

Harbinger of Light.

A
MONTHLY JOURNAL.

DEVOTED TO

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

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

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desires, and is (when sincere) a powerful accessory; yet it is probable that few who use it understand the philosophy of its action, which is by the elevation of the spirit of the pray'er to a corresponding sphere, from which it can absorb and conduct the healing influence to the sufferer. Jesus, internally conscious of this power in man, and conceiving that the religious fervour generated in them by faith in him and his teachings, would place them *en rapport* with the source from which he drew his power, predicted that those who had this faith would not only equal, but even excel him as curative media. But this living faith, inculcated by the great Nazarene reformer, has long departed from the church, and in its stead a blind faith in formula is exhibited. Hence it is that when isolated individuals, irrespective of their creed, filled with sympathy for the suffering, turn their thoughts heavenward and supplicate either good spirits, Christ, or the Father—it matters little which so that the aspiration be heartfelt—power is given to them to the extent of their capacity to transmit it, and the effect on the sufferer is commensurate.

It is a mistake to suppose that a man's religious belief has anything to do with the manifestation of this power. It is not so; the principle is inherited more largely by some than by others, but its development depends upon the religious and moral state of the individual. The reason why its modern manifestation has been more particularly apparent amongst the Spiritualists is that they, from experience, are more cognizant, not only of the existence of the power referred to, but of the power of spirits to aid, and hence they appeal more frequently to God and his good angels to help them in this direction. We are not writing for Spiritualists alone, but for men and women—for Humanitarians—no matter what form of religious belief they are attached to; if they are religious in its truest sense, their sympathies will ever be awakened by the sight of human suffering, and we want them to know that they have within themselves more or less power to alleviate it. With such persons the acquisition of this knowledge is all that is essential to stimulate them to its application, and a wide diffusion of it would make what are now deemed "marvellous cures" an every-day occurrence.

THE publicity given to the recent remarkable cures performed by Mr. G. Milner Stephen, at Sydney, has brought healing mediumship into greater prominence, and led to the publication of accounts of similar works being performed in this and the neighbouring colonies. Viewing these events in the aspect of the miraculous, as the public are prone to do, there is a disposition to doubt their reality, or attribute any undoubted change in the subject's condition to the action of their own minds; but those who are familiar with Psychology, and indeed most intelligent Spiritualists know that the most striking and apparently miraculous cures performed by laying on of hands, are merely powerful manifestations of a law which is as clearly exhibited in the simplest mesmeric processes. The *vis medicatrix* is a spiritual essence possessed in degree by every human being whilst in the body, and carried with them and intensified in the spirit world. Were this fact more extensively known, a large amount of latent healing power would be developed, and a corresponding decrease of pain and suffering effected. Will is the power to raise it into action, and sympathy the channel through which it most readily flows; but the power to generate this subtle fluid is limited in man; whilst in the spirit world it is practically unlimited, consequently, by sympathetic rapport with benevolent spirits on the other side, a mediumistic person augments his curative energy in the ratio of his fitness and earnestness. This is the secret of the marvellous cures of all ages. Greatrakes, the Zouave Jacob, Dr. Newton, Dr. Mack, and Mr. Stephen, all realise an influx of power from an invisible source, which according to their religious beliefs they attribute either to God or to spirits. Prayer is relied upon by many healers as a means to the accomplishment of their

WISE WORDS FROM SWEDENBORG.

(Continued.)

WE must now enter somewhat into the region of definitions, because there are many thoughts of a special character which will serve to aid the development of the mind in relation to a firm and satisfactory growth on the spiritual plane, and which could not be dealt with in my more general remarks hitherto given. And in this division of my communications I wish it to be understood that I shall endeavour to present the views which I now hold, but adapted to earthly conceptions, and not necessarily representing the actual form which these thoughts would take in our higher condition of existence. And I beg you to bear this in mind, because that is all we are enabled to do as the instructors of men; we take of our own good things and we give them such an application as will assist the growth of the mind on the earth plane, and thus prepare it for the higher forms of thought which prevail here.

For, as it is said of Moses, in the Old Testament, that he placed a veil over his face when he spake to the people of his charge concerning the things of the Most High; so also must we, because you, the people of our charge, are not yet prepared to be initiated into the heavenly mysteries of the higher life; but the rule holds good all through, that to profit by what you are taught, you must not only know but do the things thus expressed, for they are all intended for practical application to the ways of life. Therefore, we speak in His name, who is the Lord of the universe, and who appointeth teachers for the children of men!

The term *Life*, which is the first definition to which I wish to call attention has been very variously explained and estimated. Life is that which not only characterises man, but also all things which manifest a sentient existence around him. That there must be an origin imputed to this phenomenon, no one can doubt; it is a condition involving such remarkable results, and exhibiting such undeniable potencies, that to say it owes its origin to the mere combination of wandering particles, undirected by any special law, or combined without design, is absurd in the extreme. I have taught in my theological writings that life is essentially the property of the Infinite Being, and that its nature is pure love; and that man is merely a receptacle of this life, as is the case in a subordinate degree with all things living besides. In one respect this is true enough, as I learn now, but it requires defining and explaining. Between man and His Creator there is an affinity of the most positive character, and whereby that union continues to exist, and without which man would cease to be. But the term life, as it relates to and affects man's experience, must be regarded in a somewhat different light; and it is to secure this end I desire to direct your attention to what follows. There are infinite rays, so to speak, or points of life, which having been thrown off by the Great Life Possessor and Life Giver, commence a progress fully qualified for all the conditions through which they are designed to pass in their evolutionary progress. And these points of life, or molecules, as I might term them, possess in themselves those endowments which constitute the life-enduring quality, and also its accompanying activities. Life, therefore, is a principle which belongs essentially to man, and which he is to regard as a possession which may be used to good purpose. To define this quality, therefore, and to point out its uses, becomes a very important duty, and a duty which devolves upon the individual man himself, for [thereby does he become acquainted with himself, and thus, with the means which he possesses, to secure the ends that life is designed to accomplish.

1. Life, then, is a principle of active, growing existence, containing within itself all the potencies for continuance and expansion. 2. Life is a principle capable of being embodied and able to accomplish a variety of uses through the agencies thus provided. 3. Life, being independent of any special embodiment, is able to shift its quarters and remove from one form or condition to another for the purpose of expansion. 4. These removals are accomplished by virtue of established laws,

and never militate against the true interests of man. 5. Life, as a principle of conscious existence, is adapted to associate and harmonise with itself in the various forms which contain this principle. 6. Life, being therefore, conscious, active, unitary, and continuous, and deriving its origin and character from a permanent source, is only, as found in any several condition or mode of its existence, a transitory element, a bird of passage, so to speak, but which during its limited stay in any such mode of existence, exerts its influence, is subject to circumstances, and gains its experience conjointly with the other surrounding embodiments of life. Respecting the cultivation of this life we shall have occasion to speak under other headings.

The next definition of importance is the *sphere*, or atmosphere of that unseen and mysterious principle of life. This sphere constitutes that intermediate link which not only enables the principle of life to unite with, influence, and indeed make itself known to the other particles, but whereby its potentialities become actualities, and its conceptions find expression in accomplished purposes. There is much to be said regarding this atmosphere, or sphere, of the life principle; unlike the principle of life itself, it is subject to change; and thus in the elasticity which pertains to it, becomes the suitable vehicle to gather and retain the experiences of the various modes through which a man passes. It answers, indeed, very exactly to the atmosphere about your earth and the more impalpable atmospheres of that refined condition of materiality which constitutes the higher states of existence. You must understand, however, that it is quite distinct from what may be termed the external covering, whether that be the gross physical form of earth life or the more refined form of a higher and more interior state. It is a condition, or apparatus, essentially related to the life principle, capable of being changed in many respects, so as to be adapted to a variety of states or conditions of being. Hence 1. This sphere of the life principle which I denominate its atmosphere, is the chamber in which the individual ever lives, and which closes him in, so to speak, and renders him a complete unit of existence. 2. This sphere is the volume into which all his experience is entered, and from which he ever has the means to review the conditions through which he has passed. It is the grand conservatory of his being, the treasury of existence, the infallible record of his progress, which can never be destroyed, lost, or mutilated, and ever presenting to him those phases of his experience in the past which are the best adapted to aid him at any particular moment of his progress. 3. This sphere, while being exceedingly sensitive so as to be affected by the spheres of others, is also capable of exerting a wonderful influence on others; and thus 4. The importance of keeping it in a proper condition, free from elements which might act injuriously, and which power man has when he, in the exercise of his intelligence, acts in harmony with the laws of his being. I might remark ere I pass on to the next, that I am dealing with these definitions in their relation to man, particularly as regards his earth state. There is a degree of life which is of a lower order in nature; and to this there also pertains the sphere or atmospheric condition. Also, in relation to man in his higher condition in the future, there pertains a sphere qualified, it may be, by other laws, but essentially the same as his present. To these other phases I may refer further on; at present I confine my remarks to that which is more peculiar to the earthly state.

But in whatever state man may be found, he assumes a *Body*; the tabernacle in which he dwells: quite an ephemeral thing at best, composed of elements which, when attacked by adverse circumstances, dissolve and disseminate among the more impalpable constituents of nature. There are a great many persons who imagine that the body, the physical frame, upon which they look with the material sight, is the whole of man; and that this being dissolved, man ceases to be. But every one who has studied the anatomy of the body recognises therein a mechanical contrivance, with part adjusted to

part, very perfect and beautiful in itself, but requiring a vital force to set the machinery in motion; and which it is proved may be absent and yet all the parts of this wondrous frame be intact. This is more particularly discovered in the case of the still-born child, although the matured body, after the soul hath departed, reveals the same fact. There is very much to be said in reference to the uses of the external body in particular. It is not necessary to enter into a description of its various parts. The uses of the body, as the necessary medium of the soul, are full of significance, and manifestly express its susceptibility to the influences by which it is surrounded. The material senses, as they are termed, the appropriate outlets and inlets of sensation, derive their ability to discharge the functions allotted to them from the vitality which the spirit, or essential life-giving principle imparts to them through the inner sphere or atmosphere of the spirit. Then it is they come into play and exercise their functions. Now, the uses of the body may be regarded as twofold; first, that thereby the spirit may acquire experience; and, second, that thereby the conditions of the external may be fulfilled. And in this you perceive the methods by which both the spiritual and material growth are effected. Bodily sensations, equally with bodily locomotion, are instructive to the spirit, because the impressions produced thereby re-act upon it; for it is a peculiarity of spirit, that while it is the originator of all operations, and the sensations belonging thereto, it is affected by the reaction which necessarily results. Thought, unless it finds expression in palpable actions, is dead, being alone, and profiteth not the spirit; but when there is a result, then the spirit is educated by the quickening of its mysterious faculties, and this experience becomes, so to speak, the food of the spirit whereby it grows and advances along the line of progress. As to the form which the human body assumes, that is designed by the all-wise ordination of Him who regulateth all things according to His wisdom. And the same may be said of the inferior animals. The form assumed is always the manifestation of design to effect certain purposes. With respect to the liability of the body to those contingencies which so materially affect it during its continuance; these, also, are necessary in the order of progress, that all the various laws of life may be illustrated.

Marnias Meti.

Melbourne, June, 1880.

H. J. B.

COMMUNICATION.

BENEFICENT are all God's laws though few of them be understood!

Ignorance is at the root of all man's follies.

Ignorance of self and his surroundings.

Who would venture to sea in a craft minus captain and rudder? Yet men, and women too, attempt to sail o'er the ocean of life without guide or compass, trusting in nought but their own ignorance to steer them clear of the quicksands that surround them on every side. Without chart, without compass, what wonder that many make shipwreck of their best hopes.

From whence then is the knowledge to be derived that shall enable each one to steer straight for heaven where he would be? Clearly from those who have sailed over the same waters. From those who, like myself in days gone by, have battled with the storm and tempest, and having made the port are anxious to see him, like themselves, safely anchored.

Before friends can help each other there must be some connecting link. Now most of you know that we can correspond with those on earth in various ways, providing only that the magnetic cord of sympathy unite us.

Suppose you have a friend on earth in whom you repose confidence and on whose judgment you rely, and some difficulty rises up in your path; is it not a pleasure to consult with your friend as to the best means to be used in overcoming the difficulty? Just so should it be between the dear friends who have passed over and those who remain behind. The former having gained experience, which gives knowledge, are able from their

stand-point to see the breakers ahead, and being consulted can warn you of your danger and lead you frequently to shun the path you thought so smooth but which they can see beset with dangers.

In this way can you be led through green pastures and be given to drink of the refreshing waters of life," for are we not messengers of the Divine, whom we delight to serve. By thus helping and guiding those on earth we are obeying the command "Bear ye one another's burdens."

There are some who might take offence at my words saying "we should go to God the Father for help." To such I would say—when anyone in your community is in distress will he go straightway to the monarch for aid? You know he does not; for the monarch makes use of instruments of various grades, each filling his own office. If this be so in an earthly kingdom, can you think that the kingdom of your heavenly father, which is without limit, can be less ably governed? Each must minister to the one beneath, forming thus links of love in one universal chain, without beginning without end. A chain which encircles all things seen or unseen. A chain too that is perfect in all its parts, for all are members, one of another, whose Great Designer is He whom ye call God, or the Universal Father.

Castlemaine.

K.

To Correspondents.

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

"M. F." and other communications, held over for want of space.

A HELPING HAND.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "HARBINGER OF LIGHT."

SIR,—Having read in present number of the "*Harbinger*," that you intend to issue a supplement with the September number, and concluding that this step will involve some additional cost to you. I beg to forward ten shillings towards defraying such expense, and trust other subscribers may be led to do the same; for whilst it is very desirable that supplements containing interesting matter, be issued from time to time, I think, in the interests of this all important movement, your hands should be strengthened by the furnishing of means to accomplish this special object. With this appeal to fellow subscribers, I remain, Sir,

A PRACTICAL SPIRITUALIST.

August, 3rd., 1880.

[We thank our correspondent for his thoughtfulness and liberality. We have not, and hope never to be compelled to ask for pecuniary aid, but are not above receiving and utilising donations given in the above kindly spirit.—Ed. *H. of L.*]

MAGNETIC CURRENTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "HARBINGER OF LIGHT."

DEAR SIR,—Kindly permit me to mention the following extracts from the mass of correspondence appended to the published report of the London Dialectical Society on Spiritualism.

Professor Tyndall, in a letter bearing date December 22nd, 1869, and addressed to G. Wheatley Bennett, Esq., a member of the Committee, writes thus:—"Mr. Cromwell Varley, who is, I believe, one of the greatest modern Spiritualists, has said that my presence at a seance resembled that of a great magnet among a number of small ones. I throw all into confusion."

You will find the letter at page 265.

Mr. James Burns, managing representative of the Spiritual Institute, 15 Southampton Row, London, W.C., in a letter bearing date April 21st, 1871, addressed to the committee, says:—"My personal presence at the Spirit Circle is even an impediment to the success of the phenomena; and this and other facts have led me to the discovery that mediumship does not depend on belief or scepticism, but upon organic conditions or temperamental peculiarities."

You will find the letter at pages 354 and 355.

The foregoing extracts may possibly interest those of your readers who occasionally form circles at their residences; for it is obvious that the physiological organisation has much to do with either success or failure, and that any person, whether Spiritualist or otherwise, not possessing the natural faculty for mediumship, "which" as Mr. Burns says, "the spirit circle does not create, but merely calls into exercise" would like a parenthesis in writing, be rather left out.

Yours faithfully,

ANDREW TIMBRELL.

SPIRITISM IN SYDNEY; ITS PROGRESS.

PART II.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—At our Monday evening seance, held July 19th, we had some excellent manifestations in clairvoyance, trance speaking, and spirit writing: the latter being interesting and important. One of these written communications I purpose giving as an encouragement to those who set any value on prayer, but feel distressed at getting no satisfactory answer. Now, the members of this particular circle look upon prayer as one of their greatest privileges, and always open the seance with a prayer to the Almighty direct, not admitting of any "intercessor" between Him and them. By this act we confess to finding very great comfort and spiritual strength. True it is, we often get an answer when not expected, as will be shown in the case I am about to relate; but before doing so I must give an outline of my experience in a *haunted house*. About three months since, I was on a visit at Petersham, a township about six miles out. While taking tea with my friend I heard sudden rappings, thumpings, and other noises in the next room and over head. Being a "sensitive," the effect on me was electric, and an indescribable feeling ran through me; the effect was so marked that to cover it I enquired—"What is it?" I was informed that "it was nothing, only the wind in the roof"; but as there was not a breath of air stirring, I was not satisfied. For three or four evenings I continued my visits, the noises still continuing, being repeated louder and oftener; but I tried not to notice them; however on my next visit, a day or two later, I was startled by a tremendous rap close to my side, which caused me to remark "that the wind was still to be heard," although a perfectly calm evening. I enquired, "do you ever hear the wind blow when I am not here?"—reply, "Sometimes my wife hears it when I am out, but it is always worse when you are in the house." This was proof enough that there must be something to cause the noises beside the wind. So I decided to investigate the subject, but said nothing about it as my friend ridiculed the idea that it was anything uncommon, remarking that if his wife thought it was anything more than the wind she would be frightened. The next time I called was, if possible, a calmer evening than any previous, yet the rapping, tapping, cracking, tramping, and sighing from one end of the house to the other was to me almost intolerable; the blood flew through my veins, I changed colour, and every nerve quivered again, my friend quietly remarking "there is your friend the ghost again." As the evening advanced the noises increased, and about 8-30 they were so loud that I called out—"there that will do, you can go home now." I had no sooner spoken the words when the rapping ceased, and deliberate footsteps walked across the ceiling and stopping with two loud thumps directly over my head, poured a stream of electricity into my brain; the noise it made was like the running of sand, and was distinctly heard by all in the room. After that the noises stopped and were for a time forgotten, and the conversation was carried on without interruption till it was time for me to be going, but on looking at my watch I found it too late to meet the bus, so not being disposed to walk that distance at so late an hour, I decided to camp down for the night. At 12 o'clock the family retired, bidding me a good

night's rest. Accordingly I "curled" myself up on the couch to sleep, but not a wink could I get, so I got up and lit the candle, then laid down again, yet sleep would not come; presently the rapping commenced at the rear of the house, three distinct thuds, then tramp, tramp around the house till it came to my room door, when it exploded with a report that brought me upright on my feet, but nothing could be seen; then I laid down again. No sooner was all quiet than the march around and across the roof commenced, ending as before. For two hours this was carried on, to the almost total destruction of my nerves, when suddenly, at 2-30 a.m., the tramping commenced at the old spot, went around the house, and with a tremendous crash, which made me think the window was completely destroyed, a figure sprang into the room directly on the top of me as I lay on the couch beneath the window. In an instant I sprang up; made a grab at the form, saying, "Now I have got you, my boy;" but I had not got him, for he passed completely through me, through the couch, through the floor, and I could hear him walking along underneath, and in less time than it takes me to tell it, it quietly came head first through the hearthstone, then coolly walked to the centre of the room, where it stationed itself for some time; it was the figure of an old man, about seventy years of age, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, ruddy complexion, long white flowing hair, clean shaven, and closely cut whiskers; he had on a brown felt wide-awake, was dressed in a spotlessly clean smock-frock, honey-combed shoulders, breast, and armlets, with white glass buttons from top to bottom, leather leggings, and strong nailed boots; in his left hand he carried a long ask stick. The tension at this juncture was too great for my nerves, and I sprang from my couch exclaiming, "I can stand this no longer." Yet the old man did not move; he still stood there watching my movements with a coolness that was surprising. The tremendous crash before mentioned awoke my friend, who, thinking thieves were in the place, hastily threw on his clothes, came out to see what was the matter, and walking across the room passed completely through my old man. Of course as he did not see him he laughed at my excited state when I told him what he was doing. As I declared that I would not lay down again while that old man was in the room, I had to remain up for the remainder of the night, for the old man would insist on staying by my side. I resolved I would never attempt to sleep in that house again till the mystery was cleared up; but for some time no chance presented itself, my friend suddenly leaving the house two days after, and I have not seen him since. I may add that all this took place in the light, as I kept a candle burning the whole time. I afterwards found that for the past two years no one would stay in that house on account of the strange noises often heard. This decided me to push my enquiries, which terminated far more satisfactorily than I expected; the result I will give in my next.

Since my last letter the medium I referred to has left for America; so we have not a public medium now. The Rev. J. A. Dowie has been still lecturing against Spiritualism, to very small houses; so much so that he is changing his tactics. Next Sunday he will lecture on "Homeward Bound," in which I hope he will show a little more of that love that is needed to make home happy than he has displayed for the past six weeks.

Owing to the destruction of the Theatre (Victoria) by fire, Mr. Tyerman lectures in the City Hall; the "good Christians" of Sydney say it is a punishment to the owners for allowing Mr. Tyerman to lecture in it. Be that as it may, the owner of the City Hall is not one of that sort, and Mr. Tyerman lectures to good houses without the fear of "Fire."

Mr. Stephen is still at what is called here "his marvellous miracles," although I confess that I can see nothing of the "marvellous" in the good he does, nor do I for a moment think he performs a miracle when he relieves the lame and blind. I am not at all disposed to think he does it by the spirit-power of "Angels," as he tells the poor who flock around him, for as yet not a case of "perfect cure" has come under my observation, and in some he has proved a total failure; yet I believe he is doing much good, and will by practice no doubt

increase his healing powers. For the past two weeks I have not been able to take an active part in the movement, owing to an accident that confined me to the house for some days. I am thankful to say that I am again restored, and trust in a few days to resume my duties in the work of promoting the cause of Spiritualism that we have so much at heart.—Yours truly,

S. W. M.

Sydney, August 6th, 1880.

JOTTINGS FROM THE NORTH EAST

THE Rev. W. C. Howard, M.A., the incumbent of Christ Church, (E.) Beechworth, seems to be a gentleman of rather advanced views, more in accordance with the spirit of the age than most of the Clergymen in this portion of Victoria. Although the position he holds as a minister debars him from expressing his opinions and views with that freedom of utterance that any other man would be allowed to do who is outside the jurisdiction of the Bishop of any particular Church. A few Sundays ago he rather surprised his congregation at Hurdle Flat, (a place where he holds fortnightly services) by giving instead of his regular sermon, a discourse on the phenomena of Spiritualism, as investigated by William Crookes, Cox, Wallace, and others. Although the Rev. gentleman did not say that it was *spirits* of the human race that did those things, that would have been too much of a confession for a Clergyman to make; yet he said, and the words he said were of great importance, *That they proved there is a life hereafter*. I am very sorry I was not present to hear him on that occasion, the above being told to me by some of the persons present at the time, whose veracity is unimpeachable. I was also informed he read extracts from a work on Spiritualism, and from which he said he could draw fifty sermons. "Little straws show how the wind blows," Last Sunday, 7th. Aug., I went to hear him, and being a wet day the people present were few in number. Mr. Howard after reading the xvii chap. of the 1st. Kings, commenced a discourse in lieu of his written sermon, which he would have given if there had been more present. And in the course of his remarks said, "This was rather the Age of science than of faith." And also expressed doubts as to the inspiration of the Old Testament. And also saying "that it made no difference to the soul's welfare whether you (meaning the people present) believed the account of the origin of man or the story of the Ark, or the falling down of the walls of Jericho, by the blowing of trumpets—or the sun standing still at the command of Joshua, or the account of Jonah and the whale, it is a matter of indifference whether such things were in the present age believed or no—adding "but you *must* believe in the divinity of Christ—his crucifixion, resurrection, and in the atonement and forgiveness of sins. In conclusion he gave out as hard a nut to crack, as ever I tried my brains (if I have any) on. He said that he could account for, and explain by natural laws the whole of the wonders recounted in the Old Testament. I have been trying to solve the problem how the face of the earth was not denuded of every thing on it, the whole flying off in a tangent into space, when the earth stopped to allow Joshua to finish off the Amorites. I question much whether the *natural laws*, as laid down, or supposed to be laid down by the Rev. Gentlemen, would bear the investigation of any one but a Clergyman. Whether he can or no is of no consequence to the Spiritualist and Freethinker. The only thing we should be proud of is to know that some of the views as set forth by the Freethought platform, were in effect advocated that day by a Clergyman of the Church of England, to a congregation whose freethinking propensities are of a very limited order. I expect to hear a little more from him very shortly, that will coincide more fully with our views, and less with those of most of his fellow Clergy.

A few days ago I read an article in the *Sydney Mail*, in which the good qualities of a late M.L.A. were fully discussed; he having been a great patron of all our door sports in the sister colony. The writer of the article

alluded to, says:—"He, (the gentleman named in the notice) has joined the great majority." Now according to the teachings of the orthodox divines, very few indeed are travelling the road leading to the "Pearly gates." There is, so we are told, a vast multitude, going the other direction, towards the gates were Cerebus holds guard; consequently those that get to heaven are in the minority. While of course the majority must go (and I have the authority of the *Sydney Mail* for it that our friend was with them) to the regions of perpetual heat down below.

I hear that a Wesleyan "Shepherd who at one time had charge of the *lambs* of the Church in Yackandandah, is rather inquisitive as the truth of the Spiritualistic phenomena, and to solve the problem the Rev. gentleman is meddling with the "pitch" by reading some of the literature of the movement. If by all that I have heard of the gentleman in question, he will be no mean addition to our ranks; I say that *he will be*. For I never knew anyone who searched with the proper spirit into the facts of our belief, and investigated them with the sole intention of accepting the truth, who did not in the end throw orthodoxy away for the bright jewels of Spiritualism and the ministry of angels.

UNCOMPREHENDED SPIRITUAL PHENOMENA

THE following appears in the London *Daily Telegraph* under the heading of "Superstition in Essex."—

At the Dunmow Petty Sessions, Charles and Peter Brewster, father and son, two labouring men, were recently charged with misbehaving themselves towards Susan Sharpe, wife of an army pensioner, living at High Easter, in a manner likely to lead to a breach of the peace. The evidence showed that the defendants were under the impression that the complainant was a witch, and they wanted to put her to the test by throwing her into a pond to see whether she would sink or float. They affirmed she had bewitched the young defendant and his wife—the furniture in the house was disturbed, their domestic animals died, their bed rocked like a swinging boat, and shadows appeared in their bed-room. On one occasion there were three in bed to witness the shadowy apparition, and they strongly asserted that the shape was that of the complainant. The elder defendant had visited certain reputed "cunning" men and women in the villages around, with a view to baffle the supposed witch's evil designs, but without effect—"all sorts of things" had been tried, but they could get no peace, and the reports they set abroad caused an excitement in the locality. The chairman (the Rev. E. F. Gepp) said such things as they had done might have led to a serious riot some years ago. They were bound over to keep the peace for six months.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

IN our last we mentioned that a delegation of the Theosophical Society had left Bombay for the purpose of inaugurating a branch of the Association in Ceylon. Their advent at Galle appears to have created quite a sensation, and it is asserted that "never since the word 'Christianity' was pronounced in Ceylon has there been anything like the excitement amongst the Buddhist people there." Branches of the Society have been formed at Galle, Panadura, Colombo, and Kandy. Thousands have flocked to hear Colonel Olcott (the President) expound Theosophy, and explain the principles of the Society. The Christian population view the movement with dismay, and their ministers are ineffectually endeavouring to stem its progress.

It is particularly amongst the educated classes of Hindoos that the Theosophical principles are so readily accepted, and ample means are forthcoming for the establishment of the various new branches on a substantial footing. This speaks well for the growth of religious thought among our oriental brethren, and the establishment of these "Foci" will tend to the more rapid development of Philosophical religion in Ceylon.

ELI, ELI!

By C. W. ROHNER, M.D., CHILTERN.

A terrible lie—a black Jewish lie—a lie as black as Erebus—has been handed down to us through nine centuries by two Jewish writers whose names respectively are supposed to be St. Matthew and St. Mark. These two writers—these two alleged inspired penmen of God affirm *una voce* that the last dying words of the Man-God Jesus were, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” The two other similarly inspired biographers of the great mediating medium of Nazara, this last and best of Jewish prophets, St. Luke and St. John, equally unanimously agree that the hero of their pages said nothing so revolting, but something quite different and far more dignified. St. Luke makes him say what a true Spiritualist on his death-bed might say very appropriately in any age or country—“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit;” whilst, according to St. John, the last dying words of the martyr Rabbi were, “It is finished!”

How are these so divergent and so painfully dissonant statements of the four gospel writers to be harmonised? I say it is absolutely impossible to harmonise them, nay, more, it is utterly impossible even to comprehend them. How, I ask, is it possible to believe that so clairvoyant, so God-intoxicated, so man-devoted a spirit, as that of the Seer of Nazara evidently was, forgot himself so terribly at the end of his glorious career that he accused his God and Father as a common traitor? Yes, a traitor, as common a traitor as Judas, an omnipotently common traitor! How, I ask again, can we conceive it possible that one whose depth of divine philosophy had reached up to the profound height of Nirvana, realising his oneness with God, feeling the total absorption of his humanity in the divinity of his Father, should, in the last hour of his life, disgrace himself so utterly as to allow a merely temporary agony of pain, an agony moreover which was to land him immediately in the highest of heavens, to extort from his lips so horrible an accusation, against that Father whose much-beloved, not only beloved, son he was? Is it conceivable that a sainted martyr should lose sight of his divine mission thus abominably, thus madly, thus atheistically? No, no; a thousand times, no! No such divine treason for me, certainly the highest order of high treason perpetrated by God against man!

Away, then, with this blackest of blasphemies! How many martyrs have died since the death of Jesus, and not one of them, not the meanest and weakest of them, has been accused by any profane writer, not to speak of sacred and inspired biographers, of such villainy as is here attributed to Jesus, the protomartyr of a civilisation of love, by two would-be-saints and God-inspired writing mediums, St. Matthew and St. Mark. *Credat Judæus!* I will not believe it upon the oaths of ten thousand such saints or sinners. Why? If the accounts of these two saints are correct, we must alter the very name of Christianity to St. Stephenism; for who has not observed the great contrast which exists between the last words of the first witness to the pure teachings of the poor Nazarene, and the last words of Jesus on the cross? The Master said, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” and the disciple, sinking on his knees under the weight of a hailstorm of stones, exclaimed with a loud voice, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge; and when he had said this he fell asleep.” Yes, without blaspheming God, he went to sleep on his bed of stones. For these words alone St. Stephen would be entitled to the honour of being called the founder of the faith of the Christians; but, fortunately for us, Luke and John come here to our rescue by point blank contradicting Matthew and Mark in their slanderous assertions concerning the conduct of the man Jesus during the hour of the most momentous event in his life—his death.

There can be no doubt that a more enlightened and appreciative psychological study of the mind, and character of Jesus, will side with Luke and John as against Matthew and Mark, especially when the student of the life of this philosopher of love finds other indications of an equally exclusive judaizing tendency in the first two gospels, which indications are entirely absent in the two latter writers. All thoughtful, and unbiassed readers of our bible are aware that the spirit of the first two gospels moves yet within those narrow limits of inquisitorially persecuting judaism, which could not, and would not permit that any prophet of Israel, and especially not its Messiah or Shiloh, should go beyond the geographical boundary line of the territory of God's chosen people. And in this respect it is equally incredible that Jesus should have addressed the woman of Canaan, who requested the great Master in lunacy to cast an unclean spirit out of her daughter, in the following most unkindly and unfeeling words:—“Let the children (of Israel) first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto dogs.” How could so cosmopolitan a spirit, and so sincere and honest a lover of all God's creatures be guilty of so vile an expression as to compare Canaanites, Syro-Phenicians, Greeks and Romans, to that most detested and, by the Jews, most loathed animal, the dog? It shows plainly that the Jews of the days of Jesus, Matthew, and Mark,—whoever they may be or have been—could not even be fair and just to dogs; for as they hated the dogs, the most sincere friend of man amongst animals, so they hated and stoned the prophets, the most warmhearted patriots, and the most disinterested and genuine lovers of proletarian humanity. Thus, the Jewish mind has remained essentially conservative down to our own times, opposed to all progress of the lower orders, the mob, the rabble, the *canaille*, the ragamuffins, in fact the enemy of all those poor-spirited and single-minded creatures whom Jesus loved so much that he suffered persecution and death for them. The long expected conversion of the Jews will not be to Christianity so much as to cosmopolitical liberalism, and of this important conversion, in a not very distant future, there are ample indications. But I am digressing. The above passage, then, is merely the expression of the jealous spirit, and of the hatred of a worn out creed, seeing itself tottering to its certain decay and destruction, and fighting to the last, as our own modern creeds do, for the loaves and fishes of this world, knowing nothing of another. The passage in question is based upon no other inspiration than that furnished by the base fear of a selfish nation, lest the blessings bestowed upon them exclusively, as they thought, or flattered themselves to think, might by an all-loving God be extended to the Gentiles, for whom they had no more love or respect than they had for the dogs in their kennels; and the reason why the latter biographers of Jesus—Luke and John—do not mention either the atheistical cry of despair on the cross, or the above snarling expression of a religious *rabies caenina* must be looked for in the fact that their writings were inspired by a more comprehensive spirit of liberality and religious toleration, born long after Matthew and Mark had ceased to be the only spiritual guides of the fast-spreading early Christian churches.

Let us, therefore, in future think more charitably of Jesus, the most advanced, the most enlightened, the most earnest, the most thorough-paced spiritualist of antiquity; at the same time, however, never forgetting that Jesus, with all his divine grandeur of character, was after all only a man: a fact acknowledged even by himself in that remarkable passage of revelation where he prevented John from falling down before his apparition and worshipping him, using these words, “I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets—worship God.” Thus, then, Jesus of Nazara was only one of the numerous army of reforming martyrs, the royal dynasty of whom began with Socrates and Sakyamuni; and this noble royalty of unselfish lovers of the human race will, I trust, survive the coming shock of international republicanism, and maintain itself erect in the midst of the ruins created by the not distant strife among the peoples of our planet.

FREETHOUGHT VINDICATED.

THE announcement of a new book by Mr. Tyerman, will take no one by surprise. He is a worker so indefatigable, and with fluent pen, is always so ready to give expression to the activities of his restless brain, that there is no occasion for wonderment in the fact of his having found time amid the engrossment of those avocations with which, for nearly a decade, he has been prominently identified in this and a sister colony, to engage in another literary effort.*

The *casus belli* appears to have been the sudden realisation on the part of certain Sydney theology-smiths, that their craft was in danger, and their consequent resolution to excite the popular feeling against those whose operations seemed likely to prove seriously inimical to the success of their own celestial trade. The "drum ecclesiastic" was beaten by the *Express*, a weekly paper belonging to the Roman Catholics. The *reveille* was duly responded to with much trumpeting and piping by the *Witness*, a Presbyterian weekly, edited by the Rev. G. Sutherland; the Rev. J. A. Dowie, a cleric of the Congregational church, though at present, apparently, "unattached;" and the Rev. A. C. Gillies, a Presbyterian minister recently imported from America.

Against this combined assault, Mr. Tyerman, as the pioneer of religious freedom in Sydney, felt himself called upon to make a defence; and, accordingly, before a densely crowded audience assembled in the local Temperance hall, on June 25th, last, he delivered a lecture in reply—the report of which, in an augmented form, is now before us.

To those that are familiar with this gentleman's former works—his "Guide to Spiritualism," and "Spiritualism Vindicated," his reply to Archbishop Vaughan, and "Spiritualism as a Destructive and as a Constructive System"—it will be unnecessary to intimate that the present pamphlet possesses all the qualities which embellished them. It displays its author's keen, incisive style, and unassailable logic, his comprehensive grasp, and great power of analysis, his terse yet lucid exposition, together with occasional flashes of genuine eloquence. The exposure of his opponents, and their often grotesque fallacies, is complete and crushing.

Mr. Tyerman, while disclaiming a representative character, thus defines and describes "Freethought":—"I employ it as representing the utmost individual liberty in the pursuit of truth and happiness, that is compatible with the full liberty of every other individual; and as embracing a class of broad principles, which Liberals of all classes, and schools of thought, including Secularists, Materialists, Deists, Agnostics, and Spiritualists, hold in common. It, therefore, includes the denial of the popular views of God, the infallible inspiration of the Bible, the Divinity and Atonement of Jesus Christ, the Divine origin and authority of the Christian religion, and a number of other dogmas, that grow out of these fundamental ones; and (it includes) also certain positive and constructive principles."

The lecturer then enumerates and enlarges upon several questionable tricks, or reprehensible methods of argument, employed in controversy by the opponents of Freethought. Next follows a review of his antagonists. The charge of the *Express* that freethinkers are fools and atheists, and that they deny all moral responsibility, is combated and dissipated. Various assertions and pious slanders retailed by the *Witness* also are disproved; while Mr. J. A. Dowie's assumptions and misrepresentations are somewhat mercilessly laid bare. The Rev. A. C. Gillies then comes in for a very severe castigation. His description of Christianity and Infidelity are shown to be faulty and defective. Says Mr. Tyerman, "Mr. Gillies began by referring to the general belief among men in a *God, immortality, and individual responsibility*. These were essential to Christianity, and were, in fact, the essence of it as described that evening; while general Infidelity was simply the denial of these beliefs. . . .

Though these three doctrines are a part of the Christian belief, there is nothing distinctly *Christian* about them. They are just as much a part of Judaism, Buddhism, Mahomedanism, and several other isms, as of Christianity. . . . Christianity, as consisting in a belief in the miraculous conception of Christ, his Divinity, the atonement for sin by shedding his blood, his Resurrection as the first fruit and pledge of general resurrection, Justification by faith in his death, his Intercession before his Father's throne, his Coming to judge the world at the Last Day, the Eternal Punishment of those who do not believe in him—Christianity, as consisting of these and some other essential doctrines, was hardly hinted at." (p. p. 47-8) Mr. Gillies' assertion that Freethinkers oppose every dictate of reason when they repudiate "faith," is thoroughly refuted, the true character of faith explained—its divergence from *credulity* being clearly exhibited; that Infidelity can boast of few great names, is met by stubborn facts. That Infidelity is lacking in practical charity, benevolence, and missionary enterprise; that the Bible and science are in perfect harmony; that Freethought is self-condemned; that it is impotent to reform, but is favourable to crime; that it belittles and degrades man: all these, and similar accusations, are met as fully as the limits of a single discourse would allow, and in a manner satisfactory to most admirers of Freethought.

Besides this there are important paragraphs on the French Revolution (pp. 97—9; the influence of Christianity on Civilisation (pp. 100—1), and its incompetence "alone single-handed to convert this earth into a second Eden." On pp. 66—67, we have an enumeration of some points of New Testament Christianity to which professing Christians themselves are infidel. Among them is *Usury*, a subject brought into notoriety by the celebrated discussion recently carried on between John Ruskin and the Bishop of Manchester.

The lecture concludes with the enunciation of twenty leading Freethought principles, which we should be glad to transcribe here did not pressure on our space unfortunately preclude.

There is an appendix containing correspondence between the Rev. A. C. Gillies and Mr. Tyerman. It seems that the latter sent the rev. gentleman one of his pamphlets on Spiritualism. This elicited a response, which is so curious a specimen of clerical ill-breeding and conceited self-sufficiency, that we cannot refrain from transferring it to our pages. We observe from recent correspondence in the Sydney *Evening News*, that Mr. Gillies' epistolary efforts are commonly of the admirable tone exhibited in the subjoined note:—

"June 17th.

"Mr. Tyerman: Sir,—I take it for granted that it was you who sent me the pamphlet by you on (so-called) *Spiritualism*. I return it to you for the simple reason that I have studied and investigated Spiritualism to the bottom, and that (as is plain from the pamphlet) is far more than you have done; and, therefore, I do not feel disposed to waste any time reading such *boosh*.

"N.B.—This note is not to encourage any further correspondence from you, because I have more to do with my time and money than to throw them away on minor men. I have no shot to waste on small game.

"Anything further from you will be returned unread."

Notwithstanding the warning therein conveyed, Mr. Tyerman replied to this charming specimen of Christian courtesy in a thoroughly trenchant style, illustrative, we may venture to say, of the *reductio ad nihilum*.

We must now terminate our review of Mr. Tyerman's pamphlet, with many regrets that we have been unable to represent more in detail the positions taken up by its author, and to quote it more *in extenso*. Despite a possible disagreement on one or two minor points, we can heartily recommend the *brochure* for general perusal, as being an able vindication and exposition of Freethought, and as calculated to accomplish effective missionary work among both bigots and those who are halting between two opinions. Only one regret accompanies our commendation: it is that so excellent a work

*"Freethought Vindicated, or Infidel Christianity v. Honest Unbelief." A lecture in reply to the Revs. A. C. Gillies, and J. A. Dowie, "the Catholic Express," and the "Presbyterian Witness." By J. Tyerman, Sydney: R. W. Skinner, 285, Pitt-street.

should be disfigured, as it in some places is, by typographical blemishes, attributable probably to the haste with which it was prepared for publication; but these, we must add, in no way vitiate the argument or obscure the sense.

X.

THE COMPLETION OF THE "HARBINGER'S" FIRST DECADE.

MR. W. H. TERRY.

My Dear Sir,—

I read with much interest and pleasure the statement that the last number of the *Harbinger* completed the first decade of its existence, also the brief sketch of its career, and that of the movement of which it is an exponent and advocate; and I beg to congratulate you on having been able to brave the storms and surmount the difficulties of those ten years, and pilot your journalistic craft so far successfully across the uncertain sea of public life. They have no doubt been years of toil, anxiety, danger, and little, if any, remuneration; but it must be a satisfaction to yourself to have struggled through them, and to feel that the paper has done much good, and enters upon its second decade on a still firmer footing and with the prospect of greater usefulness as time rolls on. I sincerely hope that it will not only live to complete another decade, but many a one after that, and will find each more bright and prosperous than its predecessor.

The cause which the *Harbinger* represents has made much progress in these colonies, and in all parts of the world during the last ten years. Having myself been publicly identified with it during most of that time, and watched its career with keen interest, I cannot but rejoice with you at the success that has been achieved in different places. If the progress has not been as rapid and marked as one could have wished, it has been greater than appearances at the beginning warranted the expectation of. Prejudice, and various forms of opposition, are weaker than they were, and there are many more believers in it than it could boast of ten years ago. The pulpit and the press, as a rule, are less bitter and unjust in their crusade against it, and science, materialism, and Christianity are more disposed to give a fair hearing to its claims.

But while there is room for congratulation on the progress made, there is still much to be done before Spiritualism occupies the position, and wields the influence for good in Australia, that it is capable and destined for; and, with your permission, I will make the completion of the *Harbinger's* first decade the occasion of a few friendly remarks to our fellow-Spiritualists in these colonies, in the hope of stirring one and all up to greater diligence for its propagation.

I fear none of us are doing all we might do to diffuse a knowledge of the truth as it is in Spiritualism. Some of our friends act as though they thought the cause would propagate itself, or the spirit-world would spread it for us. There cannot be a greater mistake. It is not a self-propagating power; nor can our spirit friends make known the truth except through human instrumentation. They and we must use all the legitimate earthly means at our command, or we shall find the best and grandest movement the world has seen remaining stationary, or creeping slowly along, the object of ridicule and slander, when it ought to march onward with steadily accelerating speed, and command ever increasing respect and admiration. There is a great deal of unworthy trimming, of unmanly cowardice, of contemptible pandering to Christianity on the one hand and Materialism on the other, because they are as yet the most popular. Some of those who know the truth scarcely ever open their lips in favour of it where there is anything to risk; when they do venture to say a word in favour of it, it is with so much hesitation and half-heartedness, and so many paltry reservations, as to injure rather than help it; yet some of those same

people will talk loudly and manifest great zeal for the cause among persons who admit its truth, and consequently, where there is nothing to lose by boldly avowing their belief in it. Of course the cause is comparatively unpopular yet; there is some little risk to incur in open identification with it, and it always will be under the ban of popular opinion if all who believe in it act as those parties do. They are doing little or nothing to soften prejudice by correcting error respecting it; and when it does become fashionable, it will have little to thank them for, though some of them will, no doubt, be among the first to rush for the spoils of victory as if they all along bravely fought its battles.

If all who know Spiritualism to be true did their duty, we are numerous and strong enough to compel respect where we now encounter sneers and abuse; and the day of its universal triumph would be greatly hastened. Every Spiritualist should regard himself as a pioneer worker in the cause. It is all pioneering work that has to be done yet, and will be for some years to come. We have a hard, up-hill, constant battle to fight, to conquer the powerful enemies that confront us. And, of course, all cannot mount the rostrum, nor wield the pen, but all can do something, however little it may be. Everyone can at least show his true colours when occasion offers, instead of folding them up and concealing them, as is too often done. I do not mean that we are to be always talking about Spiritualism, nor to obtrude it on inopportune occasions, and in a manner that might repel rather than attract. Nor do I mean that an adherent of it should recklessly expose either his position, business, or reputation for it. Discretion and judgment must be exercised, or we may do as much harm as good to the cause. But I do say that all should be true to the principles they profess, and prudently use such means of making them known as may be employed with safety and consistency. And, above all, those who can afford to risk public opinion better than some of their brethren, and have the ability and opportunity to do something to extend and popularise it, should not hesitate to do their duty, whether on the platform, through the press, or in private life.

Christians and Materialists are our principle opponents, and of the two classes I regret to say that I find the latter, as a rule, as difficult to get at as the former, though they call themselves Freethinkers. Indeed, in some cases they are more unreasonable and intolerant. I sometimes hear it said that we should aim to make Christians Freethinkers first, and then they would be more likely to become Spiritualists; but experience has taught me that this is an utter mistake. If we make a Christian a Spiritualist, we necessarily make him a Freethinker; but if we aim first at making him a Freethinker, we not only do not make him a Spiritualist; we do not even render him more likely to become one than he was before. For many Freethinkers having got rid of Orthodoxy, with its errors and superstitions, scout Spiritualism as another form of superstition, and profess to be too wise to have anything to do with it. The thoughtful Christian sees that of the two systems—Materialism and Spiritualism—the latter leaves him most of what he now believes, and therefore he is more likely to incline to it than the former. I therefore hold that even as a matter of policy, as well as principle, our great should be to win the Orthodox over to Spiritualism, and then, if they are logical and consistent, they are bound to become Freethinkers.

In conclusion I would respectfully but earnestly urge all our friends who may read this letter to bestir themselves and try in such ways as they may severally have at command to make known the glorious truths we profess. We have the grandest cause the world has yet seen, shall we not strive to be worthy of it? We are numerous and strong enough, if united and earnest, to shortly place Spiritualism in a much more satisfactory position before the public than it now occupies. Shall we not do our duty, and thus confer a blessing upon mankind, and obtain the smile of those who watch our movements from the other side?

J. TYERMAN.

FROM "THE LAW-EXPOUNDER OF THE UNIVERSE."

[We subjoin an almost verbatim report of the first two of a series of astronomical addresses delivered at the weekly meetings of a circle in this city, composed of about a dozen members, by a spirit of rare brightness and pre-eminence, who is spoken of by those who attend upon him and listen to him, as "The Law-Expounder of the Universe." The other addresses of this course have been taken down by a short-hand writer, and will be published in due course.]

My beloved friends and seekers after knowledge: if, during my labours amongst you, I shall be instrumental in leading your thoughts to a true conception of that mighty Power from whence all things spring,—the sole Cause of all effect, the Creator of the universe; if, as I say, I should be instrumental in leading you to a higher knowledge of that mighty Being, the great I Am of all eternity, I shall be more richly rewarded than I could hope to deserve. I also wish to state that this course of addresses will not embody the more abstruse and mathematical phases of astronomy, deeming it the wiser course to pursue to keep aloof from those scientific regions where your circle could not clearly follow me, and only intending to notice such matters as may find ready access to your mind—truths, which I trust will not only increase your knowledge of the mighty grandeur of that wondrous system and structure of the heavens, but will give a clearer understanding, a higher knowledge, of the illimitable power and infinite wisdom which constructed the mechanism of the universe; facts which are wholly unknown to the many astronomers of your age, and but vaguely conjectured, indeed, by the few.

Friends; do not think me vainglorious in thus speaking, for it is not I, Isaac Newton, the mortal, who speaketh to you, but the power and glory of God which speaketh in and through me: for as the material universe is the visible evidence of God's power and glory, so is the universe of mind the invisible evidence of a higher power—a greater glory. Oh! that the astronomers of your day could but view the heavens in that light!

Dear friends, I shall now, without any delay, plunge at once into the first subject that is to come under discussion at this sitting, viz.: The general aspect which the heavens present when viewed in spirit life, and the position and movements of your sun. The heavens, when contemplated from spirit life, when the material part of our organisation has been cast aside to recombine with the elements from whence it came, and the vision of the soul is no longer obscured by the conditions of matter, present to us a spectacle of unspeakable grandeur. The so-called space is one endless ocean of ether, surcharged with immense forces; and at innumerable points in the celestial regions there have been produced, and are being continually produced, myriads of suns and worlds inconceivable in their complexity of formation, differences of aspect, and variety of colouring. Stratum after stratum of worlds, rolling in their elliptical orbits with marvellous rapidity and accuracy of motion; nebulous matter, condensing into planets; planets in every stage of progress, from the fiery mass to the perfected and habitable planet.

Yes, my friends, the nebular theory of the great Laplace was correct: elemental matter condensing into nuclei, and through various and wonderful stages of progress, becoming habitable worlds;—galaxy after galaxy of marvellous splendour scattered through space, bewildering our astonished gaze, to be succeeded by others so much more marvellous as to dwarf into insignificance the wonders which passed before our vision the moment before;—systems and systems of comets, not distributed at random, not wandering lawlessly through space, but obeying the beautiful and wondrous laws which govern the order of creation to which they belong, and moving through the immense waves of ether with tremendous velocity;—cometary systems of such exceeding variety of fantastic forms and complexity of shapes, that the human mind would be unable to form

any adequate conception thereof;—gaseous systems of floating light, surcharged with electricity from the solar orbs, and distributing it among the planets belonging to their several systems;—meteoric bodies rushing seemingly headlong through the waves of ether in ethereal space, leaving lurid streaks of light in their paths through the heavens—these paths being nearly always rectilinear, and the streaks of light forming waves of transcendent beauty and brilliancy; and meteors of every size, of every degree of luminosity, and however insignificant, performing their allotted duty in the wondrous economy of creation, and, however apparently erratic in their movements, never deviating by a single hair's breadth from the course marked out for them by the All-wise Creator.

And these stupendous designs are moving towards the great centre of gravity—each system having a centre of gravity belonging to itself—but not moving towards one central sun, as many have supposed, but towards what may be more accurately defined as the centre of gravity of your universe.

That key of knowledge which unlocks the mysteries of all creation, and which has been defined in spirit life as the will of the Creator, is as necessary to the existence of the monad as to that of the mightiest orbs which move in space; for what are atoms and molecules but magnets, each furnished with two poles, one of attraction and the other of repulsion; and thus, are not the loftiest things explained by the lowliest, and do not the lowliest find expression and reality in the very highest?—so that every atom embodies in its infinitesimal existence a part of the power which binds all creation in one vast bond of unity. And thus, through vista after vista of unspeakable beauty, wanders the vision of the soul, moving along the starry path, beholding inexhaustible marvels for eternal contemplation, and is confronted at every turn by the two great ideas, boundless creation and endless eternity; mighty facts, which compel the understanding to own their existence, while conception completely fails to grasp them. O mighty thought! which begins with creation and ends with the Creator. And as the eye wanders through these regions and sees system after system pass across its view, thought rests most lovingly on that system, the third planet of which awakens in me stirring memories of a past existence—that system which has been called the solar system; large in itself, but small when compared with the distance which separates it from the next system, and exceedingly small when compared with other systems scattered throughout the celestial vault.

We will now proceed to examine the position and movements of that immense luminous orb which has been called the *heat and life-giver* of your system.

The sun, when viewed by mortals from the distance which separates it from them, presents the appearance of a large, round, flat, luminous disc; but, my friends, every luminous spherical body must of necessity do so when viewed from the great distance which separates it from your planet. This luminous orb, the centre of gravity of your globe, and around which your earth and its companion planets, attended by their satellites, revolve, when viewed from spirit life, presents the appearance of an immense dark globe immersed in an ocean of light, surrounded by what I shall call atmospheres or wrappings. It is an opaque body surrounded by several of these atmospheres, composed chiefly of nitrogen, oxygen, and aqueous vapours, and some of transparent elastic media, enveloped in gaseous matter, each of which increases in luminosity as it is further removed from the dark body of the sun, until externally, owing to the revolution of meteoric bodies around it, it assumes, as seen through the telescope, that degree of luminosity which is visible to you on the earth. Thus you may perceive that the theory of a dark nucleus in the sun is approximately true, and nullifies the theory that the sun is a vast mass of gaseous matter in a state of intense combustion. There are nine wrappers or atmospheres around the sun, but these may be subdivided until they reach an immense number; but I find I am digressing, and I shall treat of this more fully in my next.

We are now to define the exact position of your sun,

his planets, and satellites; in fact, the whole of the system. The sun is a large single star, forming one of a cluster of stars, constituting part of a large nebula, situated in that immense zone of irregular streams of whitish light which stretching across the celestial vault is lost in the infinity of space, called the Milky Way; but there is such an uniformity throughout the whole system as to show that in its path through the heavens it is moving towards a definite goal, but not, as I have already said, towards a central sun. And here I would refer, in passing, to the gradual separation of the zone of suns which form the Milky Way; the myriads of suns composing which, will be scattered in the ages to come through the infinitude of space. You will, therefore, see from this that your sun is not an attendant sun, but one of the regulating orbs of this great stellar scheme. That which many astronomers have vaguely conjectured is perfectly true, viz.: the breaking up and separating of that immense zone of stars and nebulae known as the Milky Way. Your system is a very small one in dimension as compared with the space which separates it from the next system, and also as compared with the systems beyond it; and the poet of your planet who addressed you so beautifully on a previous occasion, used language to express his thoughts somewhat in this strain:—"O mighty system with worlds diverse, filling infinite space forming the endless universe." Now, friends, that may be very beautiful poetry, but when applied to the heavens it is not astronomically correct, for there are in reality immense spaces in this boundless ocean of ether which have yet to be filled with worlds.

This leads us to consider, can it be that your universe is comparatively speaking very young; but some inspiration above and beyond myself tells me to declare that our universe is very young; and that there are universes older than we can imagine, whose age defies all calculation; but were there not these immense spaces, that which is so evident would arise: there would be endless confusion, matter taking dominion over chaos. Endless worlds in process of formation from the innumerable nebulae are visible from all parts of the heavens. Truly, how wonderfully has the Master Architect of our universe met all demands! Contemplate one mass of these nebulae forming slowly into systems, while God, the Creator impresses on the elemental germs of these embryonic worlds the fundamental principles which shall eventually develop into the innumerable forms of life for whose benefit they are intended! O mystery within mystery! bewildering us all!

Now to return to the more practical part of astronomy: we would have you remember that the curves described by the planets around the sun are not circles, as Aristotle and many ancient philosophers have erroneously supposed, but are *ellipses*; the sun, however, does not occupy the centre of the ellipse, but a point known as the focus; which point is more removed from the centre in proportion as the ellipse is more oblong.

We will now proceed to notice the movements of this immense luminary. The sun performs two great movements, or what may be better defined as a double movement, as it participates in the great diurnal motion and has a movement proper to itself. It will be for us now to prove indubitably these two great movements of the sun. The whole celestial vault which forms your universe has one great movement from east to west, carrying with it all the heavenly bodies without in the least altering their relative positions; and it is owing to this great movement that the stars rise and set, disappearing beneath the plane of the horizon, and reappearing day by day at different altitudes above the plane of the horizon, and continuing to ascend until they reach the plane of the meridian at a given altitude, which does not vary, and continuing to descend until they reach the plane of the horizon. Now the sun being a partaker in this great movement, rises and sets, appears at a different point and reaches the meridian at a different altitude every day throughout the annual revolution of the earth; so that, you see, the stars always maintain the same altitude when they reach the plane of the meridian, whilst the solar orb obtains a different altitude each day, thus proving that whilst the sun partakes of the great diurnal motion common to the whole stellar

scheme, it has, besides, a movement proper to itself, which may be called, without sensible error, a movement from west to east. Let us now ascertain the accuracy of this statement. This will be best done by comparing the sun's movements with those stars in the heavens which set after him. If we observe these, we shall find that the distance or space which separates him from those stars *diminishes* gradually until they disappear in the solar radiance; furthermore, those which disappear in the solar rays will reappear at the same point of the horizon every day. They suffer no change whatever in that respect, whereas that of the sun will vary materially. During the first half of the earth's annual revolution the sun rises towards the north; during the second he will have a contrary movement; and it will be seen by comparison, that in this motion he is removing from those stars which have a more westerly aspect, while his distance from those which have an easterly aspect is gradually diminishing. Therefore we are justified in saying that the sun has a movement from west to east. Besides this great double movement of the sun, the solar luminary has also an onward movement through space, bearing with him his gorgeous retinue; and the path along which he is travelling is towards a point in the heavens which, so far as it has been ascertained, has a right ascension of 250 deg. 9½ min., and a north declination of 34 deg. 36 min.; and this movement of the sun through the stellar vault has been called by terrestrial astronomers the translation of the solar system through space, and by us, in spiritual life, the grand motion of the sun through the heavens.

It is erroneously supposed that the rate at which the sun travels, bearing with him his cortege of planets, is 5 miles per second. It is, however, 7½ miles per second. Truly a very slow rate of progress when compared with the rate at which other systems travel; for there are some which have a velocity of 50 and even 70 miles a second; but not slow when we consider the enormous distance of the point towards which he is travelling, and also the immensity of the system he is bearing with him. At present he is travelling through a thin vaporous, chilly, raw region in the heavens. In coming ages—far, far in the future—the climate of your earth will differ as much from the climate of to-day as the climate of to-day differs from that of the glacial epoch. In those days there will be comparatively different beings inhabiting your globe; for though Nature reproduces the type, she diversifies the species, owing to the external conditions and surrounding circumstances in which they are placed. As the sun passes through more salubrious regions, there will be higher forms of both animal and vegetable life upon the surface of your planet. The flowers will be richer in colour and more delicate in fragrance; the plumage of the birds will be more gorgeous; and while men and animals will be superior to those with which you are now familiar, they will be strictly analogous to existing types.

In conclusion he said: I trust the minds of the dear friends of the circle when they look abroad over the heavens will always rise to that Mighty Being who brought forth these dazzling wonders; and may the Creator—the Mighty I Am—who has been from the endless ages past ruling in all things, and in whom alone there is no change, guide you and lead you upward to a knowledge of His infinite existence, and fill you with His love and wisdom. Farewell! Farewell!

SECTION II.

DEAR friends and fellow-seekers after knowledge,—It gives me much pleasure to be enabled to hold communion with you in this manner; thanks to that All-beneficent Creator, who hath found the means for communication with earth, or rather, who has given us a means of communication with earth, for of all the gifts which that All-beneficent Providence has bestowed upon both spirits and mortals, it is the sweetest thought that they can hold communion with those in the world which they have left. My friends, my last address embraced a rather wider range of matter than I was altogether justified in treating at one sitting; for to give each subject with the volume and completeness commensurate with its importance, would require many sittings, exten-

sive power in the medium, and a close and patient attention on the part of the circle, combined with a certain amount of mathematical and mechanical training, so as to render each member perfectly familiar with the colder and more abstract details of the higher knowledge of astronomy.

I will now, my friends, with your permission, take a brief review of the subject that came under discussion at our last sitting. First: The general aspect which the heavens present when viewed from spirit life. Second: The position of your sun and his systems in the stellar vault, and the great double movement of the sun. In the first I endeavoured to present to your mental vision, through the vehicle of language, the picture of the gorgeous and indescribable scene of beauty which the celestial vault presents when viewed solely with the spiritual eyes; myriads after myriads of systems arranged with the most perfect symmetry, and each lustrous orb glowing with every conceivable variety of colouring, and every imaginable diversity of shade; and in the unity and harmony of their movements, presenting a kaleidoscope of ever-shifting wonders. In the second place we determined the exact position of your system in the heavens—that your sun is a single star, amidst a cluster of stars, which revolve around it as the centre of their gravity, and that they form part of a large nebula situated in that immense luminous tract called the Milky Way. I also referred on that occasion to the indisputable fact of the separating of that immense band of light of what might be called the breaking up and disseminating of the several orbs which compose that great luminous zone; every part in which, however remote or dim, contains within it myriads of systems. Now this fact can be demonstrated by observation alone of the immense distances through which your system is being conducted by the great luminary, the sun, as well as by certain other phenomena to which it is not necessary for me at present, more specifically to refer. In the third place I spoke of the great movement, or rather, of the great double movement of the sun, and stated that whilst it participates in a movement common to the whole of the sidereal scheme, it performs at the same time a movement proper to itself; this movement being from west to east, the luminary travelling along a great orbit called the elliptic. I omitted to mention upon that occasion that lest this movement of the sun should be attributed to the motion of the stars, it was only necessary to compare the movement of the sun with that of the stars; for this movement of the sun, differing so much from the movement of the stars, causes decided differences of time, causes what is called solar day and sidereal day. Solar day being counted as the interval of time which elapses between the consecutive transits of the sun across the plane of the meridian; while sidereal day is determined by two consecutive passages of the star across the plane of the meridian. For the sake of comparison, take the star known as Venus. Now if this star execute its passage across the plane of the meridian simultaneously with the sun on a given day, it will be found by observation that the transit of the former on the day following, across the same plane, will occur a moment of time before the transit of the sun; and it will be further found, by continued observation that this minute interval of time will increase daily until it reaches twelve hours; and a similar interval will go on ere it again executes its transit simultaneously with that of the sun across the plane of the meridian. Thus Venus is sometimes known as the evening star and sometimes as the morning star. I do not wish you to consider that this movement is peculiar to Venus; I have only selected her as an illustration from amidst the starry multitudes which throng the stellar sphere.

We will now take into consideration certain phenomena which occur relatively to the grand motion of the solar system through space—phenomena subject to no known laws. As that system proceeds through space, certain stars are seen to disappear, while others suffer a relative parallactic displacement. Let us examine these phenomena. The fact that certain stars in various con-

stellations are seen to disappear, while others suffer a displacement upon the approach of the sun, is susceptible of explanation by two simple hypotheses: either the intense luminosity of the sun renders their light imperceptible, or they suffer total displacement. It will be for us now to attentively examine each of these two hypotheses, and to accept that one which is most in accordance with ascertained facts.

Here the mathematical and mechanical training which I referred to at the beginning of the present address, combined with a knowledge of the science of optics, is necessary to demonstrate the fact that all luminous bodies having sensible diameters preserve their intrinsic brightness at every distance, and also to enable us to ascertain what is the relation which ought to subsist between two lights seen in the same direction, in order that the brighter may cause the total disappearance of the fainter. It were useless here to enter into the scientific details necessary to demonstrate these problems. Suffice it to say that our photometrical experiments—I say "our," for although photometry was unknown in my day, it was afterwards given by spiritual impression—demonstrate the fact that on a comparison between two lights at certain distances, the velocity renders perceptible differences of intensity only under the 64th part of the value. Therefore we cannot, in accordance with the demands of the laws of light, sustain the theory that the disappearance of these stars is due to the fact of their being rendered imperceptible owing to the superior luminosity of the sun.

Now we will discuss the other hypotheses supporting the assumption that the disappearance of these stars is due to actual displacement. First, it must be observed that the motion of the translation of the solar system through space produces a succession of changes attributable to no laws of periodicity, whilst under the actual and fully ascertained movements, there are orderly and well-established returns of periodic phenomena subject to those laws: therefore we know that your system is approaching a certain point in the heavens. For, again, in one constellation in the heavens, the distances between the stars are sensibly becoming more apparent, whilst in the opposite point of the heavens the distances are as rapidly diminishing, and the stars suffering a proportionate diminution in their sizes. Then, again, we find that of the many stars recorded by the ancients, who also noted their position in the heavens, some have suffered displacement, whilst others have totally disappeared.

My friends, will you kindly follow me closely in this line of argument? In one point of the heavens certain stars have disappeared in the neighbourhood of the constellation Hercules; a point towards which your sun is advancing in its journey towards its great centre of gravity. Now, what are we to conclude from this but that the motion of the solar system through space is indicative also of a similar motion in the other systems, for numbers of these are seen to recede at the advance of the sun; and that all are partakers in a great bond of union, harmoniously working with each other in their several movements; these various systems likewise obeying a law of attraction towards a great centre, and travelling along paths in the heavens, determined by their great centre of gravity? For it is one of the laws of force that if two globes, both free and quiescent, be projected into space through the centre of gravity, they will revolve each in its orbit at a certain distance, for a certain time, but that after a given period they will gradually return to the centre of gravity, each by a determinate path. Thus you see that these single suns, as they are erroneously called—these luminous orbs which are scattered throughout the immensities of space are not single suns, but each belongs to a system of planets, not one is solitary or apart, and it is owing to these grand movements that your universe is enabled to maintain its condition of dynamical stability.

The translation of the solar system through space is supposed by latter-day astronomers upon your earth to be due to the force of attraction of a great central sun; a theory which is wholly inadmissible, for if the sun and his retinue of planets be advancing towards a central sun, as a point of gravity, it certainly is not in the

region towards which the solar system is advancing, but in a transverse direction. There is, indeed, no central sun. Now it is fully ascertained that the movements, or lines described by the motion of the solar system, must be curvilinear, that its movements are by a succession of curves or circles, or what indeed might be better described as a series of delicate spirals; every second or moment of time being tangential to the great centre. Therefore the sun and his system are not approaching this centre of gravity in a perpendicular line as bodies are attracted by the force of terrestrial gravity to the earth's surface, but in a series of movements which I have well defined as delicate spirals. Now, again, if the centre of attraction were a great central sun, there would be of necessity a sympathetic movement. To prove this, let us suppose an immense body, larger than your sun. Well, now, let us take this immense body and give it an annual parallax, say of less than half a second. We could then easily correct the differences in the alteration of the position of the sun. It would not subtend to an angle equal to the three hundred millionth part of a second. That alone proves indisputably that the centre is not, cannot be, a central sun. It is a point around which the masses which compose your universe will be balanced. Where that point is, we know not; it is unknown even to the celestials. We can only give you such knowledge of it as we can deduce from theory. The slow approach of the solar system towards its great centre of gravity is owing to the immense distance which still separates it from this great centre. We have computed the speed at which the sun is conducting his system towards this centre, to be at the rate of seven miles and three-quarters per second. Now as the sun's distance from this great centre is over 99,000,767 times the radius of the earth's orbit—even supposing that as it nears the centre of attraction the force is doubled—even then it would take 100,579,000 years ere your sun could reach its definite goal. Therefore the duration of his course through space must be over 700,000,000 at least; I give it at 745,000,000 of years ere it can reach the great centre of gravity.

Now let us briefly consider how long your earth has been illumined and warmed by its great heat and life-giver. According, if I remember rightly, to the Christian theory the earth is only six thousand years old. Now as the earth was then created, according to the Mosaic scriptures, why the sun must be something, say a day, younger than the earth. That was the serious error in my earthly existence. Instead of looking this difficulty straight in the face, I was deterred somewhat by theological fear—the fear of attacking a faith which I believed was necessary to the welfare of mankind; and this was fatal to my arriving at many conclusions highly beneficial to the advancement of the science of astronomy.

Geologists upon your planet say that the earth's crust indicates the length of time during which it has been acted upon by the solar rays. Not so, for as each stratum becomes influenced by the great luminary, it is subject to a transformation, owing to the operation of the great central gases. That is a subject, or rather a fact, which geologists have omitted to take into consideration. Now we know that your sun has been illumining his system of planets for considerably over 100,000,000 of years, and that at one time your earth was part of that immense luminary; but as a ring of matter was flung off into space, and being sent through the centre of gravity was obliged to revolve around its centre successively with the various planets which form your system.

Upon this subject I will speak more definitely at a future time.

Now my friends, in conclusion, there is one great truth, the greatest perhaps that astronomical inquiry has shown us: That a contemplation of the myriads of systems which are scattered throughout the immensities of that great ocean called space, leads to a more perfect knowledge of the truth, harmony, and beauty of that great Creator at whose bidding those myriad orbs appear; and Who, having created them, sustains, guides, and governs them by the great expression of His will; and that amidst vast cycles of change—change ever

onward to higher and greater existences—He, the Omnipotent One, remaineth changeless for ever; and that to mortals the contemplation of the sublime works of creation will serve to raise their minds from low and perishable objects. It will exalt, purify, and inspire them to a knowledge of the high destiny awaiting those capable of them.

Dear friends, brothers, and sisters, through the bond of spiritual thought may the harmony which alone can proceed from pure lives and great and noble aspirations pervade your life upon earth, that you may experience them a thousand-fold in the life to come. Farewell!

A VOICE FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE.

SOME weeks ago a paragraph appeared in the *Herald* intimating that the will of a wealthy quartz miner, recently deceased, was likely to be disputed, as he had left the bulk of his property away from his family, and had bequeathed it to two persons by whom he had been electro-biologised. Shortly afterwards, the testator presented himself at a private circle in this city and established his identity to the complete satisfaction of an intimate friend who happened to be present. On three subsequent occasions he came, and always with increasing importunity, asking that a private séance might be arranged for, as he had a communication of the utmost importance to make, and one that was essential to his own peace of mind. An appointment was made accordingly, and on a given evening he came, took possession of the medium, who was in a state of trance, and in a tone of voice closely resembling that which was peculiar to him in the flesh, and with a vehemence of manner that was equally characteristic of G. L., he spoke as follows, his friend taking down the words as fast as they were uttered:—

"True friend of other days! Four of us have often sat together; two were true and two were false; and I have come from the world of spirits to tell you that I was not myself when I made my will. I have realised that old and well-worn truth, that sooner or later sin brings its own punishment; for the faults and follies of my early years were visited on me at the close of my earthly existence. My brain was weakened by early excesses, and Mac and that woman knew it. I became subject to them as the patient is to the electro-biologist. Under her influence I ceased to be a free agent, and directly I crossed the boundary of the two worlds, my eyes were opened, and I knew how I had been duped and imposed upon; but I cannot undo it; the money will do them no good, but in that woman's hands it will prove to be a curse to her and to her confederate. Look at her and see to what a depth of villainess a woman may descend; look at her with a lying spirit on her lips! They lied to me continually. They told me you were not my friend; they poisoned my mind against you; they kept you from me, and me from you. I wanted to add a codicil to my will, making some provision for you; but they prevented me from doing so. J. S., I swear before my God it was they and not I who did that thing. When I think of those two poor, faithful creatures (old ladies with whom he had lodged) turned adrift upon the world so cruelly, it grieves me more than I can express. Tell Mac from me that he can have the money, but it will be his curse and hers too. They told me it was for the great cause, and that I was only a steward of my wealth for that cause. My curse upon them. Tell G. and P. that if they will come here, I will speak to them; I know they are infatuated; but so was I, and so were you, until God opened your eyes, and you broke away from that wicked woman; for she is a wicked woman; she has been strong for good, as she is now strong for evil; once she gathered around her spirits of the highest order; now she is under the dominion of spirits of the vilest and most evil character. He and she called themselves my friends. Friends!—excepting those faithful old creatures, you were the only friend I had. Let there be no misunderstanding between us two. I cannot undo what is past; I can only explain. Tell Mac the dead has come back from his grave to warn the world against his wickedness.

Life is short, and eternity is long. Let them glory in their ill-gotten wealth; but mark my word, it will turn to dust and ashes in the spending. C. will be a great man; I can do nothing for you, but I will stand by your son, and will guide and guard, and impress him through life. A burden has been lifted off my soul by this conversation. It is the cruellest thing imaginable to awake and find how shamefully you have been deceived and befooled. My wealth will be a snare to its possessors.

"I thank you all for giving me this opportunity of communicating with you; and may God, the Searcher of all hearts, guard and bless you!"

Here the medium, of whom G. L. had taken possession, rose up and stood erect, lifted her hands over her head, and went through the motion of tearing a document in pieces, and trampling it under foot, saying, "As I destroy this will, so will their happiness be destroyed and brought to nothing. God bless you! Good night!"

At a second interview, G. L. said:—"Let nothing deter you from the exposure of those two wicked people. With right for your might, do not allow yourself to be turned aside by any obstacles. O, fool! fool! fool! that I have been. Ah! friend of other days, how cruelly I have been befooled. I don't know what to say for my self. It was that cursed demon drink, which weakened my brain, and caused me to become a passive instrument in the hands of those two impostors. When I have repaired the wrongs I have done in the past, then, perhaps, I may forget the past. You must be patient in well doing, and persevere in bringing upon them a righteous retribution. That woman was a fine medium, and possessed an immensity of power for good, as well as for evil. She forsook the good, in order that she might benefit by the evil. She sacrificed years and years of eternity, for a few moments of time. I am still upon the earth plane, and, as I move about the world, it is wonderful the sights I see:—youth, beauty, health, intellectual gifts, and great capacities for good,—all bartered away for a few moments of worthless enjoyment, falsely so called. I am very unhappy, very unsettled. How can I be otherwise when I think of what a plastic dupe I have been in their hands? And yet, in worldly matters, I used to be tolerable keen and shrewd. The sin of the blackest falsehood, and the deepest ingratitude will be heavy on their souls,—upon those of that wretched woman and her miserable confederate. You have been nobly forgiving good friend of other days, and I thank you for it from the bottom of my heart.

IS LIFE WORTH LIVING.

ALL around us men are crying out for some evidence of immortality on which they may rest. And these, be it noted, are the best, the most progressive minds of the coming age. They want evidence that will stand logical testing; faith they have not, by no fault of their own. They turn to the new Truth with an earnest desire to learn what it can teach. If I may adapt Franklin's words, they say:—

If this new Philosophy
Have something more to tell,
Some news of whence and whither
And where the soul will dwell:
If on that outer darkness
The sun of Hope may shine,
It makes life worth the living.
I'll take that Faith for mine.

And Science and Law in the nineteenth century of Grace enter into an unholy alliance to prevent them What an iniquity!

"LIGHT FOR ALL."

Is the title of a new Spiritualistic paper published at San Francisco. It reports Mrs. Britten's Farewell Lecture there, and gives an account of a Spiritual Conference held at the Ixora Hall, in that city; also of one of Mrs. Foy's wonderful Public Séances. The paper, which is rather attractive in form, consists of eight pages, but an enlargement is promised shortly.

THE STATE OF THE LAW OF ENGLAND

AS IT AFFECTS

PUBLIC MEDIUMS,

WITH SOME REFLECTIONS THEREON.

A paper read before the British National Association of Spiritualists, and at Steinway Hall.

By M. A. (Oxon).

I AM fully aware that it is a bold thing for any one whose mind has not had a legal training to attempt to meddle with the interpretation of the law. One who so meddles is very apt to burn his fingers, and to wish that he had left it alone, especially if he have any strong personal interest in the question involved.

Why then do I meddle with it without any compulsion and of my own free will? I will tell you. Some month or six weeks ago the state of the law as it affects mediums was brought before the Council of the British National Association of Spiritualists, and the full consideration of the matter was referred to a committee, over which I had the honour to preside. This committee instructed me to prepare a memorial to Government with a view to the alteration of what I will at once describe as a grossly unjust and oppressive enactment.

Those who are familiar with my pamphlet* on the SLADE CASE will remember that I have there set forth the statutes which had already been, or might in the future be, put in action against Public Mediums. When I published that pamphlet Slade was already convicted, and the Act under which he had been punished was prominent in my mind. In the present case the point of view was wider, and the whole state of the question came under notice.

I had the great advantage of the advice and assistance of Mr. C. C. Massey, who has been so kind as to see that the legal questions are properly stated, and whose draft relieves me from any doubt that I may have floundered into error through inability to understand legal subtleties. The result has been that the Association will be enabled to put forth a document which will not only draw attention to the injustice of which we have so much reason to complain, but which will also set forth a digest of the evidence on which we rely, and a list of those distinguished persons who have found that evidence cogent enough to compel their assent to the reality of the phenomena called spiritual.

UNJUST LAWS AND PREJUDICED JUDGES.

The work that I have done on this memorial has deeply impressed me with a sense of the dangers that beset the practice of mediumship from the very state of the law itself; and I have become sadly aware how infinitely those dangers are aggravated when, as is usually the case, these laws are administered by judges who have no personal knowledge of the subject, but a great deal of violent and angry antipathy to it. The law itself is bad; the ignorance that applies it to Spiritualists is a great deal worse.

It is bad enough, it seemed to me, that any man who possesses these "gifts of the Spirit," these qualities of mediumship that link him on to the unseen world, should be made indictable at common law for their possession: that some statutes originally framed against fortune-telling and witchcraft should be made applicable to that which, when they were enacted, was unknown to the legislature that framed them; but it is far worse when the animus that governs the administrators of these laws is taken into account.

I knew perfectly well, as I read these statutes with my blood boiling at the injustice and wrong that was stamped and perpetuated there under the sacred name of Justice, that it was no use to cry out for their abolition, so long as the spirit that dragged them out of their plain sense and wrested them from it, was rampant among us. I knew that it was as much the judge as the law, as much the persecutor as both, that I wanted to get at, and

*The "Slade Case," Burns, 15, Southampton-row, London.

whose spirit and temper of mind I wanted to brand.

JUDGES ARE UPRIGHT, BUT IGNORANT.

And yet this I knew no memorial to Government would do, even if such a memorial were accepted. We could not go to Parliament and bring vague accusations against the administration of justice. Nor had I any desire so to do. I believe in the purity, the incorruptible honesty, integrity, and uprightness of our judges of every degree. I put away from me at once and utterly any suggestion against them of the nature of conscious injustice. I do not complain of their intentions, I complain that they know nothing of these matters by personal experience, and that they are influenced, and must be influenced, however unconsciously, by the prevalent opinions on the subject. What these opinions are in circles where ignorance obtains, and where the utmost antipathy prevails, we know only too well. Hence to expect justice from a trial so conducted is to expect two and two to make five.

And yet it seemed to me that men of perfect honour and uprightness, who would not countenance wrong if they knew it, were strangely apathetic about these things. How was this to be accounted for? Put the prejudice aside, the hatred the desire to stamp out the plague: how came it that men who know the truth, and love it, and would further it, can sit still and see this great, this foul wrong, and fold their hands and do nothing?

I answered myself that it was either ignorance or apathy that accounted for it, and I determined if it were ignorance I would throw some light on it, and if it were apathy that I would do my best to stir it up.

Hence it comes to pass that I am found meddling with the law.

THE STATE OF THE LAW.

Permit me to state in popular language what is the condition of the law as it affects mediums. I did so in my pamphlet above referred to, and I have reason to believe that the brief statement is correct. But I may be pardoned if I re-state in the clearest possible way, what is of vital importance to the movement.

First of all let it be noted that the various statutes under which mediums have been prosecuted or may hereafter be attacked, were one and all framed for other purposes, and are wrested and distorted by the application of them which is sought to be made. What Mr. Lankester playfully called the "elusive wild beast," was not within the view of the legislature in framing any of the statutes under which he is now being hunted.

The first—Now let us see how he is sought to be got at.

I.—OBTAINING MONEY BY FALSE PRETENCES.

1.—If the medium be one who serves the public, and who accepts any money for so doing, even if he make no definite charge, as the physician does for his time and skill, but accepts whatever the generosity of those who have profited by his gifts choose to bestow upon him, as Lawrence did, he may be indicted for obtaining money by means of false pretences. He may be a true clairvoyant, with gifts as real as the spiritual gifts of any of those who claim descent from men to whom it was said of old. "These signs shall follow them that believe; in my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." But if he accepts a paltry sixpence from any one who has resorted to him, he may be at once indicted at Assizes, Central Criminal Court, or Quarter Sessions, if any one can be found bold or malicious enough to incur the trouble and expense. In every other case the labourer is held to be worthy of his hire. The hire of some of these descendants of the Apostles in England to-day is by no means despicable; but the medium is an "elusive wild beast," to be hunted down and stamped out.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF APPLYING THIS ACT.

This, however, requires doing. The Act of which I am now speaking is not one that is very cheap or easy of application. In order to convict, the prosecutor must prove that the medium made some false representation

or pretence that he had gifts which he did not actually possess, as, for instance, clairvoyance. He must further prove that when he made such claims he was aware that he was making false claims. Yet again, he must prove that such false claims were made for the purpose of defrauding; and, lastly, that these false claims, so made, did in fact get money out of the prosecutor in consequence of his believing them to be true.

This, you will observe, renders it very difficult to convict a medium, unless he be really a pretender to mediumship, and be persecuted by some Spiritualist whom he has deluded and defrauded. Under this statute Spiritualists might convict fraudulent mediums, but it could hardly be that a genuine medium could be convicted by one who was running amuck on Spiritualism. We may therefore put this aside as an engine suitable only for the exposure of fraud; a process in which Spiritualists are much more active than their opponents. We want no fraud, for the thousandth time let it be said. We have no desire to bolster up imposture, and most of the exposures of deception have come from within, and not from without the body of Spiritualists. Of course there are some credulous folks who will swallow anything and defend manifest fraud if only it be under the flimsy guise of mediumship; but they are few and their folly is self-confessed. If, therefore, this statute be used, it is likely to be for a very legitimate purpose, the repression of imposture by those who know it when they see it.

II.—ATTEMPT TO DEFRAUD.

II.—Another aspect of the matter is this:—On the trial of any indictable offence, the accused may be convicted of an attempt only. So that it would not be necessary actually to prove that fraud had been successfully accomplished, but only that the medium had tried to cheat.

This Act carries a punishment for the actual offence of five years' penal servitude, or of imprisonment, with or without hard labour, for any term not exceeding two years, and of a term of imprisonment, with or without hard labour, for the mere attempt. This punishment—two years' imprisonment with hard labour—is a most terrible one to any man, however coarse his fibre; to a true sensitive it would be well nigh unendurable. As, however, this Act must be applied, if at all, by a prosecutor who, being a spiritualist, may be presumed to be actuated by proper motives in putting the law in force against a medium who has prostituted his powers for gain, I have nothing to say against its being so applied. I have, however, in my own mind, a lingering feeling that even Spiritualists may be mistaken in their estimate of some of the rarer and more fugitive phenomena, and I have no doubt that the prevalent ignorance on the subject would be found befogging the mind of any given magistrate who might be called on to try such a case. I am, therefore, rather sceptical as to pure justice being done in any case.

III.—THE VAGRANT ACT.

III.—There is, however, far worse to come. The more usual method of procedure would be to indict a medium as a rogue and vagabond, under the Vagrant Act (5 Geo. IV. c. 83, sec. 4). This is the Act under which Slade, Monck, Lawrence, and, more lately, Matthews have been convicted and sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labour. Slade appealed and escaped. The others have not been so fortunate.

The exact words of the Act provide that "any person pretending or professing to tell fortunes, or using any subtle craft, means, or device, by palmistry or otherwise to deceive or impose on any of her Majesty's subjects," shall be punished on conviction as above stated.

MEDIUMS ARE NOT VAGRANTS.

Now, first of all, a medium is not a vagrant. He has usually a home, and can be found there; in fact it is his business to be at home to receive his visitors when he does not go to their houses. In any case he can be easily got at. To call him a vagrant, and to pursue him as such under this statute is a monstrous thing; a wresting of the law from its intent; a perversion of justice; a thing never intended by the legislature.

IMPOSING ON HER MAJESTY'S SUBJECTS.

Next, look at this point. A plain man would think that it is a subtle craft or device to pretend to wrap up half-crowns in small paper parcels and sell them at some absurd rate, say sixpence, the fact being that half-pence were substituted for half-crowns. A plain man would think that such of her Majesty's subjects as bought these precious parcels were deceived or imposed upon. Yet the Court of Queen's Bench decided that such offence does not come within the Act, while Mr. Flowers decided that Slade's slate-writing does. The Court of Queen's Bench, with a wisdom rare as it is admirable, decided (I am not using legal language now) that if a man were so foolish as to be taken in by such a device he richly deserved what he got. I wish all decisions on Spiritualism could be governed by such refreshing wisdom.

"THE KNOWN COURSE OF NATURE."

But we know perfectly well that it is vain to expect that. We know to our cost that presiding magistrates and judges are apt to decide according to what Mr. Flowers called "the known course of nature," whereas they know very little about what they so describe, and nothing whatever about that particular course pursued by the phenomena called spiritual. A man may be as honest and honourable as you please; if he be ignorant he is bound to go wrong. And persons who administer this law, itself unjustly wrested so as to apply to what the legislature never contemplated, are absolutely ignorant of and unable to adjudicate upon the subject.

PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED.

Is it not plain that it must be so? The longest experience, the most careful investigation, the keenest and subtlest insight do but qualify their possessor to affirm that he is not yet acquainted with more than the rudiments of spiritual science. Before the fleeting phenomena that mock and elude his grasp he is forced to confess himself bewildered and astonished. That which to-day seemed clear as sunlight is to-morrow illusory and shifting. The theory of one hour is chased by the phantom of the next. He is wisest who admits that he knows least. Confronted with the deepest problems of life and mind, face to face with the mysteries of LIFE, but seeing them only through a glass darkly, as the blind man when his visual powers were returning, saw his fellow men "as trees walking," it is the part of a wise man to bow his head and maintain a modest silence.

METHODS OF SOLVING THEM.

Yet into some circle room, when the profoundest of these mysteries are being presented, there rushes some shallow sciolist, some dogmatic scientist wise in his own conceit, and hales the medium off to be prosecuted as a vagrant, under an Act that never contemplated his existence, before a magistrate who never spent five minutes in trying to understand what it is all about; who has heard vague rumours about vulgar Spiritualism, and who, with a stern sense of justice, grimly desirous to crush an unpopular thing that may give trouble, decides "according to the known course of nature." Can anything be a more grotesque parody of justice, a more beautiful illustration of how *not* to do it?

I say that such a state of things in this age that we are fond of calling, without sufficient cause, an age of enlightenment, is a scandalous disgrace; and I protest against it in the name of Justice outraged by such a parody and sham.

HONESTY NO PROTECTION.

Note this too. There is no word in this Act about fraud. The mere pretence and profession of, for instance, the possession of clairvoyant faculties is enough. The medium may be, we will assume that he is, an honest man, honestly using his spiritual gifts. He may be pure in the sight of God and man. He may be a philanthropist who uses his gifts without fee or reward for the benefit of humanity. No matter? He is contrary to "the known course of nature"—off with him to three months' imprisonment with hard labour!

God made him a medium; the Law makes him a rogue and a criminal. What a detestable blot on the statute book of a free country!

THREE MONTHS.

Three months! Why a free and enlightened Briton may pound his wife into a jelly, or kick her till her own mother would not know her disfigured form, for a far more trifling penalty. The vivisectionist may have a State license to commit what are too often acts of gross cruelty on unoffending animals who cannot protest against his hacking and bawling, in hope that he may discover some means of alleviating one of the "ills that flesh is heir to;" but the Spiritualist may not study the nature of his own soul, the evidences of his immortality, the whence and whither of his spirit. He is contrary to "the known course of nature," this medium. Give him three months, and be done with him.

"Know thyself" is the wise man's advice. You shan't, says the law, or I'll give you a vagabond's three months.

VIVISECTIONIST v. MEDIUM.

Yes, the vivisectionist may take out his license from Government to study the maladies of the human body by the vicarious method of experimenting on the dog or the rabbit, but he who would know of the deeper mysteries of his own nature, or probe his chance of future life when his fleshly body is dead and done with, is debarred from the pursuit of that highest of all forms of human knowledge. No license will be granted there. Were it so, we might apply to Government—the Excise is, I believe, the department that has to do with spirits—for a license to deal in these occult matters. We might purchase the privilege of putting up over our door, after the manner of the little drunkeries that adorn our happy villages, "Licensed to deal with spirits, to be investigated on the premises. Dealers in all kinds of mediums."

That would be a truly attractive advertisement.

(Concluded in our next.)

GOD SPEED IT.

REV. JOSEPH COOK closed his fifth lecture on Spiritualism; in these words:

"If modern science can lift for us the curtain behind which we may see in clear light the explanation of witchcraft, sorcery, soothsaying, magic, and pagan oracles,—if under the microscope and the scalpel we are to have uncovered the forces which account for the power many false religions have had—for one, I say *God speed the lifting of the veil and our progress into this undiscovered country.* The advanced pioneers of thought are undoubtedly moving into strange territory; *but we must not fear exploration.*"

Bravo! Mr. Cook. You have the thanks of honest men everywhere for daring to tell the clergy and their unintelligent followers that all occult science must be investigated. We know as tens of thousands of others do, that Spiritualism is the key which explains and unlocks all the mysteries of all occultism. Spiritualism is the one science of which magic, sorcery, witchcraft, Hindoo jugglery, etc., are but so many branches.

The Devil and his angels, if there are any such beings, must be brought under the microscope, explored by the telescope, put into the crucible, subjected to chemical tests. The great Burgapoo of the ages cannot escape much longer. Science is after him and he must submit, just as God has always submitted, and delighted to submit, to the microscope, the crucible, the retort, and the other appliances for finding him out. He invites it, encourages it, blesses it, draws us on and on forever in the delightful search. Only the wretched priests, who profess his name and belie his character, have in all ages resisted investigation and put men to the rack for discovering truth and proclaiming it.

Why, even here in far away Worthington, the ignorant and misled bigots, consulted together a few years ago as to whether or not they should throw our type into the street, because we were investigating Spiritualism. —*Worthington (Minn.) Advance.*

DR. J. M. PEEBLES.

We are in receipt of two letters from the *Spiritual Pilgrim*, dated June 1st and 19th. The first in reply to an invitation we were deputed to send him to re-visit Melbourne and lecture for the Victorian Association, of which we print that portion which is of general interest:—

"Your last letter lies before me. It was received about a week since—nearly ten days in fact. And in the meantime I have been planning and struggling to see my way clearly to accept the cordial invitation of the Victorian Association of Spiritualists to fill a three months' engagement before the arrival of Mr. Walker. Heartily did I wish to accept, and most sincerely do I want to see you and my dear friends in Australia. But it is impossible, considering my engagements. July and August are our Camp-meeting months, and I am positively engaged each Sunday and a portion of the week-days during both these months. Brother Denton and myself occupy the last Sunday of the great Lake Pleasant Camp-meeting, where there are usually 10,000 and sometimes 15,000 present. These committees will not release me from the engagements. September I am engaged to the Society in New York; October, in Boston and the vicinity, and so on. And then, I am reading the proof-sheets of a new book—300 pages—and getting out a new music-book—"Spiritual Harmonies;" but these books are so far along in the revise proofs that I could leave the supervision in other hands. But not so with my engagements. Were I to fail in filling them it would make unpleasant feelings, &c. If I have any pride it is in doing the "straight, square thing," as the Americans say. If I had only known how matters stood when in California, I could have slipped over and filled an engagement of six months so easily. And Oh, how much I wanted to come and see you all and lecture upon "Angel Ministry" and "Eternal Progression." The offer you made me was liberal and generous. Let it stand; and after Mr. Walker's engagement, which I presume will last for several months, possibly a year, I will come on.

Spiritualism is passing through a sort of crisis, and under the inspiration of Buchanan, Britten, Newton, Crowell, Kiddle, Mrs. Brigham, and others, it is assuming a more calm and religious aspect. This is well. Philosophy alone chills. Iconoclastic negations fail to feed the soul. * * *

In the letter of June 19th he writes:—"Your last is at hand, in which you treat me at large of my coming to Melbourne. You can hardly imagine how it stirs up the old memories, and the old friends, and the Lyceum children—all come up before me like a living vision." Further on he says he feels impelled by spirit power to respond to the invitation, and would make the effort to conclude his engagements and start at the end of October, if that would suit the Association and not conflict with Mr. Walker or any other lecturer. The V.A.S. not being in receipt of any advices from Mr. Walker, empowered us to write Dr. Peebles to come on at once if possible by the October mail. We may therefore expect him here either at the end of November or December at latest.

"THE HERALD OF PROGRESS."

We are advised of the intended publication of a new English Spiritualistic paper under the above caption. Whether intentionally or otherwise, the title given to it is identical with that of the journal edited by A. J. Davis, and published in New York twenty years since. The editor, Mr. W. H. Lambelle, informs us that the paper is not designed to supersede existing agencies, but to take an independent position, work on the broad basis of charity, and seek the welfare of the movement by a presentation of spiritual philosophy and teachings, and a record of manifestations, which testify to the realities of spirit communion. If this programme is adhered to, the paper is likely to be a useful instrument in helping forward the movement. It was intended to commence publication in July, and should copies reach us in time we shall review them in our next.

THE LYCEUM EXHIBITION SESSION.

THE above demonstration and entertainment announced in our last, came off at the Temperance Hall, on the evening of Friday, August 20th. The weather, which had been particularly fine for some time previous, changed on the day named, and steady rain accompanied by a cold south wind set in. Under these unfavourable conditions it was found impossible to commence at the advertised time, but by 8, p.m., 100 of the children having assembled, Mr. Terry, (the Conductor) called the Lyceum to order, to commence the session. At this time there were about 150 spectators in the gallery, and for their edification the Conductor briefly explained the object and idea of the Lyceum; affirming the necessity of physical, intellectual and moral education to the harmonious development of the individual. The spiritualistic system combined these phases, but the great distinction between the ordinary systems of education and the Lyceum one was, that while in the former it was the custom to *induct* in the latter it was the rule to *educate*; the originality of the child's nature being preserved and all its aptitudes for good assisted in their development.

One of the Melbourne journals had recently alluded to the teachings of Spiritualism, as irreligious and immoral, there was not time to go through the full course of the Sunday session, but the few illustrative teachings which would be given, were sufficient to show the untruthfulness of the assertion. He regretted the inclemency of the weather, as it had prevented many of the children who lived a distance from town attending, but there were quite sufficient present to illustrate all that was desired.

Golden and Silver chain recitations, The Lyceum; The Religion of Health, Charity and "Better than Gold" were then given by the Conductor and Lyceum, after which Mr. Joske took charge to conduct the calisthenics but before doing so explained their utility and appropriateness, and the pleasure derived from the musical accompaniment to them, the series of exercises were well executed by the Lyceum, about 120 members taking part in them, the spectators exhibiting their appreciation by applause. The short interval of preparation for the dramatic performance was filled in with a pianoforte duett, by two members of the Lyceum, and at about 9, p.m. the curtain rose on the first scene of a little domestic drama, entitled the "Sisters," or the "value of domestic knowledge." This was excellently performed, each of the characters filling their parts in an easy natural manner, and clearly illustrating the moral of the play, viz., the necessity of a practical knowledge of household duties to ladies who contemplate entering the matrimonial state. One of the pretty Lyceum songs with chorus "Moonlight and Starlight" was sung by the Choir and shortly afterwards the Operetta commenced. The young ladies taking part in this are to be complimented on the taste exhibited in their dresses as well as the correct rendering of their parts, the choruses (and performers) were pretty, and appropriate scenery having been obtained the general effect was excellent, at its conclusion, the actors were re-called, and shortly afterwards took their places in the Grand Lyceum March which terminated the proceedings.

FREETHOUGHT.

THE Sydney *Freethought* appeared last month in a new form, being a sixteen page newspaper, similar to the *Harbinger* and published at the same price. This will be an advantage to Victorian subscribers as the Journal which has hitherto been subject to a postage of three-pence, will now come post free. The first number of the new series contains articles on the Christian Revelation, Spirit Hands, Bible Miracles, and a very able letter to the Young Men's Christian Association, by Mr. Tyerman, which if read by those to whom it is addressed will serve as an eye opener to many.

DR. MONCK FUND.

AMOUNT previously acknowledged ... * £11 15s. 0.

Subscriptions since received —

B. Ekensteen 2

M. W. Bent. 1

* The amount of 10/. credited to Mrs. C. (Castlemaine) should have been 6/.

We will keep the list open till the 15th. of this month, all those desiring to assist will please send remittances promptly.

MR. THOMAS WALKER.

By the "John Elder" we have a letter from Mr. Thos. Walker, who at the time of writing it (July 10th.) was at the South African Diamond fields. His Sunday lectures at the theatre there, were so successful that arrangements were being made for a series of week night lectures in addition. The *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, of July 14th., in a report of his lecture, says:—"The audience was representative of well nigh every class of the community, and Mr. Walker's fervid eloquence and undoubtedly pleasing style of oratory drew from it numerous remarks of applause."

Mr. Walker's success at the Cape has determined him to make a longer stay there than he at first intended. It is as yet uncertain whether he will come direct from there to Australia, or return via England and America.

ERRATA.—By an oversight an error has crept in to a portion of our supplement. On page 1846—For "34" miles read "5," and before "34 deg." place "A north declension of."

MR. JOHN BRIGHT ON FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE.

The following is an extract from Mr. John Bright's speech delivered during the Bradlaugh debate. The concluding paragraph, coming from such an authority, is particularly interesting:—

"As to the first report, without daring to discourage its authority, it left the matter in great doubt; and with regard to the second, he thought Mr. Bradlaugh had not been fairly treated in being refused the oath because he had asked for the affirmation. There was no precedent for this inquisition into a man's religious views when he came to the table to be sworn. This interference, he contended, would set up a new test of Theism, and would divide members into two classes. I know that many people have much greater power of belief than others have," said Mr. Bright, "and I am not one of those—having myself passed through many doubts—to condemn, without sympathy at any rate, those who are not able to adopt the views which I myself hold. There are members of this House of different Churches, but generally all, I trust, of one religion, of the religion which inculcates charity, and forbearance, and justice, and even generosity. There are those who belong to the Roman Catholic Church. I need not remind them of what they and their ancestors have gone through in Ireland (hear) for the last 200 or 300 years or more, or of how long a time they were kept out of this House, and by the very same class of arguments which the hon. and learned member for Surrey used. (Cheers.) He tells us that for a very long time past there has been a gradual relaxation. Yes, no doubt. Did he ever sit among those who had promoted these relaxations? I have been here for 37 years, and I have heard these questions discussed over and over again; but I never found that the time had come when the party opposite, represented by gentlemen who now sit there, were willing to make those relaxations. They submitted not to argument, not to sentiments of generosity or of justice; they submitted only to a majority which sat on this side of the House. (Cheers.) Then there are the Nonconformists. I am told that there are some Nonconformists even—but I think it is rather in the nature of a mistake or of a slander—who have great doubts as to how they should vote on this occasion. It is occasions like this that try men and try principles. (Hear, hear.) Do you suppose that in times past the Founder of Christianity has required an oath in this House to defend the religion which He founded? Or do you suppose now

that the Supreme Ruler of the World can be interested in the fact that one man comes to this table and takes His name—it may be often in vain—(murmurs)—and another is permitted to make an affirmation, reverently and honestly, in which His name is not included? But one thing is essential for us, the House of Commons, representing the English people, which is to maintain as far as we can the great principles of freedom—freedom of political action and freedom of conscience. (Hear, hear.) The electors, I know not how many thousands, of the borough of Northampton, have returned two members to Parliament. You admit the one and you exclude the other. All the constituencies of the kingdom, you may rely upon it, will consider this cause is their own. (Opposition and counter cheers.) Now, my belief is that throughout the whole of the great boroughs of the kingdom you will find the working classes taking part, not with the House of Commons in excluding Mr. Bradlaugh, but with those who wish him to make the affirmation. I am of that opinion myself. (Hear, hear.) To a large extent the working people of this country do not care any more for the dogmas of Christianity than the upper classes care for the practice of that religion. (Cheers, and loud cries of 'Oh!' and 'Withdraw.' I wish from my heart that it were otherwise."

MR. GEO. SPRIGGS THE MEDIUM FOR MATERIALISATIONS.

FROM the arrangements made by the Victorian Association of Spiritualists, it is confidently expected that the above reliable medium will be here sometime in November. Over three fourths of the tickets are taken up, and we would advise those who desire early sittings to secure tickets, or they will have to wait some months, as the ticket holders have priority.

MEDICAL CLAIRVOYANCE.

A correspondent in the *Northern Argus*, (Rockhampton) gives an account of a seance with Mr. "Otto Hug," of Brisbane, who it appears has recently paid a visit to Rockhampton, and exercised his Clairvoyant powers on several of the citizens of that place. The writer confesses to having "previously entertained a contempt for Clairvoyants, whom he had classified with the professional fortune teller." He was, however, favourably impressed with the appearance and demeanour of Mr. Hug, and the naturalness of his surroundings. Taking the visitor's hand the Clairvoyant passed into the trance state, and accurately diagnosed his condition, alluding to events connected therewith, which had transpired six years previously. Having proved the fact, the writer indulges in some reflections thereon, from which we extract the following:—

"What then is the nature of this gift; is it natural, or is it acquired? That a man should, while to all appearances entranced, read you like a book, examine your system, as if it was incased in crystal, instead of being enshrouded in a tenement of flesh and blood! Science, has penetrated space, counted the stars, calculated the revolutions of the heavenly bodies; Science, has dived down into the ocean depths, and revealed its wonders, has penetrated the earth, and counted the periods of the various geological formations, Science has placed a girdle round our planet, and has revolutionized the commerce of the world by the wonderful power of steam, both on land and sea.

Let, then, scientists tell us how it is that some have the gift of seeing the human system—our inward parts; who can tell us with such wonderful accuracy of our ailments, our diseases, and what had befallen us so many years ago, and not only that but while they prescribe a remedy for some, they tell another to go home and make his will.

TO CASTLEMAINE SUBSCRIBERS. On and after this date Mr. NEWLANDS will act as our Agent for the Castlemaine district. Subscribers are requested to pay Subscription for the new volume promptly to him. Single copies may be purchased at his Establishment, at publishing prices. W. H. TREY. Melbourne, Aug. 30th, 1880.

GEO. MILNER STEPHEN AND HIS MARVELOUS CURES.*

WE have received a 56 page pamphlet under the above caption, which not only gives a number of certified cases of the cures referred to, but a number of parallel instances of cures performed by laying on of hands in ancient and modern times. In addition to these, the pamphlet contains an interesting biography of Mr. Stephen, with an account of his conversion to Spiritualism and what he learnt from the spirits. A chapter on the Evidences of Spiritualism, with rules for the Spiritual circle, is a useful addition to the subject. Pressure of space prevents us giving a fuller review of this latest addition to our local Spiritualistic literature.

MR. TYERMAN has arranged for a Public Discussion on Spiritualism, during the present week, with Mr. Hume.

SPECIAL PROVIDENCE.

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT."

SIR.—There is a very general opinion among Orthodox Christians that the Deity interferes in a special manner in all the concerns of human life. If we hear of any marvellous escape, it is at once put down as providential; to bring about which result the supposition is that some magical manipulation of natural forces has taken place. To call this theory in question is to render one's self liable to be styled "Infidel." The zealous advocates of Providential interference fail to see that the principle should act both ways, for good and evil. What shall be said of the thousands who are cut off for no fault of their own? These cases, I suppose, would be regarded as Divine judgments for their sins or the sins of their fathers. Taking the Orthodox view of the government of the world as correct, then the Deity is unjust to a large portion of the human race. If it were announced that some persons had been providentially killed either by an earthquake, the sinking of a ship, or some of the thousand and one accidents the human race is liable to, how horrified the religious world would be. And yet, to be consistent, good Orthodox Christians must admit that special providence should act both ways, for evil as well as good. If anything would impress one with the fact of there being an active principle in the universe interfering and subverting the laws of nature for the purpose of bringing about certain results to particular individuals, it is the presence of evil itself, which may be explained in the following way: Man never receives any good in the order of nature without taking steps to procure it. For instance, if a farmer wishes for a return from his land, he must cultivate the same and sow it with proper seed, and so with every other department of human experience. Good does not come spontaneously, but only in obedience to nature's laws, by putting into motion machinery for such a purpose; while evil springs apparently of itself, when steps are even taken to prevent it, thus showing that the balance of evidence is more in favour of an evil instead of a good providence. I do not say that I myself positively believe in the viciousness of an overruling power; I only contend that appearances point to the theory more forcibly of special evil in the place of good.

To summarise the whole, good never comes of itself; evil, often, even when man endeavours to prevent it. The wholesale sacrifice of human life, which has transpired of late years through famine, flood, disease, and other disasters, have been attributed by the "holy brotherhood" to the wrath of God taking vengeance for the transgressions of the nations. They fail to see that justly there can be possibly no vindictiveness where there has been no injury, for in sinning, man only affects himself, not a superior Being. They also fail to see that the God they have fashioned for themselves is greatly dishonoured by the doctrine of Special Providence, as it makes him indifferent to all the misery and destitution which is the lot of the majority of human beings. If a farmer were to act in that way by producing more cattle

than he could maintain comfortably, how soon he would be called to order under Martin's Cruelty Act. If it should be urged, enough has been provided by Providence, but wanting in equitable distribution by man himself, the same thing might be met by the farmer, who could say, "Ah, I gave out plenty of hay, but the strongest got it."

This would not satisfy British Law, which holds that the breeder occupying the position of a Special Providence towards his cattle should take care that weak and strong get their share. In my estimation the only solution to this difficulty is the fact that evil in the present life is a necessary factor to human progress, permitted by a Supreme Ruler—if there be one—for the purpose of man asserting, and maintaining an individuality, and free agency, which it would seem without such a process could not be accomplished.—Yours, etc.

Leven, Tasmania, August, 19th. W. B. BUTTON.

THE Victorian Association of Spiritualists continue to hold Sunday evening services at the Temperance Hall, the speakers during the last month were, Messrs. Brown, Ross, Terry, Watt and Rolla, the subject for next Sunday is "A Religion without a Creed." The annual meeting of the association will be held the last Thursday in September.

The Melbourne Spiritualistic Society now hold their Sunday morning meetings at the Hanover rooms, Eastern arcade.

Advertisements.

Will be Shortly Published,

SPIRITUAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM MASSILLON, BUNSEN, MRS. HEMANS, POLLOCK, BYRON, FARADAY, and others, between February, 1868, and September, 1870. By MARIA TERESA JACKSON (now Mac George) Trance Medium.

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