

THE Harbinger of Light.

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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CONSIDERABLE difference of opinion exists as to the relative value of various kinds of mediumship as evidence of the truths of Spiritualism. To some extent this must ever be the case owing to the different idiosyncracies of the investigators, the variations of tone in the perceptive faculties compelling conviction through the impressibility of a certain range in one, by phenomena which in another equally intelligent but differently constituted mind would make no serious impression, and *vice versa*. Still taking the aggregate of intelligent humanity, we find by experience and comparison that certain classes of phenomena impress more permanently and beneficially the minds of those who come in contact with them, and at the same time are more telling as illustrative evidences to friends with whom they may converse. We have always held that some knowledge of the philosophy of Spiritualism, and an appreciation of the utility of a future life were, if not essential, at least an appropriate preparation for the investigation of the phenomena pertaining to it. There are numbers of individuals who admit that peculiar and inexplicable phenomena does occur, but refuse to accept the affirmation that such phenomena are caused by disembodied human spirits, and hence the test demanded by them as well as by others more favourably disposed to the Spiritual theory is, proof of spirit identity. The materialization of a form recognised as the counterpart of one we have known in the body, is perhaps one of the most tangible and satisfactory evidences that could be desired, and calculated to carry conviction, provided the recognition was perfect, to the most sceptical mind, but unfortunately such complete test materializations are rare, and only accessible to the few, whilst without a recognition however satisfactory the materializations may be to those who witness them their evidence to others is of little weight, partly from the incredible

nature of the phenomena to those who are ignorant of its philosophy, and partly from the many successful imitations of it by mock mediums and conjurers. Even the marvellous physical and other manifestations that occurred in the presence of Dr. Slade, failed as a rule to convince sceptics, unless accompanied by some test of identity from a departed friend or relative. The class of media who bring spirit identity home to the enquirer and supply him with incontrovertible facts to stagger the incredulity of their friends in the body, are those of the stamp of Charles Foster, J. V. Mansfield, N. F. Baxter and Mrs. Foye of San Francisco. Three of these by their power of discerning spirits accurately, describe them and repeat messages from them to their enquiring friends, whilst the fourth J. V. Mansfield, obtains answers to sealed letters addressed to those who have passed beyond the veil, many of which are undoubted tests of identity, and indeed so successful has he been in this respect that he has earned the sobriquet of the "Spiritual Postman." Though absolute test mediums of this class are extremely rare, incidental tests of identity are not uncommon in private circles, and even in Melbourne at the present time are frequently obtained. A rudimentary circle formed on a right basis rarely fails when communication is once opened, in obtaining evidences of the identity of at least some of the communicating intelligences, but often by straining their powers in this direction to satisfy curious friends, fail to get the evidences for others. The medium par excellence through whom spirits can demonstrate their identity unmistakably is born such, watched, and in due time developed by spirits, for these individuals are ever in a kind of rapport with the spirit world, and will be found on enquiry to have been subject to visions or peculiar influences from their childhood. There are others, however, who have a latent power in this direction which may be developed to a degree of excellence sometimes approaching that of the born medium, by application and the impartation of magnetism. We deprecate anything obtrusive in connection with Spiritualism and hence give less prominence to the more sensational phenomena, principally on account of the drawbacks connected with it which we have before alluded to, and not that we undervalue it in itself. We realize, however, the necessity in connection with all

physical phenomena of the strictest test conditions, not meaning by this the submission of the medium to any condition the rabid sceptic or pseudo scientific investigator may choose to impose, but such as while not conflicting with the conditions essential to the production of the phenomena shall afford a guarantee to the public that such phenomena could not possibly be the result of physical agencies. Though this might limit the number of manifestations, it would materially increase their value, for every one obtained under such conditions would be of infinitely more worth than ten occurring under conditions which left one single loophole for fraud or trickery to enter in.

There is undoubtedly an opening for a good test or physical medium in Victoria at the present time, failing the development of local gifts in this direction we shall take early steps to encourage some really reliable medium to visit this city, and should we be successful in our efforts, shall do our utmost to bring the medium to the conditions we have suggested, that whatever phenomena occur may have a standard value.

WISE WORDS FROM SWEDENBORG.

[CONTINUED.]

56. I must now speak a little in reference to a source of knowledge of God, which I enforced in such a very prominent manner during my earth life, and in connection with which, I laid down the lines of my doctrinal theology. I refer to the Bible, not the Bible, however, as you possess it, but in a more limited and discriminate form, and which I denominated the *Divine Word*, because, I understood at that time, that in its utterances, yea in its very words, there dwelt the mind of God, expressed both in a literal and spiritual sense; and that this divine word was the medium also of instruction to men in the spiritual world as well as the natural world. 57. Having arrived at this conclusion, I proceeded, according to the wisdom given me, to apply a key to open its teachings, and which I denominated the science of correspondence; no new idea really, but one which had been conceived in the ancient times; indeed, the most natural and earliest method to interpret the secret things of the universe by the outward manifestation of nature. I here found a wide scope for that imaginative faculty which I possessed, and taking those parts of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures then in use, which I conceived were in an especial manner sacred and pregnant with a hidden meaning, I drew therefrom the views which I enunciated to the world in my theological writings; and from the doctrine of God, which lay at the very base of all the rest, I built up the several parts which followed. 58. It must be admitted that, in drawing from the storehouse of my own knowledge, I laboured under a very grave disadvantage. Advanced as I was in the knowledge of many things relating more particularly to man and nature, I was yet very far behind the knowledge which is possessed now by men on the earth in relation to these things; and was thus misled in many of my conclusions as the result of imperfect premises on which to build. 59. You may perhaps feel inclined to ask the question, how this could be, seeing that I professed to be under the direct teaching of the LORD HIMSELF, and in continuous intercourse with the spiritual and celestial states; but that question is easily answered, for it is a fact that, only in the degree of man's mental and spiritual attainments, can he receive truths or understand the great conclusions arising therefrom. So was it with me; I had educated myself up to a certain standard, and on that basis, I exercised my seership, and taught men in accordance with my knowledge of things. Hence it is utterly impossible for any man to rise beyond a certain level at any particular period of his history; and that level will

always be graduated by the progress attained; otherwise, there would be an end to personal progress and growth and to that orderly advance which the Diety Himself has established. Had I, in the days of my sojourn on earth, been as fully enlightened as I am now, or possessed the advantages which scientific men and others enjoy now on the earth plane, I should have seen that however apparently beautiful and striking my ideas were, they were not built on a firm foundation; for while I insisted that the Bible was truth in every particular thereof, I should have known that it was but the formulated opinion of thoughtful men of all ages struggling to attain to a distinct conception of the things which pertained to the universe and to themselves; and that even then, their conclusions were drawn in such a form as to afford them rather a poetical or allegorical lesson book, rather than a direct and positive history of events to which indeed it was utterly impossible for them to attain; for who can pretend to penetrate the past, or to search into the recesses of the Infinite Wisdom of God. 60. I will now candidly admit that, I was misled in the course I pursued from the very fact that, I never questioned the authenticity of the Bible, but accepted it most unreservedly as the absolute truth of the Divine Being whom I revered, and whom I desired in a more rational manner to reveal to my fellow men. There is, as I have remarked, but one unerring book of Divine revelation, Nature, in all its wonderful manifestations; and its still more wonderful epitome, Man; for in him there centres all the elements which go to make up nature. And, thus, as I have said, you must study nature and your own being, that you may arrive at that knowledge of God which is so desirable and important to the interests of an intelligent race that it may thus rise in the scale of being, and come nearer to Him who is its author, sustainer and director. 61. But before I proceed to other considerations, I will just indicate my estimate of the Bible, and thus give you a clue to the use you may make of it as a sacred book. I call it sacred, as I would any other book of its class, because it has been so long connected with the essential religious life of man. Other nations in the remote past, have had their sacred books; and also at the present day, there are millions of your fellow men to whom the Bible is a despised book, considered in much the same light by them as their sacred books are esteemed by you. Both the Bible, then, as well as these other books are full of wise and loving thought, and contain much that any thoughtful mind may profit by when carefully and discriminately read and pondered. These books are vast reservoirs into which you may cast your net, and draw from thence, the precious things of the deep; but having done so, like the man in the evangelistic narrative, you will sit down and select the appropriate to your necessities, while you will cast the remainder aside as either unfit or useless to you. I would beg of you to despise no source of knowledge, but rather to try the character of the thoughts thus embodied; and then, to act accordingly in regard to them. Thus, you will become like unto a merchantman, who traversing the wide fields of mental possession which have been preserved, will buy of those who have to sell, exchanging your own precious things for the equally valuable things of others, and while profiting others, receive into your own soul, the strength to gain still higher planes of thought, and richer experience of practical attainments. 62. And, thus, in stepping up the ladder of progress, you will become more self possessed; and in that very achievement, gain the means to sound the depths of the universe more fully, wherein you will find the footprints of the great I am; and, the ever present God will become to you the magnet which shall have the effect of drawing out your own soul to the surface that you may know it as well. And, when God and the soul are face to face, then will you be enabled to say, in language imputed to Jesus: I and my Father are one; the sublime consummation after which all harmonious souls strive. 63. I must now turn your thoughts to some of these considerations which arise out of the being of God; for it is thus we are naturally led up to the consideration of the soul which mirrors nature in all its fulness. The laws f,

production, reproduction, and orderly government; the sinews, muscles, and nerve so to speak of a manifested God proceeding from the Most High, the spiritual sun, radiates through the vast realms of space, wherein are to be found the objective forms of nature. It is here you behold that Divine order by which all things are regulated, and under the way of which they perform their allotted functions. 64. The study of natural science which is so attractive a pursuit to the man of education, and in which I found so much delight ere I commenced to devote my attention more particularly to theology, does not attain more than its merest infancy in the earth sphere. Men of science of your day, imagine that they have made great advance beyond the attainments of ancient students; but that advance is found more in the *form* than in the *result*; and until the human mind has advanced considerably further, and becomes possessed of such as are needful to climb the steep of knowledge, it will not get beyond the most elementary degree of attainments. It matters not in what department of natural science you may work, the entire round, the one vast universe is only to be reached, when the supremacy of the soul is recognised, and the powers therein stored up are brought out and practically put to use. Men of science of the present day, in your earth state, are continually racking their brains to find out how they may best adapt instruments to enable their senses to act as conductors between the near and the remote, the seen and the unseen. This of itself, is a proof of the elementary condition, both of their growth, and the ideas by which they are animated, and does but at the best foreshadow a much higher order of things wherein the power of the soul, recognised and developed, shall take the place of those external means referred to. Then, when man can command the spiritual vision which shall reach the orbs of the universe, and examine their characteristics; when he can by the exercise of his spiritual perception weigh the soul of things which underlies nature; and, thus, in the consideration of her secrets, become alive to the ends designed in this vast machinery; will he begin to feel that he is progressing in the department of natural science; and, when, moreover, he finds the clue, and which is hidden in the depths of his spiritual nature, to enter more fully on communion with his fellow beings scattered through the universe; then also will he begin to recognise the grandeur of that existence which an Infinite and Incomprehensible Being has bestowed upon him. As well might you proceed to make the contrast between the small dust under your feet, and the flight of the mightiest eagle which soars in space, as to dwell upon what you are now at the highest and best, and what you may become under the circumstances which I have thus referred to; the difference in degree, and the space to be traversed in order of progression, between the dust and the eagle, might be estimated; but that between your present and future can only be known in the order of experience, seeing that at this moment, it is not given to man to know to what height he may rise, but only as the result of growth in accordance with natural laws. 65. Hence you can perceive the course I would have you pursue in the study of that wondrous nature which is spread out all around you. From its surface you must penetrate into its most secret recesses, and learn to do this for the express purpose of reaching that knowledge of your soul, the knowledge of which is next in importance to the knowledge of God, from whom all souls proceed. 66. To be able to treat of external forms as these comprise the objective elements of the universe, one must possess a vast and varied knowledge, inasmuch as these forms, although reducible to simple elements, present such a variety of detail. An accurate knowledge of physiology, of botany, or astronomy, or any of the other branches of science, would imply not only long study, but great discernment of the elements of which these varied phases of science are made up; and it is wonderful to the thinking man, how broad is that plane on which are scattered these discoveries of Divine Wisdom all originating and flowing forth from the force, the energy, the creative power of the Divine Love. Starting from that centre, you can never by any possibility reach the circumference although you may pursue your enquiries

through the ages of eternity. So also, if you take your departure from any given point within the circumference, and return to the centre, you could never penetrate to that secret recess where, unveiled, the Divine glory burns in all its bright effulgence. 67. Consequently, the discovery of the soul, as to its proper essence, is equally as impossible. You cannot reach the centre of your own being any more than you can the centre of that creative love, which gives birth to all things. I am notwithstanding, however, to treat somewhat of the soul; to endeavour to awaken within your mind, the important conviction that soul is, and that while it must of necessity proceed from the Infinite, has a personality; and a destiny; a present work; and in this destiny, a vast and unending career of use which is closely allied to, and part of the purpose of the Infinite Will itself. 68. Now as I have pointed out, to know God you must understand His Works, His manifested purpose; so, to know the soul, you must understand the operations whereby that soul makes itself known. And when we admit this, how vast a field of research is at once spread open before us. Wonderful as are the ways of God in Nature, can we say that the ways of man are less so, since these are parts of His ways who is the Supreme Lord of the Universe. The very anatomy of the human frame when examined, is so marvellously wonderful in its construction, that anatomists have bowed in reverence before it, and expended the energies of their intellect in the endeavour to explain its details. But did it ever occur to you, that the author of this wonderful body, the workman endowed with Divine gifts thus to produce such a display of intricate harmony in the adjustment of all its parts in their varied adaptation to the ends contemplated, is the soul itself. And yet such is the case; that divine essence, which lies in the foundation of your own personality, and whereby are accomplished the achievements ordinarily imputed immediately to God Himself. 69. But in addition to this, reflect further, that the mind of man, that plane upon which the soul performs its varied functions, is also the product of that soul. Consequently, when you can conceive of the nature of the physical, and of the mental, with all their necessary uses and ramifications as means to an end, then you have acquired some knowledge of the soul; and when further, you have investigated the uses of the physical and the mental, and are so far master of your own movements, then also, will the nature of the soul be somewhat opened to your contemplation. 70. The great difficulty with man is, to overcome the fact, that he is, in his proper essence, a mystery to himself. Why cannot I fully understand the nature of my own being? Why not grasp all the circumstances of my existence, and separating myself as a unit of the universe from all else, view myself as I am, thus understanding fully who and what I am? Simply, because, as I have remarked, you can never reach the centre of your being, any more than you can reach the centre of the universe. Knowledge of soul, like the knowledge of God, or any of His Works, is a progressive acquirement; but to reach its fullest extent is quite impossible, any more than it is possible to give a reason for all the intricate operations of daily life. 71. I might illustrate this somewhat by a reference to the opening pages of that Book, which in my earthly days I entitled the "Divine Word." In it, you have set forth the order of creation, never intended to be understood in a literal sense, but notwithstanding, full of a sublime spiritual meaning. Here you have a progressive account of the proceedings whereby God produced the external manifestations of His Will. Starting from the profound abyss from which all things proceed, your attention is taken up by the objective forms, and apparatus of external creation until you reach the other pole of that mysterious Force which has culminated in man himself. Thus you have the two boundary lines, so to speak, of the unknown and the unknowable. You retrace your steps towards the starting point, and then your progress is arrested with that unanswerable enquiry: "Who and what is God." You return along the magnetic line, and again you are opposed by the equally unanswerable enquiry: "What is soul." Thus you have your boundary marked out for

You, and within which you must pursue your enquiry, gathering knowledge of results, but ever failing to arrive at the essential causation, whether that be considered in relation to God, or the soul of man.

Marnias Meti.

H. J. B.

Melbourne, February, 1880.

A SPIRIT'S NARRATIVE.

(CONTINUED.)

I SHALL not easily forget my first visit to earth after having been informed that it was possible to return thither. Suffice it to say that this knowledge brought with it ecstatic joy; for, though many loved ones had preceded me, there still remained on earth those who were very dear.

True, I was unable to communicate with them as I do with you, still upon them I impressed my mind to such an extent that they felt my presence. Thus could I again do good, guarding from evil and leading to the higher way.

A passionate desire that filled my soul on earth was an anxiety to banish physical suffering. I never could endure to see the smallest insect in pain; and through impressing others, I have been successful, in some slight degree, in relieving suffering humanity. Much more do I hope to do. And, please to understand, when I say I helped to do it, it is not as a *unit*, but in conjunction with many more who are like minded, for we all work together for the reformation of our brethren still in the flesh. We would reduce pain to a minimum and raise health to its maximum; for without sound bodies there can be no sound minds. Physical suffering acts as a great deterrent to spiritual control, hence to have good mediums we must have *mens sana in corpore sana*.

One of my favourite amusements was the cultivation of flowers and the study of botany. I have now a far clearer insight into the various properties of herbs and flowers than I ever had whilst walking the earth. Here too, I am surrounded with beautiful plants, the emanations from which are soul-reviving.

Far away have I taken my flight amid the planets of the galaxy or milky way. At each visit my adoration increased on beholding wonders ever fresh and new. No two planets alike, and on some the inhabitants have attained a condition of beatitude; no wars nor rumours of wars; no strife or contention. Slowly but surely will earth and her inhabitants attain to the same condition in obedience to the great law of progress which ruleth everywhere.

The fauna and flora too of these planets that I have visited are altogether superior to anything upon earth. Words would fail me to describe their beauties! Nor could the most vivid imagination form any idea of the feathered songsters of the wood.

The more I have seen and observed in other worlds the more pitiable seemed the story that still holds in bondage so many minds on earth. 'Tis ignorance that makes man credulous, or the story of the God Son could never be accepted.

The great motive power, designated by mortals as God, that keepeth the myriads of systems that fill the universe in their places, is a power beyond mortal ken, but a power that must ever excite our adoration in proportion to the knowledge we have of His works. I use the personal pronoun here advisedly; that which forms, being positive or masculine; the thing formed, being negative or feminine; the two together making one grand whole—nature and nature's God.

If I tell you that I am a member of various Societies, each having for its end the cultivation of a certain branch of science, what more can I do? You cannot follow with me, inasmuch as you would feel perplexed if asked to follow, step by step, the students of analogous societies on earth, although those societies are still in the cradle.

Were you to ask me if I still worshiped? I would answer, "Yea a thousandfold more earnestly than when upon earth."

True worship consists in loving the works of the maker and in striving to understand Him. Do you ask

if ever I am weary? I answer, "No, 'tis the flesh, the outward covering, that brings weariness." Have I not all that delights? the company of those I love, and all my soul's longings gratified? What more could mortal wish for on earth, if ye could lay your animal nature on one side as I have done. What fresh note can I strike that shall reach your sympathies? It is of no use to speak over your heads, ye must understand. Remember I must come down to you, for ye are not as yet prepared to rise with me. Metaphorically speaking, the rays of the sun descend, piercing your atmosphere, but ye cannot follow those rays back to their source. There are those who in spiritual things, as in things material are mere *quid nuncs*, ever seeking for something new without turning to any good account what they already possess. To gratify merely idle curiosity is not my motive for turning earthwards. Let those who possess only one grain of seed cultivate it, that it may become more abundant. There can be no spiritual growth without cultivation. Cultivate also that ye may be able to bestow, for how can ye give if ye possess not? How can ye reap if ye do not sow? See then that ye act wisely, then when the heavens are opened ye shall be found prepared for that spiritual influx which giveth the increase. K.

Castlemaine.

Our Correspondents.

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

[Several Contributions held over for want of space.]

TEST MEDIUMSHIP.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "HARBINGER OF LIGHT."

DEAR SIR,—For many months I have been a constant reader of your valuable paper, and also of as much Spiritual literature as I have been enabled to procure which has been considerable, but as yet I have been so unfortunate as to be unable to witness any of the phenomena I have read so much about, and in which I have placed a great deal of faith.

I have a longing desire to get some personal test as to its truth, not so much to dispel doubt on my own part, as a help in argument in which I am almost daily engaged on the subject of Spiritualism.

Do you think it is possible for me to obtain such a test? I am so placed as to be unable to visit any of the Melbourne Mediums or to form a circle, as I am surrounded by those who think the subject is of the Devil. Trusting you will be able to help one who is anxiously seeking after the truth,—I am, &c.,

EARNEST INVESTIGATOR.

[We are not aware at present of any reliable test medium here who is accessible to our correspondent. Very striking tests were obtained through the mediumships of Charles Foster and Henry Slade when in this city, and more recently through a lady, who has retired from public mediumship. Good tests are sometimes obtained through mediums at a distance, by sending sealed letters addressed to friends in the spirit world. See *Harbinger of Light*, January, 1880.

There is a want of a good test medium here at present and possibly ere long the demand will bring the necessary supply. Ed. H. of Lt.

At the Monthly Committee Meeting of the Association a letter from Mr. von Alkemade, resigning the Secretaryship, was received and accepted with regret. A resolution, expressing the appreciation of the committee of Mr. Alkemade's services to the Association, was carried unanimously.

We are in receipt of advance sheets of a paper read before the British National Association of Spiritualists, Jan. 26th, by M. A. (Oxon.) entitled the "Present Position and Future Needs of Spiritualism in England." Pressure of space would prevent our doing it justice in this issue, we shall review it in our next.

MEDIUMS AND MEDIUMSHIP.

(From *London Spiritualist*.)

LAST Monday night at a well-attended meeting of the Dalston Association of Inquirers into Spiritualism, 53 Sigdon-road, Dalston, London, Mr. W. Eglinton, the medium, read the following paper upon "Mediums and Mediumship." The Rev. W. Miall, presided.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN.—In choosing the subject of "Mediums and Mediumship" for my paper, I had in mind my somewhat extended experience, and felt more confident that I could better give a decided opinion in regard to it than I could to anything else that pertains to our movement. But independently of any opinion or experience of my own, the subject of "Mediumship and Mediums" is one of the most important which could be considered by the movement at large; that is to say, if we as Spiritualists desire to place our cause on a footing which, by its sound constitution and basis, shall establish it above attacks from the world at large. This I think all true Spiritualists desire, and it is why I say that mediumship is the most important subject the movement should be called upon to consider, and that I ask you, as a humble worker in your midst, to place the mediums where they should be—in their right place in our ranks. However much some so called Spiritualists may deny it, it is none the less a fact that a medium stands in very much the same position to our cause as does the pilot to a ship in dangerous waters. The analogy, I think, is not so widely different, because as the pilot is necessary to the safety and success of our commerce by sea, so is a medium indispensable to the success of our cause. Spiritualism may have a philosophy, and a beautiful one it would be, no doubt, if rightly considered and taught; but as no organisation has ever been made to place the philosophy in any favourable light before the public, so as to gain adherents without the manifestations, it is plain, then, that a medium is the mainspring and support of the whole movement. Mediumship of to-day is, perhaps, the influx of a genius as great, if not greater, than was ever before evidenced in the world's history. It came to the people of the nineteenth century as a light in the darkness, the herald of a new truth. I do not feel, in the light of all that has been accomplished during the past thirty years, that I shall be considered at all extravagant if I say that, thirty years ago, in the hands of a few unlettered and inexperienced people, called mediums, depended the fate of a nation, if not a world's progress. Simultaneously with the first medial expression which heralded the advent of modern Spiritualism, came a wave of advanced thought that has plainly and unmistakably marked itself in every detail of modern life. Valuable discoveries and liberal sentiment have followed every new development of mediumship in modern Spiritualism.

Who and what are mediums? Thirty years ago, in a little almost undiscovered town, the first tiny rap was heard, which, increasing in power, soon became recognised in all quarters of the habitable globe, and led to the development of that peculiarly offensive and modern body called "mediums." These raps a man of mark has called, and very justly so, I think, the "alphabet of immortality." One would have supposed the most intellectual people would have been chosen to place so startling a truth before the world in its best light. In many private circles this was the case; but the spirit-world seemed to choose as best adapted to do this work, those who were born in the humble sphere of life, probably knowing that in the age in which we live self-sacrifice would be so small on the part of those who have material means at their command, that those only without adequate opportunities of keeping themselves were chosen for the spirits' mission. And how were these mediums and their mediumship received when their marvellous power first became known to the world? The people were as unreasonable in their treatment of them as they were afterwards unjust. Mediums were simply perfection—good, wise and moral: all words spoken through them being infallible, and, for the time being, they were worshipped. Every fault which they evinced was credited to bad spirits, and the

good traits accounted for by the presence of good guardians! In those days the perfection of belief in both spirits and mediums may be best shown by the fact that the sitters at one circle were actually sent for skunk's grease to better the manifestations! and I have it on good authority that this whimsical nonsense was actually complied with. Any one knowing anything of skunks and spiritual conditions, will best understand how the two could agree. While this is very ridiculous, have we not examples correspondingly ridiculous inside the Catholic Church? Far be it from me to underrate the religious devotion and enthusiasm of any class of religionists; but to those who believe in works instead of words, and example more than precept, the wearing of hair shirts, pebbles in one's stockings, or the hair cut so close to one's head that it is absolutely painful, is quite as nonsensical as being sent by spirits to search for skunk's grease as an auxiliary to spiritual manifestations. As time rolled on, and as people investigated more clearly, they fortunately found out their mistake. As one extreme always follows another, the mediums, instead of remaining on a pedestal, were correspondingly reduced. The tide then turned against them. From being wholesale and perfect believers in all purporting to come from the spiritual world, the majority of Spiritualists turned into critical investigators, and received every word and manifestation with suspicion. So strongly was this marked, that for a medium to sit in a circle in those days was simply impossible. Seeds of doubt and distrust always brings forth unripe fruit. In the midst of this atmosphere, what wonder the mediums, instead of reaching the position for which they were at first destined, took their naturally appointed place with the rest of human beings; for be it understood the mediums do eat and drink. Unfortunately, on New Year's Day the same material requirements of mediums are evidenced, and grocers and bakers have to be patronised by them as well as by the rest of God's children. Between these two extremes, what position do mediums occupy at the present day? Unfortunately, the aim of many, and perhaps justly so, is to use the great gift which has been placed in their keeping for personal glory and gain. It is only in a very small minority of cases that a man or a woman steps out into the world and sacrifices himself to use his best gifts for the sake of the people in it. Possibly the reason may be that the mediums have not yet fully realised the real divinity of their mission; and possibly it is that instances of self-sacrifice, and self-surrender have been too rare among all the artists of the world to have been readily imitated. Have any of our great men gone into the world as our mediums have done, without money and without price? . . . Perhaps the greatest misfortune which could have come to Spiritualists, and certainly to mediums, is the apparent dishonesty pervading their ranks. Far be it from me to deny or gloss over the real dishonesty of many professing to be mediums, but lacking the real genius; and others possessing the real genius, but lacking the moral courage to be at all times, and at whatever sacrifice, true to the high gifts entrusted to their keeping. Another charge, and perhaps a just one, reflects upon the moral character and standing of mediums. Again I am obliged to say that in some instances this may be true. Perhaps there is one item of credit to be attached to mediums in the midst of all this blame, and that is that their faults, although they may be many, are upon the surface. As a class, they either lack the policy or the hypocrisy to conceal their sins: consequently, standing as they do with all their weaknesses fully revealed, they present a much more hideous appearance in society than many worse men, who are simply content with presenting a moral exterior, while the inner fabrics of their moral nature may be pierced with many rents. Granted the assumption that mediums, as a class, are more immoral than any other class in society, are there not many reasons why they should be so, aside from the theory of natural depravity? In the first place, mediums are subjected to temptations of a quantity and quality that the unmediatic can never conceive; secondly, by nature they are as open to temptation as to spiritual impressions, and as a

result, the fall of mediums is due more to exterior conditions than to any interior weakness. "But how," asks the intelligent Spiritualist, "can the frequent exposures among even our best mediums be accounted for? In the religious world, or in any other movement outside Spiritualism, if a man is once found deceiving he is considered for ever after untrustworthy. Why should not the same rule apply to mediums?" Genuine impostures are as true as genuine manifestations. Now why is all this? Of course mediums are not infallible. There was a Judas among the olden twelve, and it is not unlikely that Judas is among the apostles of the new faith. But what is the attitude of Spiritualists towards mediums? What have they, as a body, done to remedy this existing evil? In other movements each representative of art, science, or religion has previously been trained, educated, and qualified for the position he has assumed or occupies. Every clergyman is first tutored for his future office. Institutions of education to promote the propagation of every subject pertaining to the welfare of the human race are open for instruction, and, when properly qualified, his work is concisely marked out for him, and representative men and women stand as his supporters. How is it with mediums? A person, perhaps entirely unlettered and inexperienced, is chosen from the ranks of the people to occupy a far greater position of trust and honour than that occupied by any clergyman of the present day; and, instead of having a class of representative men and women to support and assist him, the ordinary medium is surrounded by a class of marvel-hunters, with now and then one or two true and faithful souls, from whom alone he derives courage and support. Mediumship has never yet been placed upon its merits, neither have mediums ever occupied their true position, either in society or among Spiritualists.

Now, the medium is investigated instead of his mediumship, and the strength of ropes, tapes, and sealing-wax is tested instead of the spirits. Mediums of to-day are the inspired children of the movement; and until they have better parents, truer guardians and nobler examples placed before them, the great human cry of humbug, imposture, and immorality among mediums will never be silenced. The majority of Spiritualists now look upon mediums more as "thieves of the night," ordinary jugglers, and people whose only intent is to deceive and delude, when as children, subject only to the same weaknesses as ordinary mortals, their real desire is, to the best of their ability, to express or develop a gift, the magnitude and power of which they themselves as yet neither understand nor appreciate. Not until Spiritualists, as Spiritualists, look upon mediumship as the only channel through which they can obtain certain proof of continued and higher existence, and not until they regard mediums, frail, weak, and human as they are, as the only instruments through which God at present can reveal His will unto the people, will the proper attitude be manifested by Spiritualists towards them, and the fruitful results of mediumship be revealed. Every medium should understand that the cause is always first, and he afterward. He should understand the duties of his position so well that it is neither necessary nor possible for a sceptic to dictate to him what the spirits shall do through his mediumship, or how they are to do it.

Perhaps at this juncture it may not be inopportune for me to cite a little personal experience that will be at once laughable and possibly valuable. I am presented to a company as a medium, and I am kindly asked by the hostess how I should best like to sit. Should there by chance be sceptics in the room, it is at once assumed that the persons of my choice, whom I select to sit next me, are my confederates; therefore no other course is left me but to answer the question by "Wherever you will." Naturally the person to whom I give a seance is pleased to put me between the two greatest sceptics in the room. The places are occupied, and then comes an injunction from the host or hostess to the two sceptics to be "sure that you hold the medium's hands tightly." After he has been made as uncomfortable as human ingenuity can possibly devise, the seance begins. The initiative proceedings are perhaps a few raps. The

hostess cries out, "Joey, are you here?" Three raps, signifying "yes." "Are we going to have a good seance?" Two raps—the dubious "doubt know." "Oh, dear! there must be some bad spirit present—that is never 'Joey!'" Three raps follow this assertion assuring the hostess and the company present that it is really "Joey," and unassisted by any evil spirits. The raps cease, and the deep sonorous voice of "Ernest" comes for a moment in the midst of this, saying, "Good evening, friends; God bless you all!" Of course it is not expected that strangers to "Ernest," or even those knowing him but little, can understand how much of peace and truth and hearty good will is conveyed in his simple "God bless you!" But I, who have so long known his unfailing fidelity, am at once assured that whatever the people may be at this side of the seance, the workmen in the Spiritual seance are well governed and truly directed. The seance proceeds; the sceptics clutch harder, probably unconscious that mediums are made of ordinary flesh and blood, and one asks, "Is there any spirit here who can tell me how many shillings I have in my pocket?" "Joey's" voice instantly replies, "No; we are not particularly interested in your financial affairs." "Well, then," replies the sitter, "perhaps you can tell me where I bought my umbrella?" "Alas for poor, ignorant 'Joey,'" he does not even know that! To lengthen these details would simply be to give a complete history of the seance, lasting, perhaps, for two hours. Part of the sitters at the close vote it a success, part a failure, and the whole combined means, "I wonder why exalted spirits never manifest at dark seances?" Could their eyes have been spiritually opened, as mine were during the whole seance, they would have seen that high and exalted spirits felt that they had better business to do than telling the number of shillings in a man's pocket, or finding out where he bought his umbrella. Doubt and suspicion thrown upon a medium are the surest means of prevention of powerful spiritual manifestations. Every medium should be surrounded by an influence of trust, respect, and appreciation, not because he is a medium, but that all the elements which attract undeveloped influences may be entirely eliminated from the seance room, and that in higher influences the medium may find not only rest and support, but a proper understanding of his medial strength, and the desires of his controls. Nothing is more important than that the medium should be for the time being, master of the situation, for it is impossible for the uninitiated to impose secure conditions, by which the best manifestations may be obtained, as for a street minstrel to have instructed Mendelssohn in music. Under these conditions, it is quite possible that fewer converts will be made to Spiritualism; but it is equally true that those so convinced will be more trustworthy, more intelligent, and more beneficial to the cause.

And here let me tell you of a seance held under the above-mentioned higher conditions—one of the most beautiful it has been my lot either to induce or attend. It was on New Year's Eve, 1878, and the meeting took place at the house of Mrs. Makkdougall Gregory. There were eight or ten persons present, some of whom I see here to-night. After the usual dark seance manifestations, which upon this occasion were more powerful and instructive than usual, I entered the cabinet. I wish to strongly impress upon your minds that the seance which I am now relating was a most unusual one due, I firmly believe, to the fact of my having given many seances at the same house, and to the friendship, trust, and appreciation with which every sitter regarded me. Of course, what occurred during the materializations was related to me afterwards by the sitters present, as, unfortunately, during these manifestations I am kept in a deep trance. The gas was turned on until the room was pervaded by a dim, religious light, when slowly the curtains opened, and from the cabinet came one dearly loved, long known, and always treasured by the hostess, Lady G—, widow of the late Field Marshal Sir —. The form was no dummy dressed up to represent life, nor Mr. Eginton transfigured, which will be best evidenced by by Mrs. Gregory's own words:—

"I have no hesitation in giving my testimony to the wonderful power and satisfactory nature of your mediumship. Indeed, I, personally, have never seen it surpassed. I, with many others, have scrutinised it carefully when it occurred in my house, and we have all been satisfied with its truth. Seven different times my friend Lady G— appeared to me fully materialised, when you were lying apparently in a trance on my sofa in the drawing-room, visible to five or six of my friends who were with me at the time. Your sincere friend, LISETTE MACDOUGALL GREGORY."

What could be more beautifully impressive than this midnight scene on New Year's night? The spirit, after requesting cake and wine to be brought, tasted the cake, touched the wine and then handed it to each of the sitters, that they might partake of this holy communion with her. After this the persons present were requested to kneel, and, in their midst, the spirit knelt also, and pouring forth a solemn invocation, asked that Almighty God would bless each friend present, and make their New Year one long to be remembered, and then vanished. When the influence had left me, and I found myself fully conscious, I was persuaded the seance had been a failure, so rested and peaceful was my condition; and not until I saw the tear-wet eyes of my friends, and received their grateful messages of thanks, did I fully understand this memorable event. The majority of Spiritualists of to-day are defending the world against mediums, rather than supporting mediums against the world. I would not have you for one moment suppose that I would advocate the concealment of dishonesty, or the protection of mediums when they are really wrong; but I would advocate that every Spiritualist should be perfectly certain that the medium is wrong before he is publicly denounced and sent into the world branded and disgraced. The point I wish to impress upon your minds is that without mediums you are without Spiritualism, and until the proper relationship is established between mediums and Spiritualists, Spiritualism will make no progress, and sink into a dark state from which nothing but the truest mediumship can rescue it. The suffering of any particular medium is of small importance. Every new truth has had its martyrs. Spiritualism must have its; and I would that some method could be devised whereby mediums would suffer as little as possible, and the world learn to the fullest extent the depth and power of the truth and beauty of our philosophy.

My experience has been varied and extensive. I know something of the pain and persecution, and a little of the joy, which good, true work always brings to the labourer in an unpopular cause; and knowing all this, the greatest pain I experience is in feeling that through an improper or partial understanding, the true merits of mediumship, and the proper relationship to be sustained between mediums and Spiritualists, the best work of the century should be dimmed and retarded. As the nineteenth century is the century of inventions, so is the twentieth destined to be a century of seers; and the destiny of those seers is, to a large extent, in the keeping of modern Spiritualists and Spiritualism.

"God sends His teachers into every clime,
To every race and every class of men."

The mediums of the nineteenth century are essentially its teachers; and if I have succeeded in showing as plainly as possible that the present relations between mediums and Spiritualists are to a large extent wrong, I feel that you will all take to heart the injunction of Plutarch that "the moment you have discovered a wrong it is the time to mend it."

After the reading of this paper several speakers addressed the meeting. The chairman, the Rev. W. Miall, said that Mr. Eglington had asserted the great superiority of mediums to parsons; as he (Mr. Miall) was a kind of parson he felt sensitive on the point, and thought that Mr. Eglington might have quoted the text, "I magnify mine office." Such were the words of St. Paul. Mr. Eglington would have done quite right to quote them.—Mr. Emms thought that more seances in the light would be of great advantage to the movement; and Mr. C. E. Williams that new mediums should be developed for light seances.

THE SEANCES WITH MRS. CORNER.

SEIZURE OF THE MEDIUM.

WE extract the following in respect of the recent seizure of a presumed spirit form, from the report of the British National Association of Spiritualists, which appears in *Spiritual Notes* for February:—

"Mr. Dawson Rogers said he had now to approach a very disagreeable subject—namely the recent seizure of a 'form' which turned out to be the 'form' of the medium, as narrated in a letter addressed to the public journals by Sir George Sitwell and Mr. Carl von Buch, and as he had just seen those gentlemen in the adjoining room he would propose that they be admitted to the Council Chamber. He should have to report all the facts to the Council, and also to review the statements which these gentlemen had published, and he thought that it would be very desirable that they should be present in the room to hear all that he had to say.

Several Members of the Council expressed a very decided opinion that to accede to Mr. Dawson Rogers' proposal would be to set a very inconvenient precedent and the motion was accordingly withdrawn.

Mr. Dawson Rogers then proceeded. This letter, he said, stated that a seance held at the rooms of the Association, on the evening of Friday, January 9th—and at which he (Mr. Dawson Rogers) was present in his capacity of Chairman of the Seance Committee—a form appeared attired in white robes, that the form was seized by one of the circle, and was found to be the person of the medium (Mrs. Corner), and that the chair to which the medium had been bound was found to be vacant, while several articles of the medium's dress were scattered about the floor behind the curtains which were used as a cabinet. He was sorry to be obliged to admit that all this was true. He would also take this opportunity of stating that, in the act of seizure, Sir George Sitwell was as gentle and considerate towards the medium as the successful accomplishment of his purpose would permit, and that he (Mr. Dawson Rogers) was sorry that in the heat of the moment he applied to Sir George an epithet which he freely confessed he ought not to have used. Having made a mistake he had done all he could to remedy it, and had personally conveyed the expression of regret to Sir George, who had kindly accepted it. He would now briefly state all the circumstances connected with this unfortunate affair, prefacing what he had to say by the assurance that he had no word of censure for Mrs. Corner, that he believed her to be totally unconscious, and therefore totally guiltless of any deception, and that he was satisfied the Council, after hearing his report, would arrive at the same opinion. Naturally enough, perhaps, some persons would hastily conclude, after what had occurred, that notwithstanding all that had been heard of Mrs. Corner she was not a genuine medium for physical manifestations, and that the Seance Committee ought to have taken more care before they accepted her services in that. But as a matter of fact great care had been taken. At some of the preceding seances she had not only been well secured by tying, but her dress had been so sewn together that it was simply impossible that it could be removed and replaced without detection; and he himself had also, when sitting near the curtains, put his hands behind them and felt the medium's head, shoulder, arm, and hand at the same time that the 'form' was out and visible to all the company; and he had reported the fact to another member of the committee. He had also recourse to other tests which left no room for doubt as to the genuineness of Mrs. Corner's mediumship. Then came the question of the proposed attendance of Mr. von Buch. The rule was, as they were aware, that friends of a member were admissible on the member's introduction. Mr. von Buch's mother was a Spiritualist, and a highly respectable member of the Association, and she had asked that her son and his friends should be allowed to attend some seances, and especially that Mr. von Buch might be permitted to bind the medium, as he had great confidence in his ability to tie securely. Mr. von Buch and Sir George

Sitwell attended accordingly. In their published letter they said in, reference to their first visit, "The medium being tied by one of us with great care no manifestations followed." This was not correct. Mr von Buch tied Mrs. Corner with so much care that he spent nearly a quarter of an hour in the operation, and yet some little time after the curtains had been closed raps were heard spelling, "Tying not satisfactory, look to your knots," and on examination it was found that Mrs. Corner was free from all her bonds, the knots and the loops which had encircled her waist and wrist being all, as far as could be discovered, perfectly intact. Mr. von Buch himself examined them, and did not even suggest that the knots had in any way been tampered with. Mr. von Buch then bound the medium again, but after sitting an hour without any result the seance was closed; not, however, without an opportunity being afforded to Mrs. Corner to play tricks if she had chosen, for at the termination of the sitting she called the attention of the members of the committee who were present to the fact that the knots this time were slip knots, and that she could easily have got out of them if she pleased. And yet these gentlemen had in their letter suggested that at the following sitting the medium was able to get out because she had been tied "under the direction of the chairman! This statement was not a correct representation of the case. Knowing that the second tying at the preceding seance was altogether insecure, he (Mr. Dawson Rogers) told Mr. von Buch so, and suggested another method. This method Mr. von Buch adopted at the second seance, but he did so freely, and could have employed any other mode if he had thought it better. But how about the third sitting—that at which the capture was made? Mr. von Buch did exactly as he pleased without a single suggestion being offered by any other person. Did he then tie the medium securely, and if not, why not? Be this as it might, a "form" after a little while, came out from the curtains at the side, and stood with the back to the wall. It was covered with white drapery over the head, face, and shoulders, and had a long white robe reaching to the heels, so that the naked feet could not be seen except when they were put slightly forward from beneath the skirt. While in this position Sir George Sitwell made a sudden rush, captured the "form," and, gently holding her, exclaimed, "It is the medium; I knew it was." He (Mr. Dawson Rogers) at once stepped up, and taking the "form" out of Sir George's hands, threw up the veil to see whether it really was Mrs. Corner or not. For the moment he could scarcely recognise her, as the eyes had a vacant gaze as though there was no consciousness of what had occurred. He had been told that at the same moment Mr. von Buch rushed forward, and from the front of the curtains drew out the empty chair and various articles of Mrs. Corner's apparel; but of this, as he was then standing at the side of the curtains, he knew nothing. It should be borne in mind that when he took Mrs. Corner in this apparently unconscious state from Sir George's hands she was covered with white drapery as already mentioned. He at once put his arms round her, and led her behind the curtains. There for a few seconds, she remained perfectly quiet and silent, then trembled violently, and presently exclaimed, "Where am I? where am I? What is it? Tell me, what is it?" He endeavoured to soothe her, but finding that she was getting heavy in his arms, and fearing that he should not be able to prevent her from falling, he proposed to lead her out into the adjoining room. She replied, "Yes, do!" And he was about to remove her, when she suddenly exclaimed, "Why, I am undressed; get away, get away!" He did not, however, feel that he could leave her without letting her fall, and he therefore called Mrs. Maltby, who received her from his hands behind the curtain, and removed her into another room. Mrs. Maltby would tell them in what condition she was at the time.

Mrs. Maltby: She had nothing on her but her corset and flannel petticoat, and no white drapery whatever.

Mr. Dawson Rogers: What then had become of the drapery? It was impossible that Mrs. Corner could have removed and secreted it, for he had his arms round her from the moment he received her from Sir George

Sitwell's hands to the moment he placed her in the hands of Mrs. Maltby behind the curtains. The published letter already alluded to said that to cover the confusion he had put the light out. This was altogether untrue. The light was at one end of the room, and he at the other, and he was engaged all the time as he had said in attending to Mrs. Corner. Moreover, in another part of the letter, the writers themselves admitted that there was sufficient light for the discarded garments to be handed round for inspection.

Mrs. Maltby said that when she thought the candle was no longer needed she put it out herself.

Mr. Dawson Rogers had since heard, on very good authority, that later the same evening, at a seance at Mr. Fletcher's, with the same medium, both the medium and a second "form" were seen two or three times at the same moment. At their own seance, however, there could be no doubt that the draped "form" was Mrs. Corner herself. As he had already intimated he was firmly convinced that Mrs. Corner knew nothing about the fraud, and that it was perpetrated by the controlling spirit who had used her without her own volition. All experienced Spiritualists knew that this was a difficulty in which they were occasionally liable to be placed at what were termed "materialising seances." It was a perplexing position, and a very disagreeable one; but it was one that must be faced, except they were disposed to discontinue the investigation of this branch of physical phenomena altogether. He hoped that the Council would freely acknowledge the perplexity, and not seek to avoid it by leaving it to be inferred that there was any guilt on the part of the medium. Having attended nearly all her seances in these rooms he had the most complete faith in Mrs. Corner yet, and he hoped there would be no disposition on the part of the Council to save themselves from a difficulty at her expense.

Mr. Desmond Fitz-Gerald thought that there was no fault to be found with these young gentlemen, and that they had acted not only in a proper but even in a gentlemanly way. No doubt we had sometimes misinterpreted the scenes which had been brought before us at such seances, and had thought that these imitations were less frequent than they really were. Still he was perfectly certain that Mrs. Corner was an excellent medium, and he was also satisfied that she was altogether guiltless of such deceptions. Their present position was one in which their behaviour would be very carefully observed by all genuine truth-seekers, but they had three things plainly before them to do. First, they must fully exonerate those young gentlemen from blame, and must even admit that they had taught them a lesson, though they had not taught them anything they did not know before. Secondly, they must clearly and distinctly express their confidence in the medium, even at the expense of throwing well-deserved reflections on some of the "guides" on the other side. And in the third place, they were bound to show a bold but honest front in the face of this difficulty, and to exercise more caution in the class of phenomena presented to investigators in the future.

Mr. March said that if these gentlemen had brought the matter before the Council first, perhaps they would not have thought it wise to rush into print at all; at the same time he did not think that phenomena of this kind should be presented to people who knew nothing whatever of the various phases of mediumship, unless we could absolutely prove by some occult power (which of course we could not do), that in such a case as this the medium was certainly "possessed." Moreover, the Council ought to have a written report from the Seance Committee, and not merely the speech of an advocate entirely in favour of the medium.

Mr. Dawson Rogers said it was manifestly impossible, in the short time that had elapsed, for the committee to have met and agreed to a written report. A report would be entered on the minutes of the committee as soon as possible, but in the meantime it had been necessary to explain all the circumstances to the Council at their first meeting after the occurrence.

The Rev. Stainton-Moses remarked, in reference to the method these gentlemen had adopted in order to

arrive at the result which they had accomplished, that it could not be denied that such methods of enquiry would often land a man in a fallacy, and that there were powers and phenomena which were not amenable to such rude and ready methods of investigation. Unfortunately, however, they answered Sir George Sitwell's purpose, and it would be impossible to convince the world that he was wrong. It was to the last degree deplorable that anything of the kind should have taken place, and an answer must be made to the damaging statements which these gentlemen had published.

Mr. Desmond Fitz-Gerald said he would move that Sir George Sitwell and Mr. von Buch be invited into the room, that they might make any statement they desired, and hear a brief explanation of the theory which was compatible both with the facts alleged and with the complete innocence of the medium.

The Rev. W. Miall seconded the motion.

Mr. Coffin said he understood that the gentlemen were in attendance for the purpose of giving some information or suggestion as to the disappearance of the drapery, and he would move as an amendment that they be admitted simply for that purpose.

This amendment having been adopted, Sir George Sitwell and Mr. von Buch were invited into the Council Room, and took their seats by the side of the President.

Mr. von Buch said he desired to thank the Council for allowing him to say a few words in reference to the unfortunate occurrence which had taken place. It was due to the Council, as well as to himself and Sir George Sitwell, that he should say that in the letter which they had addressed to the papers they had endeavoured to write fairly and impartially. They had come to the seance, not as believers it was true, but also certainly not as sceptics, for they had been ready to accept any evidence which could be offered of the truth of Spiritualism, and nothing would have given them greater pleasure than to find that they had been wrong in their suspicions of the medium. He had been asked, what became of the spirit's drapery? and in reply to this he would read an extract from Mr. Home's books, "Lights and Shadows in Modern Spiritualism," which might throw some light on the subject. [The extract was to the effect that lady mediums secreted the drapery, which was light and could easily be packed into a small compass, inside their drawers, which, even when mediums were searched, were most likely to escape scrutiny.]

Mr. Dawson Rogers said that in this case, under the circumstances which he had already explained to the Council, such an hypothesis was quite untenable.

Mr. von Buch proceeded to state the occurrences which, in his mind and that of his friend, had excited suspicion. The movements and slight noises behind the curtains after they were closed resembled, he thought, the act of undressing, while the time which elapsed, after the form was last seen, till permission was obtained to examine the medium, sufficed to enable her to dress and tie herself again. It had been suggested that in doing what they had done they had broken the conditions on which they gained admission, and thus acted dishonourably. He did not think so; but at the same time he was not quite sure that, in such a case, even if they had used some little artifice, they would not have been fully justified. It was admitted that the form seized was Mrs. Corner, but she had been excused on the ground that she was in a state of trance; but he knew something of cases of somnambulism and catalepsy, and did not think that this was one of them.

Mr. Dawson Rogers: Do you know that there is such a thing as lucid somnambulism?

Mr. von Buch said he did.

Mr. Dawson Rogers: I have had considerable experience of such cases, extending over many years, and I have no doubt whatever that this was such a case.

Mr. von Buch added that he had heard that Mrs. Corner had had a successful seance afterwards, the same night, but he had been told by a Spiritualist of experience that no medium could obtain manifestations twice the same evening. Anyhow it was curious that the medium should be dragged off to give another sitting after what had occurred. From what he and his

friend had done, general Spiritualism (if there was such a thing), would never suffer. Mixed up with fraud it could never be placed on a strong basis; but if it were true, and the experiments honestly conducted, it would sooner or later come to the front in spite of all opposition.

Mr. Coffin asked Mr. von Buch whether on the last occasion he took care to tie the medium as securely as he could.

Mr. von Buch said he left the knots loose enough to be slipped.

Mr. Coffin: Did you do that purposely, in order that the medium might the more easily get out?

Mr. von Buch: Not exactly that. I thought that if it were a case of genuine Spiritualism the tying would make no difference, and if it were not the sooner we had the manifestations the better.

Mr. Dawson Rogers: How is it you stated that I put out the light?

Mr. von Buch: I was told so by one of the persons present.

Mrs. Malthy: It was put out by me as the people were leaving.

Mr. von Buch said he was sorry that he had made the mistake.

Sir George Sitwell said that when he seized Mrs. Corner he did so as gently as possible, and when she was taken out of his hands the drapery remained upon her. He believed the medium was on the floor afterwards, and had thus an opportunity of secreting it.

Mr. Dawson Rogers replied that the medium was not on the floor at all. He held her till Mrs. Malthy took her away at his request, and then the drapery had disappeared.

Mr. Fletcher, in allusion to a remark which had been made by Mr. von Buch, said that Mrs. Corner had not been "dragged off" to his house to give another sitting, but having another engagement for a seance there had come to excuse herself, but had been prevailed upon to try. The result was a very successful sitting, at which both the medium and the spirit were seen at the same time.

Mr. von Buch said they should be willing to have another test seance with Mrs. Corner, and to publish the results if satisfactory.

Mr. von Buch and Sir George Sitwell then left the room.

Mr. Dawson Rogers remarked that after the statement he had already made to the Council he did not think it necessary to offer any further explanation.

HEALING BY LAYING ON OF HANDS.*

THE above Book, the first edition of which has just reached us, meets the rapidly rising demand for information relating to Animal Magnetism, its nature and the means of utilising it for the cure of disease. The writer of the book Mr. James Mack, (more familiarly known as Dr. Mack) seems to be one of those somewhat rare individuals, who not only generate vital magnetism, but who serve as a vehicle for the transmission of the still more potent magnetism of the spheres. He is in fact a natural healer and even if practising as an ordinary physician would convey a healing influence beyond the mechanical influence of the medicines administered.

The book is largely made up of extracts from the writings of Barth, Teete, Asburner, and other celebrated magnetists whose works are not readily obtainable, also, the experiences of more recent popular healers, including Drs. Newton and Babbitt, the Zouave Jacob, Mr. Ashmann and himself, the appendix containing a large number of remarkable and well attested cases of cure, some performed at a distance by means of materialized substances.

In addition to the information and evidences of the nature and effects of curative magnetism, the book contains excellent practical rules for its application, by Dr. Babbitt, which will be of much service to embryo healers.

*Healing by Laying on of Hands, by James Mack, London; J. Burns, Publisher.

OUINA'S RECEPTION.

Mrs. C. L. V. RICHMOND gives periodical seances at her private residence in Chicago under the above denomination. The beautiful poetical spirit, "Ouina," being the principal control, her control is often preceded by more scientific ones, the questions and answers being of general interest are reported and published in the *Spiritual Record*. We give the following from the issue of December 30th, as a specimen:—

INVOCATION.

"We approach Thee with thanksgiving and praise, seeking evermore Thy blessing, Oh Infinite Spirit, asking that our ministrations may be of love and according to the need of those who are here assembled. May their spirits turn to Thee for ever for guidance, even as we turn to Thee, who art the Infinite, the abiding source of knowledge."

Spirit Ballou then gave the usual greeting, as follows: "We give you welcome, friends. Owing to the indisposition of the medium, we shall not perhaps be able to hold as protracted a session as usual. Indeed it was only desired to have a few assemble that you might exchange greeting. We will answer, however, any questions that may be in your minds. We trust you will not hesitate, but avail yourselves of the time, that we may not spend any more time than is necessary in waiting for questions."

Queries were then submitted to the control and answers given, as follows:

"Are there not forces in nature as yet undiscovered, the discovery of which is not beyond the mental development of the world?"

"That which you have proposed is impossible, since the world not only discovers that which is on the average of the mental development of the world, but there are always some minds in advance of the average, who discover, before the masses are ready, certain principles in nature. It is a paradox to suppose there can be any undiscovered principles for which the world is ready. It is quite true that there may be some minds ready for things that are not discovered or practicable in the world, and they may be ready for that which they are individually unable to discover; but if they knew all the minds in the world, and what those minds had discovered, they would doubtless find that that which they are in pursuit of has already been reached by some one."

"Will you give me your idea of what astral spirit is? Paul calls it the spiritual body, and some term it nerve, others magnetism. What do you understand by the astral spirit?"

"We do not know that the word has any technical meaning. The spiritual body is the clothing or habitation of the spirit apart from its physical, or pervading the physical body. It is not magnetism, since that also is connected with the physical body measurably; nor is it the nerve aura, for that is also the result of the physical organism. The body is that which the spirit possesses, and the term 'astral body,' doubtless is derived from the fact that the substances of which the body is composed must be existent in the atmosphere, and exist separate from the organism physically. They are not the result of organic growth or attraction, but are rather attracted by the spirit itself, which clothes itself with the spiritual body according to its growth. These spiritual substances exist not only in connection with the earth and the physical organism, but in space, or wherever the spirit may be, or wherever the spirit may require them, and consequently the substances may be transmuted or changed in their shape or form at the will or necessity of the spirit. Not so with the physical body. Hence, doubtless, the word was derived from the possibility of the substance being in or belonging to the inter-stellar spaces, and being of different substance than that which is derived from the physical organism."

"Does the state of the spirit depend upon the spirituality of the individual; for instance, how is it in the case of a man who devotes his entire life to it?"

"The spiritual body in its most perfect state is the perfect representation of the growth of the spirit. In its less perfected state it represents the deformity or deficiency of the spirit. Consequently, if a person has devoted the whole of earthly life to other than spiritual pursuits, aiming at mere physical or material aggrandisement, or aiming at ambition, or power, or following the appetites and passions, the spiritual body is not unfolded, but would present to the eye of the advanced spirit the appearance of a dwarf, a child, or a pigmy in spiritual life."

"Well, then, how would friends recognise them?"

"But friends do not recognise one another by size, since the parent losing a child in infancy, enlightened in Spiritualism, does not expect that person to remain a child. There is no bond of recognition besides that of the spirit of the individual. Expression, perfection, and recognition belong to the mind, and it is not difficult, since you would be aware that your spirit-friends had been cognizant of you even if you had not been cognizant of their state. They would recognise you if you did not recognise them at first. But where there is sympathy, there is no difficulty of recognition, even though you do not recognise each other by size. There are very few who pass into spirit-life who are dwarfs. There are those who are imperfect spiritually. But the utter lack of spirituality fortunately exists only in a few. I mean, of course, of spiritual unfoldment. Besides, this discernment of the quality of the spiritual growth does not belong to all spirits, but to spirits of the same grade of the individual. You would recognise any friend in your own degree of development, just as you recognise them here. They would not seem to you perhaps to be any smaller, or any larger, since without spiritual growth in one's self he cannot recognise its absence in others."

"What is a sub-mundane spirit, or properly called by some authors, an elementary?"

"We do not know of any such spirits. The mundane spirits are sufficiently low for us. If there are any beneath them we have not discovered it."

"Is there not a class of spirits that differ in degrees below the human spirit?"

"We do not know of any, except in the animal kingdom."

"What I want to get at is—Is not the human spirit evolved from those spirits?"

"No, the human spirit is not evolved from anything else than the human."

"Well, you spoke of animals. Is there a spirit-world for them?"

"Every grade of life has its own corresponding spiritual existence; but there is not a separate life of the animal kingdom. The vegetable kingdom also has its degree of life represented by its spiritual state, but does not any more correspond to the human than does the animal. Where the human is not advanced beyond the life of the animal kingdom, they merge in the immediate states surrounding the earthly life. But very soon the human spirit overcomes the associations of the animal kingdom, seeks it no longer, having acquired that association for convenience or comfort only."

"What degrees of spirituality do those below the wild African tribes enter?"

"A degree corresponding to their development, certainly."

"Can we unfold the spirit through the intellectual faculties?"

"We do not think the unfoldment of the intellectual is an unfoldment of the spiritual. It is one of the methods of expression, and of course is one step beyond brute force. But a highly intellectual person may nevertheless be devoid of what we term spirituality. We have known many intellectual persons who, in propositions of mathematics, or formulas of science, were perfectly accurate, and in all logical methods wholly so, yet they had no spiritual unfoldment. It is well, however, for us to define that intellectual methods may be employed by the spirit. They are valuable as methods only; but where the intellect is made the aim of life, there can be no spiritual progress."

"I am acquainted with a person who is one of the greatest mathematicians of the age, who is a perfect atheist, has no belief in immortality in any degree, but is a pure minded man; what will be his condition as a spirit?"

His mathematics will not help him so much as his purity of life. The fact of his being an unbeliever, technically, in immortality, will not in any degree affect his spiritual status provided his life is governed by purity of principle. We think he is honest; but we do not believe that any individual is absolutely devoid of faith or hope in immortality. The hope may not be sufficient to justify a statement, and being governed perhaps by reason wholly in his external life, he would not give expression to that hope. But his most inmost friend, or his own mind and secret soul will be aware of its gleamings at times. Purity of life, especially if animated by love of human kind, is evidence of a spirituality, even though it does not extend to what is called belief in immortal life."

"Does the spirit suffer as much from imaginary as it does from what we term 'real wrongs'?"

All wrongs are imaginary. There are no real wrongs. If a person has anger or malice toward you, that wrong exists in him, not in you. If he wishes to do you harm, the injury is in exact proportion to your imagining, since if he does not injure your feelings he does not injure you at all; and as the feelings are the result of the quality called imagination, when you rise above that there can be no injury. The old adage of the Stoics was—"He who wishes to injure me is beneath me; he who does not intend to injure me has not committed an offence. There are, doubtless, many grades or conditions of mind where the wrongs received affect more or less, according to the growth of the individual. Highly sensitive persons may be highly sensitive, and still not be unfolded to the degree of realising that an injury attempted is not a real injury. If it be intended, it is unworthy of being considered an injury. If it be not intended, it certainly cannot be called imaginary."

How does distance appear to spirits?"

"There are different degrees of distances. A mile seems as a thousand miles to some spirits, for the reason that they have not much spiritual growth, and are tethered to their earthly knowledge, and without the facilities of railways and other means of dispelling distances from between points in space. These are what you would call undeveloped spirits. There are others who judge of distance as you do in earthly life, chiefly through habit and lack of spiritual unfoldment, and of what you would call clear-headed and intelligent perception."

Quina then took control of the medium, and conversed with the friends in her usual sprightly manner. She, too, answered many questions very acceptably, that were put to her in the course of the conversation.

We give the following as a specimen of the poetical answers of Quina:—

Thou seekest for some unspoken word
That shall link thee to minds o'erhead;
Something that, like the soaring bird,
Shall prove where the dear ones may tread—
The dear ones passed from the mortal sight
And merged into the higher light.

The answer that cometh unto thy heart
Is the answer spoken within,
That never from the truth thou may'st depart,
Nor let a doubt come in.

But the spirit that guardeth thy life below
Is tender and true and kind;
And thoughts within thee harmonious flow,
With thy fellow beings to bind.

Thy heart enkindleth thought most pure—
Accept of this thy spoken dower,
For manifold are thy gifts in life,
And manifold thoughts will come,
But chiefly the Golden Shield I bring
To guard thine earthly home.

VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

A SPECIAL general meeting of the above Association was held at the Masonic Hall, on Friday evening, March 12th for the purpose of receiving and considering recommendations of the Committee for the amendment of Rules 4, 10, 14 and 22, and the adoption of three new Rules. There was a fair attendance of members, about 70 being present. The president took the chair soon after 8 p.m. On the minutes of the former meeting being read, exception was taken to that portion relating to the election of Secretary (which has been filled by Mr. Alkemade, assisted by Mr. Cherry) the objectors insisting in opposition to the opinions of the two gentlemen interested, and the chairmen of the present and former meetings, that their positions should be reversed, the minutes as read were eventually confirmed.

The chairman read the recommendations of the committee with regard to rules, and on his proposing the first item, Mr. Rice moved (in pursuance of notice) an amendment:

"That a sub-committee be appointed to alter and amend the rules of the Association."

Mr. Terry pointed out that the rules had answered all the purposes of the Society up to the period of the last general election, when a slight defect being found in rule 10, immediate steps were taken to rectify it. The committee had gone over the rules and now presented what amendments they deemed necessary, under these circumstances a new set of rules were uncalled for; the amendment was lost and after some further discussion, the chairman put the first recommendation of the Committee that the following words be added to Rule 4, viz:

"In case of persons desirous of joining the Association, but unable to pay an Annual Subscription of Ten Shillings, the General Committee is empowered to decide what Annual Subscription shall be paid, or in their discretion to forego payment of any subscription." Carried.

On the motion for the amendment of Rule 10, there was considerable discussion, the proposed amendment was as follows, that the words:

"These Ballot Papers are returnable till the day before the Annual Meeting," be struck out, and the following words inserted: "The Ballot Papers are returnable till the hour appointed for the Annual Meeting."

To which Mr. Deakin proposed, and Mr. Johnston seconded, the addition of the following words: "Those from persons not present must be enclosed in sealed envelopes and forwarded to the President to be opened by scrutineers."

With the above addition the amendment of rule was carried.

The amendment on Rule 14, which gives power to ten members to call a Special Meeting, the number, as recommended by the committee, was increased to 25.

The following new rule was then submitted:

"The General Committee shall have power to expel any refractory Committee Member by a vote of two-thirds of the whole Committee, including Officers."

Some members did not see the necessity for the above rule, but the chairman having defined the meaning of the word "refractory," and shown how it was in the power of such an individual to put a stop to all business and cause disorganisation in the Committee, the rule was carried, also the following rule:

"Any member whose subscription is more than one year in arrears, and who declines to pay up his subscription on application from the Secretary, shall cease to be a member."

The following was then submitted, viz., that Rule 22 be struck out and the following rule substituted:

"No new rule or amendment of a former rule shall be adopted and no old rule rescinded, except after one month's notice to the Secretary. The Committee or any member of the Association may suggest new Rules or Amendments, or rescision of former Rules by such notice, but no alteration of the Rules, either by addition, subtraction, or amendment shall come into operation until assented to by a General Meeting summoned by

circular stating the business to be transacted at such Meeting."

Mr. Deakin called attention to the fact that this Rule would enable any member who saw defects in the present rules, to offer suggestion for their amendment which would be considered at the first General Meeting after.

The Rule was carried and the meeting adjourned.

Professor Denton being unable to come at the time expected, an invitation has been sent to Dr. Peebles.

SPIRITUALISM IN CHINA.

By Dr. NICHOLS.

IN an interesting and profusely illustrated work on China, by Archdeacon Gray of Hong Kong, I find the best account I have seen of Chinese Spiritualism, which is so ancient, and so permeates the immemorial customs of Chinese life, that we may consider it a primitive or spontaneous faith of the entire nation. In that stereotyped country, as a rule, what we find to-day equally existed forty centuries ago, and thus the whole life of China is pervaded by Spiritualism.

The religion of the people of China, in fact, consists in the worship of their ancestors. The central and chief room in every Chinese house is a chapel, dedicated to the ancestors of the family in which there is an altar, and tablets recording the names and virtues of the spirits of the departed, to whom constant offerings are made and prayers addressed. A consequence of this universal faith in a world of spirits is the fearlessness of death so remarkable among the Chinese. Death is not in the least a "King of Terrors," though the Chinese have a natural love of life, and old age is officially honoured. When a man or woman reaches the 81st year, report is made to the Emperor, who authorises the erection of a triumphal arch in front of the residence of the honoured octogenarian, and a sum of money is sent to pay the cost. At 91 and 101 there are new honours.

So little is there of that horror of death so common among us, that the most welcome present to an aged person is a handsome coffin; and it is the custom for children to present coffins to their parents to celebrate their 60th birthday. These are kept in the best rooms of the house as conspicuous ornaments.

At an early age Chinese children are engaged to be married, and if one of them dies, the marriage still takes place. At the proper age the young Chinaman is solemnly married to his departed fiancée—his spirit-bride. On the other hand, if the young man dies, his fiancée remains always a widow, living with his parents. If it happen that the two engaged both die young, they are all the same married to each other after death, with the same ceremony as if they were in the bodily life.

There is also in China, as with Roman Catholics everywhere, a festival of "All Souls," in which offerings are made for the spirits of the departed, and especially for the spirits of paupers and beggars, who may have friends to help or pray for them.

This belief in the continued existence of those who have departed from this life is so universal and so vivid as to have some whimsical consequences. Men habitually act with reference to the feelings and wishes of the departed; and dread the consequences of displeasing them. Many of the Chinese are also Re-incarnationists, and it often happens that criminals, while very cheerfully submitting to decapitation, threaten, if their wishes are not attended to, to come back and behead their executioners.

At the hour of death, the dying Chinese are brought to the door of the house that their spirits may the more conveniently take their departure. The dying are also dressed in their best clothes, as if it were imagined that their ghosts might wish to wear away the ghosts of their garments.

Suicide is very common, and those who meditate self-slaughter dress themselves in their best, women especially wearing their finest clothes, and decking their hair with the most beautiful flowers. In many cases suicide is considered meritorious, as in that of children who refuse to survive any disgrace which has fallen

upon their parents; and widows who voluntarily join their husbands in the spirit-world are highly honoured; and not only those who were married, but affianced brides. Women also, who kill themselves to escape personal outrage, are canonised, as were also some among the early Christians.

This universal belief in Spiritualism in China has many excellent effects. Men and women feel themselves to be living constantly under the supervision and watchful guardianship of those who are most dear to them, and whom they most highly honour. They believe also that their good conduct promotes the happiness of their guardian spirits. In China, nobility is the reward of merit, and a man who is ennobled ennobles his ancestors. When a Chinaman is created an Earl, for example, raised to a rank equivalent to that of an English Earl, this title is at once given to his ancestors, of whose glory he thinks more than that of his possible posterity.

There is not a perfect uniformity in the religion of China. There are three millions or more of Roman Catholic Christians, who have their native archbishop, bishops, and priests; and who, as everywhere, believe in the "communion of saints" and "the life everlasting." There are perhaps five millions of Mahomedans, who have their own faith in the life to come. The great bulk of the four hundred millions, however, are followers of Confucius, or of Buddha—all believers in some form of a future existence. A common belief is, that the souls of the wicked, or undeveloped spirits, have to return to the earth-life to expiate their offences in animal or human forms. According to the teachings of Taonism, "the masterpiece of creation is the holy sage, who when he dies returns to the bosom of the Eternal Reason to enjoy endless rest; while the wicked are considered to prolong a miserable existence on earth in successive lives, dying only to be born again in some new form."

Others believe in other hells, specially prepared for great offenders—such, for example, as "ignorant physicians, who, notwithstanding their ignorance of the nature or causes of diseases, and proper modes of cure, have persisted in prescribing for the sick." For such, no doubt, there should be some appropriate punishment—in this world if possible, if not in some other.

Holding this entire faith for so many centuries, in the existence of departed spirits, it would be strange if the Chinese did not try to receive communications from them; and they have actually for a long time had what are considered spirit-communications, spirit-writing, and similar manifestations. These have been treated by occidental writers as tricks of jugglers, or the impositions of lying priests; and it is quite possible that in China, as in England and America, there may be various kinds of mercenary pretenders to spiritual gifts. I do not insist upon the genuineness of what I have had no opportunity to examine and test, but as I know many so-called spiritual manifestations among us to be genuine, I have no reason to doubt they exist among people who have had a profound and practical belief in them from time immemorial.—*Psychological Review.*

FREETHOUGHT.

WE have received Nos. 1 and 2 of the above serial, the perspective advent of which was announced in our February issue. The journal fulfils the promise of its prospectus, the first numbers treating on all the subjects comprised in it. No. 1 contains, in addition to other interesting matter, A Definition of Freethought, by Geo. Lacy; Spiritualism not Supernaturalism, by Chas. Bright; The Education Question, by J. Tyerman; Instructions in Mesmerism and Curative Magnetism, and a Biographical Sketch (with portrait) of Henry Slade by the editor. No. 2 opens with a prize essay against Spiritualism (of which we may have something to say in our next.) A sketch of Francis W. Newman, by Chas. Bright; the Antiquity of Mesmerism, by E. Williams, M.A. Sketch and portrait of Charles Bright and several papers of more or less interest. The journal is in magazine form containing 50 large 8vo. pages, and from the quality of its matter will doubtless be long command a large circulation.

MR. THOMAS WALKER.

By the last mail we have a letter from Mr. Thomas Walker, who had been lecturing in the provinces with considerable success. The *Macclesfield Chronicle* of December 26th, reports a lecture delivered in that city of a decidedly political character, entitled "England in Danger," in which the lecturer strongly supports the present liberal party in England. Whilst we agree with much that he expresses, we should regret exceedingly a repetition of the same class of lecture, as it would unfit him for the office of a Spiritualistic teacher by arousing party feeling.

The lecture referred to was well received, and a vote of thanks proposed by Alderman Smale was carried.

Mr. Walker had accepted an invitation to lecture for six months at Cape Town, South Africa; so that after lecturing in London he will most likely leave for the Cape in April. From the Cape he will again visit the Australian colonies, and we may therefore confidently expect him amongst us before the end of the year.

We are glad to observe by papers just received that Mr. Walker was engaged to lecture for the British National Association, during the month of February. A report of a lecture delivered by him at Cardiff appears in the *Medium* of January 30th.

THE SOUTHERN CROSS—ITS ECLAIRCISS-MENT.

We have, on more than one occasion, intimated that we never expect to observe, on the part of the "religious" press, either justice or good manners. Free to-day, as in the olden time, is the aphorism, that "men do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles." And accordingly, when a sheet of so established notoriety as the *Southern Cross* is guilty of any *laches*, the event is so common-place and *sui generis* that our customary course is to leave the offender "severely alone." We feel constrained, however, to deviate from this usual practice and to expose the disingenuous tactics of the above-named "evangelical" print. With an insight whose accuracy we confess our incompetence to appreciate, the *S. C.* detects in the writer of an article that appeared recently in a secular newspaper commenting on the farewell demonstration accorded to a popular preacher, a gentleman well known in Spiritualistic circles; and, under the guise of a protest against the language employed, this exemplary "Christian" organ vituperates with envenomed spleen:—"Shall we seek it (a truer and deeper Christianity than the churches offer?) in the ravings of the Spiritist Association? Shall we resort to oracular arm-chairs and to inspired tables for our new gospel? Shall we give up Isaiah and St. Paul to sit at the feet of beery men-mediums like Mr. Foster? Shall we wait to learn purity from the shepherds of the Victoria Woodhull type? Shall we sit open-mouthed to catch the pearls of truth that drop from the fingers of prestidigiters like Dr. Slade? What can induce the *Age* to make itself the organ of Spiritism against the Christian faith of the whole community?" We have heard of that peculiar process in logic familiarly known as "jumping to conclusions," and in the maunderings of theologians we have observed instances, but memory utterly fails to recall a more striking illustration of this *lusus rationis* than that contained in the foregoing citation. From the assumption, purely supposititious, that the writer of the objectionable article is a Spiritualist, the *Cross* concludes that the *Age* is "the organ of Spiritism," notwithstanding that the article itself contains no allusion whatever to the system. No one, we apprehend, could be more surprised than that newspaper at such an imputation. Its antipathy to us is well known, and actually in its impression of the 23th ult., it designates us "that eccentric body known as Spiritualists." What historic *dada* the *S. C.* has for speaking of "the ravings of the Spiritist Association," we are at a loss to determine, but we have some experience of the proceedings with which some zealous deacons, elders, and "most potent, grave, and reverend seigniors" have enlivened their annual assemblies in this city; and from the pages of Dupin, Milman, and others, we have derived some infor-

mation concerning the "vain jangling" and disgraceful exhibitions that have almost invariably characterised the councils of the Church, from that of Jerusalem down to the Tridentine conclave. We have not had the good fortune of the *S. C.* to meet with "oracular arm-chairs" (though we believe there is in the Christian Church a chair regarded as the seat of infallibility), nor did we know that inspiration was ever attributed to tables except those of Sinaiic fame, and they, if we rightly remember the legend, came to grief! The epithet, "beery man-medium" is new to us, probably owing to its elasticity. We know something of Mr. Foster to whom the *Cross* kindly applies it, but we consider that in his case it is decidedly *de trop*.^{*} However, we have some recollection of reading about a Jeremiah, who adorned himself with a wooden ox-yoke; about an Ezekiel, who became singularly irate with a poor earthen vessel, and who for more than a twelvemonth lay on one side beseeching a tile, and regaling himself with repasts of a character extremely delectable and unique; about an Isaiah, whose peregrinations were performed regardless of vesture; and about a king David, too, who "harped on a harp" and danced to its dulcet strains with garments "conspicuous by their absence." And we think that to any one of these late lamented worthies the *S. C.*'s happy expression might be appropriately affixed.

With Mrs. Woodhull's defence we are not concerned, but we venture to opine that through her ministration and those of Messrs. Slade and Foster, a brighter evangel has been proclaimed to man than the misnamed "glorious gospel" in which the *Cross* professes to rejoice—a gospel which consigns to irrevocable reprobation and endless misery the majority of the race, and reserves a senseless salvation for the few. X.

RELIGIOUS REFORMERS AND THEIR DUTIES.

THE REV. Dr. Hughes delivered an eloquent lecture on the above subject, at the Temperance Hall, on Sunday, March 14th. It was announced as the concluding lecture of the series in that Hall, the Opera House having been secured for the next Sunday.

The following is a brief synopsis:—

We are all aware of the terror the clergy have infused into the word "unbelief," yet they are constrained to admit the high moral qualities of many unbelievers, though not in the pulpit.

The deathbeds of infidels were depicted there as something fearful, and they were presented as horrible examples to the congregation. The idea that a converted savage would be translated to realms of brightness, whilst the unconverted Darwinian would be consigned to hell, would be manifestly irrational.

Christianity, he said, was evidently founded on miracle evidence, yet the miracles did not apply, and had no connection with what they were intended to prove. The most eminent scholars in Europe at the present day were infidels, and infidelity has always led to progress. He foretold a greater struggle between orthodoxy and infidelity than has ever yet taken place; the time had arrived for us to take the "buttons off our foils" and fight with bare blades. Infidelity was gaining ground, and facts were constantly upsetting theological dogmas.

The question of questions was, "Is the Bible the infallible word of God?" If not, the presentation of some portions of the Old Testament as such was criminal; if, on the other hand, it were proved to be so, it were better to ignore such a God as was there depicted. Reason and common sense were the only enemies of the Church, which had systematically opposed all new discoveries which conflicted with its dogmas. It was the duty of reformers to ignore the dogmas of the Trinity and Vicarious Atonement, and maintain the Fatherhood of God—to deny the primeval curse on which the Atonement was founded—and contend for the universality of God's blessings, including at the same time brotherly love—to deny salvation by faith and other unreasonable doctrines—endeavouring

^{*} Is it possible that our contemporary, in his innocence, has confused Charles Foster the medium with Foster of "India Pale Ale" renown?

to progress in knowledge of God—denying finality in religious belief. Whilst the clergy admitted they could not prevent enquiry into the origin of religious beliefs, they took good care not to help it in any way, but opposed all progressive movements.

He asserted that no parent or other person had a right to instil into a child's mind any religious dogma until that child was old enough to reason on it and judge of its merits. The clergy were compelled to teach a binding dogma to keep their flocks together, whilst the more philosophical teacher strove to open and expand the mind. We must recognise a universal God and universal inspiration; it was our duty as reformers to sweep away the cobwebs that obstructed the light, until, in stead, love and universal charity encircled the earth.

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God the supernal

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