehovah, although Peter puts it in contrast with flesh and the flesh of Jesus in which he was put to death. "He was put to death in flesh but made alive in spirit, by which *he went and preached.*" He has to assume, also, that Noah preached *repentance* to the whole world of the ungodly, knowing that

none but his own family would be saved. He has to assume that "he (Christ) *went and preached*" to be a pleonasm. He has to assume that the time of preaching was in the days of Noah, while Peter says the disobedience was in that time, the preaching in the time when Christ was quickened in Spirit, after having been put to death in flesh. He has to pass in utter silence the unequivocal declaration in the same connection, "that the Gospel was preached to them *that are dead,*" "to men not in the flesh." Surely when we see a few plain statements drive a man of Bro. C.'s penetration to such assumptions, not to say shifts, we feel that truth is mighty, however feebly uttered. He may further assume that the idea of Christ preaching to Spirits in prison is irrational, and we will not deny it, for so it is upon his views of the future world. But the question is, did Peter teach it? did not the primitive Christians unanimously believe it? The question is one of rational Exegesis. As a question of historical fact we are satisfied that the primitive Christians taught that Christ, after his death, preached to the imprisoned dead, and that this opinion was the uncontroverted faith of the Church for thousands of years, as it is still of the Greek, Catholic, and English Churches. We believe that the difficulties upon it grew out of the acceptance of Judean notions of Hades. We do not accept these notions, and interpret the Scriptures that seem to sanction them, so as to look to the invisible world as one of progress and not of stagnation, and our views have been stated at length. We say, then, in all honesty before God and the world, that all the efforts our humble "exposition" has called forth have only served to show us that it was a true representation of the language of Scripture. But here another matter must be stated. We impose neither the fact nor our views upon any one; desire no party to them, and they do not hinder us in our religious intercourse with any who may entertain different ones. This truth has kept us back from any defence of them that would look that way. We will not dogmatize at the

expense of other men's liberty of thought, speech, or character; and on this account our opponents suppose we wish to retreat. They are mistaken. Our views give us joy, peace, strength and hope. We have no doubt of their truth, and if we cannot be fellowshipped holding them, we must be disfellowshipped; for to ask us to give them up is to require that to which no man has a right, and would make us hypocritical and servile in the extreme. In a sentence, then, we say, To Alexander Campbell and his associates as old men, as great men and good men, as fathers in Israel, we can pay the highest and heartiest respect and deference, but to them as supervisors, judges, and directors of our faith and conduct, we dare not submit, no not for one hour. We trust, now, we are understood.

We deeply deplore the evils that have resulted and must result from a controversy of this character. We were not the *cause* and were innocently the *occasion* of them. But good will be the final result; good to the cause of religious freedom; good to those who will acknowledge the proper ground of Christian fellowship, and we hope good in delivering many honest minds from the power of irrational and crushing fears. May a merciful Father, whose forgiveness we daily need, and need most when least we feel the need, forgive and restrain the evil, direct and crown the good.

J. B. F.

Our Co-operation.

We regret that we have been compelled to turn our thoughts so much to self-defence. Would that we could be allowed to do our work as best we can, not thinking of ourselves and the glory of our people so much as of what we have to do. We have honestly entertained our views; all have seen how they have been assailed; we thought it our duty to defend them. But we have a duty above this. Besides, we know we have much to learn and far to advance; for we profess to derive our faith from Christ, rather than from any of his ministers, however deservedly distinguished. We believe in the Bible; that it is a record of interpositions for us above all human power; that it reveals a wisdom above all our wisdom,

and the redeeming work of Jehovah's mercy for his earthly creatures. It is a faith as solemn as it is great, and it must lead to works above mere self-defence and elevation. We may love and honor each other; but whenever Christ is presented we know that he is the master and claims a higher reverence. We must go on, then, from doing to more doing, from victory over ourselves to still greater victory. We need more earnestness in all our ministry; more internal activity in all our Churches, more love for the real and supreme point of all human welfare in all our hearts. Religion is the grandest element of life; it is life, the eternal life that every human being must love, if he desire the spring of all blessing and blessedness with the hope of unfading glory.

So I feel in view of all our enterprises. In vain we make societies unless somebody will *work*. There is more to be done than associate and subscribe. Somebody must do, or all is a vain boast. We cannot do together without the right spirit. The right spirit is needed much more than the right opinion. The good spirit, the spirit that dwelt in Christ, will make any man a true laborer above mere personal glory and selfishness. O, for that spirit with all its immortal aims and hopes to buy our griefs, shame our strifes, and lead us to the perseverance of the saints! O for the spirit of God manifested in Jesus, that with it we may do our work and afterwards share his glory.

J. B. F.

Dr. McFerrin's Magnanimity.

We take the following from the Nashville and Louisville Christian Advocate. Our readers will remember the articles referred to. It does the heart good to see men who honestly differ, willing to do justice to each others differences.

From the Nashville and Louisville C. Advocate.

"REV. J. B. FERGUSON'S RESPONSE.—By reference to our first page the reader will find the response of the Rev. J. B. Ferguson, Editor of the "Christian Magazine," to our notice of the exciting controversy on the "Spirits in Prison." We cheerfully allow Mr. F. the privilege of explaining through our columns what significations he attaches to his own words. We can but admire the gentlemanly spirit exhibited by him in his response. At present we do not feel inclined to attempt any review of his article; we will say, however, that we could at any time enter upon an investigation of a subject with pleasure with any gentleman who breathes the spirit exhibited by Mr. F."