

MYSTERIOUS MANIFESTATIONS.

SPIRITUAL, NATURAL, OR DEMONICALE — WHICH?

Some of our contemporaries have given much of their space to what has been termed the Amherst mystery. We have thought better to say very little upon it either expressive of belief in the strange phenomena or of denunciation of the matter as an unmitigated humbug, as one of our neighbours at some length pronounces it. We have no experience in any of these mysteries except in observing some years ago illustrations of lectures on Biology and Animal magnetism. We have no theory to sustain except it may be "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." It appears that none of these manipulations can injure one unless he puts himself under their power. From the Amherst Gazette of last week, we learn that the strange manifestations had not ceased with regard to Esther Cox. Her removal from Amherst to Sackville had been supposed to have put an end to the affair, but about three weeks ago she had returned to Amherst and became an assistant in the dining saloon of Mr. White, who kindly interested himself in her behalf. She slept at Mr. John Trenholm's. All went well until about a week ago, when the knocking began to take place as before. Among the strange occurrences related to us by Mr. White, whose word is undoubtedly that of a box about three feet long, standing on end and containing on top a basin of water having followed Miss Cox for four feet, moving along the floor, returning as she moved back, and striking the wall with a thump. Only a part of the water was spilled during the process. Again he says, she was sitting on Wednesday with her feet resting upon a part of the large cooking stove in the room adjoining his shop. The oven is at the base of the stove, and has a large door, weighing probably about 10 lbs., lined with tin. This door stood open and began to thump against a box which stood near. Fearing the door would be broken, Mr. White determined to stop the racket, and in order to do so most effectually, braced an axe between the door and an adjoining wall, when the door rose, was lifted from the movable hinges and flung upon the floor. He replaced the door, and braced it as securely as possible, when the same thing occurred, the door being this time lifted three inches, and striking against the projecting top of the stove before it fell. This was witnessed on the second occasion by W. H. Rogers, Esq., who previously had been very incredulous as to the genuineness of the reports in reference to the 'manifestations.' Mr. White was afraid his stove would be broken in pieces, concluded he had had his share of 'visitations,' so that our heroine is again cast adrift.

"Fortunately, however, a gentleman from St. John, with a scientific turn of mind, offers her a home in his house, for which she will leave to-morrow. For two or three nights the girl has slept at Mr. White's house, and the same electrical phenomena have occurred there as at the other places."

In addition to this we have a communication on a kindred subject which will doubtless be read with interest by those who have thought on the matter.

MAITLAND, HANTS CO., NOV. 29, '78.

MYSTERY!

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

Dear Editor,—

Not long since I received a letter from a friend asking for corroboration or contradiction of certain strange stories told by Mr. Ephraim Brymer, who is at present a colporteur for the British American Book and Tract Society, seeing he referred to me as an eyewitness to the wonderful things related. The reception of this letter forcibly reminded me that in justice to Bro. Brymer I ought to apologize for my seeming neglect. I promised him about five months ago to put this testimony in the Messenger.

What I now have to write springs not from a desire to keep the public mind agitated over strange and apparently unnatural occurrences, seeing that the Amherst mystery (so-called) has occupied so much attention. My object is to sustain the christian character of Mr. Brymer, whose statements have by some been doubted. Hence I write to corroborate what he relates. About ten years ago, while studying at Acadia, I went to Mount Uniacke to spend the Sabbath and preach to the few Baptists in that locality. I was entertained by Bro. Brymer, who seemed very interested in the Baptist cause while surrounded by many Universalists. According to his own statements he had become more or less troubled about their doctrine of

"No hell." I mention this fact because it seems to be connected with the strange phenomena I witnessed. In the evening after the Sabbath services were over we were sitting in the room conversing when Mr. B. said to his wife, "I feel faint will you bring me a drink of water?" Almost instantly he sank back in his chair. The man who was living with him at the time, and myself, caught him and carried him to his bed. While we were doing so he sang most cheerfully the hymn "I'm going home to die no more." We thought he was dying, for he spoke of nothing else, and his body was in a perfectly helpless condition. How could we think anything different? His eyes were fixed and glossy, his lips bloodless, his feet cold, while his whole body was insensible to the touch. He remained for about an hour in this state, talking continually. Soon as we laid him on his bed his gaze became fixed and he spoke apparently from a vision of heaven while he quoted many portions of Scripture in proof of the certainty and blessedness of being with Christ in glory. We endeavored but in vain to arouse him to a sense of anything else than what he was speaking about. His remaining unconscious as to things around him, yet apparently conscious of what he saw and what he was describing, led me to conclude that he might not be dying, and, to comfort his wife, I remember saying to her, "I believe Mr. B. is in a trance." I am obliged to confess that neither before nor since have I ever heard such wonderful language and such conclusive testimony upon any subject. It was as sublime as it was strange.

After this vision, wherein he seemed to me like the one Paul mentions in 2 Cor. xii. 2, he came to himself. He seemed a little confused; though he had been asleep; could scarcely tell where he was and would soon lose himself in the thought of his wonderful vision. Said he, "I have only seen one side. I have got to see the other." We endeavored to divert his mind from religious themes and persuaded him to retire to rest. He at last consented and went to his room. He lay down upon his bed with his face towards the floor and immediately he fell into the same state a second time. For more than half an hour he remained in this condition perfectly insensible except as he appeared to have revealed to him a sight into the bottomless pit. His language (for he continued talking) was descriptive of the saddest and most awful misery, of wailing and torment as the inevitable doom of the damned. Such language one rarely hears. His warnings and demonstrations were intense and conclusive in the behalf of all who doubted future punishment, then he would exclaim, "Oh! if they could only see what I see they could never doubt there is a hell." Between 12 midnight and 1 o'clock he again came to himself. We said but little to him, urging him to retire, which he did, being apparently in his right mind. Next morning when he arose he resembled one who might have passed through a three-month's sickness. He then had but a dim recollection of the past night's transactions. When, however, I saw him a few weeks subsequently he told me what he saw in his vision, and I was prepared to corroborate his statements. This is all I shall at present say in reference to this marvellous phenomenon.

Bro. Brymer has given up his former occupation that he might in some way work more for his Master. He was very providentially put into his present work which is considerably less lucrative than his former business and one more uncertain. But he enters this work of colportage with the hope that he may do more good, and may from time to time warn the sinner not to trifle with the threatenings of Jehovah.

I have no opinion in particular upon the subject in hand. Mine is only to state the facts, some of which I have given.

Believing my brother to be a pious and devoted Christian, I wish him success in his work and am happy to write the above in vindication of his story which he may relate from time to time in the desire of enforcing the truth upon the hearts of sinners.

Yours, &c., G. N. BALLENTINE.

Giving.

"That man may last, but never lives, Who much receives and nothing gives; Whom none can love,—whom none can thank, Creation's blot,—creation's blank."

Punctuation was first used in literature in 1520. Before that time words and sentences were put together like that.

Mr. Spurgeon is to receive a gift of \$25,000 from his congregation on the completion of his twenty-five years of ministerial labor, December 31.

The Rev. H. W. Beecher has just signed a contract for fifty lectures for \$25,000 and expenses paid, to be delivered in England, Scotland, and Ireland.

The Mennonites of Manitoba have in operation 42 schools, which they wish to have brought under the working of the general school law of the Province.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Open Letters on Baptism.

NO. XI.

REV. D. D. CURRIE:—

Dear Sir,—I again take up my pen to proceed with my dreary work, and will next call your attention to

Page 22. "It is never said he (John) baptized in water, but always with water." I have pointed this out before, but you say you did not see it, so I will try again. Is it not said in Mark i. 4 that he baptized "in the river of Jordan"? and again in Matt. iii. 6 that the people "were baptized of him in Jordan"? and was not the river of Jordan water? and if John baptized in the river, was not that in water? Can words be plainer than those we find in the above passages? You must think your readers have a great deal of confidence in you if you expect them to believe you before the Bible; or that they must be in a state of worse than heathen darkness and ignorance, that you should thus presume upon their credulity. And then having made your false statement, how you labour to shew that in the Jordan does not mean in, "but near to that river." That was the kind of reasoning that so delighted the puzzled Dutchman. Do you remember that story?

"He needs strong arms who pulls against the stream."

And he needs more than mortal strength who contends with what the Bible declares. I am informed on good authority that when the new version appears it will be found that 'with,' in the words, "I indeed baptize you with water," will be taken out to give place to the correct translation, "in water." What will you and your numerous brethren who depend so much upon that word 'with' do then? Tell me, O tell me, I pray you, what will you and your brothers do then? do then? What will you and your brothers do then?

P. 24. "John tells us himself that he was to be followed by Him who was to 'sprinkle all nations.'" Here is a misquotation again. You change "many nations" into "all nations." It may be said, by you that this is so simple a matter that it is not worth mentioning, and that I am too critical; but you, Mr. C., have to be watched at every turn. I will tell you now what I consider your reason for altering that word.

On page 27 you say that Christ "gave the commission to go and baptize all nations." Now "sprinkle many nations" and "baptize all nations" do not quite harmonize, you see, but it is easily accomplished, as you have shewn; just take away 'many' and add 'all,' then the work is complete, and the two passages harmonize. About "sprinkle many nations" more anon. Next, instead of telling what John said, you have told us what he did not say.

P. 25. "The Mosaic ritual required that he (Christ) would not begin to preach until he was thirty years of age, and not then without being sprinkled with water." Now, my good friend Currie, why do you say what you have no authority for whatever. Where is your authority for so groundless a statement? There is not a word in that ritual that speaks about Christ, or his preaching, or his being sprinkled. Christ was not of the tribe of Levi, to which tribe the priesthood belonged. See Heb. vii. 14-16. "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood: And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." Also vs. 28. "For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity," &c. And again, Heb. viii. 4, "For if he were on earth he would not be a priest," &c. Now then, Mr. C., where do you see the connexion between the Mosaic ritual and Christ. I can tell you; you want to try to shew that Christ was sprinkled, but as in all your other attempts to prove what is not in the Scriptures—you fail. Besides, the priests were not sprinkled with water as you wish to make it appear there was always ashes mixed with it. So if the Mosaic ritual required Christ to be sprinkled with water it also required that the ashes of an heifer should

be mixed with it, and if you follow the example of Christ you should do the same.

P. 28. "It is commanded that all nations—all the world—every creature should be baptized."

P. 29. "Our Lord has commanded that all should be baptized, and children form part of the whole." This is what you say; now let us see what the Bible says, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations (which as you know means to disciple all nations) baptizing them," &c., Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. "Go ye into all the world and"—baptize every creature—no, "preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized," &c.—Mark xvi. 15, 16. And yet you say that every statement in your Catechism is "absolutely impregnable." If "Our Lord has commanded that all should be baptized" (and you lay stress upon the four last words by italicising them) and children should be baptized because they "form part of the whole," then on the self-same principle every person whatsoever, be their character what it may, should also be baptized. The worst man that lives, according to you, should be baptized, because he also is a part of the whole. If Christ commanded his disciples to baptize all nations, why does Paul say, "Christ sent me not to baptize but to preach the Gospel"? and why do we not read in Mark xvi. 20, "And they went forth, and baptized everywhere," &c.? It is no marvel that the Editor of the Wesleyan has been remonstrated with for occupying so much space on Baptism when he who occupies the space brings dishonour upon his brethren by abusing God's word as he does, and I cannot and therefore will not resist the expression of my mind, that in the whole Methodist church, nor any other I hope, there cannot be a man who treats the Bible after the manner you do.

P. 31. "The command says, 'Go ye and make disciples of all,' by, first, 'baptizing them,' (Matt. xxviii. 19), and then, after they are baptized, 'teaching them (vs. 20) to observe all things.'" "First, baptize them as soon as they can be baptized, and then teach them as soon as they can be taught." Why not give the command as it stands in the verse, and then your comments, instead of mixing up your perversions with it? As you put it, you make Christ to command what he never did. "First baptizing them" is a commandment of men, and why do you say it is a commandment of Christ? What Christ said to the Pharisees may here be said to you and some others, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own traditions." "Making the word of God of non-effect through your traditions, which ye have delivered: and many such things do ye." If I thought you were sincere in your belief I would reprove you less, but lest you are, and do really believe and mean what you say, let me refer you to Acts ii, where you will find the order of the commission fulfilled. 1. Preaching, vs. 14-36. 2. Conviction and enquiry, vs. 37. 3. Direction, vs. 38. 4. Encouragement, v. 39. 5. Believing. They gladly received his (Peter's) word, vs. 41. 6. Baptism same verse. 7. Union with the church, same verse. 8. Continuing "steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." Same chapter, "When they believed Philip preaching, &c., they were baptized, both men and women." Here is preaching, believing, and then baptism. So in many other places in the New Testament? You cannot make a person the disciple or follower of another without some kind of instruction or persuasion first. Do you not see that? It is very simple. Are infant children capable of instruction or persuasion? And is not becoming a disciple of any one a personal and intelligent act on the part of the person so disciplined? You teach, too, that God has indicated the period when children should be baptized, namely in early infancy; they are to be baptized "as soon as they can be baptized." That is to say that God has commanded that infants should be baptized as soon as they are born! If any one else can put a different construction on those words, I cannot. In this you are consistent with what you say elsewhere (p. 31), where you seem to lift up

your hands in holy horror at those "who assume the awful responsibility of rejecting the only possible period in which all can be 'born of water,' and sanction a system the tendency of which is to send the great majority unbaptized into eternity."

On the same page you describe it as "unscriptural, unphilosophical, inconsistent, mischievous, and most perilous," "that children should be left to grow up to mature years, and choose for themselves respecting these things." If it is "most perilous" to neglect to baptize infants, and if it is so very important to baptize them, and its neglect fraught with such awful consequences as your words imply, then by all means attend to it as soon as possible: "baptize them as soon as they can be baptized," run no risks, the child may not live but a few minutes, and should it go out of life into eternity "forever unbaptized" what will not the direful consequences be? and what the awful responsibility of those who sent for the doctor, but neglected to send for the minister? "Cry aloud, Mr. Currie, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew to the people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" by neglecting to send for the minister to baptize the little one "as soon as it can be baptized." Tell them, Bro. C., tell them, I pray you, of the "awful responsibility" they assume by such neglect. And tell your brethren in the ministry, and all others who may listen to you, that if by any means parents have been so forgetful of the eternal interests of their child as to have neglected this all-important matter, and the child should be sick and in danger of leaving the world "forever unbaptized," tell them, O tell them, to hasten—to run—to fly with lightning speed: tell them to "salute no man by the way," nor rest till they have saved the child from its imminent danger.

Your teaching is quite in accord with that of the African Council of sixty-six bishops who met A. D. 254. They in their decree (which decree I send in full to the Messenger with this letter) say:—"a baptismo atque a gratia nemo prohibetur; quanto magis prohiberi non debet Infans qui recens natus," &c. That is, "No one is to be denied baptism and grace; how much more ought not an Infant who being just born," &c. And again, as a reason for thus early baptizing them they say, "quantum in nobis est, si fieri potest, nulla anima perdenenda est," that is "as much as lies in our power if it is possible to be done" (that is baptism) "no soul is to be lost." Read the decree in full and you will see more of the same kind. Your teaching on this subject, Mr. C., and that of those bishops, as also that of the Churches of England and Rome, seem to dovetail into each other with considerable nicety.

I find that I have by my letters to you incurred the displeasure of many of your denomination. This I am not surprised at, though I am sorry for it, but the time may come when they may be thankful that some one took the trouble to reveal to them the erroneous teachings, perversions of Scripture, and other follies of one whom they had been led to place too much confidence in. To such and all others who may be disposed to frown I have only to say, 'Clear the track.' More to follow from Yours, &c., J. BROWN.

Paradise, Nov. 28th, 1878.

For the Christian Messenger.

Exegetical.

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."—Heb. vi. 1, 2.

The Apostle had just been reproving the Hebrew Christians of dullness in understanding the Gospel. Said he to them, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (v. 12). The scriptures, here called "the oracles of God," the Hebrews were, or should have been, well acquainted with. Those scriptures contained the Levitical law of sacrifices; all of which was designed of God to