

# 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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THE controversy between Bishop Moorhouse and the Rev. Dr. Jacobson, arising out of the former's lectures on the Doctrine of St. Paul, has attracted considerable attention amongst the large and increasing body of religious thinkers both within and without the Christian Churches. Dr. Moorhouse has on many occasions proved himself to be a liberal representative of the Episcopalian Church, abandoning some of its leading dogmas and admitting the right of men to reason on and analyse the very foundation of orthodox religion. Hence in the present controversy he is at a disadvantage, for the reason and logic brought to bear against some of the positions he has assumed render them untenable. There is a widespread opinion amongst the Freethinking community, that to the divergence between the teachings of Paul and Jesus, is due the diversity of doctrine and consequent disunion and discord among the so-called Christian Churches of the day. In this we join issue. Doctrine, dogma, and forms of religion, have been the greatest impediments to true religious progress in times past, and it is only of late the religion of Jesus has had an opportunity to come to the front and be considered on its merits unobscured by the creedal curtains hung about it by those whose true office it is to make it manifest to the world. One of the leading Presbyterian ministers in this city, has set a noble example by his advocacy of the spirit of Christ's teachings, irrespective of the form, and in his recent lecture, "Present Troubles in the Church," indicates practical Christianity as the solution of them.

It is still the ambition of not only the churches, but of individuals to bring others to the same form of belief as theirs and to congratulate themselves at any instance of success; but what ground have they for jubilation? Is there anything gained to the individual

or to humanity, by the transition from Episcopalianism to Wesleyanism, from Baptist to Independent, or from any of the orthodox churches to Spiritualism? The simple alteration of belief is without virtue unless it brings with it an elevation of the moral or spiritual character of the individual, and this brings to us the thought that by the sensational and phenomenal, numbers are being urged into the ranks of Spiritualism who are unprepared to appreciate and act upon its principles. This is no gain to the cause, quality is of more importance than quantity. Better that our numbers should be few, and those few shewing by their lives the influence of their faith, than many whose social moral and religious natures exhibit no advancement from their change of faith. The mission of Spiritualism is to the "Gentiles," so to speak, that is to the world without its ranks, it works from within outwards, both in the individual and the body and by presenting ethics analogous to those of Christ, it does more for real Christianity than its professed teachers.

The diffusion of "Spiritual Truths" is not comprehended in the demonstration of phenomena, and the evidences of spirit intercourse with mortals, but in the dissemination of the broad gospel of Spiritualism, which comprehends all that tends to harmony and progress in the individual or the mass. Its greatest work is the emancipation of men's minds from binding creeds and dogmas. Toleration and freedom of thought are two of its prominent standards, and although some of its workers are Iconoclastic in their work, the majority are builders, who erect their altars beside those now existing and invite comparison. They do not fear the light of reason shining too brightly on their system, and will give space in their journals and place on their platforms for all honest opponents, will the churches do this? Had they the confidence in their tenets that Spiritualists have, they need not fear the combat. Truth cannot be destroyed, and if they have it the attrition with error will make it shine out all the brighter. A short time since a sum of five pounds was offered for the best essay against Spiritualism, to be published in our columns, and the offer is still open. Here is a fine opportunity for any minister or layman of the orthodox church to set our readers right, and make clear to them the error of

their ways, at the same time compensating themselves for the time occupied in so doing. Or should any minister of repute desire to correct us orally, we feel sure the local association would willingly find him a platform and an attentive audience, stipulating only that his discourse shall be open to discussion.

Our object (and we opine the object of Spiritualists generally) is to elicit and diffuse truth, and our columns are ever open to those who differ from us in opinion, but who express themselves rationally and sincerely. Truth presents different aspects according to the plane from which it is viewed, but the higher the spiritual and intellectual plane of the observer the broader and brighter is the view presented, therefore, it behoves those who occupy these altitudes to help their less fortunate brothers to attain them. This is best done by keeping their lamps burning brightly, or less figuratively speaking, living in accordance with the truths they are cognizant of.

### A PLEA FOR IMMORTALITY.

COMMUNICATED.

WE will first of all endeavour to define what we mean by "Immortality." When applied to man, it signifies the permanence of the spiritual principle which makes him what he is, a conscious individuality, possessing that conscious individuality in a greater or less degree according to the extent of his advancement along the road of progress. When we speak of man as immortal, we mean to imply that he in our finite language, never had a beginning, and can never come to an end. In this respect he possesses the attributes of Deity. The difficulty in comprehending this fact, arises from the narrow compass of the earth life from which men are wont to take their cue, when judging of matters in relation to themselves. This inability which they display in reference to their immortality, is the lost secret of humanity, lost amid the fogs of earth life; lost, not as a matter of necessity, but as the result of allowing themselves to be overburdened by sensuality; for the earth state is one in which the human being should, at any rate, awake to a fuller apprehension of a continuous life, and amid the circumstances of which, he has the means of arriving at its comprehension. I say it is a lost secret, because, the apprehension of continued life in an individualized form is the proper prerogative of spirit; and in proportion as that spirit grows, so should it more fully realize its immortality. Now, I want to make it apparent in this communication, that not only is it a calamity to doubt or disbelieve this fact, but also to point out how great the advantage is to man, to fully grasp and rely on it as he conducts his earth life to its inevitable termination. The influence of the past on the present, and of the present on the future, makes it apparent that while external states must of necessity be defined by distinct lines of a commencement and of a termination, the spirit progress should be seen to be the silver cord of light which never breaks, and which cannot be affected by external forms. I grant that there is, and ever must be a profound mystery attaching to spirit existence and to spirit growth, but the knowledge of this fact is within the grasp of man even though its profounder depths cannot be fathomed by him. A sense and full realization of his immortality, will illumine the otherwise dark pathway of earth life over which man has to pass; and since we believe that the experience of earth should be in every respect as pleasant as possible, this means to make it so, should by no possibility be neglected. It matters not though opinion should declare that the attainment of such knowledge is impossible, or that at the best, the evidence is doubtful in its tendency to prove the fact; the obvious duty of man is in his own interest to pursue the inquiry, and carefully treasure up every evidence tending that way, however trifling it may be. It is said that science will not conduct a man to

the realization of a future life, because science deals with solid facts and palpable laws; while the idea and proof of man's immortality rests on mere speculative fancy, and intangible evidence. This, however, is a mistake, as I view it. The true science of nature if pursued far enough, will reveal secrets at present unrealized, and in the discovery thus made of things not supernatural, but supersensual, or above the grosser plane of tangible touch and gross sight, it will be known that the chain is endless, and that the pathway which leads to imponderable gases, etc., leads still further on to a region which corresponds with the plane of thought by means of which man rises above the felt and the seen even in the pursuit of the higher science of nature. I remarked in a previous communication, that man proper, was *within* nature, dwelling in the region of essences, and that whatever plane of material life he might occupy, he looked out upon it, and that this position which he occupied is the inner kingdom of conscious existence which properly belonged to the Infinite One as the realm whence springs all life as to its essence. Consequently, you may remove the vitality but cannot *destroy* it. You may change its outward form, even its location, but the germ in which dwells all the potencies of being, *that* is the life of God manifesting itself, too elastic so to speak, to be crushed out of existence, and as the basis of grosser matter, absolutely essential to form its groundwork. I know, however, that it might be considered much easier to prove the continuance of the essence of life, than to make it apparent that man as to his individual consciousness possesses a continued realization of that individuality which constitutes him a unit in the vast ocean of the universe. And it is this really with which we have to deal, not the continuance of life in a general way, but in that particular form which pertains to man during his earthly sojourn; so that having quitted that state, and risen out of his material body, he shall still know that he is the same person, possessing personal attributes and recognising the influence of the past upon his present circumstances in the same way that an individual realizes the fact when he removes from one country of the world to another, although into widely different circumstances. However, the main difficulty which arises here is this, that in the earth life, man has no conscious realization of having come from a previous intelligent plane of being; left to himself, he concludes that his earth life state is the first through which he is passing; and that here, indeed, his conscious being commenced. This, however, need not be considered so great a difficulty in our way as appears at first sight, for it does not follow that man has no sense of a previous condition, because he fails to recognise it, or that indeed this failure to recognise it is at all inevitable to him. I have referred to the inability to recognise the future continuances of life as the loss of a power which properly belongs to man, and which power could be regained by the use of proper means; and while affirming this, I very naturally conclude that the same power properly developed to realize continuance in the future, would also make evident the existence in the past. I would, also, go a step further, and declare that where the attempt has been properly made, the result has proved that my affirmation is correct. But I would even go a step further than this, and express my belief that even now the race of man in many ways, is awakening to the realization of facts concerning its spiritual history, and also the circumstances which pertained to its past progress as well as to its future realizations. Whatever may be the history of man's past career, whether he has been gradually rising in the scale of being spiritual until he has attained to that condition which he now enjoys; or as some affirm, having attained a condition of spiritual individuality in a region more peculiar to spirits, is then sent on a mission to this earth, or as he may have been to some other world for the purposes of spiritual purification and training; the fact remains the same, that even though during the earth life, the consciousness of a past career may be hidden from him, he has still the stamp of immortality upon his spirit by virtue of his connection with those forces of nature which are the very outbirth of the Divine purpose to perpetuate an individual existence. I am enabled to



assure you of this fact from the knowledge which I have obtained on this higher plane of being. Within the veil, the mists of earth life are cleared away, and whereas *then* we saw through a glass darkly, *now* we see to greater perfection, and are able to grasp many conclusions which *then* were doubtful and unrealizable. My plea for immortality being intended to aid you, rather than minister to the satisfaction of myself, I will, in conclusion, present it under four heads.

First: I plead for immortality, because it is a most desirable conclusion to be arrived at. Indeed, man's true nature, rests upon this conclusion. His pre-eminence over the lower forms of nature which are in subjection to him, is hence alone discovered. The power of mind to improve itself, and to accomplish such results as human intelligence implies, is closely connected with a gradual elevation and increase of the constituents which go to make up that mind. It is clearly seen even in the earth life, that there are no bounds, practically, to man's mental growth, providing the circumstances are favourable; and since the spirit, or essential life of man lies at the base of the mind, and operates through it, it would otherwise be a meaningless display of expanding power if there were limits to its continuance. The very fact that man is capable of this extension on all hands, that the attributes of his spiritual nature indicate long continuance and permanent growth, is to me, a proof of immortality, and I plead for it on this ground. Second: I plead for immortality, because a certain knowledge of it must tend materially to assist successful cultivation of the earth life. I know that it is argued that man has all the motives to urge him to a successful prosecution of the earth life, within the compass of his material existence, without in anyway speculating on a continuance of that life after death. Indeed, it has been said that such a belief is demoralizing, inasmuch as it leads him to neglect the higher motives which press upon him in relation to the present. But in opposition to this, I would urge that apart from a belief in immortality, the many, many mysteries, which under the best circumstances and most favourable aspects, beset the prosecution of the earth life, are calculated to fill it with discomfort, and at any rate limit its aspirations, if not entirely debase its powers to a level so low, that any plane higher than the mere material and sensual shall not be reached. I do not believe that any of those noble attributes of man's nature, can be successfully cultivated, excepting in connection with a definite belief in immortality; and therefore, I plead for it in the interests of humanity at large. Third: my plea for immortality rests on the fact, that thus, and thus only, can the event which is inevitable to all men, viz. death, be properly understood. I freely admit that the mysteries which surround death, are as great as those which surround many of the circumstances of man's progressive existence; and that it is as impossible to explain many things in relation to its operation, as it is to satisfactorily settle the question of man's existence at all. But, when we come to deal with it as a fact which is inevitable in the order of nature, and as being connected with a creature so far advanced as man is in the constitution of his mind, and that he should be thus ruthlessly cut off, and all his plans and purposes, his designs and good intentions frustrated; and in addition to this, ever have before him so dark and frightful a shadow to torture him, a shadow which is connected with the worst apprehensions, and as a rule, most repulsive to his feelings; then, I say, that it is most desirable to arrive at some conclusions which will throw such a light upon this dark shadow, that its silver lining may be revealed, and man be enabled, not only cheerfully to accept the inevitable in his history, but to regard it with intelligent complaisance, and anticipate it with thankful expectation. When man has arrived at the stage wherein he can accept the fact of immortality, then, death will assume a very different aspect; and the dark shadow will open up into a doorway of light, through which he shall first see the possibility of continuing his conscious existence after death, and then, in due time, go forth to the full realization thereof. Strike out the belief in immortality from your daily anticipa-

tions, and there remains nought but gloom and uncertainty, and continued unrest of mind; accept it, and strive intelligently to understand it, and then your life will be surrounded by a halo so bright, that every event which transpires, will be seen to be the necessary basis from which shall arise all those sequences which tend to glorify human progress, and make it a part of the grand procedure of the universal ongoing. But, fourthly: my plea for immortality is strengthened by the fact, that in the dispensation of Spiritualism, preparation for and a full delineation of its issues after death, and onward through the unrealized beyond, is made clear and apparent to the patient student and faithful liver. I do not believe that mankind has ever been left without a witness to the fact of immortality, or a school-master to train him for it; but the means on hand have been neglected. And, now in these times, there comes forth the grand organization of a more direct appeal to man in relation to the future of his being, and a more easy method whereby he may attain proficiency in its practical details. The witnesses, are your own kindred, who have preceded you to the enjoyment of the immortality for which we plead. And the means, are those open doorways of communication, whereby they will teach and elevate your minds; and thus, in the removal of your doubts, and the difficulties under which you have labored, lead you into the pleasant light which shall reveal the long lost secret, and make the fact of immortality an open question realizable by all, and urge it as a motive for the acknowledgement of man's nobility, the conducting of his life as a means of universal blessing, the anticipation of death as the event to be longed for, and this dispensation itself, as the special blessing from God to man in this nineteenth century, and, from which, shall spring a future fraught with the brightest and noblest enjoyments of which man is capable. On these grounds then, I ask you to join with me in my plea for immortality; and can only hope that in its acceptance, you will find all the enjoyment and advantage which it is capable of affording. **MARNIAS METI.**

August, 1879.

H.J.B.

#### COMMUNICATION.

FAR down beneath the crust of the earth is Nature's workshop; there, are her hidden stores of wealth which occasionally she reveals for the benefit of man. Much has she bestowed in this way which he has not utilised, chiefly through ignorance. We penetrate into earth's laboratory, and there perceive the nucleus of whatsoever can tend to man's happiness and usefulness on this plane. Reservoirs of thought and learning are round about ready to supply man's need; but the need must be felt ere the value of the reservoir can be appreciated. Now, to be teachable you must be surrounded by an aura that will, so to speak, spring up and, figuratively, clasp hands with the aura that surrounds us. *Then* does a union take place, a bond of fraternity that enables us to give and ye to receive. *Single-handed* the barrier between the two worlds cannot be bridged. Given, the contents of a solid cube, so much will it contain and no more. A circle is without beginning and without end; and thus well typifies Time. Thus it is that the universe containeth all things; neither at one time *more*, nor at any other period *less*. So it is that what ye call time is only a segment of eternity; which, having no beginning can have no end. What man terms space, is illimitable, and, like eternity, is boundless. Space, time, and eternity being mere words to convey to man's mind certain ideas.

The hold that these ideas take of a mind will be according to the calibre of that mind; just as one man can measure a distance with his eye, while another has to use a foot-rule. Nothing hath been that will not be, and nothing ever will be that hath not already had its being somewhere, or at some time; thus proving the truth of the words attributed to Solomon, "There is no new thing under the sun."

Errata in Spirit Communication." September Number, Page 1644, line 22, sentence should end at "minds."  
" 1645 " 4, for "analogous" read "analogous,"  
" " 18, " "it" read "them,"

## To Correspondents.

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

"Wolverine," and Mr. Parrant's letters held over.

### THOMAS PAINE.

THE TERROR OF THE CHURCH, BUT THE FRIEND OF MAN.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—I was much pleased on reading the account of Mr. Walker's trance lecture, on "Thomas Paine, the Terror of the Priests, but the Friend of the People;" in last *Harbinger*, and consider it a terrible scathing for those orthodox, who find pleasure in vilifying and misrepresenting this noble reformer. When any of us hear Thomas Paine called an infidel, remember to reply in Mr. Walker's words: "He was an infidel to the blasphemies of orthodoxy; and your Christian church slandered him, because she could not answer his arguments." Such a reply will be a crusher to the orthodox. As they are continually harping on the same old tune; "That Paine recanted, &c.," in spite of the proofs we possess to show the very opposite; I think a number of cheap tracts on the life of this illustrious man, headed, "THE TRUTH ABOUT THOMAS PAINE," would silence them, and improve their inner intellectual faculties.

When the Christian church has to resort to such a mean practice as falsification, for support; it speaks little for its stability. Some church-goers are villains and rogues; and in my opinion, there should be one of our lecturers (at least) wherever there is a Christian church; to combat the erroneous doctrines emanating from the fashionable pulpits. And I am further of opinion a society denominated "The New South Wales Association of Spiritualists," should be inaugurated in Sydney; to co-operate with the Victorian Association, in arranging with lecturers, &c.; I hope a step in this direction will be made at once.\* In conclusion, I will deviate a little from the main subject of this letter, by stating that a Sydney friend, Mr. Alexander Fraser, deserves the thanks of all Spiritualists, for the noble work he is doing, viz.:—That of distributing tracts on Spiritualism whilst following his daily avocation. He has, and is now doing much good in the cause. May the good spirits guide him.

F. E. S. HEWISON.

Bathurst, N.S.W., 8th Sept., 1879.

### SCIENCE VERSUS TRUTH.

"MR. CROOKES' paper was not regarded as one deserving the attention of the Royal Society."—*The Spectator*, 22nd July, 1871.

The scientists sat in a conclave stern,

Talking of subjects deep and profound;

Of "How long it would take a match to burn?"

Or, "How deep a worm went underground?"

And such questions as these, it is easily seen,

Are not to be answered at once, off-hand;

Besides, men of science always mean

To study deeply and understand

All hidden things—whether useful or not;

And they dress them themselves in such an array,

Making of naught—such a wonderful lot!—

As to frighten the more humble people away;

Who in the far distance stand with awe,

And leave such subjects as too abstruse—

As to "Why a fly gets jammed in a door?"

Or "Rusty nails, their nature and use?"

A question arose, and the humble few

Thought that these men, so clever and wise,

Would make enquiry—say if true:

And on the subject teach and advise.

Poor fools! did they think that where scientists throng,

They would on such nonsense throw a light?

To them 'twas unnatural, so it was wrong,

And thus, it is plain, it could not be right.

\*[Our correspondent is perhaps not aware of the existence of the Sydney Psychological Association.—Ed. H. of L.]

"It's rubbish," cried one, "such stuff to talk—  
Spirits of dead men never come here;  
When I die, I know, no more shall I walk  
On this earth again—this mundane sphere:"  
And this, be it known, was said with a sneer.

"No!" said another, "to think that we  
Should study a subject so full of stuff;  
The idea of our Society  
Testing such juggling; we've had enough  
Of tricks and such like hanky panky;  
Why, people will think we've all gone cranky."

"And, between you and me, you know," quoth a third,  
It's perfectly right to pooh-pooh it aside;  
Why it's plain enough the thing is absurd,  
That we should come back again after we've died."

Still it is a most wonderful truth,  
That in spite of scientists full of conceit;  
And the cavalier way they treat it, forsooth!  
Spiritualism, they cannot defeat—  
It grows and strengthens from day to day,  
And more and more are the humble few;  
So when these bigots have turned to clay,  
Their spirits will see that the thing is true;  
For, like Damocles' sword, it hangs o'er each head,  
And its fall will be felt by each scoffer when dead.

E. CYRIL HAVILAND.

### JOTTINGS ON PASSING EVENTS.

DR. TALMAGE, whose arraignment on charges of deceit I recently chronicled in these columns, has been acquitted. A majority of the elders voted against him, but of his brethren of the cloth there was a substantial preponderance in his favour. And, of course, the verdict of the parsons will carry more weight with us all than that of laymen. The former are naturally (or supernaturally) endowed with greater powers of discernment; at least we know that in St. John's Apocalypse the four beasts are represented as being armed with vision at all points. (In some respects rather an inconvenience, I should think.) Whilst the four and twenty elders are not credited with any special visual developments. The report of the rev. doctor's exculpation tended somewhat to revive my shattered faith, and I might have got "bok agen" to the halcyon days of confidence in tabernacle preachers, but unfortunately I came across a lecture of his on the Bible, delivered in Manchester, England—where he has been "starring"—and, it is to be feared I am now past recovery.

Mr. Talmage, speaking of a conscience-stricken sinner who, seeking to pray, fails, and thereupon bursts into tears, says, "God, I think, despatched an angel from the throne, and he thrust his wing under the falling tear and caught it, and sped with it backward towards the throne of grace; and as that tear glittered in the light of the celestial throne, all heaven broke forth in full chant, crying, 'Behold, he prayeth!' Now just imagine that tear sailing away through space on an angel's feather! Dr. T. describes heaven as 'further than the limits of unimaginable space, higher than the Pleiades, and beyond the penetration of solar light.' So, if the angel were to travel 'with all the momentum of thought,' it would take an eternity to reach 'the throne, and nothing less than a miracle could either keep that tear in its place, or preserve its fluidity. Really isn't this tearable?"

One more specimen of the doctor's grotesque imaginings, and we'll leave him to his fate. "The Bible," says he, "is like a rock, surely bound in clasps of metal, lying on mountain tables, and in the jewelled beds of the sea." What does the man mean? Was there ever such ineffable slush? It is enough to make any respectable angel—winged or otherwise—weep to see it. That's the way I feel, any how.

READERS of the *Argus* have lately been entertained by a discussion on St. Paul's writings, between two very learned men—Dr. Moorhouse, the Anglican bishop, and Dr. Jacobson, the Jewish rabbi. Freethinkers, viewing



such controversies, are inclined to repeat Josh Billings's apostrophe to the "tew Emprers:"—"Go it, old gentlemen, wire in, you can't hit too hard. You've each got a deal of truth on your side, and a derned sight more error." Jews have made converts among the Christians. A whole tribe of Turkomans was brought over to their tenets in the eighth century, and Milman, in his *History of the Jews*, tells us of an Archbishop of Moscow whom the Jews converted. Probably, however, the Bishop of Melbourne is more "fully persuaded in his own mind" than was his Russian brother. In the present correspondence neither Dr. Moorhouse nor the Rabbi has evinced any marked aptitude for dialectics. The former especially showed a very undesirable irritability, and his logic at times was decidedly weak. He had affirmed that "Miracles must have occurred in the early church, or St. Paul, who was universally admitted to have been an honest man (?), would not have reported them." An anonymous writer thereupon placed the learned prelate in a bit of a dilemma by responding that honest men have attested the verity of spirit-marvels in the present time. The Bishop's pitiable attempt to evade the conclusion that either the latter-day "miracles" are true; or else, if *these* are false, the same kind of evidence in favour of early Christian miracles fails to prove *them* true—may be seen in the *Argus* of September 16th. Were Dr. Moorhouse wise, he would learn that *with* Spiritualism he can give his Christian supernaturalisms a natural and rational explanation; that *without* Spiritualism he is powerless before the sturdy assaults of materialistic infidelity.

I OBSERVE that the Bishop, in one of his letters, alludes to "Tom" Paine. Suppose we spoke of "Bill" Paley, or "Dick" Whately, or "Ted" Pusey, or "Jack" Cumming, what would his lordship think of us? Should we not rightly be censured for *vulgarity*?

## VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

THE Annual General Meeting of the above association was held at the Temperance Hall, Russell Street, on Thursday evening, September 4th. Mr. Deakin, the retiring president, in the chair.

The Secretary's report as approved by the committee was circulated among the members prior to the meeting, and after the appointment of scrutineers to examine the ballots for officers and committee for the ensuing year, the chairman read the gist of the report, referring members to the printed copies for details. From the latter we extract the following:—

"At the conclusion of their term of office the Committee present for the consideration of the Association the customary annual report and beg to congratulate the Members on the progress made. In numbers especially the advance has been most marked, for while there was only some sixty members enrolled in September 1878, the list now embraces two hundred names, with the promise of further increment. This by no means represents the strength of the Association, since hundreds more, though not nominally members, take part in all public proceedings, and generally assist its efforts. The financial progress has been still more satisfactory. Commencing with the trifling balance of £6 12s. 10d., your committee, after expending £783 12s. 11d., have still a balance of £54 15s. 4d., in hand, while £44 6s. has been placed in reserve as the nucleus of a fund for building purposes. Towards the close of the year, previous to the election of your present Committee, Mrs. Britten delivered a course of highly popular and remunerative lectures, under the auspices of the Association. The members of the then Committee contributed very materially to the financial success, by giving their services gratuitously. The total net proceeds, in addition to a bonus of £50 from the funds of the Association, went to remunerate the Lecturer, and no benefit was asked for, nor offered in return. Your Committee, however, considering that the usefulness of the Association must depend largely upon the funds at its disposal, resolved at their first meeting, that the funds of the Association should receive some portion

of the net proceeds from lectures delivered during their term of office. Mr. Thomas Walker, then in Sydney, was invited to come to Melbourne to deliver a course of lectures, on terms in accordance with this resolution. The option was given him either to receive a fixed sum per lecture and a moiety of the profits, if any, made over and above; or, to receive the total net proceeds from every six lectures, and that every seventh lecture should be for the benefit of the funds of the Association. The latter alternative was accepted, and in October Mr. Walker commenced his course in the Princess Theatre—the rent demanded by the other theatres being excessive. But the position of this building was found to be unfavourable, and after six lectures had been delivered an arrangement was made with the proprietor of the Academy of Music to rent that building for three months. At the same time your Committee made a fresh arrangement with Mr. Walker. The experiment was so encouraging however, that at its termination an agreement was entered into with Mr. Walker to become lecturer to the association for twelve months, at a salary of £300 per annum.

About this period Mrs. Britten having announced her intention to deliver another course of lectures in Melbourne it was deemed advisable in the interest of Spiritualism to withdraw Mr. Walker for a time, and arrangements were made for him to proceed to Sydney; the Association, meantime, meeting in the Masonic Hall where Mrs. Fielden gave her services for a series of interesting seances. The circumstances attending the second visit of Mrs. Britten to this city and the disagreement between herself and your Committee have been brought before two special meetings of the Association. On these occasions the subject was so fully discussed that you must all be familiar with its every detail. As you have already endorsed the action, your Committee felt themselves bound to take in this matter, we have deemed it unnecessary to make a more than passing allusion to it in this report. After the final departure of Mrs. Britten, your Committee engaged the Opera House for six months, and on the 13th April, the lectures by Mr. Walker were resumed. On Sunday, 27th April, Your Committee encountered an unexpected and serious difficulty. Up to that date funds were collected by making a charge before admission to the Opera House; but at 11 a.m. on that day our Secretary was informed that this course was forbidden by the acting Chief Secretary, Sir Bryan O'Loughlin, for that and all future Sundays—otherwise a renewal of the licence for the Opera House would not be granted. In fact the Manager of the Opera House Company refused to admit us into the Opera House without a written permit from the acting Chief Secretary. We think we are justified in concluding that orthodox influence was brought to bear on the Ministry to aim this cowardly blow at the existence of our organization, and no time was lost in taking steps to frustrate this slightly disguised attempt to deny us religious freedom. The only concession obtainable was an order to open that night, on the strict understanding that no money should be charged for admission.

The following two Sundays similar permits were obtained and at last an official permit to continue Sunday services upon the condition as above, viz.:—No money to be charged for admission. Since that time your Committee have had to depend on collections to defray the heavy expenses and although Spiritualists and friends have responded fairly to the call upon their honor, many of the public availed themselves of the opportunity to pass in without contributing. As expenses could not be materially reduced your Committee considered the advisability of taking the Temperance Hall, which would accommodate 2000 people, but as Mr. Walker had an objection to lecture in that Hall it was decided to remain at the Opera House. On the 9th June the Secretary received a letter from Mr. Walker, requesting the Committee to release him from his engagement. On the 16th June the letter was laid before your Committee, and as the reasons brought forward in his letter were not deemed sufficient to warrant the Committee taking such a step, Mr. Walker was called in to explain himself more fully. He gave such reasons, principally of a private nature, that your Committee reluctantly agreed to accept his resignation. Mr. Walker thereafter delivered three final lectures, viz.:—"The French Revolution," "The New Heaven and the New Earth,"

concluding with one on "Thomas Paine." These lectures were among the most successful ever delivered before a Melbourne audience, drawing over-crowded houses and eliciting frequent bursts of enthusiastic applause. Among the lectures delivered by Mr. Walker, "The Bible in the State Schools," and "The Thin end of the Wedge or the New Protestant Text Book," occupy a prominent position and have both been published and widely circulated, other interesting and instructive lectures have also been reported in *The Harbinger of Light*. On the 12th of July, Mr. Thomas Walker left Melbourne per s.s. "Aconcagua," for England, accompanied by the best wishes of a large number of friends, hoping to be able to return in about a year to place his services again at the disposal of the Association. On account of the action taken by the Acting Chief Secretary with regard to charging for admission, the contract with the Opera House Company was cancelled. As it was of importance to continue the Sunday evening lectures your Committee decided upon taking the larger Temperance Hall for six Sundays, by way of experiment, and supplying the place of a regular lecturer by papers from Members of the Association. Under these circumstances the platform was occupied by Messrs. H. J. Browne, W. H. Terry and C. Watt, to whom the Committee wish to express their thanks for thus coming to their assistance. In the meantime correspondence was opened with Mr. John Tyerman (then in Adelaide) ending in an offer for five lectures. Mr. Tyerman, however, had previously corresponded with the Dunedin Association, (New Zealand,) and had just accepted a three month's engagement when our offer reached him. On his way to New Zealand, Mr. Tyerman delivered an able lecture, on Sunday the 27th July, at the Temperance Hall, the subject being "Immortality."

The report contains records of Mediums and Mediumship, Debate and Experience Meetings, General Meetings, Soirees and Social Evenings, Library (which has increased in extent and usefulness) Choir, and distribution, etc. and concludes as follows:

Realizing the important influence on religious thought exercised by the popular lectures at the Opera House and other Theatres, your Committee have taken steps to obtain the services of competent speakers to fill their platform, and in response to letters dispatched to popular speakers in America, Professor William Denton and Mrs. Addie L. Ballou have expressed their willingness to visit us if suitable arrangements could be made. An offer for a three month's course of lectures has been sent to Professor Denton, and a reply is expected next month. Professor Denton, an Englishman by birth, and one of the ablest speakers on the American Spiritualistic and Freethought platform, lectures from a scientific stand-point, and builds upon that basis the Spiritual edifice. On account of the dearth of lay lecturers, your Committee have deemed it advisable, until the arrival of a paid speaker, to hold the meetings in the smaller Temperance Hall, and to limit them to members and their immediate friends.

Some four years since, a Building Fund was initiated by a former Association, and a sum deposited in trust for that purpose. Your Committee made application to the Trustees for the amount, with accrued interest, to be handed over to them, and their request being acceded to, the profits of Mrs. Fielden's first series of seances was added to it, and the total amount deposited at interest as the basis of a Building Fund.

Your Committee would respectfully urge upon you the advisability of augmenting this fund either by donations or a fixed annual subscription, as the action of the Government in suppressing our right to charge for seats in licensed buildings make it more imperative that we should possess a building of our own.

Speaking generally, the status of Spiritualism in Victoria may be said to be higher, and its prospects brighter than heretofore. The tone adopted by the press and the pulpit towards the movement is at least more tolerant. Adherents are more open in the expression of their views, and what may be termed a Spiritualistic vein of thought is found more and more prominent in the utterances of churchmen. The late lectures of the Bishop of Melbourne are notable instances of this change. The orthodox views of inspiration and other dogmas under the conjoint influences of

modern science and Spiritualistic philosophy, have been gradually transmuted into what is almost a new, and certainly a more rational faith. The investigation of Spiritualistic phenomena steadily attracts large classes to the principles which underlie them, and the formation of private circles has in many directions been attended with satisfactory results. As the facts of spirit communion obtain stronger foothold, the Materialists, as well as Idealists, find themselves placed face to face with problems which the present theories of things are unable to solve. The attitude of the public therefore, at present, is one more of sceptical curiosity and less of bigoted contempt. They begin to appreciate the significance of the movement and the breadth of its teachings, and thus the opportunities of usefulness which lie before the Victorian Association of Spiritualists are more plentiful, and promise to be more fruitful, than those of the past."

The result of the ballot was here announced as follows:—President, Mr. John Ross; vice-presidents, Messrs. W. B. Bowley and T. W. Stanford; Treasurer, Mr. W. H. Terry; Committee, Messrs. S. G. Watson, J. Hall, H. Moore, T. Lang, J. Cohen, H. Brotherton; W. Cherry, J. G. Foxton, E. Purton, J. Singleton, J. Veevers, J. Cackett. Mesdames Cassell, Andrews and Syme.

Mr. Watson was subsequently elected vice-president and the vacancy in the committee filled by the election of Mr. Rice.

The report was received and adopted, a vote of thanks being passed to the retiring committee and officers.

A motion by Mr. Rice, seconded by Mr. Ross, requesting the incoming committee to amend rule X., in reference to nominations, and submit their amendments to the next general meeting was carried.

Suggestions were made to amend the method of collection at Sunday evening lectures, also for the Registration of the Society, in order that one of its officers might be empowered to conduct marriages, &c.. Legislation on these subjects was referred to the committee. Mr. Terry made an appeal to members to give their services more generally as essayists whilst the association was without a professional lecturer. It was also suggested that deputies should be appointed to represent the association in the forthcoming Social Science Conference.

Mr. Alkemade considered that provision should be made to assist good mediums for physical and test phenomena, in order that the poorer classes might more readily obtain access to their seances.

Votes of thanks were passed to the choir for their services during the past year, and to Mr. Van Alkemade the retiring secretary, to whose ability and energy the chairman paid a high eulogium which was heartily endorsed by the meeting. Mr. Alkemade declined re-election to the office for private reasons, but was ultimately induced to accept the secretaryship *pro. tem.*, and the meeting adjourned soon after 10 p.m.

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#### DR. J. M. PEEBLES.

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We see by the Spiritualistic Journals from America that the Spiritualists of that country raised and presented to Dr. Peebles, as a New Year's gift, the sum of one thousand dollars, to remove an incumbrance from his home. This shows the estimation in which he and his family are held in his own country.

He has been lecturing, during the past winter, in Chicago, Toledo, Brooklyn, New York, and Boston. During October, November, and December next, he is engaged for the San Francisco Society, in California; then he traverses the Continent 3000 miles, to fill engagements in Brooklyn, Boston, and Philadelphia.

Mr. A. Fraser, of Sydney, writes to report the success of a circle inaugurated by him recently. Among the communicating spirits is one from a neighbouring world, "Mars;" and from his description of life there, it would appear that the inhabitants are somewhat in advance of us in morality, intellect, and habits.



## THE LITTLE BILL OF PARTICULARS.

EVER since the year 1847 the world has been promised that the "Spiritualistic craze" should be put down, exposed, annihilated. Since that time how many leading articles have appeared with such titles as "The Farce Ended," "Spiritualism Fully Exposed," "The Imposture Crushed," etc., etc. Count Gaspazin has written it down in two ponderous volumes; the Rev. Mr. Mahan has done his best to demolish it in a big book; one Mr. Dyer G. Lum has written a volume to prove it all a delusion; Dr. Carpenter has kept up for years a running fight to prevent its spreading; Dr. Hammond has explained it all by epilepsy and hallucination; Dr. Beard has been firing away in the *Popular Science Monthly* to show how it is all upset by a single flash of his "deductive reasoning," and his wonderful "Six Sources of Error; the secular editors have denied our facts, and ridiculed our Spiritual hypothesis with a persistent animosity; and yet here is Spiritualism to-day presenting such a front of fearless, confident power as it never presented before in the world's history. Three of the leading philosophers of Germany—Franz Hoffman, Fichte, and Hartmann, admit its phenomena; the philosophers, Lötse, Fechner, Wundt, Urici, Wirth, and Baader accept its leading doctrine of the spiritual body; Balfour Stewart and Tait, two eminent British physicists, put forth a book entitled "The Unseen Universe," accepting the deductions of Spiritualism without discussing its facts; some of the most brilliant physicists of Germany—Zöllner, Weber, Scheibner, and Ludwig, accept the phenomena through Slade; so do Boutlerof, Aksakof, the Grand Duke Constantine, and others, in Russia. Spiritual newspapers and magazines are multiplying all over the world. They exist already in England, France, Spain, Germany, Mexico, various countries in South America, Australia and other parts of the world.

And here is the *University Magazine* (London) for June, 1879, giving a long memoir with a splendid likeness of Dr. J. J. Garth Wilkinson (born 1812), and one of the leading Spiritualists of England, though a liberal Swedenborgian; also containing an article entitled "The Preternatural in the Present Day," complimentary to Mr. Fletcher, the American medium in London, and giving an account of wonderful examples of clairvoyance and prevision got through him. Thus it would seem that in spite of all the "exposures" and "annihilations" of the last thirty-five years, Spiritualism was never so lively, never so audacious, never in so thrifty a state as now; never so formidable in its purely scientific aspect; never so strong in the list of its eminent scientific and philosophical adherents.

But wait a bit. There is a big cloud looming up in the horizon. In Chicago there is a philosopher who has a "Bill of Particulars" which is to annihilate Spiritualism once more; and this time it is to be no child's play. The thing is to be done, and done thoroughly; and the editor of *The Alliance* is the David who is to swing the stone that is to bring down this portentous Goliath. David has been a great investigator, and has accumulated a vast amount of testimony of the most accurate and convincing character. Such men as Alfred R. Wallace, Wm. Crookes, Zöllner, Barkas, Fechner, Weber, Boutlerof, Scheibner, Buchanan, and the rest, are to be exposed as dupes and imbeciles. The man of *The Alliance* is to do it, and we have rashly granted him the use of our columns for his attack, conditioned on his granting us the use of his columns for a reply; that is in case we are not crushed out, silenced and convinced by his irresistible logic.

At the risk of alarming our readers we have offered these terms; so let them prepare for the worst. This time there is to be no postponement on account of the weather. This time Spiritualism is to be so effectually put down that not even its ghost will be left to worry and perplex honest people. The man of *The Alliance* is to do it. So look out, "ye long-haired men and short-haired women, who look wild and live in an unhealthy, unreal world, and neglect home and family and the domestic circle, and become daft on a subject" that, according to *The Alliance*, does you no good. Your day of doom is near at hand. Look out for "that little Bill of Particulars."—*Religio Philosophical Journal*.

## THE LATE FATAL FIRE IN DUNEDIN, NEW ZEALAND.

By J. TYERMAN.

IN a lecture—"Freethought and what it has accomplished"—delivered in the Princess' Theatre, Dunedin, on Sunday evening, September 4, Mr. J. Tyerman thus referred to the late fire:—I wish to make a few remarks suggested by the late disastrous fire. Such events are fortunately as rare as they are appalling. The fire in the Octagon was probably the most terrible, as regards loss of life, of any that has occurred in the colony. The news that twelve human beings had perished, sent a thrill of horror through the community, and struck responsive chords of sympathy in every breast. Most of the clergy have been "improving" the event to-day for the edification of their hearers; it has been made to illustrate important doctrines, and give point to solemn warnings. And I cannot refrain from offering a few thoughts upon it, as viewed from a rational and Spiritualistic stand-point. I am the more constrained to do this by the fact that some of the unfortunate victims shared the views I hold, and were present at my lecture last Sunday evening. It was little thought that they were so near the better world, and that a few hours after they would be wafted thither in a chariot of fire.

There was a time when such a catastrophe would have been generally regarded as a Divine judgment; an evidence of God's anger towards the community in general, or some one in particular. Almost all accidents and disasters were formerly believed to be brought about by the direct interference of the Deity in the affairs of men; and were intended to fulfil some wise and merciful providential design. If the blow fell only on some one who was regarded from a theological stand-point as an ungodly unbeliever, there was no doubt in many quarters that it was a special judgment of the Most High. When a minister of the gospel died in his pulpit, or a layman breathed his last in his pew, the event was spoken of in religious circles as a mysterious providence; but when an Infidel was suddenly snitten down, the occurrence was pointed to as a Divine judgment for his sin! And if all the victims of the late calamity had been heretics, there is no doubt ignorance and bigotry enough yet in some places to have caused the sad affair to have been looked upon as a judgment, an expression of Divine displeasure, and a warning against the dangers of unbelief. It so happens, however, that a member of the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of England, the Presbyterian Body, and possibly of other Communions, as well as of the Liberal Party, fell a prey to the devouring flames; and therefore if there was any Divine judgment in the matter, it was too indiscriminating and general to serve the purpose of the sectarian religionist. But those old and mischievous notions of providential interpositions are happily fast dying out; and such melancholy events as the one we are now deploring, are coming more and more to be regarded as purely the natural effects of natural, and as a rule preventable, causes. If there is any judgment in the matter, it is probably on some one's cupidity or carelessness; and if so, it is painful to think of so many innocent persons falling victims to it.

This sad event brings the subject of death very impressively and closely before us; and it may not be amiss to dwell upon it for a moment or two. There is nothing more certain than that sooner or later we must all die, as the change in our mode and place of living is popularly phrased. But the term death is a misnomer. Man does not die; for the real man is not the material organisation which the physical senses cognise. What is called death is only the transference of man from one part of the universe to another. The immediate cause of that transition may be an accident, or painful disease; or the change may be natural liberation of the spirit from the body that is worn out by age, and can no longer serve its purposes in the economy of life. But in whatever form, and at whatever time the change called death comes, it is a solemn and suggestive event. It may be viewed from three stand-points—the Materialistic, Christian, and Spiritualistic. As to which is the

most reasonable and probably true view of the matter, I will leave each one present to judge for himself.

According to the Materialistic theory, death is the utter extinction of conscious, intelligent life; the blotting out of memory, reason, conscience, affection, and all that constitutes man's personality. The grave is the final goal of our existence. An eternal sleep follows the brief period of wakeful and busy life that is enjoyed on earth. The doctrine of immortality is pronounced a delusion. The hope of meeting loved ones again in some other and happier world, which in all ages has eased the pangs of bereavement and lightened the burden of sorrow, is doomed to disappointment; for it is taught that death ends all. I cannot acquiesce in their gloomy views. While sympathising with Materialists in their revolt against orthodox error and superstition, and agreeing in the main with their liberal and progressive principles, I am unable to accept their doctrine of annihilation; and believe that doctrine is too cheerless, unreasonable, and repellant ever to commend itself to the great mass of mankind. A few minds may be able to contemplate the prospect of annihilation with philosophic calmness, and to meet death in a spirit of noble resignation; but there is that in the great heart of humanity which, apart altogether from sectarian teaching, will never feel satisfied with such a notion of the end of life. Nor do I believe that the general body of Materialists are quite at ease with the views on this subject that they have been led to adopt; and I can but hope that they will yet see reason to accept a more rational and comforting belief, that will not interfere with the liberal principles which they prize so highly.

The Christian view of death is that which is most generally entertained, but I cannot endorse it. In the first place I hold that its teachings as to the origin and character of death are utterly false. It asserts that death was inflicted by God on man some six thousand years ago, as a penalty for sin. But it has been fully proved that death invaded the kingdoms below man millions of years ago, and that it had swept off generation after generation of the human race thousands of years before the time which the fabled fall assigns for its introduction. It was evidently a part of the natural constitution of things from the beginning of life on earth; and that instead of being a curse, it is a blessing, especially when it comes in the due course of things. And yet though the Biblical account of the origin of death has been so completely disproved, Christians will not allow that its credibility has been affected; but still extol it as the infallible word of God! In the second place I deny the orthodox views as to the issues and consequences of death. It is taught that death ends man's period of probation, ushers him into the immediate presence of God, and fixes his eternal destiny. And hence the main object of preaching is to prepare men to meet God, and more concern is felt about a becoming fitness for death, than about a true and useful life. Death is described as the grim king of terrors, only to be met with safety and happiness by supernatural aid, to be obtained as the reward of a certain kind and degree of faith. No wonder that among those who hold the orthodox view of death, so many shrink from it in horror as long as possible, and meet it with great reluctance and fear when it can be no longer resisted. But the popular ideas of death are erroneous, and are gradually losing their hold of thinking minds, as more rational views of the subject are entertained.

The Spiritualistic view of death appears to me to be by far the most natural and reasonable of any that have been propounded. Spiritualism teaches that death is really a second birth; that the new born spirit is met and welcomed by kind, sympathetic beings; that it is introduced to a place and condition corresponding with the intellectual, moral, and spiritual plane it occupied while on earth; and that a career of gradual and eternal progress opens up before it. This view of death has the advantage of the others I have named, of being taught by those who have passed through the change, and speak from personal knowledge of the subject. And what a comfort this view gives in the presence of such a terrible calamity as the late fire. A number of persons are ushered into the other world without a moment's warning;

and if orthodoxy be true some of those have without doubt perished everlastingly, because they were not Christians, though excellent people. Our Christian friends cannot consistently with their Bible and their creeds believe any other; if some of them do venture to indulge a hope for the departed, it can only be by stretching their charity at the expense of their faith. And does not this show the great need there is of a radical change in the popular views of death? I for one have no fear concerning those who were so suddenly snatched away. As for those of them who held our views, it is as well with them as with their Christian neighbours. Mr. Robert Wilson, the Editor of the *Otago Witness*, was a Spiritualist, and has proved the correctness of the principles he professed. A gentleman who knew him intimately said to me the other day, "He was a good man." What higher eulogy could be passed upon any one? And what better passport did our brother need to a place of light and felicity beyond the grave?

#### NOT TO BE MOVED.

##### A FACT.

SOME time since, needing some work done on the premises, we sent for a man who was always employed whenever we wanted anything done in his line. He was a quiet, respectable, middle-aged man, and had worked for me for some seven or eight years. Wishing to give him some directions, I entered the room he was busy in, and having told him what I required, asked some neighbourly questions as to how he and his family had been getting on since I last saw him.

I must here premise that the past year had been the saddest of our lives, for not only had a terrible fire broken out and burnt our house (only bought about four months before) to the ground, destroying furniture, pictures, clothes, &c., &c., and also a valuable library of several hundred volumes, the cherished gatherings of more than thirty years; but our best-beloved—the sunshine of our hearts and the desire of our eyes—had left our clinging arms and entered that spirit-land where none fairer, purer, or lovelier than herself would meet her on its threshold.

Before her loss we had thought little and cared less about Spiritualism, and when some whom we had spent a few days with in a country place, spoke on the subject (in which they were strongly interested) to us, politeness alone forbade our turning their recital of raps and manifestations into ridicule. A chance meeting with Dr. Slade, and the wonderful things that occurred on a further knowledge and greater intimacy with him awakened first curiosity, then interest, and at last belief. We have since been told by our spirit-friends among whom our departed darling holds a prominent place, that nothing less than being deprived of her would have turned our thoughts to Spiritualism, for we were so happy in each other's love on earth, we troubled ourselves but little about the greater love hereafter.

To return to our friend; he remarked with kind sympathy, "I'm sorry, ma'am, you had such a hard time since I see you last, when I looks at that little one and thinks the last time I see her she was in her mother's arms, I har'ly know how you and the dear young lady's husband kep up without her." I thanked him for his sympathy, and he improved the occasion thus:—"Ah! well, ma'am, you and the gentleman must just look on your troubles as the chastisement of the Almighty."

I declined to look upon them in any such light, saying, as Spiritualists, we did not believe in a God who delighted in punishments, but in one whose very essence was love.

"Well, yer see, ma'am, I don' know what them is."

"Do you mean Spiritualists?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Have you never heard of the people who do not believe that the grave completely separates those who have passed away and those who still remain on earth?" He looked suddenly enlightened.

"Oh! you mean them Rappers, an' upsetting tables, an' them games."

I smiled, and explained that those physical manifesta-



tions were certainly included in Spiritualism, but also things of much more vital importance.

"Well, yer see, Ma'am, a brother-in-law er mine got a notion that way, and once he got me to sit in what they calls a *cirkel*; but lor! none of us heered nothin' an' so I came away, an' didn' think no more of it. But if you believes in it, ma'am, I'd like to know some more about it."

I touched slightly on the main differences of our belief with the generally accepted doctrines of others, and found my friend well read in the Bible, and ready to pelt me with a perfect hail-storm of texts.

I answered by pointing out how many of his own texts proved that Jesus himself was a true Spiritualist; but though baffled, he was not beaten, and I quite enjoyed the sturdy honesty with which, while perfectly respectful, he maintained his opinions.

The doctrine of each soul working out its own atonement in Spirit-land, and my non-belief in the vicarious sacrifice, I saw staggered and rather shocked him; but when I proceeded to inform him that in our belief there was neither hell nor devil, I had reached the climax.

With a rather pathetic tone and manner, he again had resort to his texts, which went to prove what Ingersoll calls "That comfortable doctrine of eternal damnation," and of the existence of Satan. Finding my disbelief proof against all his arguments, he at last heaved a deep sigh and summed the whole matter up with this remarkable exposition of his faith.

"Ah! well, I dessay its all very good, but for my part I *sticks* to Jesus, and I'll *never* give up the devil."

Respecting the strong conviction on either side, my opponent and myself agreed to differ, and parted, still good friends, I presenting him with a small book which would help him to a knowledge that Spiritualism was something more than raps and table-turning.

M. R.

#### MRS. EMMA HARDINGE-BRITTEN.

THE *Religio Philosophical Journal* of July 5th, contains a letter from Mrs. E. H. Britten, from which we extract the following:—

"I am compelled, as a faithful servant of that cause to which I and my husband have devoted all we have, and all we are, to acknowledge that I have learned a bitter lesson of the insufficiency of association to promote any cause, unless its associates carry its principles into the association with them. In proof of this, I point to the spiritual papers, the columns of which are so constantly filled with humiliating records of quarrels, bickerings, feuds, protests, and resolutions, denunciatory of even the best and most faithful workers in the ranks, who dare oppose themselves to what the self-appointed councils, and self-constituted leaders of the cause fulminate as their spiritual 'bulls.' I need but point to the *Harbinger of Light*, of March and April, and the *London Spiritualist*, especially the issue of Feb. 14th, to show how the readers who turn to the columns of spiritual papers to find spiritual light, are disgusted with the records of divisions and feuds, which emulate the worst features of proud ecclesiasticism, and quarrelsome Christianity."

The natural inference drawn from the above by our American cousins would be, that there exists in Melbourne an unprincipled and autocratic association, and a paper which sets aside the more important subjects connected with Spiritual Philosophy, to make room for records of the feuds and discords connected with this inharmonious Association. We have referred to the two numbers of our journal alluded to, and find the only articles which could possibly have any connection with Mrs. Britten's letter are, first, a letter of her own commenting on a paragraph which appeared in the February issue, and giving her version of some correspondence with the local Association, together with an explanatory note by Mr. W. H. Terry, whose name was mentioned in Mrs. Britten's letter; and, secondly, a short business-like letter from the Secretary of the Association briefly referring to Mrs. Britten's letter, and stating that the matter having been left in abeyance during the last month, the Association did not deem it necessary to reply to it. Mrs. Britten's statement, therefore, is either erroneous or else she is responsible for having "disgusted" our readers with her letter. There is no escape from one of these conclusions, and if there is any culpability on our part, it is in publishing the said

letter, a sin for which that lady ought certainly to excuse us. Were we to undertake the championship of the Association, which Mrs. Britten characterises as a "Persecuting Hierarchy," we should have much more to find fault with in her letter, but our object is to correct what we know to be untrue in reference to our paper, and leave that body to justify itself if it sees fit. We have avoided comment upon the disagreement between the Victorian Association of Spiritualists and Mrs. Britten, but are now, for the second time, necessitated to write correcting palpable misstatements which if allowed to pass unnoticed would have a misleading and injurious effect.

#### MEDICAL PSYCHOLOGY UNSCIENTIFIC.

WHILST reading in Braithwaite's "Retrospect of Medicine," vol. lxxix., January—June, 1879, an article on "A Remarkable Case of Hysteria," by Dr. John S. Bristowe, Senior Physician and Lecturer on Medicine at St. Thomas's Hospital, I was forcibly struck with the thought of how easily satisfied the scientific conscience of modern materialistic physicians is with a few dry words, of no meaning (when submitted to a strict logical analysis), in the presence of so-called supersensual facts. The case is a very interesting one, only the symptoms presented by the hysterical (?) female are described as belonging to the separate departments of hysterical catalepsy, mania, double consciousness, etc. — names supposed to cover all impertinent questions about the ultimate causes of the production of the strange phenomena of abnormal mentality. On one occasion, the patient being very bad, Dr. Simpson was to be sent for, at the girl's request. "Her parents," to quote from the paper in question, "went into another room, discussed the question, and decided not to telegraph, but to tell her that they had telegraphed. They returned to the room and told her that they had sent the message; but she at once taxed them with their deceit, and the result was that the telegram was sent off. At twelve o'clock she said to her parents, 'The telegram has reached Dr. Simpson's house, but he is not at home, and will not reach home until two.' At two, she observed, 'He has now got the message, but he is hesitating whether he shall come or not.' Later on in the day she said, 'Now he has started, and about an hour or so afterwards she called out that his train was being delayed at Horsham, and that it would arrive at Brighton half an hour late. Now, all these assertions of hers were, Dr. Simpson asserts, absolutely true. He was out at twelve, when the telegram arrived; he did not reach home until two, and then he had to go to the London Hospital and get a *locum tenens* before it was certain that he could go to Brighton that day. His train, which she had timed accurately, was delayed half an hour at Horsham, and arrived at Brighton half an hour late. Her condition was now as nearly as possible what it had been on previous occasions, namely, she was rigid, deaf, almost (if not quite) insensible to pain, and showed pleasure when Dr. Simpson came into her line of vision."

Strange to say, our learned doctor disdains to make the slightest explanatory remarks or comments on these strange phenomena of *visio in distans*. He evidently does not know how to account for them, and as clairvoyance has not yet become an adopted term in the scientific school-books of medicine, the helpless observer of this highly interesting case of what he is pleased to style simply *double consciousness*, allows the reader to flounder in the same pool of learned ignorance in which he himself is so deeply immersed.

To illustrate still further the same tendency of explaining spiritual mysteries by unmeaning and shallow materialistic words, I shall invite the attention of the reader to another still more remarkable case of what is called sensorial insanity in early life, and which are attributed to irregular and violent actions prompted by sensations and originating in the disorder of the motor centres, resulting in convulsions. The case of infantile insanity to which I am alluding is taken from Maudsley's "Physiology and Pathology of Mind," a work which is generally allowed by all alienists to occupy the front rank of scientific research on the subject of lunacy.

It may be found on page 300 of the second edition of that work, and runs as follows:—"a woman, about forty years old, of a full and plethoric habit of body, who constantly laughed and did the strangest things, but who, independently of these circumstances, enjoyed the very best health, was on the 20th January, 1763, brought to bed, without any assistance, of a male child who was raving mad. When he was brought to our workhouse, which was on the 24th, he possessed so much strength in his legs and arms that four women could at times with difficulty restrain him. These paroxysms either ended in an uncontrollable fit of laughter, for which no evident reason could be observed, or else he tore in anger everything near him—clothes, linen, bed furniture, and even thread, when he could get hold of it. We durst not allow him to be alone, otherwise he would get on the benches and tables, and even attempt to climb up the walls. Afterwards, however, when he began to have teeth, he died."

And now, what explanation does Dr. Maudsley offer to the reader for this strange *lusus naturæ*? He simply tells us that we have here to deal with a case of infantile insanity brought about by some hypothetical disorganisation in the region of the sensorial nerve centres. A baby only three or four days old is able to jump on benches, tables, run up walls, tear its clothes and its bedding, laughs vociferously, exhausts the physical force of three or four women in holding it, and all these wonderful performances are accounted for in a most scientific manner by a supposititious pathological state of the sensorial nerve centres. I should very much like to know what pathological condition of the human intellect is required in order to make a man satisfied with the explanation of this case presented to us by this highest authority on mental physiology and pathology? Of course the idea of *possession*, which would fully account for all the strange phenomena and diabolical freaks of this wonderfully mad baby must be rigorously excluded, because things spiritual have not yet gained admission into the learned works of a lamentably deficient and unprincipled medical science. But we can afford, in the meantime, to wait until the word *Spirit* becomes a recognised scientific term in the medical dictionaries of a future age.

C. W. ROHNER, M.D.

Bright, 12th Sept., 1879.

#### THE LATE MR. ROBERT WILSON.

Our readers will doubtless have observed in the daily papers an account of the late fatal conflagration at Dunedin, where the above-named, with three members of his family, perished in the flames. He has been a Spiritualist for upwards of five-and-twenty years, and during the past ten years has been identified with the movement in Dunedin, being always outspoken and consistent in its advocacy. His life has been as eventful as its termination was sad. His father was a lieutenant in the Royal Navy, and young Robert was sent to sea at an early age, but not taking kindly to it he procured his discharge and learned the printing business, in which he soon acquired a position, editing the *Montreal Transcript*, (Canada); subsequently removing to Louisiana, he established the *Planters' Banner*, which we believe still exists. When the California gold-fever broke out he sold out and joined the Hon. J. O. Sullivan in forming a company to cross the Isthmus of Panama, which they did successfully. After working in the mines he turned his attention to farming, but was burned out, and after another turn at mining he was engaged on the staff of the *Alta California*, the editorship of which he declined, to come to Victoria, residing for some years at Castlemaine and Maryborough, at the former of which he started a paper called the *Telegraph*, and at the latter, edited the *Maryborough Advertiser*. Removing to Dunedin he became publisher of the *Otago Daily Times*, and latterly was sub-editor of the *Otago Witness*. He was much respected by the Spiritualists of Dunedin, by whom his loss will be severely felt; but he will doubtless work as energetically from the "other side" for the cause he had at heart here, and comfort the mourners by demonstrating that he still lives.

#### MATERIALIZATIONS.

THE *Banner of Light*, of July 12th, contains an account of a series of marvellous materializing séances through the mediumship of Mrs. Stewart and Miss Morgan, of Terra Haute, Indiana. The narrative is written by Dr. J. M. Peebles, who was at some of the séances, accompanied by the Rev. Dr. Watson. Materializations of ancient and modern spirits, distinct and tangible, were formed before them, whilst the medium was distinctly visible to their gaze. Some of these forms were most beautiful, others of commanding presence, others merry and vivacious; some were distinctly recognised by their mortal friends—Dr. Peebles himself meeting with and recognising his adopted son, and Captain Grant conversing with his children; Judge Lawrence conversed with his departed wife on four different occasions. Do not these men know their own? That these things do occur we know, for we have witnessed them even here, in Melbourne, though not to such perfection; in due time, doubtless, they will come more generally.

#### MRS. BRITTEN, AT DUNEDIN.

Mrs. E. H. Britten concluded her series of lectures at the Princess' Theatre, Dunedin, on Sunday, August 31st, and attended a farewell meeting arranged by the Dunedin Freethought Association, at the Oddfellows' Hall, on Tuesday, September 2nd, Mr. Braithwaite occupying the chair. It was intended to make a presentation to Mrs. Britten, but the chairman announced that it was not ready, and would be given privately on the following day. In the course of her address she alluded to the altered position of woman, who now took her place side by side with her brothers in all the important offices of life; but this she did not attribute in the least to the efforts of the "Woman's Rights Party," or those who had fought long and strenuously for the enfranchisement of woman, but to woman's individual exertions. She expressed her determination not to compromise with the popular religious teachers of the day, and concluded amidst applause. Mr. Tyerman, who succeeds Mrs. Britten as public lecturer for the Society, delivered a brief address, and after some music and singing, the meeting concluded.

#### OUR SYDNEY LETTER.

THE test seance with Messrs. Robbins and Richardson referred to in my last letter was, I regret to say, a failure, no phenomena occurring under test conditions. After sitting for two hours without results, the usual method of arranging the sitters was resorted to, and all tests dispensed with; then the instruments were played upon, and other manifestations (?) occurred. Of course all this was highly unsatisfactory; but more was to follow. A few evenings afterwards, in the course of an ordinary seance with the same mediums, Mr. Garton, conductor of our Lyceum, suddenly struck a match, when six of the sitters declared that they saw Mr. Richardson standing up and in the act of playing the tambourine, which, it is said, he immediately flung down, hastily re-seating himself. A warm dispute ensued, in the course of which the mediums insisted upon their innocence.

The facts were reported by Mr. Garton to the Psychological Society, to whom also Robbins and Richardson addressed themselves, offering to submit to tests by the committee, who however declined, on the ground that it was no part of the duty of the Society to test mediums. As to this decision, I may say that I opposed it, considering that any Society, organised for the purpose of studying the phenomena of Spiritualism, should test the instruments through which such phenomena are supposed to be obtained. On the other hand it was argued that if such a course were adopted it might cause serious inconvenience in future, and in the case of Robbins and Richardson could lead to no satisfactory result.

Of course the charge brought against these mediums, or rather against Richardson, is of such a nature that



rebuttal is impossible. All that could be done would be to obtain satisfactory proof that phenomena do occur in their presence; a fact which is regarded as already established beyond a doubt by those who have been in the habit of sitting with them. The charitably disposed will admit in extenuation the possibility of malignant spirit influence, etc., but still an unpleasant feeling must exist, and all that is left for Robbins and Richardson to do is by the strict rectitude of their conduct in future, to live it down.

It seems hard to believe that these young men could knowingly have engaged in a system of fraud which was liable at any moment to detection, and of which the pecuniary results could only be both temporary and insignificant. I would rather incline to the belief that the temptation "to help the spirits" overcame Richardson, especially as even those most bitterly incensed at the deception insist that many curious phenomena have occurred at these seances under conditions which would render the assumption of fraud as absurd.

The whole affair is distressing to all well-wishers of the cause, and I would not have referred to it here were it not that I deem it my duty to lay the facts before your readers. Our experiences in Sydney with mediums have not been very pleasant in the past, but I hope a better time is coming.

Mr. Bright continues to "draw large houses" at the Théâtre Royal, and, I need scarcely say, is doing his work well. Some of his lectures might really be characterised as brilliant orations, and his powers of sarcasm seem to be so fully recognised by the clergy that even that champion of unreasoning Calvinism, the Rev. Dr. Wazir Beg, has not cared to meddle with him.

Perhaps not a little of the quiescence of the clergy is due to the fact that we are in the midst of a hot dispute on the subject of education. The Roman Catholic Archbishop, Dr. Vaughan, has dug up the hatchet, and in a series of pastoral letters, proclaimed war. He is determined that his following shall not be corrupted by learning to read, unless a due modicum of Catholic dogma be instilled into their minds at the same time. He threatens all sorts of pains and penalties to recalcitrant Catholics who continue to send their children to the public schools, and appeals to the people to aid him in securing a system of denominational education. Dr. Vaughan is too able a man not to be fully aware that a belief in the irrational dogmas of orthodoxy can only obtain credence in a mind which has been saturated with such teaching before the brain is capable of reasoning, and hence his anxiety at the present time. The Church of England Synod have debated the momentous question with all the acrimony which is usually engendered when clergymen disagree. Their decision means that they would like to join hands with the Catholics if they dared. Of course, in such a conflict the Freethought Party is too valuable an ally to be offended, and so, for a time, we are to be let alone. This is to be regretted, because the inane maunderings and virulent vituperation of gentlemen of the Beg school do us more good than harm.

That a very considerable interest in the subject of Spiritualism exists in this city has been evidenced by the large attendance at the free lectures given under the auspices of the Psychological Society. It fell to my lot to "orate" on the last occasion, and notwithstanding that the night was wet and unpleasant, nearly every seat was filled. When I had finished, Mr. Cavanagh read to the audience an article from the *Newcastle Herald*, giving particulars of a "marvellous" seance with Baldwin, who is now running his show in the black country. I was asked to explain Baldwin's *modus operandi*; and this I did, I think, to the satisfaction of the audience. I see that some Spiritual journals still continue to assert that Baldwin is a medium. It is to be regretted that any such error should be made, for he travels on the assertion, and I feel sure would play to empty benches were it not for the general belief that some of his tricks are produced through supermundane agency.

I am informed that Dr. Slade proposes to return to Australia either at the latter end of this year or the beginning of next. We want mediums badly, and the

news will be welcome. By the way, could not something be done to induce Mrs. Ada Foye to visit us? Surely by united action a sufficiently tempting offer might be sent to that lady, who is perhaps the best test medium in the world; meanwhile it is as well to make it known that there is a wide field here for reliable mediums.

HAROLD W. H. STEPHEN.

Sydney, 21st Sept., 1879.

#### LECTURE AT BALLARAT.

COMMUNICATED.

MR. JAMES CURTIS, gave a lecture in the Art Room of the Academy of Music on the evening of August 28th, on "The Spiritualism of the Bible." The room was filled by an attentive and highly intelligent audience, who seemed to take a deep interest in the subject as viewed from the standpoint of the Bible. The synopsis of the lecture was rather a lengthy one, and was divided under various heads:—Man and Angel, Ministry of Angels, Spirit Writing, Trance, Spiritual Gifts, Healing, Levitation, Clairaudience, Clairvoyance and Circles.

The lecturer in introducing the subject, said, "Spiritualism is now barely a question of opinion, but of facts; if facts can be attested by human testimony, then is Spiritualism fully established, ten thousand times twofold. Yet, somehow one's education, and prejudices, and perhaps interests too, are opposed to the reception of Spiritualistic realities. It is difficult to believe that, the *Spiritual world is real*, and that the *kingdom of heaven is within us*."

Many of the opponents of Spiritualism, reason only from what they know themselves, and pay no regard to the knowledge of others. A large number make it a subject for sneering and ridicule. Others, have called it humbug and delusion, but when facts became too strong for them, they stated it to be the work of the devil. There were others, who stated that Spiritualism was not needed, the Bible alone being sufficient to assure us of our immortality. This, may be true with regard to some but with regard to the great bulk of men, even professing Christians, it is not true; The Bible does not convince them, they require something more, and that more may be found in the *absolute knowledge* of communion with spirits—individualities—of those who have left the earth life."

With a few other brief remarks, the lecture was then proceeded with according to the synopsis.

Under the heading of "Man and Angel," he showed that the Bible proved that angels were the spirits of disembodied human beings; and that the words spirit and angel, were often used interchangeably, and that the ancient patriarchs often thought that these spirits were the Lord God.

Under the heading of "Angel Ministry," Mr. Curtis again shewed the numerous cases of guidance recorded in the Bible, and also, his own personal experience, giving copious extracts of an interesting character from messages sent to himself from relatives and friends, through various mediums.

When speaking upon "Spirit Writing," he shewed that, this particular phase of the phenomena, was well-known to the ancients, and specially referred to in the Bible, in several different chapters. He also took occasion to make a few remarks on the wonderful power exhibited through the mediumship of Dr. Henry Slade, and the numerous tests he obtained through his (Dr. Slade's) peculiar gift.

When the lecturer came to the part of his subject under the heading of "Healing," the large audience became exceedingly interested, and upon his rehearsing some of the wonderful cures being effected by Zouave Jacob, in Paris, and Dr. J. R. Newton, in America, he was frequently interrupted by applause.

The lecture occupied about two hours, yet, the interest was maintained throughout, in concluding he gave the following quotation from Washington Irving:—"What could be more consoling than the idea that the souls of those whom we once loved were permitted to return and watch over our welfare? That affectionate

and guardian spirits sat at our pillows when we slept, keeping a vigil over our most helpless hours? That beauty and innocence which had languished into the tomb yet smiled unseen around us, revealing themselves in those blest dreams wherein we live over again the hours of past endearment? A belief of this kind would, I think be a new incentive to virtue, rendering us circumspect even in our secret moments, from the idea that those whom we once loved and honoured were invisible witnesses of all our actions."

A hearty vote of thanks was passed by the audience to the lecturer for his very able, well studied, and highly interesting lecture; and also to Mr. McConochie as chairman.

Lectures of the kind would do a very great amount of good in Ballarat, and now that one has taken the lead, it is to be hoped that others will follow suit.

### REVIEWS.

"REVUE SPIRITE," JOURNAL D'ETUDES PSYCHOLOGIQUES, PARIS. JANUARY TO JULY, 1879.

WE will make a few notes from this excellent and old-established journal, which, since its foundation by Allan Kardec, has appeared steadily each month for twenty-two years.

*The Prix Guérin.*—This prize, of 3000 francs, will be adjudicated in May next by the Société d'Etudes Psychologiques. The subject assigned for the essays is: "To seek what have been, through the ages and in all countries, the beliefs of peoples, of the founders of religions and of the great philosophers, on the existence of spirits, on the possibility of communicating with them, on the persistence of life after so-called death, and on a future life, whether upon this earth or on other worlds." Full particulars as to the terms of competition, etc., will be found in the *Revue* for July last.

*Spiritualism at the recent French International Exhibition.*—In order to afford accommodation to the many Spiritualists who were attracted to Paris by the Exhibition, and to give them opportunities of making acquaintance with their Parisian confrères and of exchanging views with them, spacious offices were taken near the Champ-de-Mars. They consisted of a large reading-room, conversation rooms, and a library; and there was also provision for the sale of Spiritualistic journals and books. Many visitors seem to have taken advantage of the arrangement, and it certainly must have been very convenient to strangers.

*Spiritualism in Algeria.*—The orthodox dove-cotes at Oran have been much fluttered lately by a series of singular phenomena that occurred in the family of the director of the communal school. They presented the character of spontaneous mediumship, and were of a class not very rare in America, though unusual elsewhere. The beginning was with breaking of crockery, for which various people were punished; "for who else," they said, "could have done it?" Then the furniture began to exhibit strange motions, then the neighbours were called in and witnessed the dance, then M. Miron, the victim, in his innocence reported the strange affair to the mayor. Then, we need hardly say, the trouble began. The police were at fault, twenty-four witnesses had certified to the movements in legal form, and it was quite time for the authorities to interfere. Pressure was put upon all who could be reached (for although France is a Republic, yet that does not prevent pressure being sometimes put upon citizens); a new report was drawn up, in which the humidity of the room played a chief part; and, finally, to preserve his place, poor M. Miron had to sign a certificate that all the proceeding was "une erreur des sens!"

LAZY LAYS AND PROSE IMAGININGS: BY WILLIAM H. HARRISON. LONDON. 1877.

THE holiday papers of Mr. Harrison are very pleasant reading. We are generally accused of having no sense of humour; certainly it does not abound with us, but we may triumphantly point to the fact that the grave editor

of the *Spiritualist* can enjoy a quiet laugh as well as any one. The restrained fun of the story of the mystic photographing of the Turkish visitor to London is very good; and the Lay of the Photographer, with its personifications of chemical re-agents, and its gentler poke at the wilder Vedic theorists, would raise a smile even from a Theosopher.

### SPIRITUAL JUBILEE.

MR. BURNS in the *Medium* of June 13th makes a suggestion for a Jubilee or Convention of Spiritualists in London, to review the work of the past decade, and utilize its lessons. The idea is a good one which if carried out thoroughly would undoubtedly be of great assistance to the progress of Spiritualism. One correspondent suggests (in connection with this subject) a Bazaar, and Mr. Burns' comments are so much in accord with our own ideas, that we reprint them:—

"I must, however, dissent from the proposition that a bazaar be held on behalf of this work. It is an exceedingly wasteful means of raising funds. A great amount of capital and labour are spent in producing worthless articles, a vast sum of money is expended in management, travelling to the bazaar, and in purchasing the goods; and at the close of the display, gambling and other reprehensible practices are had resort to, to wheedle money out of pockets which possibly cannot afford to yield it up. We must not do evil that good may come. If the spirit-world requires us to resort to such uneconomical and immoral practices, then our Movement is no better than the churches, and had better resign its trust into the keeping of the sects. Let us only spend one-third of the money intelligently in Spiritualism that would go into a bazaar, and far more good would be realised; for after all only a fraction of the actual outlay goes into the fund for which bazaars are held. Let us in our operations, conduct ourselves as Spiritualists, and not as gamblers and speculators, then our work will be aided by the spiritual heavens, and produce spiritual results on earth. Such aid has the Spiritual Institution received in the past, and such fruits have been the result of its operation amongst mankind. Let us then take counsel together as spiritual brethren, and see what the spiritual world wishes us to do, and what experiences it has bestowed on us to enable us to proceed in our work in the future. By doing so we shall no doubt be guided to greater things than have been bestowed upon us in the past."

"J. BURNS, O.S.T."

### A WELL-TESTED MANIFESTATION.

AT a recent *séance* at the house of Mrs. Makdougall Gregory, 21 Green-street, Grosvenor-square, London, in the presence of Mr. Eglinton and another non-professional medium, two chairs were threaded, at the same moment of time, upon the arms of two sitters, each of whom was then holding the hand of a medium. Mr. Serjeant Cox was holding the hand of Mr. Eglinton, and the back of the chair passed through his arm, giving him the sensation of a blow against the elbow when it did so. When a light was struck, the chair was seen hanging on Mr. Serjeant Cox's arm, and his hand was still grasping that of Mr. Eglinton. An immediate examination of the chair showed that the back of it was in good condition, with none of the woodwork loose or broken.—*Spiritualist*, June 27th, 1879.

### VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

THE Sunday meetings of the above association have been well attended during the last month. The essayists were Messrs. Veevers, Cunningham and Ross, and the subjects treated by them led on to interesting discussions, that of "Immortality" started by Mr. Veevers extending over two nights.

THE Melbourne Progressive Lyceum has been compelled to vacate Lowe's Rooms, that building having been sold for storage purposes. They have, however, secured the Horticultural Hall, Victoria Street, which is suitable in every respect except its distance from the railway stations. The first session will be held next Sunday at 11 A.M., when Mr. Deakin will give an address.



## SPIRITUAL ANSWERS TO INTELLECTUAL QUESTIONS.

BY A. J. DAVIS.

HUMAN nature asks questions from all departments of its organisation. Physical questions arise from bodily sensations, such as heat, cold, hunger, thirst, weakness, heaviness, wants, passions, appetites. Intellectual questions proceed from mental sensations, such as ignorance, curiosity, inquisitiveness, desire to know, ambition, pride, power. Affectional questions emanate from the sensations of the various loves—filial, fraternal, parental, conjugal and self-love—and the variety and number of the questions will exactly balance with the number and variety of the sensations of which these loves are susceptible. Spiritual questions spring like white-winged doves from the sensations awakened in the beautiful recesses of the superior faculties.

Now, it often happens that a person capable of both putting and understanding a profound intellectual question, is incapable of perceiving and comprehending a spiritual answer; because of his inharmonial development—giving him, perhaps, a superior intellectual grasp and power, while he may be blank and stone-blind in the spiritual faculties. This rule is equally and invariably applicable to all other parts of human nature. Nothing can be more unsatisfying, for example, than an intellectual answer to a question which took its rise from among the spiritual faculties. Questions signify the fleeting wants, or the deep-seated desires, or the absolute necessities, of that portion of the human organization from which they emanated. Much of the bitter animosities, and senseless quibbles, and cruel persecutions in the sad tragedies of human history, is attributable to this one cause, namely: to misunderstandings arising from the fact that questions were asked by one set of faculties and answered (perhaps, correctly) by another set of faculties, in which the questioners were undeveloped, and therefore deficient.

The intellect requires argument, illustration, facts: the spiritual faculties only need clear affirmation and virtue (or truth.) If you would make progress in the ways of truth and wholeness (or holiness), you should learn to discriminate between the sources of questions and the sources of their answers. When the old Roman official put to the spiritual Nazarene the intellectual question, "What is truth?" he was not answered intellectually, because the divine young reformer well understood that the intellect is not capable of comprehending the truths of the immortal spirit, which speaks, and hears, and sees only from the coronal portions of the human mind, so that the old saying that "spiritual things are spiritually discerned," is as true as ever; and not less so is the ancient record of "everything after its kind."

Among a swarm of questions buzzing in letters received during the past year, I find the following:—

What is Clairvoyance?

Ans: The sight of the internal eye, which is opened on the removal or subjection of the bodily organs; which can be accomplished either by death or by the profound magnetic slumber.

How do spirits converse?

Ans.: Vocal discourse is an invention of the intellect. Speech is spiritual only when it flows from the motions and emotions of the inmost. For these there are no possible sounds, no written language.

Do spirits breathe?

Ans.: Flux and influx, or respiration and pulsation, are modes of life in the spirit.

What is the Resurrection?

Ans.: The rising of the spirit above the body. This experience is certain at death; but, to the spiritually pure, this exaltation may occur during the terrestrial journey.

How do spirits eat?

Ans.: They eat and drink not with their teeth and throat, but by inhalation, respiration and absorption; as you hear the soul of music and feel the beauty of the beautiful.

Is memory immortal?

Ans.: The recollection of physical sensations is perishable; imperishable memories are *changes* that occurred in the progress of spirit.

What is the Summer-land?

Ans.: The heaven where springtime and harvest-abundance are perpetual. It encircles and outshines an immensity of inhabited worlds; each of which is a spiritual vestibule to the infinite temple "not made with hands."

What is the earth?

Ans.: An earth is a planet where the immortal essence of spirit first permanently receives the "image and likeness" of the Infinite Parents.

What is truth?

Ans.: Truth is the immutable and eternal integrity of the Infinite Parents. He who lives and speaks in harmony with this integrity, lives and speaks in unity with the unchangeable will and love of God.

Who are the Infinite Parents?

Ans.: The infinite wisdom is called "God," and the infinite love is called "Nature."

What, then, is matter?

Ans.: Material substance is the outmost and slowest expression or condition of spirit.

What is spirit?

Ans.: Spirit is the name we give to the highest and most sublime expression or condition of substance.

What is life?

Ans.: When the immortal essence begins to clothe itself with the first forms of animation, we call it "life."

What is love?

Ans.: Love is the perfect flower of life. It is superior to life because it is conscious of its own consciousness.

Can love control itself?

Ans.: Yes; because wisdom is the perfect flower of love. Whatever is conscious of itself is capable of self-government.

How does a spirit appear?

Ans.: Invariably a spirit appears in the human form, but with a face and in habiliments exactly indicative of the condition and state of the affections.

Can a spirit deceive?

Ans.: A true and pure spirit cannot. But the fine arts, as well as the magical arts of psychological psychometry, are practised by certain intellectual spirits upon their susceptible fellows on earth.

Is spirit intercourse beneficial?

Ans.: Yes, when it is maintained upon a pure, unselfish basis. Nothing can be more productive of injury when it is sought for the promotion of worldly advantages. The penalty may be tardy in coming, but it is sure to fall upon the evil doer.

What is selfishness?

Ans.: That which promotes your personal power and welfare at the expense of the rightful possessions of your fellows.

Is it selfish to seek development?

Ans.: No; for an improvement of your condition is a benefit conferred upon mankind; and, especially, it is a kindness bestowed upon all who associate or have dealings with you.

Who are true Spiritualists?

Ans.: They who seek first the kingdom of truth that is in the spirit.

Who are the materialists in Spiritualism?

Ans.: They who seek the wonderful demonstrations,

which performing spirits and their mediums are fond of exhibiting.

Do you oppose these demonstrations?

Ans.: No; that is when they are sought as *proofs* of a natural human life after death.

Do people seek them for any other purpose?

Ans.: Yes; thousands of people who were long since delivered from all doubt concerning immortality, continue these materializing circles as a sort of religious amusement.

What is the penalty?

Ans.: These spiritualistic triflers are punished, at last by encountering deceptions and perplexing tricks enough to cause them to *lose all* their delightful faith. In the end, therefore, all their so-styled "positive knowledge" concerning immortality, slips away like the quicksand that was under the great house by the sea.

How shall we become spiritual?

Ans.: By seeking wisdom concerning eternal principles; and by living in harmony with such principles.

What are eternal principles?

Ans.: Truth, Love, Justice, Beauty, Liberty, Growth—these are principles, and the fruition of principles, which would overcome all evil and fill the world with joy, peace, happiness.—*Religio-Philosophical Journal*.

—o—

The *Independent Age*, published at Ohio, U.S.A., is a liberal paper, which opens its columns to the discussion and reports of Spiritualistic matters. In the issue of July 5th, we observe a favourable critique of the *Harbinger of Light*, and quotation from one of our leading articles. We are glad to find Australian Spiritualism attracting attention in distant parts of the world; the interchange of thought and experiences is mutually beneficial.

The same paper, commenting on Mr. Kiddle's recent book, rebukes some of his critics in the Spiritualistic press for their uncharitableness, and extends a sympathizing hand to that gentleman, who it says "has sacrificed his position in the public schools of New York, as well as many friends," for the cause of truth. We have not received Mr. Kiddle's book yet, but shall review it as soon as we do.

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