

Harbinger of Light.

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

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

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CONTENTS.

	Page
The Bible in State Schools	2373
Psychical Research	2374
Impressions from the Infinite	2374-6
Bishop Moorhouse and the Gift of Healing	2376-8
Reminiscences	2378-9
Sydney Letter	2380
Prophecies of the Bible; by Mr. Wm. Denton	2381-5
Footsteps of Angels: a New Year's Story	2386-7
Joseph Barker's Testimony	2387-8
Wellington	2388
Psychological Review	2389
Tests of Spirit Identity	2389
Mr. William Denton	2389
Mrs. Watson	2389

efficacy of church dogmas, people who have shaken off their influence should be loth to have their children's minds bent in the direction of the systems they themselves are drawing away from. We opine that the majority of people would rather favour than object to the introduction of moral teachings if purely eclectic; but we may rest assured our Christian friends will not entertain this idea whilst any prospect remains of getting their system to the front; when their attempt to do so has failed, which there is every prospect it will, they may, remembering the proverb that "half a loaf is better than no bread," fall in with a movement for the introduction of an eclectic moral text book, which, pending the remodelling of our School system, that must sooner or later take place, would tend to raise the tone of the children's minds and lead them on to higher planes of thought and action.

THE "Bible in State Schools' League" is not making much progress; its suburban meetings are but poorly attended and fail to awaken enthusiasm. One held recently at Richmond with the mayor of that important borough in the chair, only attracted, according to the *Argus* report, about fifty people, and these were far from unanimous in affirming the objects of the League. This does not look promising for the attainment of that object, for no matter how influential the League itself may be, our legislators will not take up their cause unless assured that the electors are with them.

We do not think this public apathy is due to a decadence of religion or morality, but rather to the rapidly waning estimation in which the book referred to is held by the community. Its infallibility as the word of God is now almost universally abandoned, whilst its general fitness for a moral standard in the present generation is largely questioned; hence the antipathy of some, and the apathy of others, in regard to the movement for its introduction into the curriculum of the Normal Schools. We cannot conceive that the primary object of the promoters of the movement is simply the augmentation of their flocks; though some may be actuated by this inferior motive we think the majority are prompted by a sincere desire to improve the moral tone of the rising generation; and whilst the Bible remains the moral standard of the churches to which they belong, it is only natural that they should suggest it as the book par excellence on which to base the instruction. This is where the difficulty comes in. The introduction of the Bible itself, or extracts from it alone as a moral text book, is an advertisement of the churches whose standard it is, giving a bias to the young and plastic mind in their direction. Herein is the danger, and it is not surprising that with a rapidly waning faith in the

We Victorians are proud of our Schools and system of education. Looking at the many noble edifices erected for schools, and realising the fact that the rudimentary education of every child is provided for, there appears cause for our being so; yet, for all that, there are lamentable deficiencies in the system which few observe or reflect upon: it is a system of cramming from beginning to end, a purely mechanical process. A certain quantity of matter has to be put into every child; a certain number of steps have to be mounted, and as each one fills up to a certain level he is put on the next step. Some take in their quantum more rapidly than others, and are passed out into the world "full up," at the age of twelve or thirteen; some fill very slowly, and have to get a modicum of the educational pabulum hammered into them during the day, taking the major portion home with them to cram in during the evening or early morning. Knowledge so acquired seldom begets wisdom, but often gives the poor child a distaste for what under more favourable circumstances would be a pleasure to it. The system is not only faulty, but absolutely wrong. A true system would seek to cultivate and develop the natural faculties of a child, making induction an incident to such development, giving knowledge in accordance with its requirements and capacity to digest it. Such a system would naturally include Human Physiology, a branch of education almost en-

tirely ignored, but which, if properly presented, children would take to with avidity, as their natural curiosity would prompt them to seek knowledge about the beautiful mechanism of their organisation, from lack of which so many suffer and transmit their sufferings to posterity. The education question is far from being settled: we are only in the "stone age" of it yet.

THE London correspondent of the *Argus* may be a clever writer, but he is evidently not a philosopher. In his letter of November 3rd, he says: "Long ago in Cambridge University there was a society formed 'For the investigation of Spiritual Phenomena,' popularly known as 'The Ghost Club,' and some very strange stories were elicited by its operations. In these later days it has again started into being, under a still finer name—'The Society for Psychical Research.' Unfortunately, the investigations are to include spirit-rapping, which is not only a delusion, but a very vulgar and mercenary form of delusion, not worth the attention of any sensible or even honest person."

From the above it would appear that the sapient writer having settled the question on *a priori* grounds, is indignant that any body of men should seek to go beyond these. Unfortunately (for him) the Society referred to have either not heard of him, or do not pay that deference to his decision which he seems to expect. We would point out, by way of consolation, that there are a very large number of persons—some millions, in fact—who are labouring under the delusion (?) he refers to, and who cannot have their eyes opened by any *a priori* argument. Under these circumstances the labours of the Psychological Society in connection with spirit-rapping, etc., might not be altogether useless. When that body has scientifically proved the rap to arise from purely mundane causes, a portion at least of these deluded people will be convinced of their mistake, and with unclouded minds admire the wisdom of the great *Argus* correspondent, who intuitively knew all about it beforehand.

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE INFINITE.

(From the Spanish of Balmes.)

TRANSLATED BY C. W. ROHNER, M.D., BENALLA.

FIFTH CHAPTER.

THE WORLD AND HELL.

Who, therefore, is able to arrest the march of the times and the arrival of the mission destined to advance wisdom and the knowledge of God? No one! All shall love, because all shall believe. Civilization, by attracting love, will also make universal peace possible. For this reason, also, will mankind obtain real knowledge, because it will believe in truths which came to it by the path of observation, of study of good works, of elevated thoughts, the product of unostentatious humility; yes, man will possess real knowledge, because he will have learnt to bring sacrifices without waiting for public praise, and because the faculty of intuitional faith will have opened to him the portals of the true life. Mankind will also advance by the path of cultured reason, reason which appreciates truth, science and philosophy. Mankind will now believe truly, because it will have true faith, and not that blind faith which makes it impossible to us to understand what we believe, or are supposed to believe. Mankind will see the eternal supremacy and sovereignty of the heavenly splendours, and looking upon itself as still very insignificant, it will worship them with all its heart and soul, thus bringing about its own progress by means of the divine law which consists in loving and forgiving, studying and believing, in seeking to find, in giving more than asking, and in trusting more to spirit than to matter. This is the true solution of the world's riddle; having advanced sufficiently man will find himself on the high road to idealism

and the comprehension of infinity and eternal truth which flows from it; then only will he find himself in the full enjoyment of his progress. Yes, in this consists the solution of the great enigma of humanity, that man in his true unfoldment will come to teach his fellows that they could be more happy if they were more than bodies—souls—if they were virtuous instead of being addicted to vice, if they were lovers instead of slaves, if they were more than wavering believers, if they were more realities than fictions, if they were more humble than ambitious, more shepherds than kings, if they preferred offering incense themselves instead of having their own vanity flattered, if they worshipped progress more than glory, if they were lambs instead of wolves, if they were thinkers instead of lambs, if they were more lovers of truth than thinkers, if they were more than lovers of truth—instructors in truth—if they were more ready to forgive than instruct, and more than all this, if they would love one another like true brothers, and if they could seek their future welfare in contemplation and inspiration from above. In this way only will mankind be able to reach the first step in the ladder of human perfection, by constantly rising, by constantly hoping, and by constantly growing and increasing in its spirituality. Thus only will the social organism be able to advance on its work of progress, and put itself into the possession of new discoveries far more useful to human society than all those which had hitherto been recorded in the annals of history, discoveries which until now unknown were unable to enlighten the minds of men in a higher degree. Thus also, not until the moral advancement of the human race has reached an elevation from which it can no longer be displaced, will humanity be able to arrive at the conviction that truth and wisdom are natural allies, and that the latter depends upon the progress made by the former. Thus, then, what is necessary for progress? To discern and approach the light in order to escape from darkness, to liberate thought of all fetters, to put an end to apathy and indifference, and to realise the great principle of love. This is making progress. This is what takes place in a world after it has attained that degree of civilisation to be met with on earth. To advance, therefore, is to approach the Infinite, which is represented in the permanent, in the immortal, a point in which all true laws must meet. It is this which the labourer, who wishes to promote his work, strives after. He waits for nothing else than the payment for his day's work as a compensation, he desires nothing more than the welfare of the human souls and the peace of their hearts. He works eagerly and with zeal, he tries to realise the fruits of his labour, he attempts to sow the atomic seeds of light that they may afterwards form a brilliant star, the course of which may be followed by new rising generations. As an unwearied labourer he never thinks of fatigue or rest, but he always thinks of the blessings of God. Thus he hopes to triumph, thus he struggles mightily, but without murmuring or shrinking back from his task. Thus he always hopes with the greatest faith to see his programme realised in the times to come; he never mistrusts or becomes diffident, he always keeps moving on, progressing, and loving. This is the law and the truth in which the worker for the Infinite finds himself engaged incessantly. This is the reality in the ideal, and the law will in future be fulfilled by humanity, when all united in one cause shall produce one effect. How beautiful will be that hour when an eternally aspiring sigh of gratitude and love fills the bosoms of all and finds an echo in the breasts of universal humanity? How happy will be that hour when all hearts palpitate with delight in possession of what is good, when all walking, dressed in one garment, calls itself a brotherhood, and on that account worships God as the one Father of all? When these real results will be seen and appreciated by those who have first come under the influence of the light, the movement will gain new and indefatigable working members whose desire it will be to realise as quickly as possible the great undertaking begun by a few, and mankind will commence its career of perfection. Discord will finally give place to harmony and union, and the great ones of the earth will humble themselves in the presence of a

regenerated humanity. Oh, how just is the wisdom of God, who has appointed to us the task and shown us how to arrive at perfection! How benevolent is the divine foresight manifested in all His doings! How precious are the seeds which He has sown to bear such sweet fruit? What other law can appear more beautiful to men than the law of God? What love can excel the love of God? What other light can appear to them more radiant than the light of the Infinite? What other work can be more serviceable for their enlightenment than the light which issues from their own souls? What other truth will appear more certain to them than progression? What mode of instruction can present itself to them more sweet than that of love? What other religion can be more persuasive to believe? What other reward can be truer than that of progress? Oh, how happy will mankind be when all men shall believe in the one, immutable and immortal truth which comes from God! All must work, all must be labourers in order to be happy. When the religion of love conquers, then will humanity begin to believe truly, and the work which will bring about the salvation of the race will then be accomplished. The true science will then become clear and plain to those who hitherto have desired it in their ignorance. The truth will be stamped on the face of all souls. There will then be neither cults nor religious ceremonies, but all will love one another. There will then be no preaching without acting; there will then be no more beggars, because there will also be no longer any rich men. There will truly be a sovereignty indeed, but one that does not interfere with human liberty of thought and action. Men then will meditate the impossible to realise it; men will only have to think in order to become wise. The language of man will then be one, his religion one, his will one, and his love one. Perfection will be constantly on the increase; the reign of morality will have been firmly established. Therefore, I tell you, spirit will have triumphed. There will no longer be material laws, because the moral law will then be found to be the only reliable law in existence which, in defending the rights of man, will always lead to forgiveness and instruction.

In those times there will also be no misers and avaricious people, because no one will be able to play the hypocrite. The balance of the world will have become altered, for if in its former equilibrium it rested its weight principally upon the material, and the material overbalanced the spiritual, when the era of progression has once reached its culminating point, the adjusted balance will always incline towards the spiritual. Absurdities will no longer find an echo in the hearts of humanity, because the truth will rule over obscurantism, and morality, making a road for itself, will take the place of ignorance. Humanity, ruling in its era of progression, will have changed the obscurity which opened the road for the mysterious in the midst of light, and it will have put in its place what is shining and radiant. The reign of excesses will have passed away; man forming henceforth but one family, will only occupy himself with working in the interest of progress. The work of the Creator will have reached its epoch of realisation marked out for it. The utopias having ceased to exist will no longer engender false beliefs; only false honours will fall to their lot, material vanities will be their only share, whilst everywhere else the blessings of God the Father, and the glory of the just, will predominate. This will be the world a few centuries later, a few short cycles after your present order of society, for already to-day the stout hearts who have learned to worship in the temple of truth are ready to die as martyrs, because they have been genuine apostles, or messengers of light.

All obstacles, notwithstanding the initiation of truth, as I have already told you, will be followed by its diffusion at the hands of willing labourers, and the result of this diffusion will be moral progress. Once more I shall tell you that the progress for which you work shall be changed into rays of light, which a little later will assume the shape of a halo. Let, therefore, all initiated labourers work incessantly, that all may learn the truth, that all may seek for light, that all may practice love. Let charity become universal, let forgiveness become

general, let moral power become absolute, peace real, faith conspicuous, ignorance abolished; let thought be made free, and light be diffused to the uttermost extent amongst all those workers who wish to earn for themselves the great title of workers of the future. Let all that he undertakes be crowned with triumph; let all that he hopes for come to pass; may he teach all he knows without reserve, may all he loves become purified, then will the worker for the future achieve the desired progress much quicker, because progress follows in the paths of truth and light.

Therefore, we have no hours to waste or lose, and we must take every opportunity to oppose the advance of that fatal ignorance which hides the truth from our eyes in order to keep us in subjection to fanaticism and antiquated, unprogressive ideas. Let us tear from our faces that oppressive veil which prevents us from seeing our road to victory. Let us reject the errors and embrace liberty and justice, the only true principles of a civilisation bent on reform. Let us not retard the flight of our thoughts; let us not stifle the palpitating yearnings of our hearts; let us not cross our own souls in their efforts of entering upon the practical and easy path of progress. As workers in this sacred enterprise, we must not faint in the midst of our undertaking. We must break down the ramparts of incredulity which we find obstructing our road. It is our duty to introduce all mankind into the mysteries of the truth; we must reveal to all those who desire to be our disciples the light of the spirit, so that they may themselves afterwards become masters. Let us with our own hands raise an altar before which we may worship enlightenment and morality. Let us teach love, thought, practical works. Let us always look up to God as our great preceptor, as the eternally Wise one, as the supreme Pontiff, as the inexhaustible source and fountain of forgiveness, as the everlasting lighthouse and beacon to all humanity in their hours of trouble and distress. Let us not forget this again, that we may not again feel faint-hearted; let us make laws which we are able to respect ourselves; let us put down all murmuring without, however, punishing it too severely; let us always make fresh inquiries in order to learn new truths; let us, above all, forget injuries and offences, and accept the sacrifices and peace offerings of our former enemies. Is this not our real mission? Is it not for this we have received our call from humanity? Is it not our duty to work in the name of the divine laws? Should we not for all this raise our souls in hope and aspiration?

If, therefore, we are workers of the future, why should we stop in our career, since the light of God shines upon us? Why do we not accept the light? Is it, perhaps, because we think that to accept it would not make us happy? God is a great master, we shall be his disciples and interpreters. We shall seek to realise the ideal as already mentioned. Its realisation consists in advancement, progress, truth, and happiness. When, therefore, the opportune time arrives, and we do not take advantage of it, who will help us afterwards? If we believe why do we not act up to our belief—and worship? If the world of matter advances, why do we not advance who are spirits? If the former appears to us beautiful why not the latter? If we are workers of the future, let us go and claim our salary without delay, for if we work in truth we are bound to become free, although we may sometimes get tired, although we are obliged to gather our knowledge in a humble manner, although few in numbers we shall have to become the multitude and majority, although, fatigued, we have to rest from our labour, although of ungainly aspect, we shall be blessed, and although we are now suffering martyrdom, we shall nevertheless reach our goal in time. If, therefore, the coming era raises its standard, and we see our call inscribed on it, and if we have seen that standard descend from the spheres above, why do we not respond to the call? Our great salvation will be put off until it is too late. What shall we then think of our feeble efforts as compared to the glory achieved? What compensation could be more grateful to us than the knowledge and recollection of having been the promoters of a world of enlightenment, of a world of morality,

of a world of happiness? How many thanksgivings shall we not offer to our Creator for having invited us to come within the sheepfold of his immutable law—the law of love?

Man will then have woken up from the nightmare which hitherto haunted his sleep; he will have entered the period of his awakening consequent upon the dawn of light, and he will have heard the voice proceeding from a higher and vaster temple—the temple of God's Truth. Therefore, I tell you, when the era of civilization and law has arrived, it becomes your duty to do everything to hasten its advent. Hence, if the era of progress has brought before your eyes the revelations which emanate from your unfathomable Protector, you must see to it that the light is not dispersed, for in that case a serious loss would befall the rising generations, for they would not be able to enter upon the plain and level path hitherto obstructed and blocked up by prejudices, abuses, and discords, all of which must be removed without any further delay, otherwise the aspect of future centuries will resemble that of our present century. Therefore, as ancient humanity in anterior centuries has laboured as much as it could to bring about the reign of reason and of right, in order that the century in which you are now living may rightly be called the century of light and enlightenment, so also must you know labour and work in order that you may be looked upon by your successors as true predecessors holding up the torch of light which it is the duty of one generation to hand to the other succeeding it. Those times will then be the times of justice, the times of glory. The foundations for this great work are already laid; universal human association and co-operation will shortly follow afterwards, when the workers of the future will celebrate and enjoy the greatest triumph ever achieved by mankind. May you, therefore, work with all your might in the interest of the whole world, for God has endowed you with mighty powers for your mighty work.

Still, the question arises, by what powers, or forces, shall we strengthen and steel ourselves in order to establish morality on a sound and proper basis? In the powers of human reason, and of human intelligence, which will prove itself much stronger when once we have proved it and learnt to trust to it, and above all let us rely on God, who is always procuring respect for his eternally established laws and precepts. Let us always obey the dictates of our conscience, the repentance of past acknowledged error; let us meditate seriously, let us be givers and benefactors without ostentation, let us always have pity for ignorance, and thus it will come to pass that by marching steadily in the straight direction of light, that the rays of light which fall upon us will be reflected on an attentively watching humanity.

Therefore, above all, it is necessary not to believe in illusions, not to dream any longer, not to believe any more in two constantly opposed powers—the power of the Devil and the power of God—the principle of evil and the principle of good; for by supporting the former we directly deny the existence of the latter; by believing in the devil we disbelieve God, and to that extent we walk in error, for by rejecting the belief in a devil we affirm our belief in one God and rejoice in our faith in one invisible Supreme Being, who inspires us with all that is good, and who is the only source of love; and we believe in Him in order to be able to believe in truth, knowing, as we do, that the only real hell there is exists in ourselves, in our hearts and minds, where we have built it ourselves by the aid of our vices; that it is our bounden duty to reject this hell, and that we can only accomplish this task by becoming the unflinching promoters of an infinite happiness by dint of our own merits and virtues. Therefore, it will be necessary to guard our true rights, which will lead us to the true goals of our existence as incarnated spirits here in this our terrestrial exile, knowing that our permanent mansion and dwelling place is in the celestial regions. There it is where an eternal change will come over us, where we shall eternally progress, and enjoy those indescribable pleasures which no human eye has yet seen, and no ear has yet heard, and which surpass all human understanding.

Benalla, 10th Dec., 1882.

BISHOP MOORHOUSE ON THE GIFT OF HEALING.

IV.

"Modern sagacity, applying modern knowledge to the subject of spiritual manifestations, may be merely modern folly, evolving erroneous conclusions from modern ignorance.

"You cannot argue away a mass of facts (like those I am now recording) by a series of extravagant and contradictory hypotheses about each in turn.

"Scepticism, which may show acuteness of mind up to a certain point, reveals a deficiency of intelligence, when adhered to in the face of certain kinds of evidence and knowledge."—*The Occult World*; p. 75.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "HARBINGER OF LIGHT."

SIR,—I resume my letter to you on that most deeply interesting of all the multitudinous phases of Modern Spiritualism, viz., the gift of healing by the laying on of hands. I commence by referring my readers to the quotation from Bishop Moorhouse in the early part of my last letter, wherein he affirms that Scriptural miracles have no application in these times.

It will surely appear from what follows that the Bishop can only make good his position with regard to these times, if we allow him to expunge the volume upon volume of evidence of facts, plain to view, and coming to light in these days, and duly recorded in those volumes and in many languages, as I noticed in my last letter.

One would think that in all right reason, one well-attested case of the kind I am going now to give, would be just as good as a thousand for the amply sufficient purpose of overturning the Bishop's theory of no miraculous cures in these days. In such case it would be unnecessary to open for the same purpose the countless volumes of records of events "in these days!!!"

Your readers will remember that in my last letter I commenced with the Catholic miracle wrought by a Bishop laying his hands on a cancer, and effecting an immediate cure. This letter will be in good keeping with my last, if I commence by quoting a Catholic miracle, or a cure, even more miraculous than the cure of that cancer. I take this one from Mr. Denovan's book, 458th page of the "Evidences of Spiritualism."

For the purpose of my controversy with the Bishop, a miraculous cure amongst the Catholics is just as good as one amongst the Protestants; but we will have plenty of those as we advance. It has been by chance only that I commenced with these Catholic miracles, or spiritual manifestations, as I should prefer to call them. Here then is one of them—Bridget Mary McNerney, county Roscommon; blindness of right eye. The eye had been sightless for eighteen years. The following letter affords the best evidence on this case that anyone could desire:—"Cloonfree, Strokestown, 26th Feb., 1880. Dear and Very Reverend Archdeacon. It is with great pleasure that I have to inform you that my eye still continues to improve. I had the great happiness of visiting Knock on the 2nd inst. On the following Wednesday, immediately after mass, I could see my hand for the first time THESE EIGHTEEN YEARS, and every day since my sight is improving, thank God."

Now, I would ask my readers, or I would ask the Bishop, how can such a case as this be made to consist with his notions, so straightforwardly and explicitly laid down, of the cessation of miraculous healings. They could not have ceased without the design of Providence, and what possible good could God have designed in such a change from a more to a less beneficial law of His government? The continuance, therefore, of these laws now, just as much as in the days of St. James, has reason on its side, as well as facts of everyday occurrence. Preaching against their occurrence in the days of St. James, for such laws of God cannot change.

To this effect I quote orthodox authority, for I find as follows, on the 65th page of "A Voice from the Ganges," by an Indian Officer. "If miracles were necessary in the infancy of Christianity, they are equally so still, and will be so to the end of time. Whenever they cease, the authority of the evidence which depends on them ceases also. Now, the Church of Rome seems

to have been well satisfied on this point, and have been fully aware that if miracles ever cease (the same cause still continuing) 'it would tend to show that they never existed,' and cannot be produced as substantial and conclusive testimony of the truth of religion."

Now this, Mr. Editor, is what strikes me as such a simple proposition as to be a matter of wonderment that the Anglican cannot view it in the same light with the Catholic church. Surely they have logic on their side when they maintain that to preach against such spiritual manifestations (as we are contemplating) in "these days," must practically be preaching against their occurrence in any day, past, present, or to come. The education and training of the mind of a Bishop, must have left his mind as quick as thought to spy out and grasp a necessary sequence, and how, I again ask, can the eye of Bishop Moorhouse fail to see at a glance just what this "Voice from the Ganges" tells us the Church of Rome can see so plainly?

Mr. Newton Crossland, seems to see very plainly what the Bishop fails to see when he writes on pages 9 and 10 of his little book on Apparitions—"How are we to convince a Rationalist of his shallow error? We can only reach his reason through the evidence of his senses, and the physical manifestations of spirits or miracles are the only weapons with which we can change and overwhelm his Materialistic convictions. I am astonished that the clergy as a body have not supported Spiritualism as an ally of Christianity; and yet one hears these reverend gentlemen constantly using against the modern miracles the very same arguments as the Neologists urge against those ancient miracles which are the evidences of the divine origin of our religion! Such self-stultification and REFUSAL OF HELP indicate an incredible amount of prejudice, apathy, and blindness on the part of our ecclesiastical guides!"

That this was not always the attitude of the clergy towards spiritual manifestations is noticed by Mr. Crossland a little further on, where he as I think very properly says—"I think we may safely entertain the opinion that the early priests of religion were appointed and held in estimation because they were mediums, endowed with miraculous gifts." I gave an instance in my last letter of a cancer being cured by the laying on of the hand or hands of the priest, in accordance with the firm impression of the sufferer. That was an illustration in "these days" of the sort of estimation in which the priestly office was held in former days, and to which Mr. Crossland refers.

I will now pass away from theoretical and theological aspects of the question to such positive facts as the one given in Mr. Denovan's book, which book will help me much in these letters. It is like one of those other productions of Sandhurst—the quartz reef, with a vein of gold to be traced through the whole, and the colour of it to be seen in every part, though from its so recent publication I have not yet tested the whole of it. It gives me pleasure to thus contribute my mite towards drawing attention to it. We might find in this volume more narratives of the seemingly miraculous "in these days" (to use the Bishop's words) than we could find in the Bible, if from the latter we first excise the manifestly fabulous. I have spoken so much of what are called miracles, and really are spiritual manifestations amongst the Roman Catholics, that I wished to quote some of Mr. Denovan's confirmations of them, but I defer that to my next letter.

The suggestion I have to make to the Bishop is just this: "Facts are stubborn things to deal with," and the question I have to ask him is just this—What is he going to do? Is he going to do with them what Mr. K. Maitland told us science does with "miracles," viz., "make short work of them by simply expunging the evidence of them?" You will remember, Mr. Editor, that this expunging business was the little trick on the part of the scientists pointed out by Mr. E. Maitland in my motto to that letter which Mr. Denovan published from the *Harbinger*. Surely a Bishop will hold himself above the expunging trick of the scientists; and then, what I ask him is to be done with all these facts of history which I now go on to put in evidence,

leaving theory and Catholic belief behind for the present.

2nd volume of the *Spiritual Telegraph*, p. 443, as follows: "Mr. David Leighton, of Bangor, nearly eighty years of age, who had been afflicted for many years with cancer in the face, and which was thought to be incurable by the physicians, has been essentially relieved of that loathsome disease by spirit influence, exerted through the mediumship of Mr. John S. Williams. After a few visits and manipulations by Mr. Williams, the progress of the cancer was manifestly stayed, and the wound was set to healing."

In those few lines reporting the Bishop at Kerang, and which I essay to controvert in all these letters, he distinctly affirms the Anglican, though unreasonable, dogma of the cessation of miracles in these days. When therefore such facts of history as I have just quoted are at issue with his lordship's notions, I simply ask for an explanation, all scepticism having a reverse side of credulity by necessity. He must believe in some explanation of the story. If the Catholics, who outnumber the Protestants by two to one, do not believe in any cessation of the miraculous, then why should our admirable Bishop do so, except to conform to the fashion of the high and haughty Anglican body who cannot believe in anything so vulgar as spiritual manifestations, and that too amongst the poor people perhaps.

The late William Howitt (one of England's fine writers) writes in his "History of the Supernatural"—"The sharp-witted Kaffirs refuse to accept Christianity except on the same conditions that the ancient world accepted it, that is, accompanied by those supernatural evidences which pronounced its divinity. They are right, and Protestantism wrong, and must go to school to Spiritualism if it is not to go to utter ruin." The same I say to the Bishop in reply to so much of his address at Kerang as I address myself to.

The *Spiritual Telegraph*, vol. 3rd, p. 62, writes—"We are informed that Mr. M., of New Brighton, was recently confined to his room with extreme illness. His physician had exhausted the resources of his art, but could afford no relief. While the patient was in this condition the spirit of his son appeared to Mrs. French, in Pittsburgh, who is known to be a spirit-medium. The spirit told her to go and relieve his father that night, or he would die. She accordingly went and succeeded in arresting the disease at once. We also learn that since Mrs. French has been stopping at the Irving-house, in this city, she has received a telegraph despatch from her patient, assuring her of his complete restoration, and that he was never in better health in the whole course of his life. We are informed by one of the parties that the preceding statement accords with the facts, and that it is certain that many similar cases are constantly occurring." To my mind it is reasonable to judge that the spirit seen by Mrs. French assisted her in working the cure, and that all this was in accordance with the unchanging law of universal Nature, quite as much in operation now as in the days of St. James (which the Bishop says he knows all about, and freely admits), when the apostles and other healing mediums were commonly assisted in working cures in answer to their prayers.

Mr. G. M. Stephens (who is a SOBER CHRISTIAN!!!) must likewise take this view of the case, for he writes on p. 30 of his pamphlet on Healing Mediumship—"When any Mesmerist tells his hearers that he cures his patients without the assistance of spirits, he errs, not wilfully, but from ignorance. His spirit-friend would be always anxious for his sake to help him cure, and the spirit-friends of that patient would also lend their aid. Had any man the patience only to examine the phenomena of Spiritualism, such patience only is needed to convert that man."

So far, and very correctly, writes Mr. G. M. Stephen, and I do not think he would make any exception of the Bishop as one who would be most certainly converted to a belief in the truth of Healing Mediumship by the laying on of hands just as much now, nay more now, than in the days of St. James, when it was so very common. But Mr. Stephen provides that the Bishop must

examine patiently, and if he were to read my letters, that I think would look towards a patient examination. From first to last of these letters I shall give plenty of instances of the spirits being seen in connection with the healings by the laying on of hands, and that certainly looks as if they had something to do with the operation, as in the case last quoted, and I have only to say to the Bishop that I think seeing should be believing. The sight of the spirits in these days ought, I say, abundantly to settle the question against the Bishop, and determine the agency, and as for the good and the utility of such a discovery, I must refer the reader back to my mention of the Duke of Argyll, and his explanatory notice of the importance of the manifestations of spiritual beings in these days. He makes the very common sense remark that our conception of the truth of religion becomes comparatively simple so soon as we discover the existence in this world of an order of beings with powers superior to our own. Hence I hold their importance in every instance I put in evidence of the sight of these operating spiritual beings, provided always there is any important good in a firm belief in the truth of religion, and I am sure there is.

I wish, Mr. Editor, in winding up this No. IV. of my contributions to your journal, to waive further argument and logic, and devote a very few lines to the devotional aspects of the subject in all seriousness. Opponents are very fond, when beaten by our stern facts and logical arguments, to turn round upon us and say, "Well, what does it all amount to; what's the good of the thing, even supposing all that you say to be quite true?" Of course I hold all such questioning to be irrelevant, if not ungodly, for if there had not been some "good in the thing," then, and in that case, *the thing* would not have been sent into the world to operate on, say for example, the religious instincts of sister Mary Frances Clare, of whom I shall speak in my next. The good of all these things must not be lost sight of amidst the wonderful, and I cannot too much admire the reminder, "M.A. (Oxon.)," gives us to this effect, "What is of serious import is, that those who profess Spiritualism as a faith—and do not merely dabble in its phenomena as an amusement—should make an enlightened use of their knowledge, in all that makes for goodness." So say I, and I can just remember that the writer of the preface to "Law's Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life," writes (I speak from my recollection of what I read forty-five years back), "If the reader has a spark of devotion in his bosom, the author will fan that spark into a flame."

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
ROBERT CALDECOTT.

REMINISCENCES.

By H. V. S.

No. VI.

"Not only cunning casts of clay,
Let science prove we are, and then
What matters science unto men."

By slow degrees I had—on reasonable grounds—attained to a belief in the probability of conscious existence after the death of the body. I could not rest in this uncertainty. I yearned for conviction that we are something more than "cunning casts of clay," and regarded with anxious scrutiny everything that came within the range of my senses which I thought might add to my knowledge of physical death, or possibly bring to my mind some faint but certain glimmer of light from another sphere of existence. I said I would pass over death-bed scenes, but I will briefly refer to one remarkable case of approaching death which came under my observation. It was painful to observers, and is painful to contemplate, although attended with but little bodily pain to the sufferer. A young woman was endeavouring to amuse some children. When taking part in their games she sustained what would be regarded as a trifling fall on the floor of the room which injured the spine. The first symptom of the injury was numbness of the lower extremities, which eventually became quite powerless, in fact dead. Many

days before death decomposition had advanced so far that the legs had to be bandaged, and deodorising fluids plentifully applied. Decomposition extended to the lower portion of the body, which was in a state of putrefaction for some time before death. Life seemed to be confined to the head and chest; yet the mind was active and clear, and I was informed that it continued so to within a few moments of final dissolution, when the sufferer's feeble voice failed. I was not present at the last moment, but I should say conscious existence, in this case, could have had no relation to the greater part of the body, which was in a state of putrefaction. Three separate cases of drowning came under my notice; I say drowning because, although animation was restored, the bodies in each case remained for some (one nearly thirty) minutes under water, after having sunk for the third time, and were most certainly quite devoid of sensation. In each case I interrogated the person concerning his experience. I shall speak particularly of one case only. James McLellan was deservedly esteemed as an honest and intelligent fellow by all who knew him. Whilst bathing in the river he accidentally got into deep water. Being unable to swim, he sank a first, second, and third time. His body was recovered with difficulty, and did not manifest the faintest sign of life until after an hour's treatment. McLellan described his experience as follows, "Sinking the first time was horrible. I struggled furiously. I do not know if I reached the bottom, but I was perfectly aware of my position when I rose to the surface of the water. Sinking the second time was not very distressing, it was an oppressive feeling as if I was confined within some space. I knew quite well that I had touched the bottom of the river this time, I rose gently to the surface, and the oppressive feeling which I experienced on sinking the second time seemed to sink as I rose. As I sank for the third time a delightful sensation came over me. I felt that I should not like to be disturbed." Up to this period the result of my enquiries in each of the three cases was substantially the same, but McLellan went on to say, "After sinking the last time I remember thinking of my mother, and how distressed she would be when she came to hear of my having been drowned," and he added, "It seemed to me that I was looking down at myself lying at the bottom of the river." He further added, "yet everything appeared more clear to me than things do now, or than ever they did." I have used McLellan's words as nearly as I can remember them. Here, clearly, was a case in which consciousness could scarcely have had any connection with the body, seeing that the body, so far as could be judged by the most careful observers, was for more than an hour no more capable of sensation than a stone. I do not know if James McLellan is still in the body, but if, by any chance, he should read the *Harbinger* for this month, he will recognise H.V.S. as the initials of an old friend.

I will here mention two incidents (I might refer to several others, but regard for your space forbids) that will, I think, convince most readers that I was not, even when very young, inordinately superstitious. Joseph Alda was my father's groom and gardener. We boys, that is, my brothers and I, used to call him "Joe." Joe was "a merry old soul," and seemed to enjoy life immensely. Although more than sixty years of age, he was as lithe as ourselves, and entered into our boyish mischief and amusements with all the exuberant hilarity of a child. I remember asking him how much longer he would like to live. His comical face gave strong indications of the pleasure he had in the idea as he replied, "about a hundred years." A faithful description of Joe's peculiar physiognomy would, I am sure, provoke the reader to a smile. His face was, I believe, the flattest "in all creation," and broad alike from chin to forehead. The mouth was a most expressive feature. His upper lip was very short. Lips! one might fairly question if his physiognomy included such features, for when the mouth was open it formed a strange looking chasm (the teeth not being visible), fringed with the stubbly beard with which the lower part of the face was usually covered. The chin being long and broad, this queer gap—which terminated in very acute angles,

almost touching the outline of the cheeks—appeared to divide the face into two nearly equal parts. When the mouth was closed all that could be seen was a straight track, just discernible in the stubble and very close under the tiniest imaginable nose. The form and proportionate size of this feature have caused me to think of it as a three-faced pyramid rising out of the plain of the broad flat face. Joe's eyes were blue, of unusual brightness, very small and glistening, as round as bullets and very wide apart. The foregoing is by no means an exhaustive description of Joe's personal attractions, but it is accurate so far as it goes. Joe was as good-humoured as he was odd-looking. Under all the provocation that boys are so capable of giving I never once saw his temper ruffled. Many pleasant recollections of bird-nesting, fishing, shooting, &c., with poor old Joe, still linger in my mind. My aim had proved fatal to many a bird and bunny before I was twelve years old. About two years later, religion had cured me of such cruelties, and made me infinitely more cruel in regarding with complacency the idea of countless millions of men, women, and children being doomed to hopeless, endless torment, because I read, and believed (2 Cor. 2. 15)—“For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish,” &c. But to return to Joe. Man is a superstitious animal, Joe was a man, therefore Joe was a superstitious animal—this syllogism will save a lot of words. When I was about 12 years old, on a certain occasion I went with Joe into the coach-house. A most mysterious change came over him quite suddenly, he was silent, and his face looked as solemn as a tombstone. I repeatedly enquired for the cause. When he could no longer resist my importunity he said, “Don't bother me, Master Henry, something bad is going to happen. At last he opened his mind to me, and said, “When we went into the coach-house there was something there. I saw it go right across and then vanish.” With some difficulty I persuaded Joe to return with me to the coach-house, and show me which way the ghost went. I became almost as serious as he was. In explaining, Joe “suited the action to the word,” and the movement of his hand drew my attention to the window, in the deep recess of which I noticed the carriage lamps, one of them with the foot off, and the spiral spring protruding about nine inches. Well, thought I, it might have been the foot of that lamp, but such a ghost would have made a great noise against the walls and brick floor. I took another look at the lamps, and observed that the spring pointed exactly to a wine hamper that was standing open in the far corner of the coach-house. I cannot say that I walked over to this hamper with any emotion, for I felt sure that the foot of the lamp in falling into it would have rung like a bell. When I reached it the whole thing was clear—the hamper was more than half full of feathers, I put my hand into the feathers, and raised the ghost. The foot of the lamp had not been fastened, the spring required only slight aid to force it off, this aid the jar of opening the door supplied, the foot of the lamp was projected across the coach-house by the spring, and fell noiselessly into the feathers. This elucidation relieved Joe, and he soon became as cheerful as ever.

The other incident may be disposed of quickly. Many years ago I started, late in the day, on a journey of about fifty miles through the “bush” (between 200 and 300 miles from Melbourne). The sun had set long before I reached my destination, and the night became so dark that I was obliged to trust entirely to my horse to keep the right direction (he knew where he was going), in fact, I could not see my horse under me. He had been moving on at a walking pace for an hour or two, I could feel that we were ascending a rise. Suddenly my horse stopt short, gave that peculiar snort which indicates fear, breathed heavily, and I could feel that he was trembling violently. I saw, I think at the moment when my horse stopt, a white object. By reason of the darkness I could not see how far from us it was (perhaps it appeared large to me because I could see nothing else). I watched, as

I endeavoured to pacify my horse. It suddenly disappeared and re-appeared several times—now high, now low. I said to myself, I can't stay here, I must face this, whatever it may be. I dismounted, and, taking the bridle on my arm, advanced slowly towards the object, which was visible, and now to all appearance stationary. We had not advanced far when a salutation that solved the mystery reached my ear—a low neigh from a dark horse with a white face, certainly a dark horse, if not black, for the white face only was visible.

SYDNEY LETTER.

The year is all but dead! Ere this is in print it will be but a memory of the past. With all my heart I welcome the New Year, and with patience await the death of the present one; and yet, it has had its pleasures as well as its pains—its losses as well as its gains—while, perhaps, if we could live it over again we should improve it wonderfully. But, then, people are always wisest when their wisdom is of no avail: everyone can avert an accident after it has happened.

On the 8th December was issued the first number of a new paper entitled the *Liberal*, published by the Liberal Association, which, although small in size, gives promise of greater things in the future. I notice that my statement *re* Walker, in November's *Harbinger*, is called into question by it, and it is asserted that no such resolution was ever passed to the effect that “Mr. Walker's name be not mentioned in this Association.” Since the information was given voluntarily and independently by two members of the Committee who were ignorant of my personality as correspondent, I cannot conceive what could be their motive for deception, even granting that such is the case; while, moreover, I did not apply my remarks to the Association but to the Committee, and since they are elected annually, the resolution only holds good for twelve months at the longest. Since the above appeared I have interviewed both gentlemen, and they still affirm that what I have stated is quite correct.

I see the Electric Light is causing quite a revolution in your city by its brilliancy and many superior points, and is putting the orthodox gas quite in the shade. We have an Electric Light that is performing even in a more perfect manner the same task. I refer to Mrs. Watson, whose arrival amongst us was noticed in the *Harbinger* of last month, and whose excellent and logical discourses I have had the pleasure of listening to during the present month. That the lady's abilities as a lecturer are fully appreciated is shown by the difficulty experienced in finding accommodation for the audiences that congregated Sunday after Sunday. Your metropolitan readers have, indeed, many good things in store, while her style and subjects being so different to those of Professor Denton will make an agreeable change. I am very sorry her stay is so prescribed, but still find some consolation in the knowledge that our loss will be your gain.

A movement is on the *tapis* to inaugurate a purely Spiritualistic Association in this city, to work harmoniously with your Association in the promulgation of the truth by bearing half the expenses, and alternating with you all lecturers who from time to time come to these shores. The idea originated with one or two energetic workers, who have been busy arranging all preliminaries prior to giving the matter publicity. Most cordially I wish it success. For a long period the Spiritualists of this city, wilfully ignorant of their own strength, have thrown in their lot with the pseudo-Free-thinkers. Elements so antagonistic could not be expected to bring forth any great results, and the sequence has proved such to be the case. Encouraged by the presence of Mrs. Watson, who has infused new life into the cause, the above steps have been taken, and for my own part I have but little doubt of its success if judiciously and properly managed. We have good material, and it only requires the leading spirits to be master-hands, so that it may be moulded into proper form and fashioned after the constitution of your excellent Association, to make it a glorious success.

Wednesday, the 27th, is the day set apart for the fifth annual picnic of the Lyceum, and if we can but propitiate the Storm-Gods it will be a great success; perhaps, not so strictly representative as yours was, seeing it partakes more of a public character, and is open to all who are willing to exchange the Queen's silver for tarts and buns. Foremost among the speakers is our illustrious visitor, who is to deliver an appropriate address. Singing, recitations, dancing and games make up the programme. Athol Gardens, a delightful sylvan spot, has been chosen, where, lighted by the beauty of the Cornstalk city, a most enjoyable day may be spent, a day to be cherished in our memories until another year is passed, and another one comes round.

"So speeds the world away." 365 revolutions of it have added a year to our age. Let us hope that we are wiser and better also. I love the old Christmas bells. I like that old custom that calls families together under the parental roof, when the year is old, and grey, and feeble—calls them together to bind their hearts closer, to make their loves sincerer—where, from the dawn to the twilight and long into the night, they can be merry and make good cheer with their Christmas festivities, and on New Year's Eve, listen to the death-knell of the year departing and the birth-chime of the year just born. Wishing that the coming one may bring us greater freedom from all that is false, old, and God-dishonouring, with increasing love for the good, the beautiful, and the true, I close my letter.

BETA.

BRISBANE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "HARBINGER OF LIGHT."

SIR—The City of the North bids fair ere long to become one of the most prosperous cities of the Australasian group. Steadily but surely it is growing and expanding. Buildings are being reared which will now class with any in the cities of the sister colonies. Visitors absent for a few years and returning are astonished at the many changes and improvements that have taken place. Persons paying their first visit are surprised that they did not know more of such a city before, and that its size, resources, and other particulars are not better known abroad. A large amount of capital has lately found its way into Queensland, and property is increasing in value rapidly. Brisbane is also without doubt a liberal city; for its population it will compare favorably with any other. The people's minds seem to grow and expand with their city, and any obnoxious show of sectarian bigotry is rare, and thus becomes all the more conspicuous when it appears. Our leading legislators and city fathers are well known privately if not publicly to be of very liberal opinions, and if the public are called upon to show their opinions upon anything of a liberal nature for the good of the community they respond heartily.

§. Perhaps this is the reason why we have our Museum and Reading Room open on Sundays, and our trains running to the various suburban holiday resorts. An attempt was made to stop the running of these trains, when your humble servant and a minister of the gospel had a controversy through the press lasting about a week on the subject, said minister arguing that it was not fair to put extra work upon the railway officials by making them run the trains on Sundays for our pleasure. Your obedient servant reminded him that he had forgot to mention that scores of omnibuses were laid on specially to carry the keepers of the Lord's commandments to church and back, thus imposing upon the drivers, and the poor horses, who could not object, whether they would or not, the extra work on Sundays. It did not matter so much about the horse that pulled the train, because he was made of iron, very tough, and could stand an extra strain without feeling it much. The editor ended the controversy here, and the trains have been running just the same ever since, with this exception, that the numbers of excursionists increases every Sunday, as many as five or six hundred being taken to one place in one train.

We now have a Freethought and Spiritualistic Book Depot right in the centre of the main thoroughfare,

Queen St., and a large Reading Room fitted up in the rear of the shop. This room was opened last night, when it was decided that it should be called the "Progressive Library and Reading Room." Three nights a week are to be reserved for meetings, &c., and the rest to be open to the public. Such a place has long been wanted as a rendezvous for friends and a place of reception for visitors. It has taken a deal of work, trouble, and anxiety, to prepare and open this place. The undertaking has been of no small character, but cheered and encouraged by our friends we have surmounted the first difficulties, and with a continuance of such help will, I am sure, surmount all future difficulties. I cannot refrain from paying a tribute of praise and heartfelt thanks to all who have extended their help or advice, especially Mr. C. H. Hartmann and Mr. William Widdop. Although distant on the mountain ridge of Toowoomba, our brother Mr. Hartmann is always present when required. Messrs. Wm. Potts, Mitchell, Jones, Wishart, Anderson, and others are energetic as usual, whilst Mr. Ralph Burton, scenic artist, deserves special commendation for the beautiful and exceedingly clever manner in which he is elaborating the front of the premises. His work calls forth many eulogistic remarks from passers by. He is a skilful self-taught, who owes much to a power beyond his own, of great inventive faculties, large ingenuity, very impressive, Ideality largely developed, Imitation prominent, whilst the faculties of Form, Size, and Color are sufficiently developed to make him a natural artist, who paints according to Nature.

Mr. T. M. Brown and family arrive here shortly from England. Mr. T. M. Brown has done much for the cause of truth in England, and will, doubtless be much missed. His sterling worth will be better known when he is absent. He has worked hard and travelled much. From home papers we gather that it is his intention to settle here with his family. He could not have chosen a better field for his labours, or a better colony for his children to grow to manhood in. He has the reputation of being a good speaker, developing and test medium, just the man wanted, and just the man to be appreciated here.

The other day, when speaking to a friend about the advisability of building a hall of our own as soon as possible, my friend made the following noble and generous offer, that should sufficient money be raised or guaranteed to purchase land and build a hall to cost about seven thousand pounds, he would give a donation of five hundred pounds, or should the cost reach ten thousand he would take shares in the building fund to the amount of one thousand pounds, on conditions that the platform be made free every Sunday evening, and to be open to anyone who would deliver a lecture, either orthodox or unorthodox, such persons agreeing to allow criticism at the close of the lecture. Such an offer is worth securing. Our friend (who at present shall be nameless) will have to hand over the money, or it will not be the fault of

Yours truly,

Nov. 22nd, 1882.

GEO. SMITH.

The Salvation Army folks and their friends are not satisfied with their "Indian" campaign. We alluded last month to their invasion and the defeat one of their officers had sustained in the Police and higher courts. Since then there has been much correspondence in the local papers, and the Rev. Mr. Hume has written to the *Bombay Gazette* justifying the action of the Salvationists by quoting Christ's command—"Go ye into all the World and Preach the Gospel to every creature, &c., to which "A Heathen" replies that the Revd. gentleman has forgotten to mention another text where Jesus says "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, neither into the city of the Gentiles, neither into the city of the Samaritans, &c., and then proceeds to prove that the Hindoos are gentiles, and that therefore the Salvationists were disobeying their masters express command. He suggests and reasonably, that it would be more appropriate for them to apply their energies to saving souls in Christian lands than to force themselves on to the Hindoos.

PROPHECIES OF THE BIBLE.

BY WILLIAM DENTON.

PROPHET is miraculous foretelling. We do not call the calculator of eclipses a prophet, for he only tells what can be naturally calculated, and there is nothing miraculous about that. The generally received orthodox idea on the subject is that God called a universe into being, and saw from the beginning every thing that would take place to the end. He knew all about William the IV and Queen Victoria a million years ago, was more familiar with Garfield, the murdered American President, than his own soul; and saw at that time all that you have done more clearly than your own eyes.

To render miraculous foretelling possible, it would seem that all things must be forefixed. We can foretell an eclipse, because the motions of the heavenly bodies are fixed. Give every planet freedom to move without regard to the position of neighboring bodies in space, and who could calculate an eclipse then?

It is but a short time since a man in Launceston, England, was stung by a bee in the jugular vein, and died within half an hour. No one could have prophesied his fate, unless he had known the fate of the bee that stung him. An atom so small, that the unassisted eye could not discover it, determined the life of the bee; the fate of the bee could not be known, unless the fate of the atom on which its life depended was known, and how could that be known unless the fate of all atoms was known, and how could that be known unless all things are forefixed? Leave one atom a lawless wanderer, a fugitive from fate, and the universe would be at its mercy. No thistle-down must be uncoupled and uncared for, and the course of the mote dancing in the sunbeam must be as well determined as the track of the flying planet.

But, as some one has remarked, if it can be known what we shall do in the future, it could be written in a book and given us to read. I read that to-morrow at half-past ten o'clock I shall shoot my neighbor, John Smith, through the head. Is there any way by which I can escape from doing this? If there is, then foreknowledge is impossible, for it fails; if there is not, freedom is impossible. We move in our orbits as the heavenly bodies move in theirs. Every motion of every human being was determined for him before he came into existence. The word of the mouth, the wink of the eye, the throb of the brain, the false oath of the witness, the leer of the profligate, the stagger of the drunkard, and the stab of the assassin. All are fixed as fate.

To render miraculous prophecy possible all this must be, and this looks unreasonable at the start. But supposing this to be true, let us see if we have any indisputable evidence in the Bible of miraculously foretelling, for which millions contend.

To prove that any statement in the Bible is a prophecy in the sense of miraculous foretelling, it should be proved that it was uttered before the events took place which it professes to foretell. It would be very easy for a man to write a prophecy of the recent American war, to tell about the battles of Antietam, Gettysburg, and the Wilderness, and date his document 1801, but every one can see at a glance that this could have no claim to be a prophecy. It must be proved by independent testimony that the prophecy was in existence previous to the events of which it professes to prophecy.

Many of the so-called prophecies of the Bible were written by men who lived long after the events which they profess to foretell. Thus, in the 44th chapter of Isaiah and 28th verse we read, "That saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built; and to the temple thy foundation shall be laid." Cyrus did not make his proclamation for the building of Jerusalem till 176 years after, the time when this prophecy is said to have been written. Here then we are told is a miraculous foretelling, the man mentioned by name and the important proclamation designated that he was to make more than a hundred years before he was born. Unfortunately for this view, however, there is no evidence that

this prophecy was in existence before Cyrus was born, or that it was ever written by Isaiah; and, in fact, some of the best German biblical critics take the ground that this passage was written by a person who lived after the proclamation of Cyrus was made, whom they style the *Deutero-Isaiah*, and that the passage was never intended for a prophecy at all. There are so-called prophecies in Daniel that were written long after the events had transpired.

2nd. The prophecy should be of such a character that no human agency could enable an individual to calculate or foresee. Many remarkable things have been foretold in consequence of the superior discernment of those who uttered them. Rev. J. Prince in his lectures on the Bible tells us that Oliver Evans made the following prophecy fifteen years before the first steamboat ran on the Hudson:—"The time will come when people will travel in stages moved by steam-engines, from one part of the country to another, almost as fast as birds—15 or 20 miles an hour. Railways will be laid nearly horizontal, made of wood or iron. These engines will also propel boats 12 miles an hour. There will be hundreds of boats running on the Mississippi; but the velocity of boats through the water will not be equal to that of carriages through the air." Evans was familiar with the power of steam; he had constructed a mill with steam for the motive power, and he was thus able to look ahead and see to what uses it would eventually be applied. Thousands of men prophesied of the war that took place between the Northern and the Southern American States, because they saw the blossom of which the war was the deadly fruit.

Many of the prophecies of the Bible are the merest guesses that any person of ordinary intelligence could make. The disciples, according to Matthew, asked Jesus to tell them when the Jewish temple would be destroyed, what would be the sign of his coming, and of the end of the world. He answered: "Many will come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many." But this is what had happened many times before, and was likely to happen again. Josephus tells us of many pretended Messiahs before the time of Jesus, and they were just as likely to follow after.

But he says, "Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars," but when was there a time that people did not hear of wars and rumors of wars? It is certain that there has not been a year for the last 2000 in which people have not heard of wars and rumors of wars. What kind of a sign then could that be? He might almost as well have said, "One sign of the end of the world will be that ye shall hear of marriages and rumors of marriages."

"Nations shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom." Of course, if there were wars it could not be otherwise; the one would happen as surely as the other, and if this is a sign the end of the world must be very near. He continues: "And there shall be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places." Yes, but then there have always been famines; a scarcity of food is felt every year on some portion of the globe. Sometimes it is in India, then in China, and a hundred thousand are swept off; or Ireland, and the benevolence of the whole civilized world is roused to relieve the wants of the starving people. Pestilences are still more common; there is no time when the world is clear of them, and, as for earthquakes, there is one somewhere every day, and on an average there is one every nine months that is destructive to human life. Little, however, did the unsophisticated Jewish radical and his admiring fishermen friends know of this. Judea, if not the whole world, was the most important part of it to them, and it is evident that the whole prophecy is based upon an exceedingly narrow view of the world and its concerns.

"Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you; and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." Jesus must have known that if his disciples preached his unpopular doctrine they would be persecuted as he had been, and in all probability many of them would be killed.

He then tells them of great tribulation to come upon

the country, and of the suffering of the people in language very much like that of the anti-slavery prophets before the American civil war. Any far-seeing man might have known that the obstinacy of the Jews would eventually plunge them into a war with the Romans, and that the most dreadful suffering would be the consequence.

But he proceeds: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken; and then shall appear the sign of the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other." "Verily I say unto you," he adds, "this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled."

While Jesus was speaking of things that could be foretold, that any intelligent man might know, he could not fail; but as soon as he launches into the sea of the unknown he becomes a helpless wreck. That generation passed away, every day seeing the signs, and on tip-toe looking for the coming of the master. Sixty generations have passed away since then; the sun still pours out of his golden urn the lucid flood in which the earth forever bathes, the moon and stars look nightly down as they did eighteen hundred years ago on "blue Galilee," the great trumpet is unblown, the son of man only comes as new babies make their appearance into the world, and if he could come in the clouds of heaven, since they are only vapour, it would only be as a bedrenched man with a shower of rain.

A miraculous prophecy should be fulfilled in every particular. The God who knows the end from the beginning can tell what will be to the minutest particular, nor can we dream that he would exaggerate or blunder. Most of the Bible prophecies that are supposed to be fulfilled are exceedingly fragmentary—a verse out of ten, a line out of twenty. Any man could prophecy the future of the United States and come as near as that. The 28th chapter of Deuteronomy contains 68 verses, and professes to tell what will be the fate of the Jews if they obey or disobey the commandments given by Moses. Fifty-three of those verses contain denunciations against them if they are disobedient, and Christian evidence writers assume that these curses were to come upon the Jews if they refused to accept of Jesus as the Messiah and obey his commandments, an assumption that the chapter does not in any degree warrant.

Among the curses is the following: "The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee until He have consumed thee from off the land whither thou goest to possess it." The Jews then must be all dead, or the prophecy fails. There is good reason to believe that the Jews are as numerous to-day as they ever were, and the prophecy therefore does fail.

"The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting and with mildew, and they shall pursue thee until thou perish."—22nd verse. In the previous verse it was the pestilence that was to cleave to the Jew until he was consumed, but now it is consumption, fever, sword, blasting, and mildew. If he was killed by the pestilence his friends had the consolation of knowing that he did not perish by the sword, as those who are born to be hanged can never be drowned; and it is absolutely impossible that both of these prophecies can be true. The presence of the Jew among us to-day shows that neither the one nor the other is true.

"The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust; from heaven shall it come down upon thee until thou be destroyed." Which shall it be, Oh Moses? Pestilence or consumption, sword or mildew, fever, or powder and dust? You cannot kill a man with the sword when he is already dead of consumption; nor can you destroy a nation by raining on them powder and dust, when the pestilence has already swept off the last man.

"The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed." Poor Jew! he must be a marked man wherever he goes, a walking hospital in his own person, with four incurable diseases. Every Jew ought to be a Christian evidence society in his own person; but I took dinner with a Jewish rabbi the other day, where there were seven Jews present, and they did not appear to have the botch, the scab, or the itch; indeed, I believe Jews are less subject to such diseases than any other class of people, owing to their abstinence from the flesh of the filthy hog.

"The Lord shall smite thee in the knees and in the legs with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head." One incurable wound from head to heels. What an advertisement for Jehovah every Jew would be, and what a proof of the truth of miraculous prophecy? Alas for the prophecy! the botch-covered Jew is not forthcoming; he walks through our streets in broadcloth, with a smiling countenance, as if he had never heard of the curses of Jehovah.

The strangest part of this prophecy, however, is the following:—"The stranger that is within thee shall get above thee very high, and thou shalt come down very low. He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him; he shall be the head and thou shalt be the tail." Who are the great money lenders of the world? Who lends money to a Jew? Do not the Jews lend to all the world? The writer of this curse could not have gone further astray if he had known the facts and resolved to write the very contrary of the truth.

If it should be said that this only refers to some past time, when conditions were very different from what they are to-day, it is only necessary to read the document and discover that this is not so; for in the 45th verse we read: "Moreover, all these curses shall come upon thee and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee till thou be destroyed." The Jew is not destroyed, and we ought to see those curses clinging to him and destroying him to-day.

But in this long prophecy there is one fragment contained in the 64th verse, which appears to have received its fulfilment: "And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other." On this the Christian evidence writers have seized and expatiated most largely, at the same time carefully neglecting those portions of the prophecy that did not suit their turn.

"They have been scattered among the nations," says Keith, in his "Evidences of Prophecy, &c." "They have been removed into all the kingdoms of the earth; the whole remnant of them hath been scattered into all the winds. . . . They are found alike in Europe, Asia, America, and Africa. They are citizens of the world without a country." But he is very careful never to quote the last part of the verse, in which he finds his famous prophecy, and which ought to be equally fulfilled. It reads thus: "And there thou shalt serve other Gods which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone." The Jew, wherever he is scattered, then, should be bowing to Gods of wood and stone, as well as the botch, the scab, and the itch would allow him. But here the prophecy utterly fails; the Jew cannot be found on the face of the earth that bows down to Gods of wood and stone. It is only by tearing away small fragments from long statements, and carefully hiding what would show the falsity of the prophecy, that evidence of miraculous prophecy is found in the Bible. It would be easy to find it elsewhere by adopting a similar method. How easy it would be for a man to write of the condition of the United States in a thousand years from this time: "Then shall its dominion be from the Polar Ocean to the Southern Sea, from the land of the Esquimaux to Terra del Fuego. The capital of the United States shall then be in the centre of Arkansas, where there is now an unbroken wilderness, and there shall not be left one stone of Washington or its magnificent capital that shall not be thrown down. It shall be a ploughed field, and no man shall be able to tell precisely where it stood. At that time mon-

shall pass through the air, drawn by flying machines, at the rate of a thousand miles an hour; and trains to go round the world will depart from the capital of America every half-hour. Locomotives will be unseen, save in the museums, and steamboats will be unknown. The post-office will be abolished, for telegraph wires will be laid to every house, and all persons will be able to talk with their friends, though 10,000 miles away, as easily as if they sat side by side in the same parlor. The people will then converse with the inhabitants of Mars, and obtain from them improvements that they instituted half a million years ago. Our cities and houses will be heated by water drawn from a mile and a half in depth, and coal and all the smut, dust, and trouble connected with its use will be unknown. Every city will be lighted by a lamp on an elevated pillar in the centre, that will give a light equal to ten full moons. No animals larger than a dog will be permitted to come within any city, unless by special permission of the City Council. No house will be erected made of less beautiful and enduring material than marble and glass, and the roofs will be covered with sheets of gold, obtained from tunnels driven under the Rocky Mountains crest." In a thousand years this prophecy is read, and it is discovered that though the greatest part of it has failed, one portion of it is true to the letter. Washington is no more; not a stone is left to tell where it stood, and ploughed fields occupy the spot where it is supposed to have been. Some one thereupon exclaims, "See what a prophet Thomas Smith was; one thousand years before the time he declared the destruction of Washington. How could he have imagined that this mighty city, with its magnificent capital, could have been destroyed? How could he know that it would be a ploughed field? He must have been inspired by Him who knows the end from the beginning." But he carefully keeps out of sight the many and signal failures made, which, as he knows, would utterly spoil the wonderful prophecy. This is exactly the method of most Christian evidence writers; they carefully conceal the botch and the emeralds, the universal scab, the consumption, the fever, and the itch, and they expatiate upon the amazing, the wonderful, the miraculous dispersion of the Jews. Such prophecies are no prophecies at all.

The prophecy should not fulfil itself. "You will marry," says the fortune-teller to the tall, blue-eyed young man, "a young lady with dark hair and black eyes, not very tall, plump, and quite good-looking." Is it any wonder, if he believes this, that he looks with favor upon some dark-haired, black-eyed, plump, good-looking girl and makes her his wife? "What a wonderful woman," says he; "she foretold years beforehand just exactly what occurred." Of course, the prophecy fulfilled itself, and the shrewdness of the prophetess rendered it almost certain. In some such way multitudes of prophecies have been fulfilled. The population of the village of Bethlehem was doubtless greatly increased that the celebrated prophecy might be fulfilled, which declared that the Messiah should be born there. Jesus sent his disciples for an ass and a colt, as we are told, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet." "Tell ye the daughter of Zion behold thy king cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." I have no doubt that the Evangelist tells the sober truth when he makes the statement; and Jesus did probably many other things for the same reason.

Lastly, the prophecy should be so plain that its meaning appears upon its face, and the fulfilment is evident. A large proportion of the prophecies said to have been fulfilled are so dark that they reflect almost any image placed before them.

Take the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, which is so frequently referred to as a prophecy of Jesus, of his sufferings and of his death, and it is easy to see that there is nothing clearly pointing to the Galilean reformer, although we have for a heading of the chapter "Christ's Sufferings Foretold." It commences with the 13th verse of the preceding chapter, "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high." If Jesus was God, there was little propriety in God's calling him his servant, nor much

need for prophesying that he would deal prudently; how could anyone conceive of his doing otherwise? When shall he be exalted and extolled and be very high? When he comes from heaven and is born of a poor Jewish maiden in a stable? When he picks up a few poor fisherman and teaches them his doctrine? Or is it when he hangs upon the cross? He was exalted then, but he certainly was not extolled.

"As many men were astonished at thee." At whom were they astonished? Why were they astonished, and when? If Jesus was the person it is strange that the prophecy should say *were* astonished, for he did not live till 800 years after this. All is thick darkness. "His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." When was the visage of Jesus marred more than that of any man? The Evangelists refer to nothing that indicates it. We are told indeed that his enemies smote him on the head with a reed, and buffeted and struck him, but this could not have marred him more than any man; and even his crucifixion marred him less than it did many others, for his legs were not broken as it was customary to break the legs of the crucified.

"So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him." What is meant by sprinkling many nations? What nations are meant? What shall he sprinkle them with? What kings shall shut their mouths at him, and why should they shut their mouths at him? What kings ever shut their mouths at Jesus? All is exceedingly indefinite. Again we are informed, "He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." Was Jesus then an ugly man? The New Testament gives us no intimation of it, and how could Jesus be God manifest in the flesh, and be thus destitute of all beauty? But the writer says *He hath*. How can this then be a prophecy? A prophecy is something that is to take place, but this evidently refers to a person then in existence, and not some one to come in 800 years. This is further evident from the next verse. "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised and we esteemed him not." This was something already done. Nearly the whole of this passage, called a wonderful prophecy of Jesus, is in reality history. If we should regard it as a prophecy, it refers to Jesus no more than it does to John Brown or Joseph Smith.

In Matthew 1-21 we read: "She (Mary) shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins." And in the next verse we are told that "all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 'behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emanuel, which being interpreted, is God with us.'" He was to be called Jesus that a prophecy might be fulfilled, which said he should be called Emanuel! When we turn to this prophecy, which we find in the 7th chapter of Isaiah, we find that it has no reference whatever to Jesus, but to events taking place at the time the prophecy was given. At that time Rezin was King of Syria, and Pekah was King of Israel, and these two united to attack Ahaz, King of Judah, and went up to Jerusalem to war against it. The people of Jerusalem were, of course, very much troubled, and we read that their hearts were moved as the trees of the wood are moved by the wind. Then Isaiah, who was then in Jerusalem, met Ahaz and informed him in the name of the Lord that the counsel of the two kings should not come to pass, that they should not take Jerusalem, and that in 70 years Israel should be destroyed; and in order to prove to him that the prophecy should come to pass, he tells him to ask for a sign. This Ahaz refuses to do; then Isaiah says, "The Lord himself shall give you a sign. A virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emanuel." But if this referred to Jesus what kind of a sign could it have been to Ahaz, who lived 800 years before the time of Jesus? In the next verse we are told that the virgin's child should eat butter and honey, that he might know to refuse the evil and choose the good. But how could a diet of butter

and honey enable a child to refuse the evil and choose the good? Did Jesus require a diet of butter and honey to enable him to know how to refuse the evil and choose the good? But we are told in the same prophecy that "the Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the rivers of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria." What can this mean? What has Jesus of Nazareth to do with Egyptian flies and Assyrian bees? Let us see what they shall do. "They shall come and shall nest all of them in the desolate valleys and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns and upon all bushes." The flies might be troublesome, but the bees might make honey that would counter-balance this, especially if by eating it the children could be made to choose the good and refuse the evil. The prophecy, however, does not end here. "In the same day shall the Lord shave," shave, you say, the Lord shave; but that can only be figuratively, it does not mean with a razor. It certainly says so: "with a razor that is hired." I read. Of whom can God hire a razor? We cannot tell, for the passage does not say. It seems to be done indirectly, however, for we are told that the razor is hired "by them beyond the river—by the King of Assyria. Do those beyond the river hire the razor of the King of Assyria, or are those beyond the river and the King of Assyria the same parties who hire the razor of some one else? Who can tell? But does God shave himself or shave some one else? We cannot even tell that. But what does God shave? That we can tell, and it is the most remarkable thing about this most remarkable prophecy. We are told that "he shall shave the head and the hair of the feet, and it shall also consume the beard." From the use of the word "consume" we might suppose that it was a red hot razor, and perhaps mysteriously connected with the flaming sword that guarded the tree of life. But what kind of a being could it have been whose feet were hairy, and that at the same time had a beard? If this really refers to the Jewish God, what kind of a monster could this Jehovah of the Jews have been? And what has all this dark, dreamy and enigmatical stuff to do with Jesus, and how was it fulfilled in him?

Our Christian evidence writers, however, contend that there are clear, plain prophecies of events utterly unlikely to come to pass that have been fulfilled in every particular. Bishop Newton says time has punctually fulfilled the predictions of the prophets concerning Babylon.* Keith says: "Manifold are the prophecies respecting Babylon and the land of the Chaldeans; and the long lapse of ages has served to confirm this fulfillment in every particular, and to render it at last complete." Babylon is said to have been built in the form of a square, each side 15 miles in length. On the destruction of Nineveh it rapidly increased in population and wealth till it became the queen of the East. The Babylonians being much more powerful than the Jews, whenever they came in contact the Jews were worsted, and in the time of Nebuchadnezzar, Jerusalem was destroyed, its palaces burned, multitudes slain, and the people carried captives to Babylon. Under these circumstances the prophets among the Jews very naturally fulminated their anathemas against Babylon, as they did against every large city inhabited by people with whom they were at war. In Isaiah, 13:19-20 we read: "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation, neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there, neither shall the shepherds make their fold there." In Jeremiah 50:13: "Because of the wrath of the Lord it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate," and in the 39th and 40th verses, "It shall be no more inhabited for ever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbor cities thereof, saith the Lord, so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein."

This is plain enough, and, we must confess, it was unlikely to happen; and what is recorded in the next chapter is still more unlikely. It is not only to be a

land wherein no man dwelleth, but no son of man is to pass thereby—Jer. 51:43. People were not to take a stone of it for a corner, nor a stone for foundations, but it was to be desolate for ever—Jer. 51:26. Let us now see whether the facts correspond with these very definite prophecies. That the city should be destroyed is natural enough since nearly every city that was then on the plain is destroyed; but that it should ever be without an inhabitant, that no one should pass by it, that such a fruitful region should become and continue forever a frightful desert, was extremely improbable, nor has it taken place. I appeal to indisputable facts. In Johnson's Encyclopedia we read: "Hillah, town of Asiatic Turkey, in the province of Bagdad, on the Euphrates, which here is 450 feet broad, and crossed by a floating bridge. It has manufactories of silk, tanneries, dyeing establishments, and large bazaars. It is built on the ruins of Babylon. Population 6000." Here we have, on the very place that was never to be inhabited, that was to be desolate for ever, that no son of man was to pass by, a city of 6000 inhabitants. In Chambers' Encyclopedia the population is stated to be from 7000 to 10,000; while Grattan Geary, editor of the *Times* of India, who has recently visited it, says its population is estimated at 20,000. The population of Jerusalem is to-day less than that of Babylon; and if Babylon is desolate and without an inhabitant, then is Jerusalem.

The author of "Remains of Lost Empires," who visited Babylon, says, "We passed our last night upon the site of Babylon in camp beneath a beautiful date grove." Col. Herbert said, "I fail to discover the desolation of desolations here. Why this morning I sketched a view from this spot, looking down the river, and it is one of the richest pictures I ever saw; and here I am camped upon the old site in a beautiful grove."—pages 248 and 249.

Mr. Geary says, "It is usual for travellers to dwell upon the utter desolation of Babylon, and to paint its site as a strip of the desert, especially woe-begone and unfruitful. But the eloquent gentlemen who dwell upon this aspect of the place could not have seen it in the middle of April. The date groves and gardens along the banks of the Euphrates are then things of beauty in their fresh spring verdure, and the plain itself is laid down with crops: Irrigation canals cross it here and there, and give trouble to the horseman. No grass grows upon the mounds, and there are patches of the level white with nitre, which is to be found here as in other parts of Mesopotamia; but the surface of the soil is on the whole green and pleasant to the eye. The glad waters of the river flow on in the bright morning sunshine, with palm and mulberry hanging over its banks, drinking in sap and life." One might think he was describing the garden of Eden instead of the place desolate as Sodom and Gomorrah. Shall we ever be told again that time has punctually fulfilled every prophecy in the Bible regarding Babylon?

With regard to Jerusalem there are prophecies that it shall be trodden underfoot of the Gentiles, and that it shall be holy and no strangers pass through it any more (Joel 3, 17). So that the evidence writer can take his choice. Whatever may be its condition he has the prophecy that will fit it. In Zechariah various nations are to go up to Jerusalem from year to year to worship the Lord and keep the feast of tabernacles—a prophecy that never was fulfilled, and in the nature of things never can be, for the time is past when it could be.

Tyre was a flourishing city in the time of the Judean prophets, and received, like nearly all the cities with which they were acquainted, their bitter curses. Ezekiel says, 26, 3, 4, 5. "Thus saith the Lord God, behold I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up; and they shall destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock: It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God." He repeats this in the 14th verse, "I will make thee like the top of a rock; thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more; though

* Bishop Newton in the Prophecies, p. 143.

thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again, saith the Lord God." Yet this place that was never to be built again, that was to be like the top of a rock, that was not to be found, even if it was sought for, is a thriving sea-port of several thousand inhabitants. The only Lord God who uttered these prophecies was the pretended prophet, the evidences of whose fanaticism have come down to us.

Among the cities denounced by the prophets was Damascus. In Isaiah 17, 1, we read "it shall be a ruinous heap," but instead of that it is, as it has been for thousands of years, a flourishing city, and has to-day 150,000 inhabitants.

How long will men cling to a religion that the intelligence of the age has outgrown, and that can only be supported by subterfuges and special pleading that would disgrace a tenth-rate lawyer? Let us honestly confess that our ancestors in their ignorance accepted a religion that could never have imposed upon intelligent men, and their descendants imposed it upon us by fearful penalties, when we were ignorant as our ancestors when they accepted it.

Nature reveals to us a spirit of the universe, every where present, operating eternally by unchanging laws, and carrying worlds from infancy to maturity, for the ultimate benefit of the rational dwellers developed upon them. A spirit that never frets nor repents, that never becomes angry, that cannot be propitiated by prayers nor troubled by curses, that brings to the right-doer bliss unspeakable, and to the wrong-doer only the inevitable consequences of his deeds, whose tendency is to induce him to cease to do evil and learn to do well.

It reveals to us, by demonstrative evidence, the existence of the human spirit after death, like a sun dispels the gloom that once surrounded the grave, crowns with immortality every human soul, and presents to us, as its probable destiny a life of continual progress and of constantly increasing bliss.

"FOOTSTEPS OF ANGELS."

A NEW YEAR'S STORY;

BY CYRIL HAVILAND.

WHAT I am going to relate happened in Sydney about Christmas and New Year's time, a few years ago, so I can claim for this the title of "A New Year's Story." But before I get to the "play proper," there must be a little prologue, as they say on the stage, to explain the position of things generally.

Well, then—The Knowles' family consisted of John Knowles, who was a labourer, his wife Martha, and six children. Regarding the names of these children a few words must be said. John always liked a good, short, old-fashioned name, while his wife was always partial to something more high-sounding and long, and in their six separate arguments (up to the present) respecting the Christian names of the six little Knowles, she had always carried her point by saying, "that there was no knowing what they might be when they grew up, and then a big name was an advantage and one they could be proud of," and she would instance Garnet Wolsley, Hercules Robinson, and several others, even going so far as to state that plain Graham Berry sounded much better than Sir Henry Parkes.

The consequence of this was that each separate little Knowles had one long and one short name, and although this has really nothing to do with my story, still I like to point out this peculiarity in the Knowles' family. The father's choice was, as I have said, short, blunt, and plain names, and the mother's the reverse. It was easy for them to get the short names, but unless you were acquainted personally with the facts you would never guess how the long names were obtained.

In order of ages there were John Bartholomew, Martha Arabia, Anne Cleopatra, Albert Plantagenet, William Ebenezer, and the baby Emma Desdemona.

Bartholomew was born in the week that contains St. Bartholomew's day, and Mrs. Knowles' first question to the clergyman of the parish had been, while Bartholo-

mew's name was still pending, "Did anything happen on any day that week, sir, to make it remarkable like?"

"Why, yes, to be sure, St. Bartholomew's day was on the Tuesday."

"Thank you, sir, would you please to write it down?" So it was written down, and that is how John the eldest child goes by the name of Saint Bartholomew.

Just before Martha was born, however, John and his wife went to one of the Sydney School of Arts' free lectures, and it happened to be geography. Large maps were thrown on the screen by the lantern, and the lecturer was dwelling particularly on Arabia. A bright idea entered Mrs. Knowles' head, and she turned to her husband and whispered "If its a girl, John, her name shall be Arabia," and then, to a gentleman next her, who was taking notes, "Would you please write down that name for me—that Arabia, sir?"

Anne, the third child, came by her second name, as you will guess, from Shakespeare's play, Anthony and Cleopatra, as did also the baby Emma Desdemona.

Knowing Mrs. Knowles' weakness for long names, the sin is due to me of Robert's aristocratic affix, Plantagenet, and Mrs. Knowles often now tells me it is the best name of the lot, and she is sorry the eldest has not got it, for he is learning French and drawing, and the "piannerforty."

William, the youngest but one, is the only one left to account for, and he gets his name of Ebenezer through his father working on houses belonging to one of Sydney's "landed gentry," whose first name is Ebenezer.

The trade to which Mr. Knowles belonged had been on strike for some eight weeks before the end of November, and the consequence was that though the men held out for a rise of a penny an hour, eight hours per day, they were really playing a losing game, for while they were fighting for four shillings a week more pay, they had now been two months on strike with no pay (except what money the Union could spare them) which pay reckoned at twelve shillings a day, came to more than thirty pounds, or in other words, more than the extra four-pence would give them in three years.

I am not for a moment saying I consider it wrong for a man to "strike," on the contrary, I think that as the merchant and storekeeper always get the highest for their goods obtainable, so the labourer has a right to get the highest he can for his article of commerce, that is, his labour; but there should be a better plan than the present one of "biting off his nose to spite his face."

Now, as I said before, John Knowles had been on strike for two months, and had in reality lost thirty pounds in wages unearned. He had not paid his rent for three months, and had only part paid his baker and butcher; these last two, however, were good-natured men and old friends, and would wait, as he had been a customer of both for some years and had always paid regularly.

But the landlord was a different man. John Knowles had not long been a tenant, having only paid him two months' rent out of the five months he had known him, and Mr. Thomas Witherbee swore he would stand no more of this nonsense.

Mr. Thomas Witherbee, the landlord, collected his own rents in person, every week, as "he had had enough of those (adjective) agents, who swindled you at every turn, and then charged you a percentage on the whole thing." And this evening he stood at Mr. Knowles' door scolding right and left.

"Knowles will pay you, sir, every penny."

"Then why don't he do it? He thinks he's going to get this rise, but if we have to import labour and get Chinamen as masons, I will never consent to pay my men a farthing more."

"It's not Knowles' fault; it's the Union, sir. You see, sir, the Union men would stone him and never work with him again, sir, if he gave in."

"Union be —" Mr. Witherbee swore tremendously, and although I give his speeches without his oaths, still it would spoil the character of this man if I did not impress on you that every noun had its appropriate and strengthening adjective.

"Look here, Mrs. Knowles, if I am not paid this day week, I'll sell you off, stick, stock, and barrel, and there's the end of it."

"And my poor children, my poor little Desdemona," said Mrs. Knowles, hugging the infant in her arms. "Ah, sir, think of your own children, and give us a little longer time; Knowles will not rob you of a penny."

"But he is robbing me—he is robbing me now; he is stealing from me the interest I get for all my money. Here's three months owing, and you're in the thirteenth week, and not a cent paid on account. Its no use pumping up tears, woman—this day week I'll sell you off and turn you all into the street, and there's an end of it."

So saying away Mr. Thos. Witherbee went to get his rent from another tenant.

CHAPTER II.

Two days after Mr. Witherbee's visit to the Knowles' family a dreadful accident occurred on the railway line. There was a collision of a goods and passenger train, and among the passengers fatally injured, but not killed, was Miss Amy Witherbee, the landlords eldest and pet child.

Poor Amy Witherbee! She was a charming girl, quite unlike her father in temperament: a gentle, soft, pretty girl of nineteen summers.

I would not have you believe she had no fire, or energy, or spirit. I have seen her stamp her pretty foot, and I have heard her voice raised in very angry tones. I heard of her once, some six years ago, when she was between thirteen and fourteen, making a young gentleman's ears tingle with a resounding slap because she caught him thrashing his dog. He stared in amazement at her, and as such things do come about, met her a year before her death and fell desperately in love with her.

Now, this girl had met her death; she survived long enough to be brought home, and had a very short period of consciousness before she died. I do not like describing death-bed scenes, but this one must be told to some extent. After she had kissed all her brothers and sisters and her mother and father, and several friends who were present, she took her mother's hand in one of her's and her father's in the other, and in a weak voice began repeating Longfellow's "Footsteps of Angels," getting as far as the third verse—

"Then the forms of the departed
Enter at the open door;
The beloved ones, the true-hearted
Come to visit me once more."

Here her voice faltered, and as she began the next verse she swooned into a deep faint, from which she woke only to give one farewell smile, and died.

This sad catastrophe cast a gloom over the whole house, and more especially over her father, who seemed to have changed his nature. He was a completely saddened man, and sat all day long in the room with Amy's dead body, and started as if in a dream when the undertaker's men came to put her in the coffin.

This was the first death Mr. Witherbee had ever had in his own family; it was in fact the first misfortune that had befallen him, and it seemed to pull him up completely.

Not a tear had fallen from his eyes; he followed the funeral, and stood at the grave as would one stupefied, and for days afterwards he would go to the cemetery and sit by her grave alone and silent.

Monday came round, when his tenants expected him to call as usual for the rent, but he did not trouble them; this was the day too that the Knowles were to be taught that he would not be humbugged, but he neither went nor sent. Amy was more to him than anything or anybody; she was the pet of his life; for nineteen years she had been about him, and for certainly the last twelve, had got his slippers or his paper. He was far more kind and considerate to Amy than to his wife or to any of the others, and the only thought that seemed to raise itself up in his mind was, "Oh, why did not one of the others go instead of her?"

Now Mr. Witherbee did a thing under this feeling of bereavement that was perfectly unnatural to him; but who can account for human nature under some circumstances? He learnt a piece of poetry—I do not suppose he ever learnt a poem before in his life. Poetry was foreign to him altogether. He asked his wife what was the piece Amy was saying when she died, and tracing it up he learnt the whole of it, and used to go to Amy's grave and repeat it. He had the third verse, where she stopped, put on her gravestone.

It was one day while he was in this mood that I was in the graveyard looking after one of my plots where grow a few violets, snowflakes, and roses, that turning my steps towards Amy's grave, I saw him leaning over it, planting some flowers.

This was about the beginning of the third week in December, and going up to him I accosted him with "Good morning, Mr. Witherbee."

"Good morning," he replied, and then, very abruptly,

"You are a Spiritualist are you not, Mr. Hawk?"

"Certainly I am, and have been for some years."

"Sit down here and tell me, do you ever doubt it?"

"No, never."

"You are certain from what you've seen that the spirits see us and hear us?"

"Quite certain."

"Do you think she hears us now, Mr. Hawk? Do you believe truly that she hears me now talking to you?"

"I know for a fact that spirits do."

"Do you think I can get her to send me a message through a medium somewhere?"

"I have no doubt of it. If you will come some night to my house we will try, but don't be too anxious at first. Will you come?"

"God bless you, Mr. Hawk, I will." His tears began, to flow freely, for the first time I believe since her death, and he threw himself down on the grave and wept from his very heart.

I let him release all his pent up feelings, and waited until he spoke again.

"The last words she ever spoke, as she held my hand, were—

"Then the forms of the departed
Enter at the open door;
The beloved ones, the true-hearted,
Come to visit me once more."

And when I say them to myself I think perhaps it might mean spirits coming back, her spirit coming back, and if I only could believe like you do, I would be so happy."

As we went together home we talked long and earnestly on the subject—I relating my experiences and bringing forcibly out such things as would most suit him, and he asking me minute questions to satisfy himself on some points.

As, however, this story is not intended to enter at length on Mr. Witherbee's experiences, I may here be permitted to say that for the past year or more he has been holding constant communication with Amy through her next sister, Helena.

A few days before the Christmas of which I am speaking, he and I were talking of his favourite subject. I had lent him what books I had, and he had purchased many I had recommended.

"I am a much happier and better man through you, my friend. I am beginning to believe all you say, and now I would not have it otherwise. I believe Amy can see and hear all I do, and I do try to do things to make her happy. I have left off swearing, Mr. Hawk, because I never swore before her, and she might hear me now, and I have something else I am going to do to make her happy, and I know it will, but I shall tell nobody. Do you know, Mr. Hawk, when I go home sometimes I go into her room and sit there alone, and then I think she comes

"With a slow and noiseless footstep
Comes that messenger divine,
Takes the vacant chair beside me,
Lays her gentle hand in mine."

And then I think of what I can do to please her, and last night while I was sitting there I had this feeling, and the thought of something came into my mind, and I believe she put it there."

Christmas has gone and New Year has come, and to-day I was going past Knowles' house, and the strike has not yet ended.

Cleopatra saw me passing and told her mother, and she sent the child after me "to step in a minute."

Knowles was away attending some meeting, to effect a compromise with the masters.

"Well, sir, God is good to us," Mrs. Knowles began; "You'd never guess what's happened." But before I could hazard a guess, Mrs. Knowles went on, "The landlord, sir, came here to-day, and sure I have not set my eyes on him since his daughter died, and he's the oldest man I ever see. Sure I was expecting this three weeks to have the bailiff in here, and when I see the master coming to-day, I says to my children, 'Ah, my poor little dears, you will have nowhere to sleep soon now,' when in he comes and says, 'Mrs. Knowles, my daughter Amy wishes me to make you a present of the rent that's owing, and tell Knowles not to bother himself, I won't push him for it.' And then he gives me the receipt writ out by himself and walks away before I could say a word. Do you think he's right in his head, sir?"

I assured her on that point, and she went on "That's not all, though, there's McKaffra, as does the mangling, he forgave her a fortnight, and she says as how he's done it to all his tenants all round."

I was turning to go away when my boy, as I call him, Plantagenet, came up to me and said,

"Mr. Hawk, I've found a sovereign in our plum-pudding."

"Oh yes, Mr. Hawk, you sent that, I know, and I am obliged to you for it. It was the loveliest Christmas pudding I ever ate; better than I used to eat when I was in service, and your boy, Plantagenet, got the sovereign that was in it. It was funny he got it when you sent it."

"But, Mrs. Knowles, I did not."

"You don't want us to know. All right, Mr. Hawk."

I was not allowed to explain, nor would I be believed if I had; but I have no doubt that Amy saw and knew, and that it made her happy in her spirit home.

JOSEPH BARKER'S TESTIMONY.

THE present generation knows little of Joseph Barker, but thirty years ago he was a powerful influence alike in politics and theology in the North of England. From Methodism he passed to Unitarianism, and subsequently to Atheism, through all his mutations maintaining active intercourse with the public mind. Having reached the zero of negation, he began to retrace his course, and ultimately returned to the fold from whence he had departed. A few years before his death he published an account* of his pilgrimage in search of truth, and relates as follows the influence of Spiritualism upon his convictions—

As I travelled to and fro in America, fulfilling my lecturing engagements, I met with a number of persons who had been converted, by means of Spiritualism, from utter infidelity to a belief in God and a future life. Several of those converts told me their experience, and pressed me to visit some medium myself, in hopes that I might witness something that would lead to my conversion. I was at the time so exceedingly sceptical, that the wonderful stories which they told me only caused me to suspect them of ignorance, insanity, or dishonesty; and the repetition of such stories, to which I was compelled to listen in almost every place I visited, had such an unhappy effect on my mind, that I was strongly tempted to say, "All men are liars." I had so completely forgotten, or explained away, my own previous experiences, and I was so far gone in unbelief, that I had no confidence whatever in anything that was told me about matters spiritual or supernatural. I might have the fullest confidence imaginable in the witnesses when they spoke on ordinary subjects, but I could not put the slightest faith in their testimony

when they told me their stories about spiritual matters. And though fifty or a hundred persons, in fifty or a hundred different places, without concert with each other, and without any temptation of interest, told me similar stories, their words had not the least effect on my mind. The most credible testimony in the world was utterly powerless, so far as things spiritual were concerned. And when the parties whose patience I tried by my measureless incredulity entreated me to visit some celebrated medium, that I might see and judge for myself, I paid not the least regard to their entreaties. I was wiser in my own conceit than all the believers on earth.

At length, to please a particular friend of mine in Philadelphia, I visited a medium called Dr. Redman. It was said that the proofs which he gave of the existence and powers of departed spirits were such as no one could resist. My friend and his family had visited this medium, and had seen things which to them seemed utterly unaccountable, except on the supposition that they were the work of disembodied spirits.

When I entered Dr. Redman's room, he gave me eight small pieces of paper, about an inch wide and two inches long, and told me to take them aside, where no one could see me, and write on them the names of such of my departed friends as I might think fit, and then wrap them up like pellets, and bring them to him. I took the papers, and wrote on seven of them the names of my father and mother, my eldest and my youngest brothers, a sister, a sister-in-law, and an aunt, one name on each, and one I left blank. I retired to a corner to do the writing, where there was neither glass nor window, and I was so careful not to give anyone a chance of knowing what I wrote, that I wrote with a short pencil, so that even the motion of the top of my pencil could not be seen. I was, besides, entirely alone in that part of the room, with my face to the dark wall. The bits of paper which the medium had given me were soft, so that I had no difficulty in rolling them into round pellets, about the size of small peas. I rolled them up, and could no more have told which was blank and which was written on, nor which, among the seven I had written on, contained the name of any one of my friends, and which the names of the rest, than I can tell at this moment what is taking place in the remotest orbs of heaven. Having rolled up the papers as described, I laid them on a round table, about three feet broad. I laid on the table at the same time a letter, wrapped up, but not sealed, written to my father, but with no address outside. I also laid down a few loose leaves of notepaper. The medium sat on one side of the table, and I sat on the other, and the pellets of paper and the letter lay between us. We had not sat over a minute, I think, when there came very lively raps on the table, and the medium seemed excited. He seized a pencil, and wrote on the outside of my letter, wrong side up, and from right to left, so that what he wrote lay right for me to read these words—"I CAME IN WITH YOU, BUT YOU NEITHER SAW ME NOR FELT ME. WILLIAM BARKER." And immediately he seized me by the hand, and shook hands with me.

This rather startled me. I felt very strange. For WILLIAM BARKER was the name of my youngest brother, who had died in Ohio some two or three years before. I had never named him, I believe, in Philadelphia, and I have no reason to suppose that any one in the city was aware that I had ever had such a brother, much less that he was dead. I did not tell the medium that the name he had written was the name of a brother of mine; but I asked, "Is the name of this person among those written in the paper pellets on the table?"

The answer was instantly given by three loud raps, "Yes."

I asked, "Can he select the paper containing his name?"

The answer, given as before, was "Yes."

The medium then took up first one of the papers pellets and then another, laying them down again, till he came to the fifth, which he handed to me. I opened it out, and it contained my brother's name. I was startled again, and felt very strange. I asked, "Will

* "Teachings of Experience; or, Lessons I have learned on my Way through Life." London: James Beveridge. 1869.

the person whose name is on this paper answer me some questions?"

The answer was, "Yes."

I then took part of my note paper, and with my left hand on edge, and the top of my short pencil concealed, I wrote, "Where d—," intending to write, "Where did you die?" But as soon as I had written, "Where d—," the medium reached over my hand and wrote, upside down, and backwards way, as before,—

"Put down a number of places, and I will tell you."

Thus answering my question before I had had time to ask it in writing.

I then wrote down a list of places, four in all, and pointed to each separately with my pencil, expecting raps when I touched the right one; but no raps came.

The medium then said, "Write down a few more." I then discovered that I had not, at first, written down the place where my brother died: so I wrote down two more places, the first of the two being the place where he died. The list then stood thus—

SALEM,
LEEDS,
RAVENNA,
AKRON,
CUTAHOGA FALLS,
NEW YORK.

The medium then took his pencil and moved it between the different names, till he came to CUTAHOGA FALLS, which he scratched out. That was the name of the place where he died.

I then wrote a number of other questions, in no case giving the medium any chance of knowing what I wrote by any ordinary means, and in every case he answered the questions in writing as he had done before; and in every case but one the answers were such as to show, both that the answerer knew what questions I had asked, and was acquainted with the matters to which they referred.

When I had asked some ten or a dozen questions, the medium said, "There is a female spirit wishes to communicate with you."

"Is her name among those on the table?" I asked.

The answer, in three raps, was, "Yes."

The medium then took up one of the paper pellets, and put it down; then took up and put down a second, and then took up a third and handed it to me.

I was just preparing to undo it, to look for the name, when the medium reached over as before, and wrote on a leaf of my note paper,—

"IT IS MY NAME. ELIZABETH BARKER."

And the moment he had written it, he stretched out his hand, smiling, and shook hands with me again. Whether it was really so or not, I will not say, but his smile seemed the smile of my mother, and the expression of his face was the old expression of my mother's face; and when he shook hands with me, he drew his hand away in the manner in which my mother had always drawn away her hand. The tears started into my eyes, and the flesh seemed to creep on my bones. I felt stranger than ever. I opened the paper, and it was my mother's name: ELIZABETH BARKER. I asked a number of questions, as before, and received appropriate answers.

But I had seen enough. I felt no desire to multiply experiments. So I came away—sober, sad, and thoughtful.

I had a particular friend in Philadelphia, an old unbeliever, called Thomas Illman. He was born at Thetford, England, and educated for the ministry in the Established Church. He was remarkably well informed. I never met with a sceptic who had read more or knew more on historical or religious subjects, or who was better acquainted with things in general, except Theodore Parker. He was the leader of the Philadelphia Freethinkers, and was many years president of the Sunday Institute of that city. He told me, many months before I paid a visit to Dr. Redman, that he once paid him a visit, and that he had seen what was utterly beyond his comprehension,—what seemed quite at variance with the notion that there was no spiritual world,—and what compelled him to regard with

charity and forbearance the views of Christians on that subject. At the time he told me of these things, I had become rather uncharitable towards the Spiritualists, and very distrustful of their statements, and the consequence was, that my friend's account of what he had witnessed, and of the effect it had had on his mind, made but little impression on me. But when I saw things resembling what my friend had seen, his statements came back to my mind with great power, and helped to increase my astonishment. But my friend was now dead, and I had no longer an opportunity of conversing with him about what we had seen.

The result of my visit to Dr. Redman was, that I never afterwards felt the same impatience with Spiritualists, or the same inclination to pronounce them foolish or dishonest that I had felt before. It was plain, that whether their theory of a spirit-world was true or not, they were excusable in thinking it true. It looked like truth. I did not myself conclude that it was true, but I was satisfied that there was more in this wonderful universe than could be accounted for on the coarse materialistic principles of Atheism. My scepticism was not destroyed, but it was shaken and confounded. And now, when I look back on those things, it seems strange that it was not entirely swept away. But believing and disbelieving are habits, and they are subject to the same laws as other habits. You may exercise yourself in doubting till you become the slave of doubt. And this was what I had done. I had exercised myself in doubting, till my tendencies to doubt had become irresistible. My faith, both in God and man, seemed entirely gone. I had not, so far as I can see, so much as a "grain of mustard seed" left. So far as religious matters were concerned, I was insane. It makes me sad to think what a horrible extravagance of doubt had taken possession of my mind. A thousand thanks to God for my deliverance from that dreadful thralldom.—*Psychological Review.*

WELLINGTON.

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.

THIS my first communication will contain, I fear, but little to interest your readers. Spiritually, New Zealand is almost at a standstill, but for all that there is a vital germ that promises indefinite development by and by. There are plenty of forward thinkers here, unshackled by conventionalism, who would investigate if the subject but once received legitimate impetus. There is, however, no disguising the fact that the fear of ridicule and an instinctive hesitancy to run counter to the views of the majority stand much in the way.

Investigations into the mysterious science of Spiritualism have been proceeding for years past in the south of the colony with varying results. In many cases advanced manifestations were obtained, and I know for a fact how several sceptics have been rescued from the cold grasp of materialism by the evidence obtained at Spiritualistic circles. Here in Wellington the stream, though sluggish, is moving. Two or three circles are investigating, and one of them is obtaining very good results. I hear a healing power is being developed and exercised with good effect in a case of paralysis. The circles are conducted with strict privacy; very little is heard of them, but enough leaks out to prove that the heaven is at work, and must prevail at last.

I am glad to say that the cause has exponents in the country districts. At the Wairarapa there is a circle of farmers, also, who are obtaining good results. Encouraging results were also obtained at one or two circles which were formed at Masterton, but clerical opposition acting on the feminine mind crushed the young movement. If the church only knew where its true interests lay it would encourage, not oppose, the Spiritualistic progress. More another time,

Nov. 26th, 1882.

"TAIHOA."

THE "PSYCHOLOGICAL REVIEW."

THIS high-class magazine has entered into its fifth volume, the first four numbers of it only reaching us in December. From them we find it has been further enlarged to ninety pages, and the price advanced to a shilling. Amongst the numerous thoughtful articles which they contain we are especially attracted by one on "our existence in eternity" by Alex. Wilder, M.D., whose position as a Spiritualist, Theosophist, and experienced student in the field of psychological research enables him to treat a metaphysical subject clearly enough to meet the comprehension of the comparatively unlearned. In the September number is commenced the republication of "Psychography," by M.A. (Oxon), revised and corrected, and with a large amount of additional matter. The author gives as a reason for its republication his belief that Psychography (or writing without the intervention of human agents, and professedly from disembodied intelligences) is a fact susceptible of simple and complete demonstration in a higher degree than any other equally important phenomenon in Spiritualism. In this we entirely agree with him, never having met with a reasonable theory that could cover or even impinge upon the facts within our own experience.

Very interesting, too, are the biographical sketches of the late William Howitt by his daughter, Mrs. A. M. Howitt Watta. From these it appears that he was a natural seer, having spontaneous somnambulist experiences in early life, the influence of which developed his spiritual faculties in later years.

In the October section of this is a beautiful poem from his pen, which it is believed has not hitherto appeared in print.

"THE LIBERAL."

We are in receipt of the first three numbers of the *Liberal*, an eight-page weekly paper, edited by Mr. Geo. Lacy, and published by the Liberal Association of N.S.W. at their rooms in Castlereagh St., Sydney. As the organ of the Liberal Association, the editorial policy will necessarily be guided by its constitution, making it an essentially freethought paper. In an introductory article the editor gives his opinion of the causes which have led to the failure of all previous attempts to establish a freethought organ in Sydney, and considers that by making the *Liberal* more essentially a newspaper its prospects of success will be greater than any of its predecessors. The paper, therefore, is largely made up of notes on current events bearing on freethought, brief reports of Dr. Hughes' and Mrs. Watson's lectures, and correspondence. A short article by Professor Denton appears in No. 1, and an excellent lecture by Mr. Lacy, entitled, "Freethought Constructive as well as Destructive," runs through the second and third numbers, and is to be continued in the fourth.

TESTS OF SPIRIT IDENTITY.

MASTER Willie Denton, an intelligent lad of fifteen, in writing to his father here, describes a visit paid by him and his sister to the Lake Pleasant Camp Meeting, and amongst the incidents relates the following experience at Mrs. Maud Lord's seance:—"We were sitting in Maud Lord's circle, when somebody came to me and said 'Georgie,' and patted me on the knee, and I said, 'Georgie who?' and he said 'Georgie Moloy,' and shook hands with me and said, 'Willie, I am not dead, I am alive!' He came to Winsey the same way. Some one came to Carrie, and said, 'It is 'Gussie,' Carrie, Gussie Lovewell,' and she commenced to play on Carrie's hand as if she were playing on a piano (she had taught her the piano when in the body). Maud Lord knew nothing about them whatever. She also said that there was an old man that came to me, and said it was my grandpa, and he said to me, 'Tell mother it is all true.' He meant grandma, I suppose, as he called her 'mother' sometimes, and grandma says it was in answer to a question they talked about just before he died, and she thinks it is very remarkable."

MR. WILLIAM DENTON.

MR. DENTON'S Sunday lectures for the Victorian Association of Spiritualists have been largely attended during the past month. The Wednesday ones have not been so largely patronised as the popular prices charged for admission would justify. Some people estimate the quality of an article by its price, which we fear has been the case in this instance. The grand scientific lectures given by Mr. Denton would have been more largely attended by the class referred to had the admission been from two to five shillings, but because the committee in their liberality fixed the price at about a fifth of this to enable the working men to participate in them, many of those who attended his first lectures have held aloof from the last, whilst the working men for whose benefit the reduction was made have not come forward in sufficient numbers to cover the heavy expenses. Having been punished for their liberality in this instance, it is unlikely the association will commit the same fault at any future time when they have first-class talent available, but will charge a price commensurate with the value of what they present, whether it be amusement or instruction. Mr. Denton gives his final lecture in Victoria at the Athenaeum Hall on Wednesday, January 17th, and a farewell will be tendered to him in the same hall the following evening. He will commence a course of lectures at Sydney on the 22nd, and probably lecture at Brisbane and Charters Towers (from both of which places he has been requisitioned to come) on his way to the Orient.

TO THE ORTHODOX AND ALL OTHERS
WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

CAN any of you, whether Orthodox, Spiritualists, Unitarians, Freethinkers, or Theists, tell me who that Being is alluded to in Scripture as the "Logos," "The Son of the Father," "The Only Begotten Son," or as the Orthodox express it, "The Son Begotten of the Father before all worlds?"

To me this hitherto mysterious Being has now been made known. To you I now put the question, answer it if you can. Who is this mysterious Being, this, "the Only True Son of the Father?"

Reply, please, through the medium of the *Harbinger of Light*. If you can answer the question, do so. By the true answer the false Theology and Christianity of the ages is completely overthrown, and the true Redemption, the Eternal Christianity, shall take its place in all hearts.

UNITARIAN MINISTER.

Rockhampton, Dec. 3rd, 1882.

Mrs. Watson's Sydney lectures have proved a great success. Although there is a charge for admission of from sixpence to two shillings to every part of the house, the Academy of Music (the largest available building) is found inadequate to accommodate the crowds who assemble to hear her. All our correspondents unite in eulogising her inspirational discourses, which seem to meet a long-felt want in the sister-metropolis. Mrs. Watson is expected to arrive in Melbourne about the 17th inst., and will give her first lecture at the Bijou Theatre, on Sunday, 21st. A public reception will be given to her by the Victorian Association of Spiritualists at the Athenaeum Hall on Thursday, 18th inst.

RECEIVED—Hutchinson's Australian Almanac.

Massina's Guide to Melbourne.

Essay on the Colony of Victoria, prepared for Amsterdam Exhibition of 1883.

Enquiry into the Religions of the Day; by Dr. Ormsby.

The latter exhibits in a concise form the inconsistencies of the various Christian churches, showing the impossibility of their arriving at any harmonious basis for religious teaching in State schools.

The Argus for December 8th says—"It is stated as a result elicited by the last census that there are now in Paris 2,250 persons who live by practising 'clairvoyance,' and it is asserted that 30 of the number make over 60,000 francs a year by their profession.

An able letter, defending Mr. Denton against clerical slanders, appears in the *Pleasant Creek News* of December 12th.

We have received the first printed report of the proceedings of "The Society for Psychical Research," published by Trübner and Co., London. It is prefaced by a brief statement of the causes which called the Society into existence, viz, the accumulating evidences of Mesmeric, Psychical, and Spiritual Phenomena; its objects—the scientific investigation of such phenomena; and the scope of the intended inquiries. One of the first subjects taken in hand was "Thought Reading," the committee for which consisted of W. F. Barrett, Professor of Physics in the Royal College of Science for Ireland; Edmund Gurney, M.A., and F. W. Myers, M.A., both of Cambridge University. Their report, which occupies 23 pages, substantially affirms the fact that sensitives can read or become conscious of the thoughts of others. There are interesting appendices by Professors Barrett, Stewart and Rev. A. M. Creery, all corroborative of the fact. Committees have been formed for the "Study of Hypnotism and so called Mesmeric Trance, Clairvoyance, and other allied phenomena." "A Critical Revision of Reichenbach's Researches, with certain organisations called 'Sensitive,' and an enquiry whether such organisations possess any power of perception beyond a highly exalted sensibility of the recognised sensory organs." "A careful investigation of any reports, resting on strong testimony regarding apparitions at the moment of death or otherwise, or regarding houses reputed to be haunted." "An enquiry into the various physical phenomena commonly called Spiritualistic, with an attempt to discover their causes and general laws." "The collection and collation of existing materials bearing on the history of these subjects." This programme, if fully and fairly carried out, must inevitably lead to important results, though these results will be largely influenced by the quality and reliability of the instruments through which they are obtained.

Advertisements

VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

Mr. Denton's Farewell Lectures.

Wednesday, January 3rd, Athenæum Hall,

"Comets and Meteors, and their relation to the Death of Worlds."

Sunday, January 7th, Academy of Music,

"The Coming Day."

Wednesday, January 10th, Athenæum Hall,

"The Antiquity of Man and his Primitive Condition."

Sunday, January 14th, Academy of Music,

"Evolution in Religion, and the Religious Feeling of Victoria."

Wednesday, January 17th, Athenæum Hall,

"The Origin of Man: Is Darwin Right?"

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