

THE Harbinger of Light.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL

DEVOTED TO

ZOISTIC SCIENCE, FREE THOUGHT, SPIRITUALISM
AND THE HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY.

"Dawn approaches, Error is passing away, Men arising shall hail the day."

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sensation of Spiritualists and Spiritualism than the lady referred to, even backed up by her two supporters within its ranks.

We take no exception to the classification of Spiritualists as given in our report, though we think Mrs. Britten should have explained that the "second" class, form only an infinitesimal portion of the body, but the assumption that those only who attended her lectures were true Spiritualists, whilst those who absented themselves are stigmatised as Phenomenalists, is one of the grossest pieces of egotism we have met with. We wish to write temperately, but cannot justly express ourselves in milder terms, nor do we think that any impartial reader of that portion of Mrs. Britten's address can say they are too severe.

The last portion of the address to which we take exception is that relating to Mr. Thomas Walker; it would have been a graceful act on the part of Mrs. Britten to announce Mr. Walker's coming lecture, but all the merit of the act is lost when the occasion is made use of to stigmatise those, who from principle had held aloof from her lectures, as her enemies, and to injure Mr. Walker by the gratuitous and unwarranted statement, that, "he is not with them (the Association) in feeling." We are able from personal knowledge to affirm that Mr. Walker is, and has been in sympathy with the Association and its objects, is on the most friendly terms with its officers and many of its members, and we doubt if he has a single enemy within its ranks.

It is a painful task for us to condemn the utterances of one for whom as a public speaker and teacher of the truths of Spiritualism we have the highest respect, but if either from personal or external inspiration her lips speak falsehood, it is incumbent upon us to do our part in correcting it, for the confidence inspired by the truths which are wont to flow through that channel makes the error more dangerous. It is with this view alone we have written, all these human errors and weaknesses cannot affect the truths Mrs. Britten has uttered or will yet give utterance to. Error perisheth but truth is immortal, and the time will doubtless come when this eloquent teacher will regret as much as we do her valedictory address here.

READERS of the *Harbinger* will be aware from letters and reports appearing in its columns, of a disagreement between the local Association of Spiritualists and Mrs. Britten. We should not, however, have alluded further to this unpleasant subject, but for the public introduction of it by Mrs. Britten in her valedictory address, which prompted the special meetings of the Association and its committee, and called forth the letter of its secretary which appears in another column. We are but an "humble" soldier in the ranks of which she calls herself a "noble" one, our only claim to nobility being that of truth. And by this claim we feel called upon to do battle, not with Mrs. Britten, but with what we conceive to be the errors which she has put forward as truths. We cannot but deplore the evident animus shewn by Mrs. Britten against a body of ladies and gentlemen who have worked earnestly, disinterestedly, and hitherto harmoniously for the advancement of Spiritualism in this part of the world. The spiritualistic "house" which appears to be in this instance, the Victorian Association, is not "divided against itself," but as will be seen from the report of its last meeting, is all but unanimous in its opinion on the matter in question, and the contemptuous manner in which Mrs. Britten speaks of them as "the persons who for reasons and purposes of their own have seceded from my side," is unworthy of one occupying so prominent a position in the Spiritual army. The simile of the flowers is good, but not a fortunate one for the speaker, as it cuts both ways, and the keenest edge is turned towards her, for surely one hundred flowers come nearer a representation of the flora of the universe than a single specimen, and consequently the hundred or so of the members of the Association who dissent from Mrs. Britten are a fairer repre-

SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES.

XI.

I now want to speak more particularly of how you, in the earth-state, should be affected by the contemplation of these spiritual horizons, which to us are so incalculably interesting and instructive. Your immediate surroundings are made up of the physical things which correspond to your more external thoughts and aspirations; and the degree in which these things are capable of affording you pleasure or pain, interest or distaste, arises from the physical or bodily constitution, and which, in its turn, is affected by the grosser atmosphere of the planet on which you dwell. But it must not be forgotten that man possesses another constitution, viz., a spiritual or interior organisation; and that this also has surroundings, and is affected in its degree by influences which go to make up an experience very different to that which pertains to the grosser physical. It becomes, in the conduct of daily life, a very important consideration, to train judiciously the external organisation; so that, through that medium, the individual may derive an exalted conception of the external life of man, for this, in its place, and as the agency of progressive advancement to higher external states, is vastly important in the government of the Infinite Father. And I may also remark, that such a course will materially aid the higher culture to which I invite you most earnestly. Now, in connection with this work, I would remark that it is a considerable acquisition to be able to read the teachings of Nature; for all of Nature in its objective forms has a tale to tell, not only of itself, but of Him who has fashioned it and endowed it; and this is the great highway to reach the secret of spiritual facts which ever underlie the material. The shining stars, the radiant sun, the soft and gentle light of the moon, dry land and sea, fruits and flowers, trees with their verdure, and even the minerals which are exhumed from the bowels of the earth, with all the potencies which these exhibit, speak in language which can be understood by man, of principles and laws which are at the very foundation of the seen universe. The great want of man, however, stands connected with *spiritual instincts*; and consequently, with the means of contemplating the future of his existence. There appears to be in man's nature, first, an instinctive idea that existence may be prolonged even after the fleshy tabernacle falls; and also a latent desire, sometimes amounting to intense anxiety, to know what that future will reveal as it affects the individual consciousness. And it is from this standpoint that man needs to be educated and his wants supplied. I have no hesitation in saying that what is termed "the new dispensation of Spiritualism," in its purer and higher aspects, has contributed a basis on which to attain such a realisation. The opening of the spiritual channels between the abode of man on earth and the dwellings of those who have passed on to the next stage of human existence, has thus, at any rate, become a more palpable and universal fact; and what is now wanted in connection with this, is the opening of the spiritual eyesight of man, and which he must accomplish for himself in the cultivation of those elements of his nature which have to do with the spiritual constitution. Then it will be discovered, that around him and above him, and entering into his everyday life, there are those heavenly horizons which indicate not only the possibilities of his spiritual faculties, but also the character of his future; but a future, after all, as connected with his spiritual life, growing now, and progressing to a continuous and never-ending result, and, moreover, affording such a measure of instruction as shall indicate the course he must pursue in order to be in harmony with the will of the Great Author of his being. Like Peter, of whom you read in the Acts of the Apostles,* there shall be spread out before him those instructions to be read, the tablet lessons of a higher wisdom, at once assisting and comforting the soul on its earthly pilgrimage. It is to the attainment of this privilege I am especially desirous to call your attention; the cultiva-

tion, in fact, of the operations of the interior life, and whereby you shall stand on the mount of vision, and not only view the Canaan with unclouded eyes, but learn to interpret the pulsations of the great Nature of which you form a part as indicating the part you are expected to take in its great movements; and thus, in the harmony to be attained, discover in all things which be, and which transpire, parts of the great whole. From my own experience, I can assure you that the benefits to be derived from the careful and faithful cultivation of the interior life is, beyond a doubt, the highest practical good a man can reach, whether in the earth-life or the next stage on which he must enter. And the happiness or misery which appears to be the necessary result of intelligent life, will be affected by attention to, or neglect of this all-important duty. In my next communication I shall hope to give you some practical thoughts as to the cultivation of this duty, and the way in which I think you may become more familiar with the heavenly horizons which ever surround you—the means of restoration of the spiritual sight; and the facility which is afforded for its exercise, in the benevolent dispensations of the Divine Government."

MARNIAS METI,

H.J.B.

April, 1879.

To Correspondents.

Communications for insertion in this Journal should be plainly written, and as concise as possible.

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—On Sunday evening, April 13, I attended service at the Baptist Church, Emerald Hill. The preacher, a venerable-looking old gentleman, in the course of some remarks referring to advanced thinkers boasting of the rapid progress of Freethought, said, "As if all thought is not free." I do not for a moment accuse the reverend gentlemen of intentionally using a sentence so equivocal, but was much surprised at the thoughtlessness which allowed of its being addressed to an intelligent congregation. Surely the reverend gentleman must admit that thought can not be free when its exercise is interfered with; and have we not daily instances of such interference, for example, the instilling by individuals and religious and political parties into the minds of their supporters of prejudices, dogmas, hatreds, falsehoods, &c., all of which effectually check for a time—and too often for a very long time—the freedom of different trains of thought. History, again, unhappily furnishes altogether too many illustrations of how completely thought may be imprisoned by the suppression of its exercise. The reverend gentleman must also be aware of another powerful means of holding thought in check, a means so repeatedly used in the past, and occasionally resorted to in the present, I refer to the silencing of the tongue of the printing press. The weakening and ultimate destruction of the reasoning faculties by the removal of all subjects for thought is painfully illustrated by the large proportion of shepherds located in bleak and lonely districts who become insane. If thought is always free, how can any clergyman for a moment hope—and I trust they all do so hope—to remove from the minds of their congregations and Sunday-school children the habit of dwelling upon evil and corrupt thoughts, and what is the use of talking about "moulding the minds of our young."

In another place the reverend gentleman, speaking of the attitude of the churches towards the present state of thought, said, "There may be a necessity for a change of front." How this is to be effected, or what meaning he desired should be attached to it by his hearers, I am unable to say, as I concluded from the general tone of the sermon that the speaker was an advocate of the old school ideas. Apologising for trespassing so far upon your space, I am, &c.,

C. R.

April 6th, 1879.

MR. J. TYERMAN IN ENGLAND, AND HIS APPROACHING RETURN TO AUSTRALIA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

DEAR SIR,—The last letter I sent you was written in Rochester, State of New York, America, so closely associated with the early history of Spiritualism. After leaving there I lectured at Buffalo, Boston, Brooklyn, and New York, where we had fine meetings, the largest and best I had in America. My tour through the United States improved as it proceeded, and ended most satisfactorily. I saw some materialisations in Boston, whose genuineness I could not doubt, and other manifestations of a remarkable character. In New York I had a pleasant interview with Andrew Jackson Davis, Professor S. B. Brittan, Professor Buchanan and other distinguished Spiritualists. Mr. Davis came from Orange to meet me. He is an extraordinary man, as everybody knows who is well acquainted with his writings, and as pleasant a gentleman in company as one could wish to meet.

From New York I came to Glasgow, Scotland. The steamer belonging to the same company that sailed before we did has not been heard of since, and is given up for lost. My departure from America was delayed a few days, or I might have been on board of her, and hence had a narrow escape. Once I should have called that a providential thing, but I do not now, in the ordinary sense of the term; for while parties escaping may be said to have had a providential mercy shewn them, what can be thought of Providence, as popularly understood, sending a ship and all on board to the sea bottom, and making many poor widows and helpless orphans? Such events suggest very different views of Providence, and the government of the world from those of the orthodox churches.

At Glasgow I had a very successful sitting with Mr. Duguid, the well-known medium. I heard an address from the spirit purporting to be "Hafed, Prince of Persia." I saw the medium take up a red hot coal in his hands, and hold it till it cooled, without being burnt, and got three gems of pictures done in oils, one while the medium's eyes were closed, and two in total darkness, under absolute test conditions. I met with some hearty Spiritualists both in Glasgow and Edinburgh, but had not time to stay to lecture there. I also saw places of great historic interest, on which I shall probably say something when I return to Australia.

I have lectured in London four Sundays, to large and increasing audiences, and on the 20th ult., I was tendered a public welcome, which was as unexpected as it was gratifying. Mr. J. Carson, of Melbourne, presided, and the affair was in every way a great success. I stayed at the Spiritual Institution while in London and found Mr. Burns an excellent fellow, and a splendid worker in the cause. He deserves all the support he gets, and a great deal more. And of course there are other good workers in connection with the movement in London.

I had pleasant interviews with Mr. William Crookes, F.R.S., Mr. Alfred Russell Wallace, and other leading Spiritualists while in London, who, as scientific men, have done so much to improve the status of the movement in Great Britain. I took tea with Mr. Wallace the other day and found him a most agreeable gentleman in private.

I shall lecture at Newcastle-on-Tyne next Sunday and Monday, and at London again the following Sunday, my last in England. On the Monday following the friends in London have proposed to give me a farewell public meeting, and I shall sail on Tuesday the 25th inst., in the steamship "Cuzco," which will call at Adelaide and Melbourne before going on to Sydney. We shall also call at the Cape of Good Hope.

Last week's *Medium* contains my portrait, and also a report of the public welcome given me in London; which will probably interest my friends in Australia.

In closing these brief notes, I will just add that my health has much improved by my trip so far, and I have been benefitted in many other ways. The determination to take this tour round the world was one of wisest and best I ever formed, as events have so far fully proved.

My convictions of the truth and importance of Spiritualism have been deepened and strengthened, instead of shaken as some people might expect; and, if spared, I shall return to Australia more firmly resolved than ever to do what little I can for its defence and propagation in the colonies. I never had a shadow of doubt as to its truth from the day I fairly understood it, and deeper thought and further research only confirm my first views and impressions of it; and hence my desire to live and labour to promote the interests of it, and cognate subjects.

Yours fraternally,

J. TYERMAN.

Lofthouse, Yorkshire, March 13, 1879.

The "Cuzco" is expected to arrive at Melbourne before the middle of this month, and should she remain here a night, arrangements will be made for Mr. Tyerman to meet and address the Spiritualists of this city. [Ed. H. of L.]

JESSE SHEPARD IN SYDNEY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

DEAR SIR,—In your last issue I read, with considerable curiosity, a communication from Sydney, referring to the wonderful phenomena that are taking place in this city, through the mediumship of Mr. Jesse Shepard. If the statements of that letter be correct, the manifestations of Spiritualistic phenomena are indeed marvellous. But, stranger, and more marvellous still, the major part of the Spiritualistic public of Sydney are altogether ignorant of, and strangers to these wonderful events, which we are told are transpiring in our midst. Surely in this instance may it be appropriately said, "Truth is stranger than fiction." Your correspondents open their epistle as follows:—"Since Mr. Jesse Shepard's second visit to Sydney he has been giving concerts and seances with great success." Now, Mr. Editor, I have gone to some trouble to enquire with reference to this vaunted success, from persons who have attended these seances—persons who are Spiritualists, and therefore charitably and favourably disposed—and I find, upon their statements, that nothing of an extraordinary character has taken place in their presence; and yet, strange to relate, your correspondents seem to have had exclusive privileges, for they say:—"Almost nightly we sit for manifestations, both musical and physical, and have been rewarded with the most startling results." So manifold and oft-recurring have been the manifestations, that in writing concerning them they add:—"We scarcely know where to begin a description of them." Now, Sir, I am solely writing in the interests of truth. By all means let us have "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." It will, indeed, be a dark and dismal day for Spiritualism, when it will need overdrawn and over-coloured statements to recommend it either to friends or foes. As a Spiritualist, I have every confidence that our spirit friends are well able to take care of, and carry forward their own work, and that a progressive future will unfold Spiritual truth in all its attractiveness, beauty, and grandeur; but I always feel grieved when friends of the cause—to whom I give every credit for good motives, but who, perhaps, have more zeal than knowledge—send forth to a discerning, but unappreciate world, statements which are calculated to retard the wheels of progress, and bring upon our grand philosophy unmerited sarcasm and scorn. We can well afford to leave our cause in the sure and safe keeping of our unseen friends, whose greatest solitude is for the unfoldment of those truths, which are to benefit and bless humanity. Let us not endeavour to exalt our mediums—for, after all, they are only instruments—at the expense of the kind offices of our spirit-workers, and the noble issues they are anxious to accomplish.

Referring further to your correspondents' letter, concerning the character of the manifestations, they say, "On one occasion, while Mr. S. was playing the piano and talking, the large table was lifted up and upset, the tambourine was shaken violently, the guitar

was playing all about the room, keeping time with the hymns and airs sung by the sitters, lights appeared, voices spoke to everyone in the circle, independent voices sang in different parts of the room, and materialized spirits appeared, walked about, touched us all, and, bowing low, presented us with rare stones from the River Jordan."

Now, Mr. Editor, this is precisely what we want, to convince unbelievers, and convert sceptics. Having a medium among us through whose organism such astounding phenomena is, and can be produced, we are indeed highly favoured among the nations, and need not be any longer terrified by the Christian fulminations of that clerical opponent—the Rev. Dr. Begg.

Your correspondents, having heard spirit-voices, seen materialized spirit forms, and received rare stones from the River Jordan, is tangible evidence of spirit actuality and power.

I should very much wish to have a glance at these rare stones, and should like to be informed how they know that they came from the River Jordan, and not from Hobson's Bay or Port Phillip Heads. After this, I should not be surprised to hear that the spirit friends presented the favoured ones with some of the goodly stones from the pearly gates, and jasper walls, or, perchance, with a nugget from the gold-paved streets of the New Jerusalem; or, by way of variety, they may present some "rare" fruit—which would be more digestible than stones—plucked from the "tree of knowledge of good and evil."

Well, Sir, comment is needless. Truly, in this instance, "distance lends enchantment to the scene." I trust the day is indefinitely remote when Spiritualists will surrender their common sense and rationality, either to spirits or mortals. Spirits nether require nor demand it; on the contrary, they tell us not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits, and accept their statements and teachings only so far as they harmonize with the convictions of our intuitions.

And now, in conclusion, permit me to say that I trust a word to the wise will be sufficient. Spiritualism in this city has gained many triumphs, and before her the future is both ominous and encouraging. She is making sure and steady strides in the march of progress, despite unceasing opposition of hostile and malignant foes. There are many circles in operation for investigation and development, at which phenomena is often presented—not of a startling character—but yet sufficient to convince that it is the result of spirit intelligence and power. If Spiritualists will only observe conditions laid down by our spirit friends, and not prove recreants to duty and truth, I feel satisfied that the cause to which we have plighted our fealty will defy and defeat all opposing powers; and, with Spiritual truth in the one hand, to combat and conquer error, with Spiritual light in the other, to instruct ignorance and dissipate darkness; and with the forces of the Spirit-world behind us, to sustain and strengthen us in the conflict, we shall go forward in the path of duty and progress, assured that victory will be the crown of our joy and rejoicing.

Yours, fraternally,

Sydney, 15th ult. G. Q***TY.

MR. ROBBINS' MEDIUMSHIP.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—We have in Sydney a gentleman from Mudgee, Mr. Edwin Robbins, who is really a splendid medium for healing and developing. I was present at one of his seances held at 260 Louisa Terrace, Palmer street, Sydney, on Friday, 4th April, inst. The circle was opened with a beautiful invocation and with music. A lady on my left, was soon controlled and spoke in the trance state. The spirit friend present, said he would not be able to control his medium long that evening; when asked why, by a gentleman opposite, a musical box which had ceased playing, began to my astonishment to commence a tune. Now I had my eyes on the instrument just before that, and can say that no one touched it, this was in answer to the gentleman's question, implying that more music was necessary, whereupon we complied with our spirit friend's wish by setting the

instrument going. A lady on my right after being in the trance condition, found her ear-rings on the table in front of her; they having been taken from her ears. Mr. Robbins was subsequently controlled, and various spirit friends communicated through him, amongst them the celebrated John King. We then dimmed the light, when a beautiful luminous cloud appeared, and spirit faces, &c., were discernible. On Thursday, 17th inst., we held a sitting at a friend's house in Parramatta Street and another at 260 Palmer Street the next evening. At the former Mr. Robbins was under control again, and we were told that the medium should erect a cabinet, and place a bell therein, when we might have materialisations. At the Friday sitting, the music box again played twice (no one touching it), Mr. Robbins was entranced by his father's spirit, who said the spirit of our medium is far away in the atmosphere; and that it would be recalled instantly, were any harm about to happen to the body. Allan Kardec's "Book on Mediums" corresponds with this statement exactly. The latter portions of these seances were in the dark, and I saw a beautifully defined form of a spirit face emerge from the cabinet at the last sitting, and bright clouds of aura and spirit lights both on Thursday and Friday evenings. A lady on the medium's left, was then controlled by an Indian Chief. I have never seen such wonderful manifestations as these, and I hope all who wish their powers developed, will join these circles. Mr. Robbins is a worthy Spiritualist, a large number having been convinced through him at Mudgee and at Gulgong.

F. E. S. HEWISON.

67 Crown Street, Woolloomooloo,
Sydney, April 21st, 1879.

SPIRITUALISM IN ADELAIDE.

It is not at all improbable that the visit of Professor and Mrs. Baldwin to this city will do good in the cause of spiritualism instead of harm, for it will excite an interest in the subject which has hitherto been wanting. Already the one or two Spiritualists we have in our midst have been taking advantage of the excitement caused by the visit of the so called expositors, to point out to the people of this colony the absurdity of imagining that the tricks of Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin are in any way similar to the manifestations obtained through spirit mediums. The ball was opened on Tuesday last by a writer in the *Advertiser*, signing himself "Ginx's Baby," who stood up in defence of the Eddy Brothers. This led to a reply from Mr. Baldwin, in which he referred to his challenges to Dr. Slade in Melbourne, and stated that he was each evening characterising that gentleman as an impostor, a swindler and a rogue. A writer in this morning's paper very pertinently asks if it is Professor Baldwin's usual custom in issuing a challenge to any spiritual medium to thus denounce him, stating that if this be the case he is not surprised at the fact that his challenges meet with no response, for no honourable man would condescend to argue with any one who was engaged in vilifying him as Mr. Baldwin states—in apparent exultation—he did Dr. Slade. The same writer then goes on to ask whether the tricks by which the "Katie King" manifestations, so called, would apply to such cases of materialisation as those described by Mr. Adshead in connection with Miss Woods at Belper in 1877, or to Dr. Monck and his manifestations in the presence of the Rev. Thos. Colley, and then gives some experiences of his own with private mediums. Altogether the letter is rather rough on the showman.

I must thank Mr. F. E. S. Hewison of Sydney for his complimentary allusion to me in the April number of the *Harbinger*. I am sorry I did not meet with him when he was in Adelaide, as I should have been glad to introduce him to our little circle of investigators. Our progress is very slow, but we are progressing and that is something. We have no phenomena to report, but in our communion with the spirits we hope to learn something, and to show that we are laying the foundation for a grand superstructure to be built thereon in the future. All we, as Spiritualists ask for, is fair play and candid investigation. I never ask anyone to believe because I believe, I only say "try for yourself and try fully and

fairly." This I believe is all that we have any right to ask, except that we shall not be condemned for our belief; if we are so condemned, then it only shows that religious intolerance is not yet a thing of the past.

L. E. HARCUS.

Hackney, S. A., April 18.

MRS. BRITTEN'S LAST LECTURE AND VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.

MRS. BRITTEN gave her farewell lecture at the Opera House, Melbourne, on Sunday, 15th April. The house was well filled, Dr. Britten (as usual) occupying the chair. The Chairman, in a few prefatory remarks, thanked the audience for their attendance and kindness during Mrs. Britten's lectures.

Mrs. Britten's subject was "The End of the World," in which she summarised the indications of some great and imminent catastrophe. These forecasts were principally of a prophetic nature, fortified to some extent by astrology, and astronomical indications. The lecture was able and interesting, and was applauded at its conclusion. After the applause had subsided Mrs. Britten advanced, and spoke as follows:—

I have a few words to address to you, and they shall be but few. Those words are chiefly to reiterate the tone of the loving sentiments expressed by my president to those who, Sabbath after Sabbath, have so kindly, so disinterestedly, aided and sustained my efforts in this place. I believe that I shall never meet you again, at least, never in this city, never in this land. I believe that this departure has been hastened, has been compelled, in fact, by an unhappy division in our ranks, a cause that I would not have alluded to, were it not my duty, as a noble soldier, to refer to that division. As for the persons, who, for reasons and purposes of their own, have seceded from my side, I have nothing to say: but, on many occasions, it has become proverbial to observe that "a house divided against itself cannot stand." I therefore desire emphatically to assure you that this well-worn aphorism does not apply to Spiritualism. It is like any other movement—but it has come into power while all other systems are fading rapidly away. It has come in these latter times to bring us an assurance of a spiritual universe, whose movements are different from any other movement instituted by man. Divisions are fatal in all human undertakings, but Spiritualism is not solely entrusted to man. It is something of itself. It is God's work, and all that man may put upon it can never injure or mar it—(Loud cheers). Time was when my spirit rose in indignation against those who sullied the cause, or uplifted an unholy hand against it, or wielded a ribald pen, or wagged an irreligious tongue against it; but I now only pity those who sought to crucify Thought, which has come to rescue the world from darkness, from ignorance, and from hopeless despair; for when we see that faiths, creeds, and systems perish and decay, we are sensible that the knowledge of God, and of His Universe, is expanding every moment, and they who are leaning on such slender reeds will acknowledge their folly when they look upon the fact that God is a spirit, and that spirits come rapping at our doors, flashing upon our walls, clasping our hands, and giving us the assurance that there is no death. I now tell you that Spiritualism is not in the hands of men; it is not under the power of men, and human schisms do not affect it. They have not affected me, but they have unhinged that which Spiritualism has wrought during the last thirty years, for during this cycle the spirit-world drew nearer to earth, to save, to protect, to uphold and to elevate, so that it cannot incur dishonour or retardation because of any divisions; neither can a small hole in the wall of a house cause it to perish. You might as well argue that these fading flowers

(holding up a bouquet) represent all the flowers which are at this time growing and flourishing in their respective grounds. Spiritualism came to build up a new religion, in which man should follow, and not lead, the Spirit of Truth.—(Cheers.)—I would remind you that there are three classes of Spiritualists: First, they who believe in the phenomena, but never advance beyond it; they believe in the rain that descends; they believe in the sun that shines; but their belief does not affect their lives. Secondly, there are those who believe in it because they wish to see the old system uprooted, the old land-marks destroyed; who call everything superstitious that they do not believe in; and who think that Spiritualism has come to release them from all responsibility, and nothing more. There is a third order, but perhaps they do not believe in the doctrines that spirits teach: their thoughts are spiritual, their minds are enquiring for spiritual light and life; there burns superiorly the source of all light. Those are the friends who have come here, Sabbath by Sabbath, to find in this strange and fantastic teaching that kernel of truth, that one great gem of immortality which they have failed to find in other directions. Those are the friends who have cherished the spirit in their hearts; whom no adversity can drive back, and no persecution can dismay. In their presence I have found ample compensation for the absence of all phenomenalists. From day to day I have heard their expressions of love; while I have realised the satisfaction of knowing that the seed I have been permitted to scatter has fructified in certain places; has taken root, and in future seasons, will bring forth the fruits of a new religion. I thank you from my heart, and from my soul, for all your sympathy. I thank you for listening to me, and I leave behind me a printed record that the words I have spoken, and the revolutionary and daring language I have uttered, can all be proved by the best references; and when you hear the cry raised: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" return to that little book, and therein you will find a beautiful evidence that I have spoken to you the truth, and given you the history of world-building—given you the history of that magnificent free religion instituted by the Great Free Man of the skies; approved by spirits at the gates of immortality, standing, torch in hand, ready to shew men and women how to become free from priests, who seek to claim the kingdom of heaven for themselves alone.—(Cheers.)—And yet I have a few more words to say, for I wish to tell you where you and I shall meet again:—That, in a brighter and better land, those who part this night will meet each other again "over there;" shining like a constellation, "over there;" free from all griefs and troubles, "over there, over there;" where all is beauty, warm and golden, "over there;" never sighing, never crying, never dying, "over there."—(Enthusiastic and protracted applause.)—One word more. Next Sunday Mr. Thomas Walker will appear, a good and faithful servant of the cause. I know that he is engaged by those who are my enemies—(vehement cries of "No! no!")—but I assure you that Mr. Walker is not with them in feeling. He is a good-hearted fellow; I have known him as a true friend, and I now present his name to you that you may attend his lectures, for he will unfold to you the best and sweetest teachings that the spirits can bring.—(Cheers.)—Forget divisions. Forget all else; but remember with profit the burning words that will flow from his lips, and give him the same warm sympathy that you have extended to me.—(Applause.)

Mr. Oliver then came upon the stage, and uncovering a handsome silver-mounted casket, which stood upon a table, presented it (on behalf of Miss E. Ricketts), to Mrs. Britten. Mrs. Britten feelingly acknowledged the gift, which bore the following inscription:—"Presented to Mrs. Emma Hardinge Britten by Miss Ricketts, as a token of esteem and appreciation for her exertions and talents in disseminating the principles of Spiritualism. Melbourne, April, 1879." This concluded the proceedings. Mrs. Britten left Melbourne, *en route* for Dunedin on the following Tuesday.

JOTTINGS FROM THE NORTH-EASTERN DISTRICT.

BY WOLVERINE.

I HEAR now and then some things which prove that Spiritualism is making its way quietly and steadily in this part of the colony. It is a great pity we cannot get a good lecturer to wake the people up; as it is, we are without a champion to combat the erroneous utterances that are being, Sunday after Sunday, made use of by the occupants of the different "cowards' castles" round. I have heard some of the most nonsensical arguments against the Spiritual theory that it is possible to think of spoken by some of them; while others seem to have mastered the subject a little better. Of the latter class is the minister of the Church of England, Beechworth, who said "That he heard, spirits come in at one window, and went out at the other,"—rather foggy, eh? He must have had D. D. Home's *Levitation* in the presence of Lord Lyndhurst and others, rumbling through his brain. The same minister, at a meeting in Beechworth, speaking of the spread of infidelity, said that a great number of people took exception to and doubted the truth of the Book of Jonah, in reference to the "whale" swallowing the prophet. He gave an explanation that I never heard before, and I think very few of your readers have either. He said the word "whale," in the original (I forget whether he said Greek or Hebrew), meant a "boat." Granted. But Jonah, or whoever the writer of the book may be, says that "Jonah prayed out of the fish's belly." And again, "The waters compassed me about;" "*The depths closed me round about.*" The only solution I can arrive at is that it must have been an "improved life-boat," the structure of which has been lost to us. But there is another phrase, and one which our worthy shepherd has evidently overlooked. The word "whale" does not even occur in the "Book of Jonah."

Mr. Robert Brown, the medium for the "Direct-voice Lights," &c., gave a seance at Yackandandah a short time ago—the first time such a phase of mediumship has occurred there. The circle was harmonious and comfortable with one another, and by that and a friendly feeling towards the medium, looking on him as an honest man (which I am sorry to say investigators are not in the habit of doing with mediums, treating them rather as *doubtful*), and by that means the phenomena that took place was gratifying in the highest sense to those who were permitted to enjoy such a treat. As the readers of the *Harbinger* are well acquainted, through the reports that have appeared of the doings of the Barnawatha Circle, I shall not describe that particular seance more fully than what I have stated.

Do spirits walk the earth after the violent death of the body? The following, in answer to the question, has been told to me within the last few days:—A young woman of my acquaintance, who is an automatic writing medium, had written, through her mediumship, on a slate, that there was the spirit of a man nightly frequenting a certain spot on the bush road between Beechworth and Twist Creek, and that if the medium would go to the spot he would try and show himself. (Now, before I proceed further with this account, I must tell you that, some two or three years ago, a brother-in-law of mine who was walking along this same road one very dark night, saw a white luminous sort of shadow walk or glide across the road in front of him—he, strange to say, was not at the time of the occurrence any way alarmed, but thought it very strange. He saw it again after that, in the same spot. A man named Allen saw the same thing, and another whose name is Scanlon; in fact, as far as I can learn, no less than four or five persons had seen the same object at different times. One (Scanlon) made a hit at it with a stick, and, on his doing so, it vanished instantly. None of the *seers* confess to being afraid or timid at the time, but rather the opposite.) But, to proceed: A party was made up, consisting of three men and three women—that is, father, mother, and daughter (medium), the daughter's husband, and a neighbour with his wife, sallied out to view the supernatural visitor of earth, and a long and lonely walk it was, the night being starlight. The par-

ticular spot being reached, our friends held a circle in the lonely bush. The medium having brought a slate and pencil, at the instigation of one of the circle she held the pencil in position, and, scarcely was it held so, when, "Do you not see me?" was quickly written and read by the aid of a match. All looked, but could not see anything. Slate again—This time, "Now look!" and, sure enough, quite near was the form of a man gliding along towards the party. "Look there!" says one, "Look!" Strange to say, all the circle could not see it; only the three women and one man. The other two men strained their eyes in vain, nothing could they see. After the lapse of a few seconds, it vanished. Slate again—Now was written, "I will try again; I will show a light if I can." All saw the light flash dimly (like the momentary flash of the fire-fly on a summer's night.) Three times it was seen, and then no more. Slate again—This time there was writing on it to this effect, "My name is Robert ——. I was murdered near here nineteen years ago. Help me." No further writing took place, and, after trying to see if anything further would occur, our brave little party trudged away home again, and so the matter rests at present. Can any of your readers give a similar instance to the above?

April 16, 1879.

VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

A SPECIAL meeting of the above Association was held at the Masonic Hall on Friday, 18th April, to consider the propriety of publishing the correspondence between the Association and Mrs. E. H. Britten. The president (Mr. Deakin) took the chair at eight p.m., at which time there were seventy-two members present, the number being subsequently increased to about ninety. The Chairman stated that the meeting was called in consequence of a resolution of the general committee at its last meeting, viz., "That as this committee is not unanimous about the publishing of the correspondence with Mrs. Britten, a general meeting be called to consider the position of the Association with regard to Mrs. Britten, and as to the advisability of publishing the correspondence."

The Secretary read the correspondence which had passed between him and Dr. and Mrs. Britten since last general meeting. Some portions of the latter provoked expressions of indignation from the audience.

After explanatory remarks from the President and Secretary, Mr. Lang moved, seconded by Mr. Fisher:—"That this meeting, having considered the correspondence between Dr. and Mrs. Britten and the Committee of the Association, is satisfied that Dr. and Mrs. Britten have not behaved with courtesy, kindness, or good taste in their transactions with the Committee."—Carried almost unanimously, there being only two dissentients.

Mr. Oliver spoke in defence of Mrs. Britten, and alluded to private letters between Mrs. Britten and Mr. Walker, which, he informed the meeting, he had in his possession. His arguments, however, did not find favor in the eyes of the meeting, and several members expressed themselves to the effect—That the meeting had nothing to do with private letters, and did not acknowledge the right of any individual member or other person to conduct a semi-official correspondence.

Mr. Stow moved, and Mr. Watt seconded—"That the letters passed between Mrs. Britten and Mr. Walker be not read."

In reply to a question from the President, Mr. Oliver stated that he had not a copy of these letters with him, it was, therefore, not necessary to put the motion.

Mr. Lang next moved, and Mr. Lee seconded: "That this meeting is of opinion that the publication of the correspondence would fully justify the committee and the Association in the position they assumed towards Mrs. Britten and her husband, but that the laws of charity, forbearance, and good-will towards them dictate that no further steps should be taken in the matter of the letters at present." Carried unanimously.

Mention was also made of Mrs. Britten's concluding address at the Opera House, on the 6th April. The Secretary read her exact words from a shorthand report. Also, the reports in the papers about her address.

* Mr. Ross and others considered that the erroneous statements made at the Opera House by Mrs. Britten, in reference to the Association and Spiritualists generally, should be as far as practicable, refuted.

Mr. H. J. Browne proposed some resolutions, of which the following is the text, but in reading them he made several explanatory comments, which were understood by some to be portions of the resolutions; and, as there was considerable delay and discussion, and they were not re-read before being put, only about one-half of those present voted for them, viz., 20 for, and 27 against them, they were consequently lost:—

"That this Association unanimously condemns the action of Mrs. Britten in the indiscreet and unjustifiable remarks made by her at her last public lecture here, and consider the enmity shown by her to this Association, merely because it refused to be dictated to by her, and withdrew its support from her during her last lectures, totally opposed to that spirit of charity which characterizes the true Spiritualist."

The remarks referred to are these:—

1st. "That there was a split or want of harmony in this Association, which Mrs. Britten must have been well aware was not the case when she uttered it; and as was proved by the very different result of her last series of lectures in this city, compared with that of those she previously delivered under the auspices of this Association."

2nd. "That two-thirds of the Spiritualists were either mere phenomenologists, or those who joined the Spiritualistic ranks to be relieved from all moral restraint; and, at the same time, she implied that only those who supported her were true Spiritualists thereby giving the enemies of the cause of Spiritualism fresh grounds upon which to base their attacks, which they have not been slow in taking advantage of—one of the popular religious papers of Melbourne having gone so far, even, as to claim Mrs. Britten as one of their latest allies, in consequence of her wholesale condemnation of that cause, through the advocacy of which Mrs. Britten makes her own and Dr. Britten's living, and in which cause she claims to have been the chief pioneer labourer and lecturer."

"This Association, while giving Mrs. Britten all due credit for her ability as a lecturer, regrets that she should have been so ill-advised or so badly influenced during the latter part of her stay in Australia."

The majority, although condemning Mrs. Britten's remarks, and her conduct throughout, still wished to continue to show a spirit of charity and forbearance.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman, moved by Mr. Ross, and seconded by Mr. Evans, terminated the proceedings.

B E D S.

F. W. EVANS.

Is it not a significant fact that one of the lowest in the animal kingdom has this one good trait.—When rising in the morning its first act is to stir up and ventilate, as best he knows how, the bed upon which it reposed? Is it gratitude for the night's lodging, scientifically expressed, to thus commence the new-born day by observing one of nature's laws, promotive of life and health.

Go to the Ant thou sluggard, to learn activity; go to the Stork to learn filial affections; to the Bee, and be industrious; observe the Swine, and leave not in the morning thy couch until, as some of our societies now practice, you have hung up all the bed-clothes and some of the bedding. So shall ye leave the imperfect behind and press on to sanitary perfection.

So long as necessity compels to combine the sitting-room and bed-room in one, let the rights of each be regarded. In the forenoon, be it a ventilating bed-room; in the afternoon, let it be a retiring room. Is a whitewashed sepulchre any more objectionable than a nice-looking sitting-room, made out of an unventilated bed-room?

In every good word or work, the righteousness of Christians should exceed that of the outside world. The preacher's lips should reveal the knowledge that forestalls sickness and premature death, as the result of physical unrighteousness.

JOTTINGS ON PASSING EVENTS.

BY LAMBDA.

REALLY we Spiritualists ought to be deeply sensible of the unvarying kindness and unremitting attention which we receive from our Christian friends of the orthodox press. When we reflect how much more congenial to themselves, enlivening to their columns, and interesting to their readers, would be duly seasoned accounts of "revivals," "sudden conversions," "new births," and "spiritual outpourings," than chronicles of the misfortunes and follies of a miserable handful of poor deluded and deluding fanatics like us; if we are not overwhelmed with gratitude at their sacrificing the former to the latter, it must be because the pernicious doctrines we have imbibed, and the "malefic" influence of our environs, have obliterated from us all traces of the noble sentiment. Still, there are doubtless some amongst us whose acquaintance with the new "theurgy" has not been of a sufficiently profound and protracted nature to render them utterly demoralized, or wholly oblivious of the spirit of indebtedness which the bestowal of favors usually evokes. On behalf, therefore, of such Spiritualistic *rara aves*, I beg to extend to the *Southern Cross* and the *Wesleyan Spectator* my most sincere and heartfelt thanks for the systematic and unqualified vilification of Spiritualism and its professors, with which they at times interlard and embellish their periodic issues. If it were not that the past career of the *Cross* has been in every respect so honourable, and, like *conjuræ Caesaris*, so supremely above suspicion; also, that everything savoring of jokes is quite incompatible with the professions of so demure and correct a journal, one would almost be inclined to think our intensely pious contemporary was either "tollin' a sma' lee," or else had suddenly taken to "funnin'," when it informs us that Spiritualism is necessarily grossly immoral in its tendencies and effects. But since no one of sound mind or thoughtful habits can possibly either charge the *Southern Cross* with unvaracity, or accuse it of humor, we must accept its (beg pardon, its) dictum as being unimpeachably true.

Our Methodist friend, the *Spectator*, admirably fulfils the functions of a newspaper, and regularly supplies the public with items of intelligence (!) One of the established contributors to that journal writes over the initials X. Y. Z. (phonetic, I presume, for *extra-wise-head*.) This gentleman has lately been exposed most unmercifully, and of course undeservedly, to the batteries of the *Argus*, which had detected him (to employ a euphemism) in "disingenuousness." A few weeks back, X. Y. Z. was compelled by "circumstances over which he had no control," to temporarily vacate his "easy chair," and in it was installed his "old friend and crony," "Ballarat." Mr. B. proved himself a worthy disciple, and fully demonstrated his rightful heirship to X. Y. Z.'s mantle; and, if not endowed with a double portion of his predecessor's spirit as regards vigor of style and wit, he certainly vindicated his right to "apostolic succession" in disingenuousness, and the ability to abuse. "Ballarat" has heard some "Spiritist" sneering at the Christian's conceptions of God, and in an essay so brimful of melodramatic pathos as to leave no room for its writer's attempts at smartness, he proves the consistency and reasonableness of the Christian idea, and the utter absurdity, want of coherence—in fact, the absolute unsubstantiality of the Spiritualist's conception. Our vivacious friend might have spared himself both the assertion and its labored proof. Of course, the Christian's view of Deity is in every sense consistent, complete, and beyond all cavil; and no one but a lunatic or a Spiritist (which, of course, is the same thing), could for one moment dispute it;—how could he?

"And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity. . . . The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. . . . And yet there are not three incomprehensibles, but one incomprehensible." (Prayer Book.) All that is plain

sailing; nothing mysterious, absurd, irrational, or "incomprehensible." Neither is there anything contradictory or inconsistent in the Biblical account of God, even though it represents Him as never repenting, yet given to repentance; tempting no man, yet tempting Abraham, David, and Jeremiah; always invisible, yet seen by Moses, Aaron, and others; dwelling in light, yet enshrouded in darkness; a man of war, yet the God and author of peace; a consuming fire, yet full of love and mercy; angry for ever, yet angry but for a moment; incapable of telling lies, yet lying by proxy. Equally unquestionable, save by imbecile minds, is the talented Methodist's assertion regarding the Spiritualist's conceptions of Deity. Of course, A. J. Davis does not recognise a "Great Original and Positive Mind," or speak of God as "The Father of the Spirits of all men," *Penetralia*, p. 46. Of course, J. M. Peebles does not confess, "I believe in one living and true God, Maker of heaven and earth, and all things"—*Cornerstone*, p. 26. Nor does Mrs. E. H. Britten make a similar confession, (*Creed of the Spirits*), or even address Deity as "Thou, who art our light, and life, and our salvation," (*Savage Superstition*, p. 5.) Of course, it is a matter of fact, that Professor S. B. Brittan, representing his American co-religionists, never wrote that "Spiritualists, with a few exceptions, acknowledge the being of one God, self-existent, omnipresent, omniscient, and all-powerful. They regard Him as a spirit, 'The Spirit of Love and the Source of Life,' (*Rational Sp.*, p. 5.) Equally certain is it that Mr. H. J. Browne, one of the Melbourne representative Spiritualists, never penned the creed, "I believe there is a God, for I have daily evidence of His love and wisdom. I could not live without Him. He is my life, my light, my very existence," (*Delusion and Reality*.) And, of course, Thomas Walker never asserted, "We believe in the Supreme and Everlasting Deity, whose infinite personality lives in all His works, and in whom we live, and move, and have our being," and, if he had made so deplorable a blunder, his co-believers would instantly have repudiated him; or, at any rate, would have refrained from all expressions of approbation or applause. (Report of Debate, p. 217.) And, finally, it is, without doubt, a fact (from a Spectator aspect) that such prominent Spiritualists as William Howitt, S. C. Hall, Wallace, Morse, Owen, Putnam, Watson, Sargent, Crowell, &c., not only profess no belief in Deity, but entirely reject the impossible assumption of the Divine existence.

It is to be regretted that Hudson Tuttle, before presenting to the world his latest work, "The Ethics of Spiritualism," did not take the trouble to enshrine the many noble thoughts and commendable sentiments to which he gives utterance, in a framework somewhat worthier of them. Though such a treatise has long been a desideratum, still we could have waited a little longer for Mr. Tuttle to render his production more in accord with the requirements of syntax, orthography, and punctuation, and to make a little more perspicuous his many obscure and ambiguous sentences. Whilst desiring to detract in no wise from the merits of the book as being philosophic, thoughtful, and generally sound, I must remark that the talented author's composition is often defective. The volumes of Mr. Tuttle may be standard works, but he must be reminded that the standard is lowered when he writes such slipshod English as this book contains. When one sees unfortunate verbs going begging for nominatives, and forlorn little nouns so isolated in their opinions, or with digestive organs so impaired that they can't get anything to agree with them; one is inclined to ask, Why does not Mr. Tuttle put into practice his transcendental aphorism, "Do all for others," and do something for them?

'Tis quite plain now! Does anyone want to know what is the "ultimate law of man's history?" If so, he has only to turn to "Isis and Osiris," and there he will find the problem most lucidly solved. The aforesaid law is enunciated thus:—"Thought in its Differentiating and Integrating Activity, advances under Terrestrial Conditions, from the conception of one-sided Determination, through the Differentiation of Subjective and Objective,

to the conception of Mutual Determination." Now, don't say, "There is nothing new under the sun," after that.

P.S.—I ought to add that "Isis and Osiris" is a very learned and profound work, treating of the origin of Christianity, by John S. Stuart Glennie, M.A., an Egyptologist of "credit and renown." It contains nearly 450 pp., and is sold, at the very low rate of 3s. 6d., by the Freethought Publishing Company, Stone-cutter-street, London.

THE GRAND OLD TRUTHS.

SOME years ago, one of our popular writers described a public orator, addressing a crowded audience, at a time when the weather was so exceedingly cold that the words, as they proceeded from his mouth, became frozen and fell in small pellets of ice to his feet; so that, after he had been speaking for three quarters of an hour, he was observed to be standing up to his neck in his own eloquence. It was much colder, on that occasion, than it appears to have been on Tuesday February 4, 1879, when the solar rays might have blistered a cricket bat, and scorched the ball dark brown, for the reading of the index upon a thermometer, told us that the quicksilver had risen to blood heat in the shade; but, even then, while omnibus horses were dropping dead through sun-stroke, and the casualty-wards of the general hospital were being frequently occupied by patients suffering from *coup-de-soleil*, there might have been witnessed the spectacle of an Anglican Bishop officiating at the pompous ceremony of laying a foundation-stone for the new church of St. Luke's, in north Fitzroy; and, what Goldsmith said of his village school-master became applicable there, for

"Words of learned length, and thundering sound
Amaz'd the gazing rustics all around:
And still they stared, and still the wonder grew,
How one small head could carry all he knew."

They were oblivious of the co-relative circumstances, and lost sight of the ecclesiastical grandeur of the Prelacy, the episcopalian revenues, and the silver trowel with the supplementary collection of seventy sovereigns; but we cannot dissociate from the chronicle, that sublime apostrophe of Jesus, "My house shall be called a house of prayer, and ye have made it a den of thieves." The Right Reverend James, Lord Bishop of Melbourne, dilated, sententiously about the "grand old truths," and boasted that his *alma mater* of Cambridge, had confronted the scepticism of modern opinion, by erecting a church at a cost of eighty thousand pounds. With profound respect for his lordship's antecedents learning and position, we ask him to adopt the advice once tendered by Johnson to Boswell, and to "clear his mind of cant," for the deity dwelleth not in tabernacles built with hands, God's kingdom is universal nature, earth, ocean, heaven, His boundless throne. The ecclesiastical intolerance and blasphemous impertinences of the present day, reflect the hypocrisy and covetousness of that dissembling council of the Sanhedrim which consigned the profoundest of all philosophers to an ignominious and excruciating death: and, we most solemnly believe that, were Jesus to revisit our planet, in a material body, he would have again to endure the scoffs and insults of a superficial and mundane priesthood; whose religion is a profession, whose creed is a chimera, and whose God is Mammon. It is remarkable that almost contemporaneously with the demonstration in North Fitzroy, there appeared an article in *The Melbourne Review* commenting upon the decadence of pulpit power; and contributed, actually, by the irrepressible pen of a local preacher, and as a collateral circumstance, there but recently occurred the following incident, during the collection of census statistics in England, when two officers entered the cottage of an agriculturist, in one of the northern counties, to obtain information for filling in the census-papers. The head of the family answered all the preliminary questions very satisfactorily, but when he was asked what religion he belonged to, he became suddenly confused, and as he did not vouchsafe any reply, one of the enumerators, turning impatiently towards his colleague, exclaimed: "O! this

man, evidently, does not belong to any religion; so let us return him a member of the Church of England." Add to that another edifying episode connected with the reception of Pastor Chiniquy on Monday evening, February 3rd, when he told his audience at the Temperance Hall, that, at the last meeting of the Vatican it was stated the Protestant Church was going to hell fast; for, if such be the case, the Anglican Bishop ought to recognise the obvious absurdity of erecting additional conventicles, and instead of playing into the hands of the Devil, leave the Devil to be content with what he has.

But, with unctious orthodoxy, his clerical lordship expatiated in sacerdotal rhetoric about, "grand old truths," and yet we were told, by a Melbourne Journal on Wednesday, February 5th, 1879, that "the revisers of the authorised version of the new Testament have just concluded their second and final revision of that Book, which labour has occupied them eight years and a half, and the current year is likely to see the amended version in the hands of the people." Perhaps Bishop Moorhouse, when next he assails "the intellectual tournaments" of the day—as he is pleased to designate what he did not distinctly name—will have sufficient candour to inform us how much oftener is the Word of God to be revised. Ignorant though we be, we affect to know a little about Bible history.

If Jenoway's notes be reliable, the first translation was undertaken by king Alfred. The Psalms were translated into Saxon by Adelmus in 709. Other parts were done by Edfried or Egbert in 750, and the whole by Bede. In 1357, Trevisa published the whole in English. Tindall's translation appeared in 1334, was revised and altered in 1538, was published with a preface by Cranmer in 1549, and allowed to be read in churches. In 1551, another translation was published, which, being revised by several bishops, was printed with their alterations in 1560. In 1613, a new translation was published by authority, which is that in present use, and is generally known as king James' version. There was not any translation of the Bible into the Irish language till 1685, and the Pope did not give his permission for the translation of it into any language till 1759. After all that, it is pleasant, certainly, to hear that during 1879, another revised Testament, is to be "in the hands of the people:" but surely, we are perfectly justified in asking if the Word of God requires to undergo as many alterations as occurred to Sir Joshua Hawley's silk stockings; of which articles it is said that you could not identify the original texture, because it had been so frequently mended: and there would have been as much propriety in Sir Joshua boasting about his grand old hose as there appears to be in the Anglican Prelate discoursing upon the "grand old truths." The only truths this world needs, are embodied in the *principia* of Christ's sermon on the mount. The chief, and indeed, only difficulty is to bring human conduct in obedience to these precepts; but whosoever shall build both a faith and a church upon revised editions of the Bible, will find out before very long, upon what an insecure foundation the pair have been erected. On February 4th, the Hon. Mr. Longmore, when addressing his constituents at Camperdown, referred to the church lands of St. James' parish being now let on building leases, covering fifty years duration; and stated that Mr. Service had already erected a mercantile establishment there at a cost of £7000, the ground rent being £600 per annum; and, in the course of a few more years, that church, which is the consecrated exponent of God's revised Word, will probably realise a revenue of £50,000 a year. We are supposed to submit to this, because the ground was originally granted by Government for church purposes; but, although we very reluctantly refer to the political phase of the question, we are disposed to cavil at this alienation of a valuable city allotment, when the original intention of the Legislature, upon the abolition of State Aid to Religion, has thus been perverted to revenue purposes. The Presbyterians also, some years ago, received a valuable grant of land from the crown, ostensibly for "church purposes," in East Melbourne, and in 1868, were drawing ground

rentals of 5s. per week from their leaseholders: and this sort of thing continued until the attention of Government being directed to the *fiasco* the little game was put a stop to. We have been provoked to these strictures by the allusions of a certain nameless section of our opponents, who ought, in common honesty, to first pluck out the mote that is in their own eye, before they presumed to ridicule and defame the intentions of others. Foote, the celebrated comedian, once said of a certain miser that he would have undoubtedly removed the beam from his eye, if he thought he could have sold the timber; and the same remark is peculiarly applicable to many at this day. The "grand old truths" of an orthodox clergy are closely associated with avarice and corruption; and as Sidney Smith expressed it, "their divine ecstasy comes from the Queen's printer, bound in calf, bald with age, and not very choice either in diction or in grammar." The Athanasian Creed, the kneeling at the name of Christ, the going to the altar, then to the desk, then to the pulpit; the changing of surplices from white to black, the risings up and the sittings down not one of these was pretermitted. What mind that has any soul in its sacred business, can reach to its own stature under such a system? Look at the education of our moral teachers! What are the chief qualifications? The classics at Oxford, and mathematics at Cambridge!"

Now we can understand how it happened that the parochial minister obtained such an ambiguous answer from a lady-pupil in his Bible-class, "What is your chief consolation in life, my dear girl?" said he, expecting no doubt, to receive the theologic reply; but it rather astonished him, when the lady answered, "I do not like to mention his name, but I have no objection to let you know where he lives." The pastor was thinking of the Trinity: the girl was thinking of her lover. But a truce to this. The rule of right is within every man, and Spiritual happiness proceeds from the Rule of Right. The doctrine of Individual Responsibility is more efficacious, for public and private morals, than thrusting a finder into the key-hole of a church-door, and simulating the mummery of prayer. In Spiritual virtue alone, do we find vitality; it is as enduring as the creative essence that made it: and, while its motto is onward, it lifts us likewise, upward to a God infinitely more merciful than man, and to a Deity who desireth not sectarian burlesques, but the breathing devotion and trustful constancy of souls, as everlasting as Himself. Thus, did Adelaide Proctor write, and thus do the spirits in the spheres now sing:—

"Learn the mystery of progression duly,
Do not call each glorious change decay,
For we know, we only hold our treasures truly,
When it seems as if they passed away:
Nor dare to blame God's gifts for incompleteness,
-In that want their beauty lies. They roll
Towards some infinite depth of love and sweetness;
Bearing onwards ev'ry immortal soul."

Whosoever will not echo the sentiment, embodied in that stanza, would be likely to go to fisticuffs with Gabriel, and create a rebellion in the poetical paradise; although, in the principles of an effectual, and fervent belief, he may not possess a hope above brass-buttons nor have a desire beyond sal-volatile, or any other sal

Notice to Our Friends.

WE particularly call attention to the article addressed to "OUR FRIENDS," on page 1573 last issue, and urge them to act upon it. The response so far has been inadequate; at the same time we must apologise for typographical errors and defective punctuation in our supplement, which, through unusual hurry in publication, went to press without correction.

BALDWIN is in Adelaide, and his pretended exposures of Spiritual phenomena have led to a correspondence in the *Express* and *Telegraph*. This paper has shewn more impartiality than most of its contemporaries, and gives scope for both sides. A writer on the spiritualistic side, under the *nom de plume* of "Ginx's Baby," ably defends the Spiritualistic position and exposes the fallacy of Mr. Baldwin's and his supporters' statements, in some trenchant letters.

REVIEW.

THE scurrilous and consummately untruthful pamphlet on "Mediums and their Dupes," alluded to in our last has called forth two antidotes, written by two gentlemen of well-known literary fame in Sydney, and, as we believe, has been the means of doing the very opposite to what it purported to accomplish. The work we allude to was intended to thoroughly expose Spiritualism, but it has, on the contrary, brought Spiritualism into wider notice, and by thoroughly exposing the ignorance, unreliability, and vanity of the compilers, and withal bringing into the field two able defenders of the sacred truth, who, otherwise, might have remained silent, it has directly subverted the end their compilers had in view.

The two works in reply are entitled "Spirits and their Friends;" and "Vagabonds and their Dupes;" one would think very appropriate titles indeed. The former by E. Cyril Haviland (of the *Australian Magazine*), in a fervent and almost devout spirit, enters upon the task of showing the many faults and blemishes of the work he replies to. He shows lucidly that he has an entire knowledge of both sides of the question, and takes the evidence in support of his own convictions home to the readers by giving many details of experiments and seances, not only witnessed by many of the ablest men of this age, but witnessed also by himself, so short a time ago as the last few months, and here in these very colonies. By setting his opponents to war amongst themselves, by adducing their conflicting theories to account for the same fact, he negatives their power; for naturally it will be seen that if two or more theories be given to account for any fact, when these theories are conflicting, if one be true, the rest must be false. What we mean may be illustrated by a few words from Mr. Haviland himself. On page 12 he says:—"I don't know which to admire most, Dr. Knagg's *toe* theory, or Mr. Maskelyne's *thimble*," and he might have added "Mr. Baldwin's *slot* in the table." Here there are three conjurors—one only an amateur, to be sure, but possessing as much vanity as either of the others, and theirs is immense—each giving an explanation which, if true, must give the lie to the others; and, to use the language of Thomas Paine, "Since we have no authority to believe one more than another, we have no authority to believe any." "Mediums and their Dupes," contains a statement to the effect that messages received through Dr. Slade were never written in any language save the English. This is met by publishing several messages written in German and French, and producing unimpeachable authorities attesting to the fact of messages having been received in Greek, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Swedish, Dutch, German, Arabic, and Chinese dialects. Mr. Haviland leaves no stone unturned, but at every step adduces some evidence to illustrate and take home his point, and in quoting from Zollner, the Rev. Stainton Moses, the Court Conjuror of Germany, and others, as well as by the earnest, sincere, and unassuming style of his narrative, he has shown that he loves the truth, and is not only able but willing to defend it.

The defects of the book are purely literary, and are such that could not well be avoided, if the zeal and high spirit of the author are to be preserved.

"Vagabonds and their Dupes," written by Harold W. H. Stephen, a gentleman so long connected with, and so well-known in literary circles, that we may rest assured that what he does will be well done—is, indeed, what it professes to be—"a complete exposure of the errors and mis-statements of 'The Vagabond,' and certain of his friends." It abounds in excellently applied and politely administered sarcasm, genuine critical analyses, and cogent and stubborn quotation of facts. Its style is racy, and its logic faultless. It has, moreover, a vein of humour in it, and you cannot help smiling as you see "The Vagabond" examined as though he were a school-boy with a peculiarly morbid imagination, and put, "demure and sad," upon the dunce's stool, to speak no more till he has *learned* his lesson. Nor do the "Vagabond's" companions fare much better, but are shown to be false even on such a small point as "grammar," and ignorant in the highest degree upon

the subject which they profess to expose. They stalk into the gloom of their own ignorance, and with the writer, we are compelled in pity to say: "These poor Vagabonds! Mad everyone of them!"

Mr. Stephen carefully goes through the evidence of the Slade trial in London, and shows the evidence to be in Slade's favour, and against the testimony of the amateur conjuror, Dr. Knaggs, he places that of the German Court Conjuror; against the twaddle of a Sydney ink-stainer, he places the wisdom of the Hon. W. E. Gladstone; against the presumptive maunderings of an Indian sporting character he places the calm opinion of A. S. T. Peterson, Esq., the late judge of the Supreme Court of Calcutta; and against the light and frothy *argumentum ab absurdum* of Amateur Conjuror No. 2, he places the earnest letter of Baroness Von Vay, &c. Not that he draws your attention to the contrast, but the contents of the book lead you to such comparisons.

Both of these works conclude with directions to form spirit circles, and in the hands of the sceptic, for whom they were written, they cannot fail to do great good; for, to use the language of a well-known Spiritualist of Melbourne—"Spiritualism being based upon demonstrable facts, the more it is analysed and impartially investigated, the greater is the evidence of its truth, and the more rational does its philosophy appear."

PRINCIPLES.

WM. H. BUSSELL.

THE love of truth is natural to the human mind. But this statement seems to be contradicted by all experience. Man has all along accepted fancy instead of fact, the absurd in place of the consistent, and clung to error as though his eternal welfare depended upon it. This only proves that in his original condition he was incapable of ascertaining all truth at once. Eyes had he in the beginning, but capable of seeing above him only the blue canopy studded with unnumbered gems. That was truth to him to a certain extent. He rejoiced in it, for he beheld there beauty, sublimity, and glory. But is it to him now "little joy

"To know he's farther off from heaven
Than when he was a boy?"

The old heaven of his original fancy has disappeared for ever, but behold the infinitude of glories that have succeeded! The gods and goddesses that once peopled mountain, river, and forest, have fled, but sources of inspiration for the poet are more abundant now than ever before.

Theologians have laid great stress upon the necessity of a divine revelation, and, if we can rely upon their statements, we have it in the form of books called the Bible, the Koran, the Shasta, and the like. But the Book, even to the most orthodox of them, is not sufficient in itself. Its literal sense does not content them, hence they must allegorize and spiritualize in order to satisfy the demands of unfolding reason, even where religious truth is alone concerned. Jesus was not satisfied with the Bible of his own people, and therefore appealed to the revelation of God in his own soul as something of higher authority than the ancients had taught. The scientist is not content with old theories of science; continued investigations and discoveries demand new theories. The future will doubtless call for still newer ones. As well undertake to confine the Infinite Life within the compass of a human body as to limit divine principles to any or all of the books that have ever been or shall be composed by human minds.

Dissatisfaction with the enunciations and theories of any one age is not inconsistent with the statement that man is a lover of truth. He may cling to the past because his feet are not well planted upon the eternal foundations. He may be fearful lest the billows continually swelling and rolling on the ocean of life should forever engulf him and his hopes. He may cherish the truth which he holds with ardent affection, yet not with the confidence which truth demands of him. His timid

utterance is: "If the foundations be destroyed what can the righteous do?" whereas he should be able exultingly to exclaim: "We will not fear though the earth be removed."

The present is an age of investigation. It is right that it should be so. All are interested in the discovery of truth, whether called scientific or religious, for all may be alike benefitted by it. It is said that some have been rendered sceptical thereby. If their scepticism consists in the rejection of superstitions, whether old or new, so much the better. These have never helped the world. "The truth shall make you free." If it is said that scientific investigations tend to make men atheistic and materialistic, this may fairly and squarely be denied. If some called scientists, are materialists, yet thousands of others are not so. Let all truths be thoroughly and candidly examined; they contain the principles of life both present and future. "Life and immortality were brought to light" by Jesus. Every other one may do the same, for himself at least, if not for thousands of others now sitting in the darkness of doubt respecting the immortal existence.—*Shaker Manifesto.*

Groveland, N. Y.

FOUR REPRESENTATIVE ENGLISHMEN.

BY JOHN PAGE HOPPS.

JOHN BRIGHT, THE PROPHET.

I HAVE already pointed out the characteristics that form, as it were, the working half of the prophet's faculty—Individuality, Sympathy, Insight, Courage, and Fervour—but when all is said about the Individuality, the Sympathy, the Insight, the Courage, and the Fervour of the man, something still remains to form the true prophetic character, and this element I indicate in the two characteristics of Reverence and Moral earnestness. Without these, you might have a demagogue or an incendiary, an iconoclast or a conspirator, or even a politician—but not the genuine PROPHET.

One of the characteristics of John Bright's speeches, even in the House of Commons, is the grave and reverent undercurrent of reference to a Supreme Being, to a real King of the nation, to a good heavenly Father. From my boyhood I have been struck and startled with this, while reading the reports of Parliamentary debates. I never could quite rid myself of the impression that John Bright was the Evangelist of the House of Commons. Once, when speaking of persecution for the sake of opinion, he appeared to deprecate this appeal to religion, but, even in doing so, he touched the very deepest chord. "This House," he said, "is not the place for religious questions. But, reflecting on the deep mysteries of religion, on my own doubts and frailties, on the shortness of the present time, and on the awful and unknown future—I ask what am I that I should judge another in religious things, and condemn him to exclusion and persecution?" What a reverential and really religious reason for not doing ill to your neighbour—that both you and he are rapidly passing on to the *real* Judge!—and what a grand prophetic spirit this—that could lift up a debate in the House of Commons to such a level! In a similar spirit he once spoke in Glasgow, in a glowing appeal to Ministers of religion, to help on the cause of Parliamentary Reform:—

"We believe," he said, "in a Supreme Ruler of the Universe. We believe in His Omnipotence; we believe, and we humbly trust in His mercy. We know that the strongest argument which is used against that belief, by those who reject it, is an argument drawn from the misery and the helplessness, and the darkness of so many of our race, even in countries which call themselves civilized and Christian. Is not that the fact? If I believed that this misery, and this helplessness, and this darkness could not be touched or transformed, I myself should be driven to admit the almost overwhelming force of that argument; but I am convinced that just laws, and an enlightened administration of them, would change the face of the country. I believe that ignorance and

suffering might be lessened to an incalculable extent, and that many an Eden, beauteous in flowers and rich in fruits, might be raised up in the waste wilderness which spreads before us."

And that was his reverential reason for asking for reform—that the good Father in heaven meant us to be free, and happy, and helpful to one another.

But all this is vitally related to the next great characteristic—of *moral earnestness*. And here I get to the very heart of the man and his calling: for all that I have said is only like describing an admirable machine: the motive power is still wanting, and in John Bright, that power is *moral* power—moral weight, energy, and earnestness. It is this that has always lifted him above the dust of the arena and the strife of tongues; it is this that has always made him a commanding presence, even when fighting a losing battle, or leading a forlorn hope—and it is this that makes him a prophet in our midst to-day.

What a magnificent burst that was in 1858, when, in Birmingham, he brought to the bar of the moral law the Foreign policy of the Government:—

"I believe," he cried, "there is no permanent greatness to a nation except it be based upon morality. May I ask you, then, to believe, as I do most devoutly believe, that the moral law was not written for men alone in their individual character, but that it was written as well for nations, and for nations great as this of which we are citizens. If nations reject and deride that moral law, there is a penalty which will inevitably follow. It may not come at once, it may not come in our lifetime; but, rely upon it, the great Italian is not a poet only, but a prophet, when he says:—

'The sword of heaven is not in haste to smite,
Nor yet doth linger.'

We have experience, we have beacons, we have landmarks enough. We know what the past has cost us, we know how much and how far we have wandered, but we are not left without a guide. It is true we have not, as an ancient people had, Urim and Thummim—those oracular gems on Aaron's breast—from which to take counsel, but we have the unchangeable and eternal principles of the moral law to guide us, and only so far as we walk by that guidance can we be permanently a great nation, or our people a happy people."*

In the same elevated spirit he once vindicated his life and work from defamation or disparagement.

"I plead only for what I believe to be just," he cried. "I wish to do wrong to no man. For twenty-five years I have stood before audiences—great meetings of my countrymen—pleading only for justice. During that time, as you know, I have endured measureless insult, and have passed through hurricanes of abuse. I need not tell you that my clients have not generally been the rich and the great, but rather the poor and the lowly. They cannot give me place, and dignities, and wealth; but honourable service in their cause yields me that which is of far higher and more lasting value—the consciousness that I have laboured to expound and uphold laws, which, though they were not given amid the thunders of Sinai, are not less the commandments of God, and not less intended to promote and secure the happiness of men."

There spoke the prophet of the Living God, proclaiming the sublime eternal law—the law of *righteousness*. Again and again this moral earnestness upheld him. Once he founded an argument entirely upon this assertion—"I believe in the moral government of the world." On another occasion he swept away criticism by saying:—"What though I have not been there! One thing is clear—what is just is just everywhere; and the Great Creator has implanted within us the knowledge and the love of justice."

And on yet another occasion, when speaking of Ireland, he lifted a House of Commons debate out of the dust with these noble words:—

"I imagine that there will come a time in the history of the world when men will be astonished that Catholics and Protestants have had so much animosity against, and suspicion of each

* A truly prophetic word! and, like all such words, perpetually true; but the people appear to prefer the counsels of Mephistopheles.

other. I accept the belief in a grand passage, which I once met with in the writings of the illustrious founder of the colony of Pennsylvania. He says that 'The humble, meek, merciful, just, pious, and devout souls are everywhere of one religion, and when death has taken off the mask they will know one another, though the diverse liveries they wear here make them strangers.' Now, may I ask the House to act in this spirit, and then our work will be easy. The noble Lord, towards the conclusion of his speech, spoke of the cloud which rests at present over Ireland. It is a dark and heavy cloud, and its darkness extends over the feelings of men in all parts of the British Empire. But there is a consolation which we may all take to ourselves. An inspired king, and bard, and prophet, has left us words which are not only the expression of a fact, but which we may take as the utterances of a prophecy. He says, 'To the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.' Let us try in this matter to be upright. Let us try to be just. That cloud will be dispelled. The dangers which surround us will vanish, and we may yet have the happiness of leaving to our children the heritage of an honourable citizenship in a united and prosperous Empire."

This has been the spirit of all his work—this the burden of all his prophesying—Let us do right because it is right: let us be just and fear not: let us believe in the abiding moral law of the Eternal: let us look for the happy only in the good—for the beautiful only in the true.

I might end here, for the essential characteristics of the Prophet have all been named: but one crowning grace or force remains: I call it—*Confidence*, giving to everything else the buoyancy and strength that come of the "full assurance of faith." This is the characteristic that brings us nearest to the familiar conception of the prophet as *predictor*: but it is here that the prophet does fore-tell, not because by some magic gift he can see the unturned leaves of the book of fate, but because he can trace the threads of events, and see fulfilments in beginnings, effects in causes, fruit in seed. He takes his stand, as I have said, on a moral order, sees that moral order is the life and soul of the universe, and is confident that the event, though delayed, is sure.

At times they laughed at John Bright's clear-cut demand for some reform, but he invariably replied:—"Hon. gentlemen may laugh, but I tell them that this, sooner or later, will be done." And, even in apparent defeat, this sublime prophetic grace of confidence never deserted him. After his serious defeat at Manchester, in 1857, he met his old constituents with words of loftiest cheer:—

"I know not," he said, "whether there be persons who will look upon this meeting in the light of the commemoration of a defeat which we have sustained. To me it wears far more the aspect of the celebration of some great success. And may we not say that we are successful—that notwithstanding the vicissitudes which wait upon the career of public men, and upon the progress of public questions in a free country, we find as we look back over a term of years, that those beneficent principles which we have so often expounded and defended on this ground, are constantly making progress and obtaining more and more influence on the minds of our countrymen? . . . Seeing this, then, who will despair? Since I have been able to think maturely upon public questions, since I have been able and have been permitted to open my mouth in these the open councils of my countrymen, I have never for one moment despaired."

This grand assurance of faith is all the more remarkable when we consider the wonderful range of his subjects. He has grappled with Indian finance, the government of the colonies, the state of Ireland, Commerce, International Law, Political Economy, Education, War, the Church, Parliamentary Reform; and whatever he has touched he has illumined and lifted up into a purer atmosphere. In relation to these subjects he has been a reformer, and the prophet of hope—never the victim of despair.

To him, Reform has, all along, only meant justice between man, and the welding of all classes of the people into a contented and united whole. For him, the

end of all thought and aspiration has been the creation of a united, righteous, and happy people. It was the longing for this that moved the souls of the prophets of Israel; it is the longing for this that moves the souls of our prophets to-day. Let us listen to them, let us obey them; let us stand by them, let us know them and bless them ere it be too late. Too long have we stoned our prophets while they lived, only to pile up stones in their memory when they were dead. Let it be so no more.

"O pure Reformers, not in vain
Your trust in human kind;
The good which bloodshed could not gain,
Your peaceful zeal shall find.

The truths ye urge are borne abroad
By every wind and tide;
The voice of Nature and of God
Speaks out upon your side.

The weapons which your hands have found
Are those which Heaven hath wrought—
Light, Truth, and Love: your battle-ground,
The free, broad field of Thought."

MR. WALKER'S LECTURES.

MR. WALKER commenced a new series of lectures for the Victorian Association of Spiritualists at the Opera House on Sunday, 13th April, and, despite the inclemency of the weather, the house was well filled in every part. He chose for an opening subject, "Afraid; or Christians Going to Heaven," in which he analyzed the doctrine of fear, showing its demoralizing tendencies, and contrasting it with the conception of a God of Love, held by those who reasoned and reflected on religious subjects irrespective of orthodox dogmas.

Shortly before leaving Sydney, Mr. Walker paid a visit to Mudgee and Gulgong, where he delivered four lectures. They are favourably reported in the local papers, the Gulgong *People's Advocate*, speaking of the attendance, says, "The largest audience that, for several years past has filled the Prince of Wales' Opera House, assembled there on Wednesday evening to hear Mr. Walker."

THE *Medium* of March 7th is embellished with a portrait of Mr. Tyerman. We find also in the same paper an account of the public welcome given to him at Claremont Hall, London, which is stated to be "the largest, and best in quality which has met on a festive occasion for some years, in connexion with the movement in London." Our old friend Mr. John Carson was chairman, and is said to have discharged his duties in a hearty and able manner. The following resolution was passed, viz.:—"That this meeting of the Spiritualists of London, extends most hearty welcome to a Mr. John Tyerman of Australia, regarding him as a conscientious and devoted apostle of the cause of Spiritualism, and wishing him a safe return to his adopted country, and increasing success in his labours, also, expressing the hope that he may again visit his native land and take part in the public advocacy of Spiritualism." Want of space prevents us giving a fuller report of this meeting or of the successful lectures Mr. Tyerman has given in London and the provinces.

A CORRESPONDENT, Mr. C. H. Hartmann, writing from Toowoomba, Queensland, expresses his regret at the non-publication of Mr. Walker's lectures. He and others who have only had the pleasure of listening to one or two of them were anxious to participate in the advantages those living in the larger centres of population had, and he thought the publication of the lectures would be of great benefit to those situated as he is. He suggests the publication of a series in a volume, and says he for one would be happy to take a dozen copies. This is practical, and if the example is followed by others would probably lead to the publication sought for.

MRS. BRITTEN AND THE VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

DEAR SIR,—Allow me to make a few remarks on Mrs. Britten's "concluding address" at the Opera House on the 6th instant.

1. Mrs. Britten states:—"I believe that this departure has been hastened—has been compelled, in fact, by an unhappy division in our ranks, a cause that I would not have alluded to were it not my duty as a noble soldier to refer to that division." (I quote from a shorthand report now before me.) Yet in her letters to the Association, and to the *Harbinger* for March, Mrs. B. writes:—"As I could only stay in Melbourne six weeks at the farthest, &c., this much for her "hastened departure." As regards the divisions in our ranks, Mrs. B. utters that which she knows to be false. The Spiritualists here, instead of being divided, are more united than ever. The members of the Association, and even Spiritualists outside the Association, have stood firmly by the Committee, and testified their approval of their action.

Notwithstanding that, Dr. Britten let no opportunity pass by to plead his cause, based on private letters from Messrs. Terry and Deakin, (which letters, however, were only alluded to as justifying Dr. and Mrs. B.'s course of action) when politely called upon for copies of these so compromising letters (with the consent of the parties interested), Dr. and Mrs. B., for reasons of their own, judged it better to take no notice of this just request. What the nobility of her conduct consists of perhaps some of your readers, with a clearer head, will perhaps inform me.

2. Mrs. B. states—"They (those who did not support her) have not affected me, but they have unhinged that which Spiritualism has wrought during the last thirty years." In reply, let us look at the outcome of her address, and refer your readers to the leading article in the *Age*, a journal which always treated us most fairly till now, and an article in a leading religious paper (the *Southern Cross*). The last-named paper states:—"We little thought that the *Southern Cross* would have found an ally in such a quarter," &c.

3. Mrs. B. divides the Spiritualists into three classes—1st. Those that believe in the phenomena, but never advance beyond it; 2nd. Those that believe in it because they wish to see old systems uprooted, and who think that Spiritualism has come to release them from all responsibility, and nothing more; 3rd. Those that perhaps do not believe in doctrines that spirits teach, but whose thoughts are spiritual, and (*now mark*) "those are the friends who come here, Sabbath after Sabbath," &c. "In their presence I have found ample compensation for the absence of all phenomenals." Simply because the Spiritualists generally of Melbourne could not in honour comply with the selfish terms of Dr. B., they are to be branded as "phenomenalists and people who think that Spiritualism has come to release them from all responsibilities." The cool impertinence of these remarks made by a lady who styles herself one of the bright lights of our young movement, has caused great indignation among those longest connected with the movement here. Her thoughtless and spiteful utterances have given a splendid opportunity to ever-ready enemies to cry us down to the lowest; of these opportunities they have not been slow to avail themselves, and quote Mrs. B. triumphantly as their authority.

4. Mrs. B. further states that—Next Sunday, Mr. Walker will appear—that he is engaged by her enemies—"but I assure you that Mr. Walker is not with them in feeling." Mrs. B., not content with the great wrong she has done already to a cause which it has taken so much trouble by many earnest workers to advance here in Melbourne, endeavours to prejudice the minds of the Spiritualists here against Mr. Walker, who, she knows, is a great favourite amongst us. What shall we call such conduct? I am happy to say she has been unsuccessful—Mr. Walker is as popular as ever.

The Association was never stronger, richer, or more united than now, while it has proved by its action that it can resent injustice, and maintain the spiritual platform in Melbourne pure, thereby justifying its existence. I have no wish to enlarge on this subject, my sole object being to enter my individual protest against Mrs. Britten's untruthful statements, which are as uncharitable and spiteful as they are unjustifiable.

I am, yours fraternally,

A. VAN ALKEMADE.

THE TERRORS OF PERIHELION.

BY HUDSON TUTTLE.

It may not be criminal in the eyes of the law, but certainly it is only one step from it for public journals to herald with display headlines, and in high coloured sentences, the terrible calamities to follow the coming perihelion of the planets. One would think that science itself had decided that the two years immediately in the future were designed to be filled with famine, war, fires, plagues and general destruction, whereas all this talk is the sheerest nonsense, in which no man of science would for a moment indulge. It was started by a lingering faith in astrology, and making a startling paragraph, it has gone the rounds of the press, nowhere meeting with the condemnation it deserves. It is a discouraging sign when journalists (whose high calling is to teach the people, who look to them for daily mental food) sacrifice the truth to the love of the wonderful and startling.

Singular enough the "SPIRIT MESSAGES" of many public mediums are colored by this wide-spread prophecy. It is, however, to be remarked that estatics and trance speakers in all ages, are prone to follow the example of Jeremiah, and prophesy of war, famine and pestilence. It is the easiest of all methods of gaining attention and as no one can successfully dispute that the future may not verify, the prophet gains note, and is regarded with a kind of undefined awe. Such prophecies have been made since the advent of Modern Spiritualism, and we have yet to see their fulfillment. I do not refer to such prophecies as are made calmly, relating to the continuous order of events, many of which have been fulfilled to the letter. There is no doubt of the ability of certain intelligences being able to foresee the future. I more especially allude to what may be called "*blood and thunder*" prophecies, which are so constantly put forth.

Now, it may be said that the statement that wonderful and unusual changes occurred at the time of preceding perihelions, is utterly without foundation, or that any planet has ever been demonstrated to have more decided influence at one time than another over mankind. That the planets have such influence I do not dispute, but that it is so great as to cause mighty organic or spiritual changes is a baseless assertion. That a passing planet may influence the earth may be quite possible, for the earth is much less in size than any of the exterior orbs, but their influence on the sun, and thus indirectly on the earth, is quite another consideration, and when we regard the insignificant size of the planets in comparison with the sun, we perceive that the cause is wholly inadequate to the effect. Besides the fact that at perihelion it is always possible for the planets to be at their farthest from the earth, renders the idea of their greater influence on our orb untenable.

The planets are usually balanced in their orbits around the sun as their periodic times of revolution are various, and rarely ever reach their perihelion, or in other words, the nearest point in their orbit to the sun at the same time. The reader will better understand this subject if he will remember that the planets do not revolve around the sun in circles, but in slight ellipses, and the sun is placed out of the centre towards one end of the elliptic orbit. This brings the planets at one point of their revolution nearer the sun than at any other. Jupiter, the largest of the planets, revolves around the sun in eleven years ten months and nine days, and once in that time approaches 45,894,000 miles nearer than at the other half of its long year, when instead of being 452,745,000 miles, it is 498,639,000 miles distant.

Now the influences of Jupiter, whatever it may be, is more than that of all the rest of the planets combined, for if we take the mass of the earth as 1000, that of Jupiter is 300,860, and that of all the remaining members of the solar system except the sun is only 121,243. But when we compare the combined mass of the planets and asteroids with that of the sun, it will be seen that it forms a very insignificant factor, for while the masses of the sun, taking the earth as 1000, is 315,000,000, that of all the planets and asteroids is only 422,103. This proportion, expressed in popular terms, would be about that sustained by a pea to a good-sized orange.

In case of the earth, it is seen that although in perihelion it is about three millions of miles nearer the sun than in aphelion, and as this takes place every year, it certainly should have been observed to have some effect on organic beings. That none such has been observed is almost conclusive proof that no sensible influence is directly exerted.

The great size of Jupiter is urged as a more potent cause, yet the argument is superficial. True his volume is 1233 times that of the earth, but he is formed of lighter material, and this means proportional diminution of gravitation, or attractive influence. His density is only about one-fourth that of the earth, so that he really exceeds the earth only 301 times. Again, as every body in nature attracts every other body with a force directly as its mass and inversely as the square of its distance, the power of Jupiter is still further greatly diminished. Thus as Jupiter is more than five times further from the sun than the earth, it follows that its attraction is twenty-five times less, so that if the attraction of the earth for the sun be represented by 1, that of Jupiter will be only 12, notwithstanding his enormous size.

SATURN.

All that has been said of Jupiter holds good in regard to Saturn, only in a greater degree, for Saturn, although 700 times the volume of the earth, is only 90 times greater in mass. Its greatest distance from the sun is 920,973,000 miles, and least 823,301,000 or 49,000,000 miles less. Its mean distance, therefore, is nearly ten times greater than that of the earth. It is thus evident that although Saturn would, if placed in the earth's orbit, exert ninety times greater influence than that orb, yet at its remote bounds it exerts no more on the sun than does the earth. In this case as in that of Jupiter, the difference in attraction between aphelion and perihelion would not be sufficient to cause any alarming changes either in the earth or in the sun. Certainly if we find no change in the earth directly referable to its own perihelion, we should not expect to find changes produced by other planets.

After thus disposing of the two titans of the solar system, it is needless to mention the others, which form altogether an insignificant portion.

Why there should be any greater changes on the earth during the period of perihelion of any planet, than aphelion, no one attempts to explain, or why because several enter perihelion at nearly the same time, should let loose war and the plague.

THESE MILLERITISH PREDICTIONS.

of the "end of the world," of convulsions and misery, belong to another age than the present; to an age when the laws of nature were little understood, and a tyrant was supposed to manage the universe for man's discomfort and his own selfish pleasure. Now, we have faith in law, the result of knowledge, and these prophecies are like those of the weather in the almanac of the quack.

Furthermore, why should the influence be for evil instead of good? Why not the disturbances caused by this slight approach of the sun, redound to the benefit of man, instead of his destruction?

There is nothing certain in these wild prophecies. They have not the least foundation in science, and whether given by mortals or spirits, are simply wicked in the effects they have on the credulous and ignorant.

If a pestilence is to come next year from the scowl of Jupiter, no better preparation can be made than such predictions which, if believed, unnerve the system and make the victim ready for the slaughter.

In 1456, more than four centuries ago, the Pope issued a bull against Hally's comet, which from the zenith to the horizon swept its direful tail of flame, shaking therefrom, war, pestilence and famine, bending the knee of all Europe in agony of fear.

Now we have a repetition of the same ignorance of man's relations to nature, and a catering press prostituted to feeding credulity!

Wherever the planets may be, there will be countries at war, and others where food will be wanting, and others still smitten with disease; and on the otherside nations at peace, nations abounding in prosperity, and rejoicing in more than average health.

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION.

On Sunday last, the Victorian Association of Spiritualists were advised that in consequence of a letter received from the Attorney General, threatening the refusal of their licence if the theatre were used on Sunday, the directors of the Opera House were compelled to refuse the use of the house for Mr. Walker's lecture that evening. As there was no possibility of advising the public in time to prevent their attendance and avoid the disappointment which would necessarily ensue, three officers of the Association proceeded to Sir B. O'Loughlen's house to get permission for at least that evening's service to be held, that gentleman was from home, but was subsequently interviewed by one of the deputation, who after considerable difficulty obtained an order for the opening of the house on that occasion, provided no charge was made for admission. The hon. gentleman denied that the step complained of was taken on religious grounds, but we fail to see on what other grounds it could reasonably be so. We Spiritualists have no endowment of land, as most of the other denominations have, and no pew rents. We have not only to pay our minister, but to pay rent for the building in which we hold our services, and which is for the time being our church. We have been in the habit of taking our seat rent nightly instead of annually, and the stoppage of our liberty to do so seems very like an underhand way of suppressing the meetings. The meetings of the Victorian Association are strictly religious services, attended by large and respectable audiences, and have been conducted as such in a quiet, orderly manner for some years past, the body have never derived pecuniary benefit from them, but have furnished money for the introduction of capable speakers. We are aware that these meetings have been a thorn in the side of the orthodox party, and can only look upon this act as a stroke of policy on the part of the executive to curry favour with them. Be this as it may, the interference is both unjust and uncalled for, and we trust that Spiritualists and Freethinkers will combine to overcome the difficulty.

OUR SYDNEY LETTER.

MR. CHARLES BRIGHT, who arrived from New Zealand last week, delivered his first lecture at the Theatre Royal on Sunday evening, before a very large audience. His discourse was excellent in kind, and well and pointedly delivered. Mr. Bright has acquired the art of commanding the attention of his audience, and is now certainly entitled to take rank among the first of our lecturers. His subject-matter is always good, whilst there is a quiet under-current of humour running throughout his discourses, which compels attention. He has leased the theatre for twelve months, and, I doubt not, will become a great favourite.

The Psychological Society is flourishing, though there seems some difficulty in obtaining original matter for discussion, and the *élite* of our spiritual society, with some honourable exceptions, still hold aloof. The society has just received the honour of an abusive notice in the *Echo*, which insinuated that the insanity of its leading members was caused by Spiritualism. The gentleman alluded to has been suffering from some species of brain disease for months past, and a fortnight ago it was found necessary to place him under restraint in a private asylum. He has now recovered sufficiently to be

able to write business letters, and we expect to see him amongst us again in the course of a few days. The *Echo* paragraph is only another instance of the bigotry and intolerance which characterises the press in its treatment of Spiritualism. Fortunately, the Truth is making its way in Sydney with rapid strides, and at every turn we find the subject of Spiritualism cropping up.

There has arrived amongst us from Gulgong a young gentleman named Edwin Robbins, who possesses remarkable healing powers, as well as other phases of mediumship. He has already met with great encouragement, the modesty of his demeanour being not the least of his recommendations. He has established several developing classes, and his time is, even now, fully occupied. Recently he paid me a visit at Manly, and found my wife suffering from the effects of a severe cold to such an extent that for three weeks previously she had been unable to speak above a whisper. In the presence of a sceptical friend of mine, Mr. Robbins magnetized her, and threw her into a partial trance, from which she recovered quite well, and with her voice restored. It would be well if others who have benefitted by this gentleman's services would make their experiences public, as it is extremely desirable to keep a record of any good resulting from Spiritualism—in these days when the world is taught to consider the movement as being, for all practical purposes, useless.

HAROLD W. H. STEPHEN.

Manly Beach, 24th April, 1879.

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