

The Church Times.

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Calendar.

CALENDAR WITH LESSONS.

Day & Date	MORNING	EVENING.
S. Jan. 15	2 S. aft. Epiph.	Isalah 61
M. 16	any	Gen. 22
T. 17		Gen. 22
W. 18		Gen. 22
T. 19		Gen. 22
F. 20		Gen. 22
S. 21		Gen. 22

Poetry.

LETTER TO LORD PALMERSTON'S PHILOSOPHICAL LETTER OPPOSING THE APPOINTMENT OF A FAST DAY.

HAPPY the man who sees a God employed
In all the good and ill that chequer life,
Resolving all events with their effects.
God proclaims
His hot displeasure against foolish men
That live an Atheist life, involves the heaven
In tempests, quits His grasp upon the winds,
And gives them all their fury; springs His mines,
And desolates a nation at a blast.
Forth steps your spruce Philosopher, and tells
Of homogeneal and discordant springs
And principles, of causes how they work
By necessary laws, their sure effects
Of action and reaction: HE HAS FOUND
The source of the disease that nature feels,
And bids the world take heart and banish fear.
Thou fool! Will thy discovery of the cause
Suspend the effect, or heal it! Has not God
Still wrought by means since first He made the world?
And did he not of old employ His means
To drown it?
Go dress thine eyes with eye-salve, ask of Him,
Or ask of whomsoever He has taught;
And learn, though late, the genuine cause of all.

—Cooper.

Religious Miscellany.

From the Christian Advocate and Journal.

SPIRITUALISM.

We have now before us a large octavo of five hundred pages, entitled 'Spiritualism,' by Judge Edmonds and Dr. Dexter; two gentlemen hitherto of fair standing in this community. They, however, do not claim to be the authors of the volume, which is composed principally of revelations, professedly made to them by Swedenborg (!) and Lord Bacon, (!) with an occasional vision seen by the judge, when covering his eyes with a pocket handkerchief, he was wont to recline upon a sofa and rest himself after the fatigues of the day.
We have no doubt the judge had these visions.—There is nothing very remarkable in them. Many an iron-eater has seen more wonderful things and more visions; but it is not usual to spread them out in details in the volume before us. It is done to enliven excessively dry and very misty communications through the judge's confederate—the medium, as it is called.
Dipped up in a mass of meaningless verbiage, in spite of it, we must admit, very much like the writings of Swedenborg gave to the world while in the body, we have the most glaring absurdities, bold blasphemies, direct and positive contradictions of the teachings of the book of God. At the hazard of utterly disgusting our readers, we verify our assertions by a few quotations.
I was sitting, at the very outset the doctrine of punishment in a place prepared, as Christ tells us, for the devil and his angels, is pronounced by these gentlemen, on the authority, they say, of Swedenborg, &c. They talk of 'the fabulous regions of Satan's empire;' and this cardinal idea is elaborated throughout the volume. In section thirty-nine, for instance, a new actor is brought upon the stage in what is designed as an interlude to relieve the excruciating labors of the chief actors in the drama—the ghosts of Swedenborg and Chancellor Bacon. He represents himself as one who, while he was in this sphere, that is, in his lifetime, was a believer in the declaration, 'The earth shall be turned into hell, with all the nations

that forgot God,' and faithfully warned his fellow-men of their danger, and of their need of a Saviour. He spent his life in these labours, and now comes down,—or up, it is not clear which,—and according to the solemn asseveration of Mr Edmonds, gives this account of his post-mortem experience

'I thus departed from earth, feeling happy that I had done my duty, and borne my cross, and might enter into the joys of my father's house. I entered the spirit world, but was not met by the rejoicing and bright angels I expected: by some friends, to be sure: but their countenances were sad and gloomy; there was evidently something on their minds. I asked, How is this? Why should heaven seem so gloomy a place? I said, Friends, can you tell me the reason? Let me see the Saviour, who died on the cross to redeem sinners. One venerable-looking brother, whom I had known on earth, approached me solemnly, and taking my hand said, Our life-teachings have been wrong, &c.

But the poor fellow was not so bad off after all.—The friends who had 'something on their minds, reveal' to him another doctrine, which appears also to be fundamental to this system. It is, that there is ample time for repentance in the future world. 'My soul was so troubled and cast down,' he continues, 'that, after pausing awhile, I said to that brother—What dost the reader think he said to that brother? Even this:—'What shall I do to be saved?' The brother directed him 'to go down' and become a rapper, and 'by your labor' says he, 'blot out your sins by assisting others to blot out theirs.' A very easy method of blotting out sins, is it not. Of course he came 'down,' and thus relates the rest of his experience: 'I began my labors. And, O yes, it was a labor indeed sufficient to wash away the errors from those minds whose ignorance was made darker by my errors, and who might now have been further advanced but for my teachings.'

This, it seems, was a minister. A vagabond by the name of Jones, who had been hung for murder, confirms the doctrine. He makes his appearance in a very mysterious manner, and Mr. Edmonds asks, 'Are you the spirit of one who was tried before me for murder, was condemned to death by me, and executed?'

The answer is prompt: 'Yes, I am he, judge.—Then the murderer goes on: 'Do you know why I embraced your knees just now? Of course Mr. Edmonds does not know: and that he may not burst in ignorance, the spirit is represented as saying, 'Well, judge, I was so thankful that I was removed by your mandate from my former state of ignorance and blindness into the next sphere, where I have become a man, and I am now sent here by the wise ones to speak to you.'

Whether Jones—Mr. Jones we must call him, since he has 'become a man'—has yet returned thanks to the sheriff, we are not advised.

The doctrine of atonement is denied and ridiculed.—Mr. Edmonds speaking in his proper person, tells his readers, 'It is no vicarious atonement which is to redeem us, but we are to work out our own salvation, either in this life, or, as we have seen, in the life to come, at our own option. He calls the atonement a pernicious 'doctrine,' at which this new revelation strikes, in his own language, 'once and for aye a fatal blow.—On this point he is a little bolder than even the rapper who professes to be Lord Bacon, who is made to ask, 'Could it have been necessary that God should have made a Saviour?' And again, 'How could Christ have taken on himself the burden of the sins of the world?'

On the doctrine of original sin, however, he is more explicit, and dogmatizes after this fashion; 'That there was and is sin in the world no one denies, but that the old or present sin originated with the act of Adam, in the garden of Eden I do deny, as incompatible with everything we know characterizing God.' This is bold. It seems to stagger even Bacon himself, and he resorts to his favorite mode of asking questions. Thus he proceeds, with his usual courtesy: 'Pray tell me, if an act of wrong committed on your earth include the spirits here in the consequences, how could any spirit ever arrive at the highest sphere?'

A hard question indeed, if there be no mediator, and if the atonement be, as Mr. Edmonds asserts, a pernicious, that is, a false doctrine.

To be Concluded next week.

UNIVERSALISM.

It is strange that those who are now re-agitating the question of 'the Future Punishment of the Wicked, and many of whom are professed logicians, do not appear to perceive that the real inner question is 'the existence of moral evil.'

Yet the leader of this new party in the Church is very distinct and emphatic in his identification of sin and punishment. He even goes to unusual lengths in this direction, insisting on it that a state of alienation from God, of hatred and rebellion, is in itself hell, and that it is useless to speculate about any other.

Clearly, then, to argue that future punishment and hell itself will one day come to an end, is to maintain that, at some future period, moral evil will be extinguished—a most wonderful prospect, if there be any reality in it; but one which it is strange presumption to invent, or to open to mankind, without the highest authority.

But, unquestionably, the general tenor of holy Scripture looks in a totally opposite direction. The fallen angels, says St. Jude, are 'reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.' Of this great judgment to come, those evil spirits are well aware. They asked our Lord Himself, 'Art thou come to torment us before our time?'—(Matt. viii. 29.) In the last pages of God's word, the nature of that judgment is plainly declared.—'The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever' (Rev. xx. 10.) Surely, in such words as these, there is not the least glimpse of an extinguishment of moral evil, or of a termination of its just and proper punishment.

Nor should it be forgotten that those who speculate upon a supposed intention of God to swallow up at some future time death and hell, and Satan and all moral evil, in an 'abyss of love,' do thereby indulge in a kind of freedom in speaking of the divine attributes, which borders very closely on the profane. For they beg to take for granted that God can, without any dishonour to His attributes, both sanctify and glorify all the fallen spirits in hell whenever He pleases; and in thus imagining an arbitrary power of universal redemption, they necessarily imply that all the sin and misery that exists, exists merely because God wills it: or because He refuses to will it to be otherwise.

A very judicious writer of the last generation has well observed that there is cause to suspect that we are often 'a little too hasty in investing our Creator with those attributes which we think fit to assign to Him: and we may see that this idea of perfect love is but the fiction of our fancy, which imagines that a virtuous disposition, amiable in human beings, would suit also the perfection of their Maker. In considering the moral attributes of God, the best guides we can possess are the dispensations of His natural and moral government, which, as far as our weak intellects can comprehend them, afford direct evidences of His character.'

'We take all those qualities which we find in ourselves, contributing, as we think, to our perfection: and adding infinity to them, fancy we have an adequate idea of the 'Eos Entium.' The more direct path appears to be the same which we adopt in common life: to draw our inferences concerning His nature and character from the manifestations of it in the affairs of this world, and in express revelation, remembering only the humility with which we should enter on a subject so awful and incomprehensible.'

To our minds, there is very little difference between the temerity which would fain find out the origin of sin, and the presumption which asserts its final extinction. We can know nothing of either except what God has been pleased to tell us. And whether we consult the last words of the evangelical prophet of the Old Testament, or the last words of the beloved disciple in the New, we find in each, dictated by the Holy Spirit, the plainest assertion that the divine justice and love will be manifested at last, not in the extinction of moral evil but in the condemnation of it.—Record.

* The late John Bowdler, jun. Esq.