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

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THOUGHTS are the true wealth of the mind and soul,—our mental "stock-in-trade," and, according to the quality and extent of them we possess, is our individual development, and our power to accelerate the progress of humanity. But the influx of thought cannot continue to benefit the individual unless there is in due time a corresponding flux, or reflex, to others. There are misers in the fields of knowledge who are constantly accumulating it and turning it over in their own minds without evolving sufficient wisdom to show them the true use of it: these, however, are fortunately the exceptions. As a rule, a man whose thoughts are stimulated either by influx or intuition to the evolution of ideas which he conceives to be of public value, desires to express them, though often, from lack of intellectual ability or cultivation, unable adequately to do so. The diffusers of practical or elevating thoughts are our greatest public benefactors, though not always recognised as such, for thoughts are more precious and durable than silver or gold, and more fruitful of good to humanity.

In the social sphere the influence of a thinker is limited, in the field of literature it is marvellously increased, but on the platform, when gifted with oratorical power to adequately express his thoughts, the acme of diffusive power is reached, for the words as they flow from the lips of the speaker are *alive*, and make a far more vivid impression on the consciousness than the printed symbol. The utterances of a wise and eloquent speaker live not only in the minds of his hearers, but the most potent of them, the "gems of thought," are transmitted from their minds to those of others, and by the printing press diffused far and wide.

In America the platform is a recognised institution, exerting a powerful educative influence, but in the Australian colonies that standard has not been reached, and its manifestations are intermittent. We do not appear to have developed local talent in this direction—men capable of teaching the multitudes. That we have such amongst us there can be little doubt—brains well stored with thoughts pregnant with good for humanity, yet seeing no channel for their diffusion. Men full of worldly wisdom and self-conceit, and pecuniary adventurers, push themselves to the front, whilst the genius stands back waiting for an invitation, and were facilities and encouragement offered by the establishment of a popular platform of science and ethics, the public would get the benefit of their thoughts, and be the richer for it. The scientific teacher, if he has the brand of an English university, is received with *eclat*, lauded by the press, and worshipped by the multitude; yet much as is our need of scientific teaching, great as is the office of the scientific instructor, still greater is our need of moral instruction, and higher the office of the moral teacher, but the man who combines both is the best of teachers, and a most powerful lever to raise mankind to a higher level. Such men, though rare, are to be found for the seeking, and within the reach of any organization having the means and energy to bring them forward. The maintenance of a high-class popular platform would inevitably bring a supply, and afford an outlet for many valuable thoughts that, for lack of it, find but a limited expression. The first essential to the attainment of this desideratum is a hall, available at trifling cost for speakers on all progressive subjects. In the two local spiritualistic institutions, the Victorian Association, and the progressive Lyceum, funds were initiated some time since for the building of a Hall adapted to their purposes, and which would be available for any purpose connected with the social, intellectual, and moral advancement of the race. The latter of these funds is slowly growing, but, unless augmented by men of larger means, it will be many years before a sum will accumulate to cover the large outlay implied in the erection of a suitable building in a sufficiently central position. It therefore rests with those who are in sympathy with rational spiritualism and the harmonial principles comprehended

in it to hasten forward the movement. If these put their shoulders to the wheel as they should do, it will not be long before a hall of instruction, with a genuine freethought platform, is erected.

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE INFINITE.

(From the *Spanish of Balmes*.)

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

SIXTH CHAPTER.

REDEMPTION IN THE INFINITE.

THUS, then, as I have told you in my last chapter, will truth be the initiator of our real happiness.

When the spirit, disengaged from matter—ethereal, radiant—has accomplished its mission in the solemn temple of Peace, then will it begin to contemplate with sadness the involuntary errors into which it has fallen during its journey through the worlds. Then it will revisit the spheres of its past lives; will gaze upon the ascents it has made in each of them; then also will it consider the greatness and immensity of God; with eagerness will it again run through the different phases and aspects of its past life; it will meet with the very small pleasures to which it had entirely delivered itself; it will see the very small amount of good it has done, and consequently it will then comprehend that only by the force of its will, and by the potency of its Spirituality, disengaged from the investiture of matter, is it able to resist the egotism emanating from its materiality, and to enjoy higher pleasures and perform better deeds. From the vast temple called space will it then come to pray with its utmost fervour and its deepest feelings and sentiments of devotion, pouring out its whole heart in thankfulness for the many gifts which God kept in store for it. Then, raising up its thoughts to even higher levels, will the spirit comprehend the depth of the ignorance into which it was plunged when it practised errors and committed abuses; it will then be ashamed of its past faults and shortcomings, it will anticipate its future in idea; it will try to realise great plans and schemes, as it is beginning to feel the first impulses of its regeneration and new birth. Then will it begin to exert itself to be useful; then will it cease to be dominated by one idea—"to give away what it has in order to obtain what it has not." It will ask God for His blessing, and then will it feel in the ecstasy of its real happiness, after having passed through this earth-life, that it has been rising to a higher mission and to render itself more radiant, more luminous, more ethereal.

Such is the nature of the spirit who has advanced beyond the limit of others; such is the spirit who already has begun to understand his immortality; such is the spirit of progress who has already torn from his eyes the bandage of ignorance; this is the spirit who strives to justify itself alone by the dictum of eternal justice; this the spirit who falls no more, being obedient to the divine laws; this the spirit who loves; this the spirit who teaches and instructs.

Thus, then, when the soul, after having thrown off its corporeal garment, begins to initiate itself into the truths of the Infinite, does it accomplish its mission, and becomes irradiated by that illumination for which it has hoped and yearned ever since its incarnation began.

Did matter comprehend the truths which are enclosed in the redemption of the soul, it would never get tired on its road to progress, nor would it throw any obstacles into the path of the spirit. In proportion, therefore, as the spirit becomes initiated into the secrets of its immortal nature, in its progress, in its divine essence, in its positive truth, will it also obtain the reward promised to it from eternity. Let us, then, work in spirit and in truth. To work is to do all the good possible; to approach all that is real in the destiny of mankind, and not to try to silence the voice of conscience and to retard the progress of our natural ascent.

Therefore, let us not waver in following the decrees of the Almighty who has worked out for us an inflexible path, by treading which we shall quickly learn to understand Him and to truly love Him. Let us not deviate from the path which leads to the sanctuary of creation in which we ourselves become sanctified! Why should we neglect our divine rights, why should we turn a deaf ear to the voice which cries to us to march on? Do not interrupt the work you have begun; approach the ideal in the interest of reform. The path has been clearly traced out for us; now it becomes our duty not to deviate from its course—to advance on it resolutely, taking no notice of the abysses over which we have had to leap.

Firm in the faith, hope animates us, and charity will be our saving clause; we know little, hence we shall receive much. Our progress will be greater than that which is studied in the laws, for we shall have received that of other and greater laws. Our teaching shall be this: "to love" and "to believe." Our immense benefit we shall obtain after we have gained the victory, and that victory will be our redemption, and our desires will be fulfilled.

To believe in God, and to love much, in this consists the whole truth, and this is what we expect from those who have helped us to advance truth in order to distribute it amongst their fellow-beings. To believe in God means to instil with charity and compassion the great as well as the little in his name: to watch the healthy and to nurse the sick, to administer medicine to heal the multitudes; in everything to admire always the works of God, in the smallest herb of the earth as well as in the greatest glories of the skies; always to exercise clemency; to give liberty to all, to the caged turtle-dove, to the dried up tears, to thought, to civilisation, and to love; always to be just, so as to be able to undergo the trials and temptations of matter; to receive the beggar, to treat with tenderness and respect the orphan, and to try to imitate the innocent, good child. In this consists the true belief in God and the love of our neighbours; this only constitutes true advancement when we progress on our path without looking back upon the track which we have left behind us.

Oh humanity! when wilt thou cease to be deaf to the voice that cries out to thee from on high? When wilt thou believe in truth and in spirit in order to obtain eternal forgiveness? Humanity, thou wilt not neglect the voice, the echo of which thou must have long since perceived in thy restored conscience; thou wilt not turn a deaf ear to that call; rise from thy lethargic sleep, if thou desirest to attain thy final glory! No time is to be lost! Answer; accompany and assist the good workers above who call thee; persevere in thy study that thou mayest understand the great truths in which those same servants initiate and instruct thee, whom thou treatest with disrespect, and of whom thou speakest ill.

Fellow humans! do not give rise to scandal. You cannot bless God whilst you are cursing your brethren, for if you judge others you shall also be judged by others; if you hate any of your brethren you will have to suffer much until you obtain redemption for yourselves. Therefore, rouse yourselves from your death-like slumber; think of to-morrow; remember that your earthly opportunities to gain the life eternal pass by swiftly, and if you have been introduced into the truths of the eternal life, follow up those truths constantly and perseveringly, for it is necessary to shake off the errors of your bondage before you can obtain redemption and enter into certain and everlasting glory.

Withdraw thyself into the sanctuary of thought; reclothe thyself in the heavenly garments; honour, oh humanity, thy Creator, that thou also mayest be honoured; steep thyself in wisdom in order to attain to thy future glory; thy path has been made smooth and easy, therefore walk on it; thy book of science lies open before thee, take it up and study it; place thyself in front of the thoughts it contains, and see thy littleness. Wake up, as we have told thee before; strive after what is real; defend your rights; enter into the temple of eternal truth; be a constant and steadfast

worshipper of light, and do not turn in the direction of darkness; seek peace, discourage all discord, and dissension; try to realise the future destiny which is no longer a mystery to thee; take the torch in thy right hand and hold it aloft for the enlightenment of thyself and thy brother.

Let thy eye sweep through all the grand realms of creation; study nature's works, learn to love in them thy Lord, thy King, and thy Father; do not waste thy time; for thou art temperate in thy real happiness and greedy of thy vanishing hours. Listen to the truth, answer to the voice which has called thee from the ethereal spaces, which has spoken to thee from the vast bosom of the Infinite. Being now convinced of the truth, strive to divert and redeem thyself from the last trace of error. Oh humanity, do not wish to remain blind; listen no longer to vanities and absurdities; open thy mind to the certainties of truth; do no longer hesitate to march on; do not get fatigued on thy path of progress, and learn to be ready when thy hour has struck. Do not gather false laurels; extract the thorns from thy side lest they hurt thy spirit; take the garlands of flowers which we offer thee with all our heart and soul; inhale their fragrance so that thou mayest become impregnated with their sweet odours; be no longer a coward; have courage and be strong, as we have already told you; fight to win and conquer: defeats are displeasing and injurious. Listen, humanity, the thorns are forcing themselves into thy flank, and it is necessary to pluck them out; thy thirst is burning, and on the spot we show thee the fountain, and thou carest not to quench it. What is thy reason? Why art thou content to suffer thus? Thou bendest under the weight of thy vices yet. Why dost thou prefer to remain the sport and football of thy errors? Why dost thou not rise up, humanity? Why dost thou frustrate our hopes? Cast away thy ignorance; let abuses no longer take root in thee; pull off thy poisoned Nessus' shirt, and clothe thyself in the celestial robes. Thus only will the road to knowledge be opened to thee; thus only wilt thou arrive at the truth; thus only wilt thou reach thy promised home in heaven. Revel in the abundance of thy knowledge; wrap thyself round with it; adorn thy brow with the diadem which God offers to a regenerated humanity; seek the right that thou mayest embrace the light. Morality will teach thee the principles of the former, and thy progress will furnish thee with the keys to the radiant chambers of the latter. Cease now from thy drowsiness and thy slumbers. Realise at last thy upward tendency and thy heavenly course; do not sleep any longer on the couch of injustice, for thy sleep cannot be sound and tranquil! Be not content with thy small portion of happiness; accept from our hands that which we offer to thee as a health-giving remedy for thy ignorance and evil fate.

Let humanity become familiarised with truth, and it will at once become sacred; let it learn to forgive and it will become free itself; love and thou wilt be blessed; bless and thou wilt be rewarded. This is the work of thy brief day's journey: Become moral and thou wilt make immediate progress; learn to master thyself and thou wilt appear gentle instead of cruel; be an instructor of thy brethren in darkness; and let thy aspirations be for higher and still higher planes of perfection. Thy studies have already commenced; thy task now is only to repeat thy former lessons; thou hast only to follow in the footsteps of truth; thou hast only to obey its strict precepts; practice infinite love and self-sacrifice; cultivate peace and forgiveness; be loyal and faithful to God, and thou art sure to obtain thy redemption in the Infinite. Then wilt thou have advanced the great work of the future; then wilt thou have offered a precious pledge; thou wilt have made an ascent which, although it appears inconsiderable to-day, will be deemed of great importance and value when thou hast learned to illustrate it in thy practical life. What, then, does still keep thee back? How canst thou still doubt? Why dost thou not make haste to receive the truth which we are teaching thee—to familiarise thyself with it, and to carry it out in thy every day life? What is still holding thee back from climbing to the summit which we have pointed out to thee? What is

it that still keeps thee back from thy studies? How is it that thou shouldst still rejoice in future darkness? Why dost thou not yet believe? Why art thou still without hope? Why is thy faith still so wavering—thy hope so brief—thy charity so meagre? Hast thou never delivered thyself to deep meditation, and to a searching inquiry into the nature of the soul? Hast thou never exposed thy thoughts to a higher breeze than that of this world? How is it that thou sleepest still, when thou knowest that after a while thou must suffer severely for thy disgraceful conduct to-day? We have already told thee that the faith of the future is regeneration; that regeneration is the fruit of study, the child of peace, and of the pursuit of reality. Let thy faith in God buoy up thy heart and thy hope; let universal love take possession of thy heart, and thou wilt be happy; deliver and disentangle thy spirit from the meshes of materiality; be a lover of liberty, and the chains of thy bondage will fall from thy galled limbs; emancipate thyself now in order to achieve final redemption in the future!

Benalla, Dec. 27th, 1882.

GOD IN THE LIGHT OF SCIENCE AND COMMON SENSE.

A LECTURE DELIVERED IN THE BIJOU THEATRE, MELBOURNE, BY WILLIAM DENTON, DEC. 31, 1882.

"THERE'S not a living man in all the earth but hath God near to him as his own soul; there's not a woman in the world but hath God nearer than the love in her deep heart; there's not an infant in the world but hath God near to it as the blood in its young veins; there are no souls forsaken of their God."

"Canst thou, by searching, find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is larger than the earth, and broader than the sea." Words put by the author of the Book of Job into the mouth of Zophar, the Naamathite.

It had been well if such thoughts had prevented men from dogmatizing about that of which the best informed human beings can know but little. Very few of the Bible writers, and very few of the religious teachers of the present time, have manifested much modesty in treating this subject. They tell us what God is, what he has done from the beginning, and what he will do for an eternity; they have fenced him round with their freeds, they have been visitors in his council chamber, and seem to look upon him as their special property, very much as Barnum does on Jumbo.

But if at any time men might justly expect to know the truth upon this, the greatest of all problems that can be presented for human investigation, we certainly may. If men ever had a right to speak or write upon this question, we certainly have, for all questions that concern humanity concern every one of us, and no people that ever lived on the planet know as much about the universe as do the people of the present time.

Since the books of the Bible were written, the universe in space and time has been more than a million times enlarged. We have travelled on our telescopic steeds over the illimitable celestial fields, and have made the acquaintance of millions of suns that the ancients never saw. Geology has opened to us the doors of the Great Past, and we have explored its chambers, that, like a universal museum, contain the forms in which life has been embodied for many millions of years. The men who lived before these grand discoveries were made, were compelled to draw their conclusions from that part of the universe with which they were familiar; their knowledge of God was as limited as their knowledge of the universe; knowing nothing of what geology has revealed, they crowded into a few days what had taken countless ages to perform; and all their ideas of God and his operations, drawn from these false premises, were vitiated in con-

sequence. From the vastly higher stand-point that we occupy, we take up the great problem of the ages, and bring the light of science, and reason informed by science, to bear upon it.

The belief in a God or Gods is well nigh universal; yet there must have been a time when it first dawned upon the human mind. The savage looked around him, he beheld the sun that warmed and cheered him, the river from which he drew the fish for his food, the tree whose nuts satisfied his hunger, and his own body more wonderful than all. And he said: "We make our huts, our clubs and spears, and a great Maker must have made all these things I see around me. He made these bodies that shine above me; his mighty hand shaped these mountains and this firm earth, and he, by his wisdom, fashioned man." This was a very natural thought. It was as sure to spring up in the mind of man as the thought that the earth is flat, and that the sun rises and sets every twenty-four hours.

The Greek father of the Gods, the "immortal Jove," was only a magnified man. Homer tells us:—

"He rolls the thunder o'er the vaulted skies;
Shakes his ambrosial curls, and gives the nod;
The stamp of fate, and sanction of the God.
Jove, on his couch, reclined his awful head,
And Janso slumbered on the golden bed."

Nor were the ideas held by the writers of the Bible much superior to this. Jehovah was only a giant Jew, and if the Jew had painted him, he would have had a full beard, and an aquiline nose. Adam hears his voice as he walks in the garden in the cool of the day; Jacob wrestles with him all night; he shows himself to Moses, while he covers him with his hand. Isaiah sees him with a dress on, for "his train" or skirts "filled the temple." He labored for six days making the universe and its occupants, and, at the expiration of the time, rested and was refreshed. He made coats of skins, and clothed Adam and his wife, after he had turned them out of his garden into the cold world, and was so well satisfied with the Egyptian mid-wives as to make them houses. Those must have been indeed God's houses. Jesus believed in a personal God, who lived in heaven, sat upon a throne, and at whose right hand he expected to sit; and even to-day a large proportion of Christians expect to see a personal Divinity, to hear his voice, and be welcomed by him to his palace of delights.

It is very easy to see, however, that this is not, and cannot be, true. Of what use can feet be to a being everywhere present? He cannot possibly move from one locality to another; he can neither come down nor go up, for he is already both down and up; he can sit upon a throne no more than a man can sit upon his own chin. Christians also agree that God knows all things, and knows them from all eternity. To such a being eyes and ears are equally unnecessary. What could he see that he had not already observed? What could he hear that he had not already heard? Nor could he reason with a brain; reasoning is only possible to beings limited in knowledge, who desire to learn what is to them unknown. Nor can an infinite being have shape. That only has shape which is bounded, for the boundary constitutes the shape. To render shape possible there must be space outside, but what can be outside of infinity? An infinite little finger would leave no room in the universe for the rest of the hand. How, then, could there be a body? The notion of a God with a shape, then, is evidently false, for if he has shape he is finite, and cannot be God, if God is infinite.

"But cannot God, if he is infinite, manifest himself in shape?" If he does, it can only be that part of God which exists in shape that can be seen, and that can bear no proportion to the part that is unseen; for the finite must be infinitely less than the infinite; and instead of seeing God under such circumstances, we should only see what is infinitely less than God.

But if God is infinite, he is everywhere and everything; for if he is not everything, he must be crowded out by everything that he is not. God, to be infinite, must be not only in the sun, but he must be the sun, or the sun takes up space that God does not, and he lacks so much of being infinite, and consequently of

being God. We must either abandon the definition of God, which represents him as infinite, and in that case abandon the idea of universal Christendom, or we must accept the doctrine that God is not only in all, but is all.

It is evident that God is everything, even if we accept the Jewish story of creation. Before anything was created God filled the universe; he must have done this if he was infinite. He must have made the universe, therefore, out of nothing, or out of his own substance. But a universe full of God has no place even for nothing. Creation could only, therefore, have been the shaping of God in one form into God in another form.

But if God is all, then God is the universe, and the universe is God; and this, it seems to me, is the only rational conception of God that we can entertain. All the force in the universe is God's force; all the life is God's life; all the truth is God's truth; all the thought is God's thought. It follows that whatever is true of the universe, is true of God, and whatever is not true of the universe, is not true of God. God is all we see and know; and all that exists, which we do not see and know; the latter infinitely greater than the former. God is infinite, for the universe is infinite. God is everywhere, for the universe is everywhere. We cannot depart from God, for we cannot leave the universe; nor can God forsake us, for the universe can no more leave us than we can leave the universe, or a man run away from himself.

We can readily see that many of the Jewish and Christian ideas of God will not bear investigation. We read, "God created the heaven and the earth," which is very much like saying God created himself, which is absurd, for heaven and earth is only a phrase meaning what we mean, when we say the universe. Think of the universe planting a garden, and walking in it in the cool of the day! The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is no more reasonable than the universe of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Who gave these men a monopoly of the universe? If God means the infinite and the eternal spirit, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost are no more appropriate than universe the father, universe the son, and universe the Holy Ghost, which is no more appropriate than the mother universe, the daughter universe, and the baby universe. God cannot be love unless the universe is love. Love is, of course, included in the universe, but so is hate and jealousy, envy and revenge; and if God is any of these, he is all.

It follows, if the universe is God, that he knows most of God who knows most about the universe; he who knows least about the universe, is least acquainted with God. Theologians, as a general thing, know very little about God, for they do not study the universe, which only truly reveals the divine. Geology that gives such a wide view of the past, that has rescued from oblivion almost an eternity, is well fitted to give us enlarged conceptions of God, because it reveals to us so much of the universe, and its operations. Here we may see what has been done by the universe, the only God, during hundreds of millions of years. Here is no evidence of a personal Deity, no miracle-worker, no achiever of impossibilities. The earth is rounded by law, the same law that enspheres a rain-drop; the rocks are formed by law, that which binds the particles constituting the pebble holds the mountain masses in its firm embrace, and composes the solid sides of the warm-hearted earth. The same laws that govern life to-day governed it then. Here are myriads of shells, fishes, reptiles, birds, and beasts that came into being and perished before man's appearance. Life, climbing through them to higher forms, more man-like beings, till it culminates in the men and women we behold on the planet to-day. Were these forms made in mere sport or wantonness, as a tavern-lounger whittles nothing all day? Had there been a God that could transcend law, and for whose operation it was quite unnecessary, why this waiting for its slow process, and waiting for a hundred million years, as geology demonstrates? A God waiting, as the blacksmith, who stands by his forge till the iron is hot enough to be beaten into

shape, or a farmer till the winter's snow disappears before he can plough or sow!

There was no life on our planet till it had naturally, cooled to that state in which life was possible, and this we know was many millions of years after it came into being. As the planet continued to cool and improve, a corresponding improvement took place in the animals and plants living upon it, and man only came after all the natural steps had been taken from the simplest protozoa to himself. Why not man on the boiling earth? or why not the heated globe cooled by a word, and all things made at once that could best subserve his welfare? The reason evidently is that no power outside of nature exists in the universe, and only by the operation of law can anything be accomplished.

The being called God in the Bible, and worshipped by so many millions in what are called Christian countries, differs very widely indeed from the God which nature reveals.

The God of the Bible is omnipotent; he speaks, and it is done; he commands, and it stands fast. At his word, chaos flies, and order from disorder springs. Around the earth, a sunless, starless void extends in every direction; but he speaks, and a myriad suns in splendour shine, and around them planets in their order roll. He needs no time, no instrumentalities; the thought and the execution of it are instantaneous, and impossibilities are unknown in his kingdom. He says, "Let the earth bring forth grass and trees," and full-grown trees nod to their full-grown neighbours, and their rings of growth mark years that have never been. Again, he says, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature." And instantly the hitherto lifeless sea swarms with myriads of busy forms. Immense whales gambol in the ocean, birds darken the air that never before yielded to the pressure of a wing, for what can refuse when omnipotence calls?

But since the universe or nature is the only God, how different from this are the facts, as science reveals them. Nature requires time to accomplish her work, and must use instrumentalities. She cannot make grass till she has first formed the soil in which it may take root. Nor can she form soil till rocks have been produced, whose worn down particles compose it; nor even then, unless there be light and warmth to perfect its organisation. She cannot give a tree the perfection of a thousand years growth till the thousand years have transpired. She can only attain the summit by faithfully taking all the steps that lead there. She cannot reap till she has sown, and not then till the crop has grown and ripened, and for everything accomplished by her so much must first be done.

If you say this limits God's power? I answer I am not responsible for the limitation. God's power is limited, because the power of the universe is limited. A sheet of paper cannot be made with only one side, nor a stick with only one end; a clock can never strike less than one, and three times one can never be two, not even to a God. Our ideas of God must conform to the facts of nature, or they will be false, though sanctioned by all the priests that ever officiated, or sacred books that were ever written.

The God of the Bible loves Jacob rather than Esau before either is born; he loves the Jews above all people, and showers miraculous favours on them. He feeds them by miracle, watches over them, fights for them, guides them and delivers them, while he curses all the nations round about for their sake.

Nature is no respecter of persons; all fare equally at her hands; she has no well-beloved sons or daughters. The frost that stiffens the field-mouse in its nest freezes the blood of the baby that was carelessly left in the log cabin; fire burns flea and philosopher alike; the earthquake takes down prince and peasant at one gulp; the saint swinging his censur before the altar, and the doomed malefactor in his cell. The sun warms every man's land, ripening rice for the Hindoo, and wheat for the Caucasian, even expanding the narcotic leaf for the tobacco-raising sinners of the Connecticut Valley. The king has an idiot child, to the sad regret of a nation, the cobbler's boy is a world-blessing philosopher; not that nature cared more for cobbler than for king, but he

drew more from her deep fountains that are open alike to all. The infusorial point drinks its fill of enjoyment, and the "rapt seraph" can do no more.

The Gods of the past were at times impatient; disturbed by opposition, sometimes grieved, and at others angry, and "swore in their wrath." Nature is sublimely patient, calm and majestic. Above the earthquake's shock, and the volcano's cloud, sit enthroned, unmoved, undimmed the everlasting stars, fit emblems of Nature. For millions of ages she turned the ponderous globe round and round; bathed it with sunshine, cooled its fevered brow with her breath, and waited—oh, how long she patiently waited—till life came, and then watched and cared for it, while millions of years passed like days, till the brute ripened into the man. Nor did she curse or drown the speechless savage because he was no philosopher. Philosophy is the ripened fruit of humanity, and for it she is still patiently waiting.

The drunkard at midnight howls his blasphemies through the streets. How does Nature treat him? She sends sleep, who puts her arms around him, and gently lulls him to rest. He awakens in the morning with a parched mouth and aching head, but this is only a warning against his direct enemy. Nature punishes not, for she knows no vindictiveness; the evil consequences that follow only follow as inevitable effects, as the stick is consumed when it falls into the fire, or the tree is riven by the lightning's stroke.

God is, then, no majestic monarch sitting upon a throne, and desiring the adulation of his shamed subjects, listening with a smiling countenance as they cry, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory." He can be no personality, no more he than she, as properly our Lady as our Lord. In him we live and move, and have our being, and in us God lives and moves, and has his being. He sees with our eyes, hears with our ears, and thinks with our brains. We hear his voice in the song of the blue bird, in the thunder of Niagara, and the whisper of the evening breeze. We see his glory in the sun that walks in majesty, the rainbow that spans the heavens with its arch of beauty, and the dew-drop that mirrors earth and heaven in its tiny glass. The farmer beholds him in the springing blade, and the gardener in the blushing rose, the mother in the smile of her darling babe, and the husband in the love of his trusting wife.

This doctrine destroys all orthodox theology, cuts it up by the roots. Jehorah is gone—swallowed, as the rods of the Egyptian enchanters were swallowed by the rod of Moses. If Jehorah exists, he is a part of the universe; and, since the true God includes the entire universe, it includes him also. If he does not exist it is well, and saint and sinner my rejoice.

Salvation by Jesus cannot be true; men were never lost, or in danger of being lost; they never departed from God, and Jesus, therefore, could never bring them nigh. The universe has too many sons for Jesus to be an only begotten one. A mediator between God and man is less needed than a mediator between the sun and the earth, or between a mother and her child, and is as impossible as it is unnecessary.

The theologian rears his brick and mortar establishment, and then says to the man who walks on Sunday in the grand old woods, "Why don't you come to the house of God?" Is thy brick and mortar steeple house in any sense the house of God that these woods and fields are not? Show me the house that the lightning will not strike, that the earthquake cannot throw down, that needs no repairs and cannot be damaged, or commences to repair its own damages as soon as made, and I will show thee God's house in the special, theological sense. All houses are God's houses, as all men are his sons, and all beyond this is pretence.

By making God an individual, with human attributes, men have linked his name in a special sense with their little, and sometimes their very mean doings. The most barefaced begging, church fairs, raffles, lotteries, guess-cakes, and grab-bags, raise £6,000, and then a £12,000 steeple house is reared; an expensive organ is placed in it, a fashionable preacher engaged, and the place is

styled God's house; a gilded book, lying upon a velvet cushion before the preacher is called God's book, the preacher's talk is God's word, or his gospel; the people, who pay to support the establishment, and make professions of their belief in the doctrines taught in the house, are called God's people, and all the operations connected with the house, the people, the preacher, and the book, are styled God's cause.

Show me the book that water will not wet, that fire cannot destroy, that is neither affected by mould nor time, and I will acknowledge that it is God's book in a sense that no other is. The men add women that water cannot drown, fire burn, mosquitos bite, or powder blow up, and that no bullet can penetrate, may be God's people, but our planet has never seen them.

The old idea, the Christian idea of God, pampers pride, and builds up a priestly aristocracy. Moses goes on Mount Sinai to talk with God, and then he comes down, and says: "Here are the tables of stone written by God's finger;" and thus the exceedingly faulty code of Jewish morality is palmed on the world in God's name, and is painted on some of our Christian churches to-day as the supreme moral law. "He commands you to offer sacrifices; it pleases him to smell the sweet savour;" and then there must be a class of men to do this acceptably. Aaron is consecrated, and his sons, and the people are burdened with the support of an army of idlers, who pretend to go between the people and God. They are a holy people unto the Lord.

So we have to-day in our land thousands of Christian priests, who come between the people and God with their prayers. They are the reverends, right reverends fathers in God, whose prayers take the place of the ancient sacrifices. God is thus set at a distance, only to be approached through Jesus and his deputies, who came to bring men nigh.

Here is the universe free for all. He sounds deepest who has the longest line; he sees farthest who has the best eye, and the best telescope; but the heavens show him no more favour than they do the blind man, who gropes along the pathway, staff in hand. What man can coax an extra sunbeam into his house, or shower on his potato patch? When he can be found, we may accept his claim to be a favoured child of the universe—a well-beloved son.

What passes for theology is for the most part fancy, wild and fantastic notions handed down from barbarous times, and a proper study of the universe alone furnishes us with the means to form a theology worthy of the name.

We are told that God works *miracles*, but what is a miracle? Something, it is said, that is done contrary to the laws of Nature. But if our view of God is correct, this is manifestly impossible. The laws of God are but Nature's methods of operation; and how can he do anything contrary to his way of doing it? Whatever is done by the universe is in accordance with its laws, for its laws are but the way in which things are done. The very fact that anything is done is evidence that it is done according to the laws of the universe, and consequently it can be no miracle.

Prayer, in the sense of asking God for special favours, is ruled out by this view of God. Who would beg the rain to cease, expecting an answer, or to the clouds, in anticipation of a shower, or to the rocks for geological knowledge, or the stars for the truths of astronomy? Canst thou stay the sun's fiery chariot with thy breath, or lock the wheels of the rushing planets by thy entreaties? The man that could overturn law by prayer would be a veritable God-father, the God of all Gods.

Cursing God does not trouble him, praising God cannot affect him. So far as the universe is concerned, the ravings in the tavern are alike with the ravings in the prayer-meeting. All men are God manifest in the flesh. We are all God's people, all lambs of his flock, and his pasture is large enough for all that eternity can produce.

"But is there not a great Creator that made all things?" What did he make them of? If he made them of pre-existent matter, then matter is something separate from him, and must equally have existed from all eternity. We cannot conceive a matter distinct

from its form and extension, and these properties must have been held by it eternally, if it existed eternally. Who made them? If these could exist without a maker, then all things else might exist without a maker. If matter did not exist eternally, then God made all things out of nothing, and before he began there was nothing but himself, a solitary from all eternity. For let him commence at any time to fill the infinite void, there must have been an eternity before that, when God saw nothing, for there was no light, and nothing to be seen; when he heard nothing, for there was nothing to hear, and no air to convey the sound; when he could not smell or taste, for there was nothing on which these senses could be exercised. He could do nothing, for there was nothing to be done, nor think, for there was nothing to think about; and he must have been in a worse condition than a jelly-fish in an idle ocean. Can any reasonable man credit this? What could have induced him to commence operations after doing nothing for an eternity.

Besides this by no means solves the difficulty. If we accept a God, who made the universe, he must be greater than the universe that he has made, and he still remains to be accounted for. Instead of removing the difficulty we have merely substituted a greater one. What a wonderful eye that being must have had who fashioned the eye of man! What an ear that being must have that can hear the innumerable voices of the universe, and what fingers he must possess who spread out the heavens and fashioned the earth! If we are to take the ground that all things must have had a maker, this being must also have had. Who fashioned his all-seeing eye? Who created his all-hearing ear, and built up his marvellous structure? Are we told that he is the uncreated cause of all causes, the eternal, without beginning and without end? So is the universe, whose existence is constantly being demonstrated to us, and which, when accepted, relieves us from the necessity of imagining a being, whose existence never can be demonstrated.

"But if we accept such a doctrine as that *there is no heavenly father*, to whom we can go with all our troubles, pour them into his loving ear, and receive his blessing. Earth without him would be a dungeon, and heaven itself be shrouded with gloom." A father who would allow his child to drown, when he heard his piercing cries for help, and could just as easily save him as not—a father that could see his child in a burning building, and make no attempt to snatch him from the flames, that would allow some of his children to torture others to death with excruciating agonies—what would such a father be worth? What worse would it be to be destitute of a father than to have such a father as this?

Here is a ship at sea with 500 souls on board; infants in arms, children that run about on deck, men and women in their strength. A drunken sailor has gone into the hold, and, while tapping the brandy cask, has set the ship on fire. The first cry of alarm comes from those who see the smoke rising from the hatchway. Then comes the startling cry of fire! fire! dreadful on land, horrible at sea, a thousand miles from shore. See the flames climb the mast, and leap from shroud to shroud! Out of their cabins rush the passengers, only to see their terrible doom in these mounting flames. The boats are surrounded with fire, and only one small boat is launched, into which half a dozen sailors jump, one of them the very man who fired the vessel. Then come the despairing, agonising cries of the doomed multitude. Some pray, some curse; prayers and curses are alike powerless to avert their dreadful fate; their calcined bones go down with the hissing hull to the Atlantic depths. Where was their heavenly father? If there was a good God, the Father of the human race, who cares for us as a father cares for his children, such things would be of course impossible.

Here is a locomotive with a thousand passengers, driving through the darkness of a stormy night. Fathers hurrying home to their wives and children; and in homes far away loving hearts are waiting, and prayers are going up to heaven that they may return in safety. But a bridge that crosses a gulf has been swept down by the wind, and there is a chasm! Not a whisper from

our Father. How could you, O God? On rushes the train, and down it sinks with every soul, and over them rush the cold, un pitying waters. What father would have allowed his children thus to perish?

"But what a cold, uncomfortable doctrine." Supposing it to be so, I am not responsible for it. It might be comfortable to be told that some good friend had left you an immense fortune. Trusting in the statement, you lavishly spend your money, and then discover that you have been miserably deceived. You would not thank the man who brought you the intelligence.

Suppose that God should act as a father would, what would the result be? The drunken sailor fires the vessel, but God in his mercy blows the fire out. He could not do this for one vessel without doing it for all, or he would be partial. Captains would know this, and why, then, should they prefer sober sailors? why should they exercise special care over their vessels and crew? If God cared for vessels, he must also care for houses. Wherever his children were likely to be burned by fire, there would he be to save them. The consequence would be that no particular care need be exercised by the owners of buildings. God would be the universal watchman, and carelessness, indifference, and drunkenness would be no more detrimental to the safety of a building than caution, vigilance, and sobriety.

The wind has blown down the bridge, and God whispers to the engineer, who stops his train before he reaches the chasm. Let this be done for all trains, and what would be the result?

The universe is better regulated, as it is for man's highest welfare, than it would be if a personal Divinity cared for every man, and did for him what a father or a mother would do for a child. The baby is born an idiot, a curse to the family for a life-time, but idiots never come without cause; he was begotten when his father was drunk, and inherited the beclouded reason of his drunken progenitor. The law of inheritance by which this is done has greatly helped to bring the whole human race to its present exalted position. By its aid we obtained a Shakespeare and a Newton, and by it earth is eventually to be made a heaven.

If God cared for us as mothers care for their children, he must needs be mother, father, nurse, watchman, policeman, physician, guide, insurance society, and general factotum for the whole human family. Why should mothers or nurses watch over their children, when God, with sleepless eye, looks after them? Why should the policeman walk his rounds, when God will not suffer his children to come to harm?

Were this the case, it would dry up the stream of charity, paralyse the arm of endeavour, close the eye of watchfulness, kill sympathy, and reduce mankind to universal babyhood.

It is absolutely certain that the universe does not treat us as a father treats his children. What good father would permit one of his boys to put the other on a burning log-pile, and roast him to death? Could we believe either in his goodness or his fatherhood if he saw the whole transaction, and never uttered even a word of expostulation? What should we think of a father who could look on calmly, and see four of his sons bore out the eyes of a fifth with red-hot irons, pull his tongue and nails out by the roots, and pour melted lead down his throat? Might not that boy as well be an orphan, as to have a father who cared as little for him as that?

"But," we are told, "God sees that it is best that he should not interfere, as this would destroy men's freedom." But an omnipotent God could have made something else to be the best, and have thus preserved his children from all this suffering. If God is so bound that he must permit this suffering, in order that certain results may be accomplished, then there is something in the universe greater than he; that something is King, and he is its subject, and ceases, therefore, to be God.

"But Nature allows all these things," of course, because they cannot be avoided. The blossom must precede the ripened fruit, and the fruit must be green and sour before it can be ripe and sweet. Planets must have a fiery birth, and, therefore, must be scarred by volcanoes, and rent by earthquake throes as they pass

to maturity; and there is in the universe neither the power nor the disposition to turn aside to save a city any more than there is to save an ant-hill.

Here is the moon doomed, by the absence of air and water, to be a barren waste. Between Mars and Jupiter a world has evidently been shattered to atoms, and possibly all the beings that then existed upon it. Meteoric masses, fragments of large comical bodies, occasionally fall to the earth, as larger ones have fallen in past times, and produced disastrous consequences, and these show us what we call accidents belong to the heavens no less than the earth, and that there is no more miraculous exercise of power to prevent two worlds from coming into contact than there is to prevent two pebbles from striking together as they go rolling down a stream.

"This view of God is terrible," says one; "it chills my soul." But if it is true, which would you rather have? It is no more terrible than the truth; and it is better to accept the truth than to go through the world forever the victim of a fraud and a lie. But is it any more terrible than the doctrine held by Christians? Is a being who drowned the world purposely less terrible than a universe, in which such a thing happens by the operation of natural law? Accept the God the Bible reveals, and we have a devil, as much worse than a common devil, as an infinite tyrant is worse than his victim.

The old idea of God makes man a cowardly slave. "What are we that we should come into thy presence, or lift up our eyes to the place where thine honour dwelleth." Are the words that drop from the man's lips, while he kneels at the foot of the image that in his ignorance he has set up. "If thou hadst been just to mark, and severe to punish," he continues, "we had been long since in that place where hope never comes." He makes his God so high, so unnatural, so cruel, that a counter-balance is necessary, and blood must be shed to obtain his favour.

Taking the common orthodox view of God, if we are defective, it must be because he has made us so. If God is omnipotent, he could just as well have made us perfect as not, and we have the very best grounds of complaint against him. We might justly pray, "O God, we are thy children, so thou hast informed us in thy word; thou couldst have made us pure as angels of light, and as happy continually as the sun is bright; but thou has made us subject to sin, and all its woe. We, therefore, lay this at thy door. It is not anything that we chose, but it is what thy decrees have brought upon us. Thou has so constituted us that we are as sure to sin as we are to breathe. We, therefore, lay all lying, theft, adultery, drunkenness, and murder upon thee, for if thou hadst not willed it, it never could have been. O God, we pray thee to reform thyself, and then the whole world will be reformed. Kill the devil, or reform him. Shame upon a God who ever allowed him to exist. Put out hell; a God that cannot manage the universe without a hell should abdicate the throne, and allow a better God to take his place. Give every child born into the world a good physical constitution, and a large well-balanced brain. Open the door of heaven for every human soul, and let it be a heaven as good as a God can make, that we may have compensation for the great injustice we have experienced at thy hands.

We would suggest to thee, O Lord, great improvements that are needed in this world of ours. Make fertile the frightful deserts, temper the climate of Africa, and improve the appearance of its inhabitants. Give us better weather in New England, and let there be more sunshine in Old England; destroy the mosquitoes, and kill the black flies; let the weeds depart, and give us good crops with less labour. Make the rich bend their backs to labour, and give the poor a respite from excessive toil. Thou hast placed us upon a world, O God, that might be very greatly improved. Give us thy omnipotent power, and thy infinite wisdom, and in half an hour we would make a world so beautiful that thou wouldst blush to think that thou hadst placed man on such an unfinished mud-ball as this."

Such a prayer might bring God to his senses, and

lead him to kneel and ask our pardon for the unnecessary misery that he had caused us.

But Gods of this description only exist in the imaginations of the ignorant, and all things are as perfect as the conditions under which they have been produced would allow. It is in our ignorance that we have made kings to rule over us, popes to think for us, priests to pray for us, and gods to damn us.

But the world is growing wiser; we say to the king, "Rule your mighty self, and you will probably have enough to do." To the pope, we say, "Think for yourself, old man; but whether you do or not, you cannot think for us. You are, doubtless, as infallible as the swearing fisherman, your illustrious predecessor and patron saint. He on one occasion is said to have drawn money out of a fish, and you draw it constantly from the helpless people, who have been caught on your papal hook." To the priest we say, "Pray for us no longer; your prayers can no more change the order of the universe, than the croak of a frog can cause the sun to shine on us at midnight." To the false gods that have been palmed upon us in the name of this or that religion, we say, "You are as impotent to damn as you are helpless to save. Here are we the children of the universe, and we shall always be. It took the eternity of the past to produce us, and we are for the eternity of the future."

You say God is infinite. I say the universe is infinite, without beginning and without end. God, you tell me, is omnipresent; it is certain that the universe is omnipresent, for it is all; outside of which nothing can be. God knows all things, so does the universe. Even what some call dead matter recognises whatever takes place in its vicinity, and can repeat it to the intelligent mind. The universe is the ever-living, the originator of all life, the fountain of all energy, the father of all love, all hope, all intelligence, that liveth and abideth forever. It is not omnipotent, for there are things in their nature impossible; but it can do all that is possible to be done.

There is a sense in which the universe or Nature is both our father and our mother, caring equally for all, doing the best possible for all. The Infinite has given us life, knowledge, wisdom, love, and poured out bliss for us like an overflowing fountain. Has given us not only life, but future life, and all glorious possibilities. More than father, it has done more than father could ever do; dearer than mother, the mother of all mothers; the love of our mother is only a drop out of her infinite heart. For millions of years we shall climb the mount of progress, and know more and more of the infinite mystery, forever revealing itself to the human soul.

A universe without a spirit, an animating principle, would be the corpse of a universe; and this is what people have mistaken for it, and shrunk from it as they would from a corpse, if it was set up to rule over them. I believe in a universe, every atom of which throbs with life and motion, and is guided by the highest intelligence. These stars around us are suns, and these suns are the fathers of countless worlds, that are not like any useless drift weed, to be washed on an unknown shore; but worlds steered by the infinite spirit of humanity; and not humanity a walking clod for seventy years, and a rotting clod at the expiration of that time, but humanity—men and women—with living souls, the highest embodiments of this infinite spirit. What urges blazing suns to throw off fiery drops, that cool into stony worlds? What causes them to blossom into life, and life to advance through fin propelled fish buried in the waters, to scaly reptile basking on the rocks, to soaring bird, and tree-climbing ape that fathers the first rude man? It is the living, guiding, governing spirit, never for a moment absent from any part of the universe, never breathed into man, or lower organic form, because always present. This is the life of our life, the soul of our soul; our father, our mother; and all people are our brothers and our sisters, the offspring of this spirit. Let us love them, help them, bless them, and we shall receive a satisfaction that no worship of false gods can give; and, after death—

"The good begun by us shall onward flow
In many a branching stream and river grow;
The seed that in these few and fleeting hours
Our hands unsparing, and unwearyed sow,
Shall deck our graves with amaranthine flowers,
And yield ye fruits divine in heaven's immortal bowers."

MRS. ELIZABETH L. WATSON.

THE above talented lady, whose reception in Melbourne is chronicled in another column, gave her first lecture for the Victorian Association of Spiritualists at the Bijou Theatre on Sunday, January 21st. The chair was filled by the president, H. J. Browne, Esq., and the house was packed from floor to ceiling.

Mrs. Watson, on being introduced by the chairman, said that her lectures having been spoken of as inspirational, she wished to give her audience an explanation of her condition. She spoke in a semi-trance, and was conscious of what she said, but had reason to believe she was under the psychological influence of a disembodied mind. In this there was an analogy between the mesmeric subject and the spiritual medium. She was an instrument more or less in tune to be acted upon by higher intelligences, but was ignorant of the law which controlled their operations.

The choir having performed a piece of music, Mrs. Watson rose and delivered a most impressive invocation, addressed to the Spirit of Nature, whose light shone in the stars and sun, and glowed in the flowers, enkindling hope and love in the hearts of his human children. She commenced her lecture by affirming man is a spirit—a soul, a part of the great system of Nature, a key in the grand instrument necessary to the universal harmony. The body of man is the physical environment. We had been educated in the religion of death; theology taught us to prepare to die; Spiritualism to prepare to live. The spirit world was not millions of miles from this, but here amongst us, and the spiritual philosophy turned our thoughts to the world in which we lived to make it better and more heavenly. The clergy now began to admit that religion must be in harmony with nature. Man's religious nature was a fact, and the first truth demonstrated by modern Spiritualism was that man's spirit was a fact, and that man is an immortal being. Socrates realised his spiritual nature when he told the people they could not kill him, only destroy his body. The orthodox teaching, that the criminal who had faith in Christ should pass to heaven, whilst the good and moral man who had not that faith, should go to hell, was a libel on Nature and God. In the heart of man God wrote his Scriptures from day to day.

What effect, she asked, had Spiritualism on our daily life? The boy died in his sins, and his mother mourned him as lost, but he came to her and told her that he still lived, and the good God had forgiven him, and the loving mother's life was born again. Every home, whose door stood ajar waiting for sacred guests, must become more holy.

There was consolation in Spiritualism for true, brave, noble men and women. Spiritualism did not take Jesus from you, but brought him nearer. In place of a heaven too small for human love, it gave you one broad as the universe. She did not believe in the infallibility, or even wisdom of all spirit communication. A spirit out the body must be judged even as a spirit in the body.

Spiritualism was essentially a religion of every-day life, ennobling and enriching the soul, an incentive to good deeds, whilst the doctrine of depravity tended to make men depraved. She concluded her eloquent discourse with a beautiful poem.

The Rev. Dr. J. P. Newman, a venerable and celebrated preacher of New York, has avowed his belief in spirit-communication in a sermon entitled "Do the Dead Return?" confirming it on being interviewed by a reporter. He had entertained his opinions for twenty years. "He had had personal proof of all that a man might know, and had concluded that he was not alone in his belief, for many clergymen had the same convictions, but had not the courage to confess it."

REMINISCENCES.

By H. V. S.

No. VII.

"Mysterious in the blame of day,
Nature pursues her tranquil way;
The veil she wears, should hand profane,
Seek to raise, they seek in vain;
But from her spirit thine receives,
When hushed it listens and believes
Secrets revealed, else naively sought,
Her free gift when man questions not."

In my last paper I reverted to my early boyhood, and referred to incidents in my colonial experience. I have not marked the period when my colonial experience commenced, because these papers are not intended to be a complete autobiography; nor have I mentioned the causes which led to my emigration to this side of the globe, although they were remotely related to my scepticism in regard to "religious" matters. Suffice it to say, I left England in 1852, and immediately after landing at Melbourne went "up the country," and lived a "bush life" for a period of fourteen years, visiting Melbourne twice only (for a few days) during that time. There was a time when, if I ventured to speak of the power and beneficence of God as revealed in his works, I was met by the remark—"That may be all very well, but the works of Nature give us no assurance of the remission of sins, and an everlasting inheritance through the blood of Christ." I was now out of reach of such counsellors, out of hearing of religious dogma. The "Revealed Word" had, long since, to me, been a "dead letter." My mind had found a more even balance, between the extremes of credulity and scepticism, and hence was better fitted for the perusal of the *living Word of God, the Grand Revelation*, which has never been dependent on scribes, transcribers, translators, interpreters, printer's ink, &c., for its preservation. I spent much time exploring, what were then, untrodden mountain regions, and often paused upon the steep to contemplate the various forms, hues, and lights and shades of the stupendous masses of matter by which I was surrounded. I remember there were times when the grandeur of such scenes seemed to absorb me, and breathe into my mind conceptions of Deity which words are quite inadequate to describe. I have felt the same inspiration when contemplating a lovely plant, and the wonderful process going on through its slender stems, by which the beautiful tress of foliage and blossom is developed—when searching into the profound beauties of a minute flower, or the exquisite mechanism of a minute insect; but I must not further dwell upon a theme so vast. In the line or two that, if I may be allowed the expression, I have quoted from Nature's mighty volume, I have spoken only of matter, but how shall I speak of the wonderful organising powers associated with that matter? What is vegetable life? What is animal life? What consciousness? Notwithstanding the wonderful achievements of science, in presence of these problems it is impotent. Professor Tyndall confesses so much and more, when he says—"We can trace the development of a nervous system, and correlate with it the parallel phenomena of sensation and thought. We see with undoubting certainty that they go hand in hand. But we try to soar in a vacuum the moment we seek to comprehend the connection between them." Scientists have enlightened us in regard to fertilisation and gestation, but they no more comprehend the process by which a blade of grass grows than the least intellectual of uncultivated men. Even the powers associated with inorganic matter are incomprehensible. Electricity and magnetism, for example, although they are now applied to so many useful purposes, are "but names for effects." The causes of phenomena, called electrical and magnetic, being as yet as unknowable as the Great First Cause of all, and all true conceptions of that Great First Cause, are derived from phenomena which result from those natural laws, which are "the mandates of a primitive Almighty will." This grand revelation of God in nature presented many, and great difficulties to my mind, which I may never be able to solve, but I will

here endeavour to give some of my reasons for attributing them to my position in the cosmical system, and not to defects in that system. It is said—"Nothing explains so well as comparison." Now, suppose I was to suggest to a skilful engineer certain alterations in the size and form of one wheel of an intricate machine the scope of which was beyond my understanding, what value should he place upon my suggestion? So not being able to comprehend the scope of universal law, and the relation of each and every part of the sublime system of nature to the whole, I am unable to gauge the consequences that would follow the elimination from that system of parts which, considered in the abstract, are undoubtedly evils. Why, we may ask, under the government of an Almighty, all-wise and benevolent Father, should the innocent suffer? I shall not attempt to solve this difficult question; but I will say mankind, being endowed with the ennobling faculties of benevolence and compassion, there must needs be suitable objects for their exercise, otherwise they would cease to exist. The sufferings of the guilty bring their faculties into play only in a degree. Qualified by other emotions, it is only when we witness the sufferings of the innocent that they are exercised in full force, and if we possessed larger knowledge of "that greater system to which the present is only subsidiary," possibly the evil of these sufferings of the innocent would disappear.

BRISBANE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "HARBINGER OF LIGHT."

ANOTHER year has commenced; one year more in the eternity of time—that vast period the extent of which we find ourselves totally unable to calculate—that period of "for ever" before which a year sinks into nothingness and is lost in the ocean of time—yet what changes one year will bring; what apparently insurmountable difficulties can be surmounted in that time; what glorious progress can be made, and grand efforts accomplished; how important is a year in our short span of time on this material plane, this preparatory school, to our existence through countless ages of time! If all understood the philosophy of existence—why they are, and what is wanted of them, and would determine to do each year more than they had ever done in any previous year; to strike a straight course through the year; to love self less, and their neighbours a little more; to seek for truth and proclaim it whenever found; to shun evil and attract the good, and strive to make the world know they are living in it, and make their life in it of some benefit to it, then would the change each year makes, become more discernible, and the gulf between barbarity, and civilisation and perfection, wider and wider.

Mr. T. M. Brown and family arrived here from England, on Jan. 7th (via Maryborough), and were entertained the following evening at a welcome tea party in the Progressive Reading Room. A very pleasant evening was spent, the visitors enjoying themselves thoroughly.

On Sunday evening, Mr. Brown delivered an address on "Mediumship, its Use and Abuse," before a good audience, in the same room. His remarks were much appreciated by those present.

Mr. Brown intends to continue these Sunday evening lectures, and also to at once commence practical work in circle-forming and developing, and in giving private sittings. These private sittings are exceedingly good, and all who have already had sittings with him speak highly of their excellence and of the numerous tests of a private character given. One gentleman, who resides about twenty miles from here, and who had a sitting with Mr. Brown, was astonished at the information he received, which was as perfect as though he had known the gentleman and his family for years. "Bretimo," the chief guide and control of Mr. Brown, reads the sitter as though he were an open book, causing considerable astonishment as page after page of the sitters' history is laid bare.

The addition of Mr. Brown to our ranks will be pro-

ductive of much good, should he find sufficient scope for his labours to cause him to reside permanently amongst us, with an occasional visit to the districts around. Let us hope that he will cause large numbers to become believers in the Spiritual Philosophy—that philosophy that inspires man to look upward, that shows to man a life of eternal progression; that teaches man that he is more than the dust he treads underneath his feet; that inspires the mind with the purest thoughts and highest religion yet given to man; that illuminates and expands the mind until it feels itself yearning to grasp and expose the mysteries of the future, and opens to the vision all that is beautiful and true in Nature, and that helps to

"Sunder, and for ever,

Every tie of human passion that can bind our soul to Earth;
Every sacred tie that binds us to the things of little worth,"

That the spirit may expand and soar upward towards the Infinite, and grow in goodness and knowledge, becoming a shining light in the material darkness of the present, brightening the Earth by the refulgent rays of the truth it conveys, and sowing the seeds of truth, purity, goodness, and light, which spring up beautiful flowers, to be plucked and admired by those attracted by their fragrance. The perfume and fragrance of good deeds and actions are quite as powerful as that of the choicest rose; whilst evil deeds and actions carry with them to the nostrils of the progressed spirit an odour of the vilest stench.

When to our beautiful philosophy are added the facts that go with it, the proofs, together with the theories, what wonder that it makes such rapid strides: wiping away the tears from the mourners' eyes, and bidding them look upward to the hand stretched out to help them on through life's rugged path, until they cross the river to join the mourned awaiting them on the other side. No religion is so exalting, no belief so satisfying, and no teachings so accompanied by the signs that were to follow them that believed; then

"What matter if the world does sneer and laugh;
We have the wheat, they only have the chaff."

Yours, etc.,

GEORGE SMITH

SYDNEY LETTER.

Mrs. WATSON, whose brilliant discourses have won for her well-merited fame, and called together some of the largest audiences ever assembled in this city, has left us, and is now enlightening the people of your city.

On the 14th inst. she gave her last address, or, perhaps, speaking by the card, I should say devoted the evening to the answering of questions which were collected from the audience, and arranged in due order as to subjects, and then answered *seriatim*; and, judging from the frequent applause, most satisfactorily. It is the intention of some of her Spiritualistic admirers to present her with a little *souvenir* prior to her departure, and arrangements will be made to meet and entertain her on the evening prior to the sailing of the 'Frisco boat, about 23rd of April. I am heartily pleased to find such is to be, and wish the gentlemen promoters every success, though be the value ever so costly, it will not equal in value the good this excellent lady has been instrumental in doing—a good that will live long amongst us, while many a pilgrim will have to thank her for the kindly assistance given on life's rugged and winding pathway.

On the Sunday following, in order to maintain the continuity of the lectures, an evening session of the Lyceum was held—being the second of such gatherings—and withal more successful than the first. The programme consisted of songs, recitations, and an excellent address. *Apropos* of the Lyceum, an excellent, though somewhat severe, yet withal truthful article, has appeared in the columns of the *Liberal* upon the institution that, I hope, will have the desired effect the writer had in view in penning it.

In the telegraphic news of one of your contemporaries

appeared the following on the 15th inst.:—"The Free-thought paper, the *Liberal*, has been stopped by order of the Government." The correspondent was evidently labouring under some misapprehension, since no such action has been taken. The police authorities sought ineffectually to stop the sale of this paper on Sunday; hence, I suppose, the above. As further evidence, two issues have appeared since, and a third is in the press.

The Old Arians who cried aloud with grief as the sun sank down into the great ocean, rejoiced as heartily when the first faint glimmer told them he had returned, and so in time they were taught to philosophy. Human nature is just the same to-day. We rejoiced when Professor Denton was with us; we sorrowed when he went away; we are exceeding glad now that he has returned, and (philosophising) have learnt to make the most of him, and his rare talents whilst in our midst. I am glad to be able to report that in this light we are all philosophers, for his success, so far, has been great both on Sunday, and during the week.

In a former letter I spoke of the intention several gentlemen had of introducing Miss Woods, a materialising medium, to these shores. Since then I understand all necessary arrangements have been made, and that the lady may be expected in about a month from now. There is some talk of Mr. and Mrs. Hearn following in due course, so that with our present talent augmented by the above, and also Col. Ingersoll, who is expected shortly under engagement to Messrs. Williamson, Garner and Musgrave for a series of his popular iconoclastic lectures—in Salvation Army parlance we are going "to storm the Fort" in earnest.

Speaking of the Salvation Army reminds me that we have not escaped the contagion, but it is a very mild attack. Beyond several iniquitous meetings, and the foundation of an anti-atheistic platform, it has been virtually silent.

The Post Laureate has sought in his latest pseudo-dramatic production—the Promise of May—to hold up a Freethinker to odium. Strange to say, orthodox London has raised its voice against the author, and the play has been a well-deserved failure.

The Hon. Mr. Copeland, who has been instrumental in opening all our institutions and gardens on Sunday, has been defeated in one of the suburban electorates of heterodox N.S.W. Can we point a moral from these two anomalies? Do they mean that with all our boasted Freedom and Liberalism, Old England still leads the way, church-bound and Conservative, as she is supposed to be?

The Lyceum picnic was a great success, and although falling short of previous ones financially, it was, nevertheless, much more pleasurable, and by the absence of any disturbing element the enjoyment was unalloyed.

With the close of the year Denominational schools ceased to be. On the 17th inst. the new Act first saw the light that makes education free, compulsory, and secular. Unfortunately the advance is too great for the many, and has not met with that success it is entitled to, notably from the Romanists, who have founded schools of their own. Strange to say, the Archbishop has only now discovered, after State aid has ceased, that it was but an incubus, and militated greatly against the training of the young into the pathway of the Lord; and, moreover, that Roman Catholics are heartily glad it has been abolished, since they do not, nor never did, require it. This may be excellent logic from the Archbishop's standpoint, but from mine it savours strongly of inconsistency, and illustrates very forcibly that excellent old fable of the Fox and the Grapes, while greater force is given to it by the saying—"That next to God money is the most powerful and useful thing in the universe."

BETA.

Is the report of a trial for the murder of a Mr. Butler Bryan, which took place in Wexford, 1844, it is stated that one of the witnesses, Judith Baily, swore in reply to some questions by the judge that she had frequently seen the deceased's ghost.

SPIRITUALISM SUPERIOR TO SECULARISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT."

SIR—As by phrenology, I know that men are only wise to the extent of their individually developed organs, it would not be proper or philosophical to condemn or ridicule any system, whether secular or orthodox, inasmuch as followers of such systems have nearly in every case got just so far as their developed degree of insight will carry them. Every animate and inanimate thing has its extent and boundary in space, and that space into which it is fitted, is adequate to its content. Thus the craggiest rock will have space for its every irregularity, just as the savage or simplest man will find gratification to the extent of his knowledge—and even as an orthodox Christian is content to pendulate in belief between Genesis and Revelations—so will the secularist be content to pendulate in knowledge between a monad and an animal man; and, even if it is so, it is no fault of the individual any more than it is the fault of nature; for a fault or evil in nature, —if anything in nature can be called evil—is only undeveloped good. And as good, better, best, arrive at good, better, and best by imperceptible, infinite degrees, it follows that anything in the shape of condemnation or ridicule, offered to a state of intellect, which is the result of organism, would be a thoughtless task indeed. If by scientific investigation I find myself on a higher onlook than either secularism or orthodoxy, and my organism is adapted to perceive the immense superiority of spiritualism, it does not follow that those bound to orthodoxy and secularism by virtue of their cranial development will perceive as I perceive. Time necessary for that cranial development would be required before the individuals composing these several sets could feel and understand what I know of the wonderfulness of spiritualism as a fact, and the universe embracing grandeur of spiritualism as a philosophy. To condemn and ridicule that which is at the extent of its capacity would be just like cursing a door because you ran your head against it in the dark; since it is not the door's fault but your own blindness. Secularism is inevitable, just because man's ideas are the inevitable growth by degrees of his intellect. I shall therefore respect that state of the skull which compels secularism in the man, and proceed to my question as to its utility as a basis of happiness. Herbert Spencer, a profound thinker and secularist, says—The religious feeling is a part of man's nature—Now, what is the most essential desire of the religious feeling? A man electrified by the touch of modern thought, begins to perceive how beautiful the world is, with knowledge he gets to be more morally pure, more brotherly and affectionate, and contemplating the mere sixty or seventy years which are given him to enjoy life, his thoughts that wander through eternity begin to long more and more for an eternity of life that he might enjoy the secrets of the immense universe. This longing for a continuity of life is the most essential desire of the religious in man, which Herbert Spencer says is part of man's nature. Here is a longing felt in the nature of man for a continuity of life. Here is a source of happiness, which, before it can bring content and harmony to man—must become established on a scientific basis—and this, the secularist, by virtue of his peculiar cranial development cannot as yet perceive. The very fact that the desire to know, compels man to the desire to live to know all things, is sufficient to explain the deficiency in the secularistic programme. To be a complete system it ought to be complete in everything concerning the demands of man. In many things, doubtless, secularism gives man complete satisfaction. If he desires to know about the rocks, geology instructs him. If he would know about the stars astronomy instructs him. So does botany teach him about plants, chemistry about elements, mathematics about numbers, and by a knowledge of these the secularist is without doubt highly satisfied, probably to the extent of his skull, sufficiently satisfied. But other men and women who are not content with a

mere programme of secularistic knowledge and who are in the highest sense model men and women, demand that the wants of their higher cranial development should be satisfied. These people are just as much shut out from the heaven of the secularists, as the secularists and spiritualists are from the heaven of the orthodox. Thus secularism becomes a sect, and is not what a universal system of knowledge ought to be viz: a complete induction. Every demand of man's nature has not in this system its essential qualification. When a prominent secularistic lecturer dogmatically asserts that it is of no utility to man to know that he lives as an individual after his body is put in the grave, he seems not to perceive that if there is a demand for such knowledge at all, it is a defect in his system if it cannot gratify that demand. To make such an assertion as that, is to assume like the orthodox clergyman, who says unless you believe in Christ, you will be damned. This dogmatic assertion amounts to the same thing as to say, a knowledge of man's nature is not essential to man's happiness. Thus secularism when it puts bounds to knowledge and desires of mind in this way is not, even with Huxley, Tyndal, and Herbert Spencer at the head of it, so very supremely philosophical. There is a conservatism about it, a sort of we know all the knowable. Anything further about man we don't know, and if we did, the knowledge would not be worth possessing. Let us live in this life, without dreaming of another life. Let us eat, drink, enjoy nature's good things and be merry. Such are the secularists, and such they are by the very necessity of their cranial growth. They have not outgrown tobacco smoking, whisky drinking, bigotry, envy or uncharitableness; of course there are some exceptions. But their best lecturer in this city has not as far as I know, denounced as a true reformer ought, the above disgusting practices. There are true secularists, as well as false secularists, just as there are true spiritualists as well as false spiritualists. But there is nothing in secularism as a knowledge that is not to be found in spiritualism. All that the secularist maintains as good, beautiful and true, that also the spiritualist maintains. Whatever is beneficial to man socially is just as much desired by spiritualists, as by secularists. And no man denounces more emphatically superstition and vice, than the spiritualistic advocate. But spiritualism does much more than this: it proves by scientific methods that man lives individually after his body is put in the grave, and this knowledge is immensely more satisfactory to the highest types of humanity than anything the bounded dogmas of secularism can give in the way of happiness. Spiritualism satisfies all human demands, and as these demands are more that secularism takes cognizance of, the superiority of spiritualism must in the end become manifest. We know this to the extent of our phrenological capacity, and time's developing process will certainly make secularists know it, and feel that spiritualism is the only real basis upon which true happiness can be founded—I am, etc., yours truly,

W. HAMILTON RUTHERFORD.

20 Lothian-street,
Hotham.

THE BIBLE IN STATE SCHOOLS.

The *Melbourne Review* for January introduces its readers to an article on "Religion in State Schools," from the pen of Mr. Alexander Sutherland, M.A., Principal of the Carlton College.

We feel that a debt of gratitude is owing as well to the proprietors of the *Melbourne Review* for publishing, as to the author for writing, this timely contribution. The article in question possesses an especial value, not only by reason of its intrinsic excellence—to its "lucidity," even fastidious Matthew Arnold could take no exception—but also because of the source whence it emanates. Mr. Sutherland is a scholar of acknowledged ability, and a teacher of considerable experience, and his qualification to speak with knowledge on this topic is not a little enhanced by the fact that he is a staunch "religionist," a member of the grim old Presbyterian denomination.

We have not the space at disposal to present anything like a just *précis* of the gentleman's pregnant and trenchant utterances; but we gladly refer our readers to the *Review*, and will even add the suggestion that the essay under notice be reprinted for general circulation, as one means of counteracting the pernicious efforts so sedulously put forth by the sectaries on behalf of their "trade-interests" or their prejudices—efforts, we regret to see, in some places supported by certain weak-kneed *soi-disants* "liberals."

Before concluding, however, we may venture to call attention to a few salient features in the article by Mr. Sutherland.

He begins with an analysis of the reading books used in our State Schools, and claims for them that they "are throughout characterised by an admirable religious tone." "Christ's teaching pervades them," he says, "from end to end." They "breathe throughout the highest morality," and "inculcate reverence for God and for all divine things." They "are saturated with religion, . . . a religion that will make children noble, kindly, and devout." Mr. Sutherland further urges that the spirit of Christ's teaching is everywhere present, and that though his precise words may not be given, yet the idea is always presented in a form more readily assimilable by the juvenile mind than that form in which they occur in the Bible. "If I were asked," he says, "to determine whether the Gospels or the first four of the Royal Readers would leave the more lasting religious impression on the mind of a child, of ten, or eleven, I should certainly give the preference to the Royal Readers."

Referring to the Second Book, Mr. Sutherland remarks, "This one little book of 190 pages contains 106 lessons, of which 27 are intended to embody Christ's teaching: six others, though nominally on secular subjects, are so constructed as to lead the mind of the child up to God as the Great Father of all; nine more incidentally teach the goodness and care of God; and the remaining 64, though intended only to impart useful knowledge, breathe throughout a kindly and elevating tone. . . . What is true of the Second Reader is equally true of the others. Surely, if anyone has a claim for complaint it is the Atheist and the Materialist; certainly not the spiritual Christian! "But," says some Bible-leaguer, "we do not wish to interfere with the morality or religion that the school books contain; what we want is that the children should not be brought up in ignorance of the historical [!] facts [!] recorded in the Bible." Well, we may admit that it is a misfortune for a child not to be familiar with some of the transcendently historical episodes of the Holy Scriptures, *e. g.*, the intropiscine experiences of Jonah, the exploits of the heroic Samson with the wonderful jaw-bone, the angelic adventure of Balaam whose aesthetic ass was so preternaturally made "to (o) utter," etc., etc., still we fancy that a child could, without any *great* material or spiritual disadvantage, afford to wait till conditioning years and experiences had fitted him for forming a just estimate of those edifying narratives. But if the usefulness and value of an acquaintance with Hebrew mythology be insisted upon, we submit that it is unfair to ignore the equally valid claim of Osirian, Hindu, and Moslem, of classic Greek and Roman.

X.

JOTTINGS ON PASSING EVENTS.

WHAT is to be done with Mr. Sutherland, of the Carlton College? He has dared, in the columns of the eminently respectable and popular *Melbourne Review*, to say "the plain truth about the Bible!"* Read this and shudder for Mr. Sutherland: "The Bible is not a useful class-book. Compared with the present simple and effective system, Bible-reading would be clumsy and inefficient to the last degree. Of 929 chapters contained in the Old Testament, there are between three and four hundred containing nothing but lists of names, inventories, directions for rites and ceremonies now obsolete; there are perhaps a hundred more occupied with fulmin-

ations against the Jews for their idolatrous practices, their images, their groves, their intermarriages with heathen women, and so forth. . . . Nor are the historical parts more suitable; they are not written for juvenile comprehensions, and a child would much prefer to read the story of Joseph or of David in simple language, such as is used in children's magazines and picture books." Mr. Sutherland also alleges that there are some thirty-eight chapters in which are related stories of revolting immorality quite unfit for perusal by school-children; and he sums up that "there are nowhere in the Bible twenty consecutive verses which would satisfy a teacher's idea of what a reading-lesson for children of from seven to twelve years ought to be." Poor Mr. Sutherland, prepare to meet thy doom!

Mr. Spurgeon must look to his laurels: there is another Richmond in the field! The following advertisement appeared recently in an English religious paper:—

CONGREGATIONAL AND OTHER CHURCHES.—ANOTHER SPURGEON! An experienced and singularly gifted Preacher, whom the people style ANOTHER SPURGEON, is open to supply any Church able to elect and support its own pastor. Glorious services! Outsiders brought in! Flattering testimonials. God shall have the glory! Address "Preacher," etc.

Why doesn't Collingwood import such a "star" for the Tabernacle?

Spurgeon—the original one, I mean—has a summary method of disposing of St. Peter's infallibility. "Peter," says he, "had a wife. Now no man who had a wife could believe long in his own infallibility, for she would soon convince him of his mistake."

A writer in the *Christian World* records the case of a modern "good Samaritan" in connection with the late Prof. Palmer, of whose deplorable death at the hands of some Arabs we all have heard. "An old man lay senseless on the side of one of our outskirt roads, evidently poor and starving. Who passed by but Father Ignatius, and seeing him went up and offered a prayer, over his head. As he was in the act Prof. Palmer came up, lifted the poor creature, took his arm, got a trap, and took him to lodgings, as he was homeless. He fed him, warmed him, and paid his expenses."

In the *Victorian Review* for January, Mr. W. G. Thistle, of New Zealand, puts forward a sensible plea for the introduction of Mesmerism into public hospitals and asylums as an auxiliary system of treatment. Mr. Thistle urges that at least a trial might be given, as, if no benefit ensued, the treatment at any rate would be innocuous. It is time the public mind was educated as to the therapeutic value of Mesmerism; but there is still very general ignorance on the subject, notwithstanding (is it because of?) the multitude of its "professors."

The Rev. Dr. Jessop relates in the *Nineteenth Century* the story of an old farmer who, being told that he must resign himself to Providence, said, "Drat that old Providence; first he spail my tanners, then my tarnips, and now he's took my missus; but I reckon there's One abev as will put the stopper on him if he go too far." This sublime faith (says an English "infidel" paper) was more definite than in the case of another old farmer, who, being catechised on his death-bed, said, "What wi' faith in the Trinity, substitutionary sacrifice, justification by grace, and one thing and another, I'm clean be-muddled, be-foozled, and beat."

The old saying, "Let the dead rest," when it refers to speaking ill of them, has more meaning than is generally supposed. A spirit once reproached the writer for thinking unkindly of him; remarking that the unpleasant thought was as plainly perceived and as painful to him as unkind words are to those in earth-life.

C. R.

* "Religion in State Schools;" by A. Sutherland, M.A.

SUPPLEMENT TO THE Harbinger of Light.

FEBRUARY 1, 1883.

CONVERSAZIONE.

A conversazione was held by the Victorian Association of Spiritualists at the Athenaeum Hall, Melbourne, on Thursday evening the 18th ult., for the joint purpose of affording the members and friends of that body opportunities of bidding farewell to Mr William Denton who has laboured so energetically and acceptably in the colonies for some time past for the promotion of free-thought in religion, and the spread of rational views of spiritualism, on his final departure from Victoria, and of welcoming his successor in the work, Mrs E. L. Watson, of San Francisco.

Mr H. J. Browne, the President of the V.A.S., occupied the chair, and opened the proceedings by adverting to the circumstances which had called them together, to the good work which had been done by Mr Denton, and the regret generally felt in consequence of his leaving them, and was followed by Mr John Ross, who remarked that there was nothing truer than that the teacher of mankind was one of its greatest benefactors. There was a good deal of knowledge nowadays that required not so much to be taught from the beginning, but to get a clear and lucid thinker, with a suitable vocabulary of words and a talent for arranging, to put them together in an orderly way, so that we could see their fitness, and how cause and effect follow consecutively, and fill up the warp and woof of every branch of science. He thought the greatest evil had been that we had been taught without a scientific foundation; taught as children to be good, without being taught how to be good; taught our duties to society without being shown that it was a science; without shewing that selfishness and altruism were only two sides of the same thing, and as they were expressing their regret at Mr Denton's leaving, it was only another way of expressing their selfishness at parting. A great many things came up in their minds in association with that gentleman, and it was a fitting occasion to mention such old friends as J. M. Peebles and Mrs Britten, who had prepared the way for Professor Denton and made his duties less arduous. The speaker referred to the prejudice with which those lecturers had been received, and pointed out the great advance that had been made when a person could come amongst them and knock away at orthodoxy, as Mr Denton had done without his peaceful progress being obstructed. He (the speaker) had sometimes felt a shock in sympathy with others, but he felt that there might be too much consideration for these things. He was satisfied that more benefit would come from the lectures just closed than from any they had had the pleasure of listening to for many years. He was merely pronouncing the words that were not the most agreeable to those present, but were a necessity on the present occasion—farewell to Professor Denton. He wished him Godspeed on his journey, and that he might bear a light that would illuminate his path wherever he went, and carry to other places the good wishes he had gained here, and he expressed the hope that Mr Denton would repeat his visit. The sentiment of the speaker were received with loud and continued applause. In seconding the remarks of the last speaker, Mr C. Johnston said he should speak of Mr Denton more as an intimate friend. He considered that he had been fortunate in securing him as a friend, and their intercourse had been very pleasing. He had been rather hard on their small vices, such as smoking,

but he felt they were losing a valuable friend, and regretted to say farewell.

Professor Denton in response, said that he had been in the lecturing field for nearly forty years, and that was the first time in his life that he had had an opportunity of hearing himself glorified as he had been. If they had only had something to say in deadly opposition to arguments that he had advanced he would have been at them in an instant, and would have had something to say appropriate to the occasion. But what could he say that night. It carried him away back to the time when he started, to the time when everybody was orthodox, and nobody was heterodox. Nobody (?) yes, for in a town of ten thousand inhabitants where he was born, in Durham, there were three heretical persons, one of them of the name of Harrison, and he, Mr Denton, had really thought that he was a sort of second cousin to the devil, from the opinions that were put into him in reference to anybody who dared to doubt what orthodoxy for such a long period of time had been advancing. For a man then to attempt to say anything against the opinions that were generally advanced by what is called orthodoxy, was one of the most daring things in the world. A man of that kind did require and must have backbone, without which nothing could be done in that line. But he had lived to see an amazing change. When he first began to lecture, there was not much praising. Not unfrequently showers of stones; they were hard but not very convincing arguments to advance on the other side; occasionally rotten eggs, very strong in one direction, but very weak in the other. That was what people used to receive in those times. People never thought of thanking a man for coming and disturbing the quiet of their opinions. The man who taught that the world was over six thousand years old was a devil then, and the man who taught that mankind had been on this globe for more than six thousand years and that Adam was not the first man and Eve the first woman,—why, it was no use having a hell if such a wretch as that was not plunged into it. But there was an amazing change in this respect. He had heard orthodox ministers with pious faces talk about this world of ours being millions of years old, and he had noticed the deacons never brought them up for it, but sat with smiling faces as if Moses had never lived and Genesis never had an existence. He was just sixty years of age, but expected to live yet to hear orthodox ministers talk about man having been on this planet for hundreds of thousands of years, and people even the most active orthodox members will not dream that they are heretical because they make any such statements as those, for he found that the bible was wonderfully elastic in these days; it was like the days of Genesis; when it was found that the world was over six thousand years old they then stretched out the Genesical six thousand to seven thousand; when found to be over ten thousand years old, they put it down at fifteen thousand anyhow, and so having made up those days of indiarubber they had stretched them out to very indefinite periods of time, and say, "we are going to reconcile these things with our doctrines anyhow, and we are not to be beaten." So it would be with regard to the antiquity of man, and so with everything else. It was not to be imagined that these orthodox churches were going to break up and pull down their steeples; but he would tell them this, that every step taken by thinking men

and women outside, is followed by a corresponding step inside the church. It was the outside work that had made ministers—that had made Mr Strong and the Bishop of Melbourne more liberal-minded. The liberality that they were able to give in their pulpits, they owed to the heretical teachers outside who were doing the work for them, and for the people generally. This work was destined to succeed in spite of all that could be done to oppose it; just as certainly as this planet revolved around the sun, so certainly did the truth once clearly enunciated go forth to do its work, work that must be done before the millennium that we all desired should make its appearance. He was born and cradled in Methodism; Methodism was sung into him, preached into him, prayed into him. He was seventeen years old before he heard an heretical idea advanced, even anything as mild as Unitarianism. It was not until he went to London at the age of nineteen that he began to hear what are called infidel ideas expressed and then they shocked him so dreadfully, and he himself could sympathise with those people who had been shocked with the dreadful things he had said, things which some had considered blasphemous. But you could not blaspheme that which had no existence save in the imagination of mankind, and people had to be shocked. They wanted to be roused out of the intellectual sleep that orthodoxy had rocked them in ever since they were babies, and you had got to say something that would start them, and make them open their eyes and let the daylight in. There was one compensation for them, the same thing would never shock them again; after they had heard it two or three times, there would be no more shocking about it. The truth would become clearer and plainer until eventually what was once rejected as a devil would be seen to be a Saviour, and it was this that carried us on to freedom, to light and to bliss. If, when a Methodist, he had been told that he would hold the opinions he held to day, his thoughts would have been "how miserable shall I be"; but the very contrary of all this was true, every step he had taken had been forward, and he had never taken a step until driven by his judgment; it had been a step into light, a step into bliss. He had no fear of what death might bring, no fear of what might be after death. In his boyhood, when he accepted the orthodox belief that millions all around him were destined to suffer the tortures of the damned, he had stood sometimes at the door of a tavern, and the tears would stream down his cheeks at the thought of the horrible misery those wretches must endure, and if he could pity them, if he could lay down his life for their benefit, how much more a God if worthy of the name! What must we think of a God who tells us to love our enemies and damns his own? He dilated upon the inconsistency and absurdity of the theological notions respecting eternal torment and biblical infallibility, and said that before leaving he must give his hearers credit for listening to him in his lectures with a wonderful amount of patience, a patience that had actually surprised him. He had hardly expected that he would be able to say what he had said, with the freedom that had been given to him since he had been amongst them. He was considered to be rather an ascetic. He had very strong opinions indeed with regard to the way in which people ought to live, in regard to simplicity of diet, as well as simplicity of life generally, and he knew that those opinions are very different from the opinions of a great many persons who had been listening to him and who had taken a good deal of interest in his lectures and he gave them credit for being not only willing but glad that he should be free to express his opinions; so long as he lectured he should say just exactly what he thought. His tongue and brain had kept time ever since he began to talk, and would do as long as he lived, but he rejoiced to meet people who could sympathise with him in this freedom that he exercised, while at the same time they exercised their freedom as to how much was in harmony with their own sentiments. That was the grand essential. The man he wanted to hear was the man who disagreed with him, but unless he gave his reasons for disagreeing he cared nothing about it. If a man said "believe this or be damned,"

he has just as good a right to say to him, "believe this or you will be damned." We were all men, standing on the grand platform of manhood and womanhood, and should allow no man under heaven to stand between us and the truth, not even Jesus, but should dare to exercise our judgment though we stood alone on the planet. He had been alone in a town of twenty thousand inhabitants, the only infidel that he knew of, but it did not trouble him at all; he had backbone enough then to stand up and speak his thought with freedom, and in that way he had advanced step by step to where he was. He would like very much to see them again say in ten or twenty years from then, but at present could see very little prospect in that direction. He had been from home nearly two years, and he knew a good woman and some good little children who had been longing for him a good while. He must now get home, and that speedily, intending to visit China, Japan, India, and then go to the "Holy" Land. Mr Denton then dwelt upon the absurdity of the belief that the Soul of Universe walked this co-called Holy Land in the form of a Jewish carpenter. He had no such high opinions of Jesus as even a great many of their speakers had, and had made a very careful study of the man. It was not a pleasant position for him to take after all, but he could not leave them without telling them just exactly where he stood in reference to that subject. He wanted to make people feel that they were all sons and daughters of the Infinite Spirit, that they should learn all they could, and be just as wise and just as good as the circumstances surrounding them would enable them to be. The thought of death would then be no disturbance to us. There was a time when he could not lay down and think of it without trembling. But all that had gone, and he was no more afraid of death than he was of sleeping. He had lost (as they called it) a good father, but he had lost a good mother the best friend he ever had on earth. But he had found his mother was still alive; still she blessed him, still he felt her influence; still she encouraged him, still she guided him. Though many of his hearers would not be able to sympathise with those ideas, for he was cut off from a great many persons by virtue of what he had to say in reference to that subject, yet that was one of the things we knew just as he knew whatever had been cognised by his senses, and at death we were going to start exactly where we left off here, and march on to the grand future that would lie before us in another condition of being where the same laws would govern us, the same Infinite Spirit rule. We should be true to ourselves wherever we were, listen to the voice of God within us, infinitely more important than the voice in anybody else's soul, and live the life that commended to our own soul for this world and all others that may come along. (Applause).

After an interval for refreshments and conversation Mr. W. B. Bowley rose, and expressed the very great pleasure which he felt in putting their thoughts into words, and welcoming Mrs. Watson. He hoped she would never have cause to regret having come, and that when she took the platform before an audience, they might feel that there was one come amongst them to carry them on in the great work of promoting thought. He really believed that Providence must have had a hand in bringing amongst them to promote the cause they had at heart such workers as Professor Denton and Mrs. Watson. After a few words by Mr. Terry supplementary of the welcome given by the preceding speaker, pointing out that Mr. Denton had been preceded by his work which had to a large extent rendered them familiar with him, while Mrs. Watson was best known in her own country, but that he and others had heard of her ability and had read some of her discourses with approval. That lady in responding said, that if she should do any work in Melbourne worthy of regard, she too would believe in a Providence, for she came here scarcely of her own will, and was literally brought across the sea. She was not fond of the sea, and scarcely dared step on board a ferry boat to ride six miles at home, but she had travelled several thousand miles to come amongst strangers; not a face that she had ever seen before except that of the grand

old worker Professor Denton. They would agree with her that she had never, and she thought no speaker had ever, passed through such a severe test as she had, for this reason, that he had had great experience, and she as a young girl an instrument in the hands of higher powers had travelled over the same ground where he has been battling, and to the last hour of her work in the American States she had heard his name spoken with so much reverence by grey-haired men and sick-hearted women. They knew his value even more than we did here. Over that wide populous country he had worked for many years, and hundreds of thousands could thank Professor Denton for striking the shackles from their souls. It was a good thing to give a human soul liberty, and he had given liberty to thousands. She hoped he might be able to return, and reap the rich harvest that would spring up from the noble seeds he had sown. Her friends in giving her welcome had said they thought she was fitted for a work different to Professor Denton's, but sometimes she too handled the two-edged sword, not she thought as of her own free will, for she would not utter a word to shock anybody, though she agreed with Mr Denton that sometimes people needed to be shocked. But she would rather search out the hearts that were wounded and sore, and utter words of consolation for that was a more graceful task, but their good brother was so strong that he could bear their curses and still go on as though they had been blessings. Her weaker woman heart needed sympathy, and she was sure that she would have that sympathy amongst them. (Applause.) She wanted to take them into her confidence, she had so little herself, though great faith in the good angels. But she was not one of those mechanical instruments which they could use as they liked. She was not an instrument that obeyed perfectly the will of the spirit, she was only capable of certain mental illuminations, and she knew so little of the laws which governed these operations that she often times mistook the path that led to the angel's confidence and power, and then her organism suffered. All she could promise would be that she would try and be faithful to the commission, and try and be patient with herself. She had her ideal of what a teacher ought to be, and it seemed to her if only she could have powers worthy of the truths that wait for us on every side, if only she could find the fitting expression for those angels that stand eager to be taken into our hearts, she would be the happiest woman on earth. But she was sometimes incoherent, was not logical, nor scientific, was only an imperfectly attuned instrument, though sometimes able to bring forth things new and full of promise. But she had this to be thankful for, that everywhere she went there was such readiness to receive consolation and inspiration, and the hearts were so hungry that when she broke the bread even in insignificant crumbs they were gathered quickly, with eagerness and even thankfulness. And so she came to them trembling lest she should not do what was expected of her, for she had been greatly misrepresented by her friends, and they must not expect her to meet all requirements nor fulfil all the promises that friends had made for her; but since she knew that heaven was near, and they were earnest, they could at least work together, for the task of the speaker was the least task of all; it was the worker at home, the every day worker in this field of the spiritual philosophy upon whom they must depend. Mr Denton had passed like a meteor, leaving a trail of light behind him. They must work in that light while it lasted to make the fruit ripe. She thanked them from the bottom of her heart for their welcome. Their smiles must take the place of the smiles of love which she missed since they were so far away. Their welcome must do for her for the food of the heart now denied her. They must be to her in the place of the friends she had left in the season that she should be with them, while she knew that the good grain sowed by their brother would help to support the frail blossoms that she was bringing.

The proceedings were varied by the execution of several pieces of music by the choir and by soloists, and several side tables were well filled with tastefully

arranged fruits of the season and iced water for the delectation of the numerous assemblage.

THE EVIDENCES OF SPIRITUALISM.*

The publication of the volume now before us, the largest of the subject referred to that has ever been printed in the southern hemisphere, is an event in the annals of Victorian spiritualism that demands more than a passing notice. The author, a man of undoubted integrity, clear intellect, and at present filling a responsible public office in one of our largest cities, was about ten years since very prominently before the public as chairman of the "Energetic" Circle and leader of the Spiritualistic movement in Sandhurst. In the former capacity he, assisted by a private medium and a party of earnest truthseekers, carried on a series of interesting experiments in the evolution of various spiritual phenomena, culminating in the first materialisations of spirit forms publicly heard of in Australia, and in the latter he not only took the lead in any public movement for the advancement of those truths which his experience had so forcibly brought home to him, but prepared and delivered several able lectures illustrative of the philosophy and phenomena of spiritualism, which were largely attended, fully reported in the local press, and awakened a lively interest in the Sandhurst district. In addition to some five years experience on the Energetic Circle, Mr Denovan has availed himself of every opportunity to witness phenomena occurring through other media, and carefully studied the recorded experience of other prominent labourers in the same field of investigation, his comparative retirement from public identification with spiritualism during the past few years necessitated by the exigencies of his official duties, has made his name less familiar amongst the more modern spiritualists though to our readers of eight or ten years since, it was a household word.

Such is the man, who for a considerable time past has devoted all his leisure to the production of the work under notice, a work which, though it may not recoup him even his pecuniary outlay, will at least bring him credit and honor amongst the students of the spiritual philosophy of the nineteenth century.

To exhaustively review so voluminous a work, would be altogether beyond the limits of the "Harbinger," we must therefore content ourselves by giving a brief synopsis and recommending our readers to peruse it at the earliest opportunity.

The first eighty pages consist of five lectures, delivered by the author during the years 1872 and 1873. In them he gives his reasons for doubting the infallibility of the Bible, and for believing in the fact of spiritual intercourse, citing in one of the lectures most overwhelming testimony to the reality of various phenomena pertaining to it. This is followed by an able analysis of the scientific and christian objections to spiritualism. The final lecture on spiritualism and freethought traces the former as a natural outcome of religious freethought and inspiration. These lectures are ably constructed, full of cogent reasoning, and telling evidences.

The record of evidence commences with the "Spirit Rap" an apparently small, but most significant phenomenon. In addition to the author's and other experiences, this section contains complete reports of Mrs Foye's Melbourne seances, which are highly interesting.

The second section, on the "Tying of Molians," introduces Dr. Sexton's celebrated exposure of mock mediumship, Messrs Miskelyne, Cook, Lyman and others of the anti-spiritual conjuring fraternity being present whilst the doctor exhibited and explained their tricks and contrasted them with the genuine phenomena to the discomfort of the professionals.

The next section treats of spontaneous manifestations, principally "stone throwing" by unseen agents. There is a large amount of evidence of this somewhat unpleasant

* The Evidences of Spiritualism:—Lectures, Addresses and Records of Spiritual Phenomena, by W. C. D. Denovan, formerly M.L.A. for Sandhurst. Melbourne: W. H. Terry, 1882.

and disorderly manifestation, but fortunately very little of it in this part of the world, and none within the author's personal experience, but the more wonderful and from a materialistic standpoint incredible manifestations of "matter passing through matter" treated of in next chapters, the author's supplements the testimony of many well-known persons, including scientific men in Europe, Asia and America, by that of several living witnesses in Victoria including himself. The general incredulity about this phenomena is attributed by spirits to our crude ideas regarding the nature of matter which a fuller knowledge of dynamics will very much modify.

Under the head of "Direct writing by Spirits," Dr. Slade's phenomena occupies a prominent place, but some most remarkable results in Psychography were obtained at the Energetic Circle fully ten years since, the original writings precipitated on paper under strict test conditions are still extant, two of them being copied by Mr. Troedel as illustrations to the subject.

Passing over the interesting records of spirit Photography, Painting Mediumship, Healing and Dreams, the only remaining branches of the subject unsupplemented by the personal experiences of other author, we come to the crowning phenomena of Materialisation. The phenomena though so entirely in harmony with the scriptures which the major portion of English speaking people profess to believe in, is so diametrically opposed to the general experiences of humanity, that many unprejudiced people even in the ranks of spiritualism are unable to believe it, the numerous frauds perpetrated by unprincipled persons which are constantly coming to light serving to strengthen their incredulity. Hence no amount of outside testimony alone is likely to convince the sceptical mind of the fact, but a scientific explanation of the philosophy and the records of experiments conducted by men reputed wise above their fellows, will at least prepare the mind for an unprejudiced examination of the phenomena when opportunity offers. Both these are afforded in the large section devoted to the evidences on this important subject, among the many experienced witnesses who testify to the fact, we find the names of William Crookes, Professor Danmer, Epes Sargent, Dr. Crowell, Cromwell Varley, Dr. Richardson, Dr. Nicholls, William Oxley, Dr. Barkas, R. D. Owen, Archdeacons Colley and Kavenagh, Col. Olcott, Hon. J. O'Sullivan, Profs. Kiddle, W. Denton, and John Carson of this city, whose experiences are supplemented by a careful record of phenomena observed at the Sandhurst circle of which Mr. Denovan was chairman, and the more recent experiments with Mr. Geo. Spriggs in Melbourne.

With regard to the philosophy of materialisation, the following extracts from Dr. Crowell's "Primitive Christianity and modern Spiritualism" quoted by Mr. Denovan, are terse and comprehensible.

The spirits say:—"It is, properly speaking, a psychological process. For instance, the returned spirit, in coming in contact with earthly matter, with minds dwelling in material bodies, becomes immediately vividly impressed with the last sense of the conditions of earthly matter through which it lived. They are all distinct to it in memory. Its dress, its general appearance, the incidents connected with them, are clear to it. By the process of intense outward thought towards any one object, spirits are enabled to clothe themselves with whatever objective form they desire to assume. Your mother remembers how she dressed, in what manner she wore her hair during the last days, weeks, or hours of her life. She knows she will be remembered most distinctly, most satisfactorily, by those who remain if she can assume that objective form; so all she has to do is, to fix her mind on the picture she wishes to weave out of your atmosphere. By intense outward thought she clothes herself just as she wishes. It is a common psychological process which all spirits thoroughly understand. Even little children are acquainted with it.

In order to produce visible forms of spirits, we must have proper atmospheric conditions and suitable mediums, and a portion of the process must be performed in the dark, light being a disintegrator. Under proper conditions, with a good and

harmonious circle, and with the instructions we can give, we shall be able to make forms for ourselves that will be much more permanent, and will resist for a time the disintegrating effect of light. The basic electric and magnetic elements which we use for making the pabulum with which we cover our forms, are drawn from the atmosphere in a darkened place. Hence, in all ages, spirits have been able to appear most distinctly at night. In order that this pabulum may be used without too much injury to the spirit, we should have the magnetism of a circle, and of one or more mediumistic persons from whom we draw certain elements which still retain their vitality. We are thus enabled to vitalise our pabulum, so that it resembles the cuticle and hair of a human body, and the spirit who is thus surrounded becomes so similar to a human being that you cannot detect any difference. In drawing these elements from our mediums the process is often exhausting, and there are certain elements which are only borrowed, and must be returned; and this explains the fact that, if a portion of the spirit materialised be stained by any coloured substance, the stain will be transferred to the same portion of the medium's body with the elements that are returned."

It would appear from this that their superior knowledge of chemistry and dynamic laws enable the spirits to produce what to our uneducated senses appears marvellous phenomena.

Mr. Denovan's concluding remarks on the duty of spiritualists are highly apropos, he points out how much the future of spiritualism depends upon those who are founding its principles and how essential it is that men of integrity and judgment should be placed at the helm of all organisations that exist or may be formed for the furtherance of spiritual knowledge. Spiritualism, he says, has a great reformation work to do, God and immortality are its watchwords, Love and education its weapons of warfare.

To the liberal christian the rational freethinker or anyone who is not afraid to look facts in the face, Mr. Denovan's book will be found a highly interesting and instructive volume, whilst to the Spiritualist of limited phenomenal experience it will be invaluable as a book of reference furnishing arguments to meet the onslaughts which kind (?) friends are so ready to make upon their faith, and which from want of material and experience, they are unable to cope with.

The book which is printed by a Sandhurst firm contains 698 large octavo pages, and fourteen illustrations by Troedel.

THE TELEPHONE.

THE above little exponent of Christian, or, perhaps more correctly, "Swedenborgian" Spiritualism, published at Brisbane, Queensland, has just completed its second year of existence, and gives prospect of future vitality.

Some Spiritualists are irate at the doctrines taught in it, and have expressed their opinion to us that it was doing injury to Spiritualism; but we fail to see it. If they read it in the light of reason, they will find some truths in it, and they will naturally set aside that which does not commend itself to their judgment as true or valuable. On the other hand, there are many persons connected with the church systems, whose minds are not yet prepared to receive the religion of Spiritualism from our standpoint, and to whom the *Telephone* would be a stepping-stone towards what we regard as a higher phase of it.

THE *Theosophist* for January contains much that is interesting and instructive. Alexander Wilder's continuation of Mind, Thought, and Cerebration affords considerable information in relation to Dual Consciousness, whilst the curious mediumistic phenomena of Dr. Buck (and editorial note) are particularly interesting. The same number contains the report of the seventh anniversary of the Theosophical Society, celebrated at Bombay, on the 9th December last, from which it appears that there are already thirty-nine branches of the Society founded in Asia alone. The meeting was a large and influential one, Mr. A. P. Sinnett, author of *The Occult World* being the chairman.

BISHOP MOORHOUSE ON THE GIFT OF HEALING. V.

"THE spiritual manifestations in many of the Catholic Churches, at the tombs of the saints, and at the holy wells, have been so numerous, so varied, and so well attested, as to command the belief of thousands, having no connection with her in any way. The pilgrimages to holy places, therefore, which seemed so absurd to Protestants and unbelievers, were not all superstition, but were oftentimes accompanied by powerful spiritual manifestations of a beneficent character, and in obedience to the eternal laws of God, which sanctioned them. At such gatherings, miraculous cures have been effected on hundreds of sick and afflicted persons. Levitations, in the air of pious persons, have been witnessed by thousands, and apparitions of the departed have been seen in churches and convents."

"The Evidences of Spiritualism,"

By W. D. C. Denovan, p. 573.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—I was desirous that the above motto should have followed, and appeared with, the one I took from Mr. Sinnett's book, and which you published at the head of my last letter, but with its second motto (which I now give) excised therefrom. I am very sorry for this, for two reasons—First, By quoting or selecting a motto from a new book, I should have drawn more attention to it than by a quotation from it in the body of my letter.

Second. My second reason for being very sorry for the excision grew out of my having had a cunning design in joining together the two passages from the two books.

Mr. Sinnett spoke of scepticism, showing deficiency of intelligence in the face of "certain kinds of knowledge."

Mr. Denovan gave an illustrative specimen of that "certain kind of knowledge," the ignorance of which (though so very common even amongst the educated) reveals deficiency of intelligence, viz.—the well-attested Catholic miracles, such as the motto of this letter refers to, and would have told with more force in my last.

The very common scepticism in phenomena of this character, like scepticism "IN EQUALLY WELL ESTABLISHED FACTS OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM," does reveal deficiency of intelligence amongst the Church of England people, and the clergy of that Church encourage the foolish scepticism. The reader would have been led to infer all this without my explanation if you had given (as I designed) the mottoes of this, and my last letter together, as forwarded to you.

I say here, and I shall repeat in another form further on, that if what Mr. Denovan declares to be true about these Catholic miracles really is true, then it goes to the very root of my controversy with the Bishop's utterances at Kerang, seeing that they were all wrought a very, very long time after the days of St. James, which the Bishop would have us to look back to with so much more reverence than these days of Dr. Newton, and George Milner Stephen. I cannot reiterate this too often, and claim the victory accordingly.

I mentioned in my letter that we had the orthodox authority of the Catholic Church in favour of the continuance of miracles, and I further quote Mr. Denovan in support of the important fact of the certain belief and doctrine of that Church. Says Mr. Denovan, p. 573:—"The Roman Catholic Church (to do her justice) has always consistently avowed and maintained that her bishops and priests retained the power which Christ said was to accompany the preaching of the gospel in all ages, and which he bestowed upon his apostles during the few years he sojourned with them in and around Jerusalem and the Holy Land. There cannot be a doubt but that the possession of this power, however it may be doubted by sceptics, has been manifested in numbers of ways during the long and remarkable history of that Church."

So far writes this author, and I concluded my last letter by promising to refer in this to the good sister Mary Francis Clare, whose writings on the subject of Catholic miracles Mr. Denovan also speaks of in commendation on his 574th page. She writes:—"The first of these glorious manifestations of the power of God

and Mary was seen under circumstances which precluded the possibility of deception. Even so much is freely admitted by the correspondent of an English paper, who visited Knock for the purpose of giving his readers a report of the wonders which were being enacted there. Alas! with how little result. If an extraordinary event of scientific interest had been wrought before the public in England, with what eagerness it would have been studied, with what assiduity every account would have been read, and how many inquiries would have been made. But when the matter is one which is more important to us than all politics, or the science of the world, men pass by with cool, if not with contemptuous indifference." I was going on to remark (when you, Mr. Editor, cut short my letter) that this good sister Mary Francis Clare evidently had that spark of devotion in her spiritual organisation, which spiritual manifestations could fan into a flame, just as the student of "Law's Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life," having within the same spark, could fan that spark of his devotion into a flame by reading that work.

But whether it is that work we are speaking of, or the manifestations of Knock, or the American instances of the gift of healing by the laying on of hands—all must depend upon the existence, or the non-existence, of that spark of spiritual receptivity within, to be acted upon. I should wish to observe in the Bishop a spark of the good sister's devotion; then I should wish him to turn such an eye upon all my American instances of the gift of healing, as she turned upon the Irish instances of the gift of healing, through means chosen by God, and what she "SO PROPERLY" termed "THE GLORIOUS MANIFESTATIONS OF THE POWER OF GOD." She said: "I saw the necessary spark—"

"If held the eye no sunny sheen,
How could the sunshine e'er be seen?
Dwelt no spark Divine within us,
How could God's divineness win us?"

I said that I had designed, in winding up my last letter, to pay a kindly compliment to both the Bishop and Mr. Denovan's new book, as far as my notice of it would go (holding both these gentlemen in high esteem), but you were pleased to cut off the tip of the tail of that letter, to its sad disfigurement, in my estimation.

When an on-looker varies the lines of the architect, the design is lost, and if you only knew to what a painful degree you shatter my equanimity by these alterations, the very charity of your heart would stay the action of your very active fingers.

For instance, in the letter I observed that Mr. G. M. Stephen was "a sober Christian," but the force and the intention of that observation was lost, and would seem to be a sort of accusation, to be gathered from the excuse, without the foregoing words of the Bishop, which you exercised, and which ran as follows:—"Does any sober Christian believe in the continuance of those miraculous gifts?" Of course I meant to say that Mr. G. M. Stephen was only one of the thousands of "SOBER CHRISTIANS," whose minds have been as highly cultured as the mind of our learned Bishop, but who yet believe in the continuance of the miraculous gifts of healing by the laying on of hands. I have told you before, and I tell you again, that my case against the Bishop will not be adequately stated by me, or adequately understood by the majority of my readers, if those very few words are not quoted in each of my letters, wherein he disclaims so distinctly all belief in the present days of gifts of healing by the laying on of hands. His words are very few, but very explicit—indeed so explicit, that he can be easily beaten by my American facts alone. Then, again, Mr. Denovan's complimentary vaticinations concerning the Bishop I extracted, but you excised. He was conjecturing as to the possibility, if not probability, of his Lordship himself, in his own proper person, becoming a healer, and I thought those ideas would follow with nice effect upon the notice which I had just taken of the disposition of men's minds, and the Church generally in times past, to couple the gift of healing with the priestly office.

If I first postulate, that gifts and graces go together, and, next, that the Bishop is a good man, and that Mr. Denovan thinks he may yet become endowed with the

gift of healing. Surely all this would have amounted to a complimentary notice of both Bishop and book.

Having to some extent dared to beard my Bishop in all these letters, a few soft words towards him would have come from me with a good grace, and been heartily rendered.

What am I to say to you, Mr. Editor? Must I ask—"Is thine eye evil, because mine is good?"

As I am just now in the mood for making complaints, will you allow me to correct your print of my letter in the June number of the *Harbinger*, which, with the misprint, has been published in the "Evidences of Spiritualism." I am not sorry to have to refer to it here, as this letter will commence with such another cure, which was also miraculously instantaneous, and both, let it be observed, long after the days of St. James. The mistake which you have imported into Mr. Denovan's book, you will find at the bottom of the 468th page, in this passage:—

"The writer of these lines had the happiness to see, and converse with lately, a 'nun' who had been instantaneously cured by drinking a little of the precious water from the Grotto of Lourdes in the month of May last. The ladder slipped, and she fell to the floor; her injured leg had shrunk to the thickness of about two inches." Unfortunately, by a misprint in the *Harbinger*, the word "man" is printed, instead of the word "nun," which makes nonsense of the story, leaving the reader without a clue to its correction.

If any one who reads this letter, may be disposed to doubt the truth of these instantaneous, and, so far, miraculous cures, he will have his doubts removed by reading an admirable article in the *Nineteenth Century* for the month of November last, on "Modern Miracles."

This article (I should especially remind the Bishop) is not by a modern Spiritualist, but one of a high order of his brother ministers of Orthodox religion, viz.—by a member of the Society of Jesus. His name is R. F. Clarke, and it is an honest production.

If you allow me to continue these letters, Mr. Editor, I may refer again to that article.

All this preface has been rendered necessary by circumstances, but I will now strictly confine myself to those facts, so difficult for the sceptic to deal with. A leg shrunk to the thickness of two inches instantaneously cured would, like projecting teeth instantaneously straightened, present to the mind's eye matters of fact too apparent to allow the supermundane origin and agency to be questioned.

I repeat that, so far, I am glad to have been called upon to refer back to this injured leg, and I ask to have, it compared with the instantaneous cure of the teeth by those who are too wise to ascribe all these reports to wicked invention. I say all the reports give to each other mutual support.

This story of the teeth I take from the 464th page of the "Evidences of Spiritualism."

I know a lady in Bristol who had her front upper teeth nearly forty-five degrees out of the perpendicular. In the course of a few days after receiving a message, purporting to come from the spirit of her mother, her teeth became perfectly straight without the intervention of a dentist. I will give the names of two or three gentlemen, who are, like myself, perfectly cognisant of the facts I have narrated.

I will mention Messrs. Watson, Blackwell, and John Beattie, all of Bristol or Clifton.

Question.—I ask, are not these two cases of equally instantaneous cure, too definite to be trifled with by suggestion of human agency, or the mistaken fancy of witnesses, and not the supermundane agency of the world of spirits—an agency, which I look upon as ordained by the Great Father of all spirits to-day, and in the days of St. James.

I now return to American cases of old date—"Spiritual Telegraph," vol. 3, p. 101.—"It will be recollected that we published in the *Telegraph* of last week as interesting fact illustrating the modern power of healing by spiritual influence, which is exercised by Mrs. French, in common with several other mediums. Since our last issue we have been favoured with the particulars of another interesting case, which is doubt-

less as true as it is remarkable. Mrs. French obeyed a spiritual injunction, and went out into the streets of New York, when she saw a blind boy sitting in front of a house. This blind boy told his simple story.

He was about eleven years old, and for more than six years of that time he had been totally blind.

His parents had departed this life, and he lived with his uncle in the house where he was sitting.

The dwelling indicated that its occupants were of humble circumstances, and the story of the poor boy, though very brief, was full of mournful interest.

Mrs. French entered the house with the boy, and, without design, commenced manipulating those sightless eyes. Very soon the child declared that he could see the light, and in a few moments he was able to distinguish objects, and began to describe some things which he saw about the fire.

Language is inadequate to express the astonishment exhibited by the members of the family. Of course they did not comprehend the nature of the agency employed in this apparently "miraculous cure."

The subjoined letters, subsequently addressed to Mrs. French by the uncle of the blind boy, corroborate the foregoing statement:—

"New York, 6th Oct., 1853.

"To Mrs. French.—Dear Madam,—I am very happy to inform you that my nephew continues to distinguish objects. I magnetise him three times a day. I feel very much indebted to you for the good you have done us in restoring our boy's sight.

"We consider him cured, and, oh, my dear friend, language falls short in describing our feeling to you, and our Heavenly Father, in sending you to us in our extremity. Long may you live, and be useful.

"I know that happiness and success will attend you, and may God bless you. Accept the thanks of grateful hearts.

"DANIEL S. GRIFFIN."

It is only one of the many instances I have given, and shall give in these letters, of restoration of lost senses by the laying on of hands, so common in the days of St. James. If not true, both then and now, why should reports of exactly the same wonders have found a place, year after year, in the printed records of Modern Spiritualism, as the instances sprang up, and came to light amongst enlightened people? and thus on for a period of thirty years? The whole of the circumstances leave no room for honest mistake, and we cannot imagine motive for such everlasting lies, any more than we can explain upon that hypothesis all those cases spoken of by Mr. Denovan in the motto to this letter.

WAITING AND WATCHING.

I wish to state, for the information of all whom it may concern, that I am simply a Unitarian minister—an independent Unitarian. I own no allegiance to either the advanced Unitarians or Seculars on one hand, or to those calling themselves "Unitarian Christians," on the other. Jesus said long ago, that the spirit of the Father would be given to lead us into all truth. That promise was given and is for all time! Therefore I am, and shall be to the end of my earth life, an Independent Unitarian minister, teaching such truth to all as I may be permitted to receive from God, the supreme Father Spirit, through His ministry of spirits and angels; and, therefore, I am a Spiritualist, led in all things by the Spirit of the Father, the only True God, and holding fast to the great truth of spirit communion with intelligences once of earth, but now living in the spirit worlds, who can and do influence us according to our own soul-aspirations, and communicate with us according to our several needs. To this truth I hold fast, because I know it to be a great and blessed reality from my own experience of spirit communion during more than two years. There have been also certain passages in my own life entirely unexplainable on any other than the spiritual hypothesis of the communion of spirits with men and women on earth, which occurring at various times, long ago, previous to my commencing the investigation of Spiritualism, serve but to confirm my knowledge of the truth of Spiritualism. Therefore,

free, unbiased, with a mind disciplined to receive whatever further truths the Father Spirit may see fit to bestow on me; my attitude is that of waiting and watching for whatever further truths He may be pleased to reveal to me, at His own time and in His own way, when, where, and how He pleases.

Having escaped from the soul-enslaving bondage in which the orthodox churches are held, and in which they still hold their wretched dupes, teaching for dogmas the commandments of men, I will neither suffer myself to be entangled again in the yoke of bondage, nor will I suffer others to be so. If I can help it I will sign no enslaving creeds, articles, or confessions of faith so styled. I call no man master or lord; I pin my faith to no book of the past ages of ignorance; in the light and truth of the living present I live, coming to me from God alone. On that present light and truth we stand in our own day, and I for one look and press forward hopefully to the future, knowing that the enlightenment and truth-knowledge which are now are but fore-runners of the light and truth to be. By the free spirit of the Father alone will I be led into all truth, such as the Great Father Spirit may be pleased to bestow upon me during my own life on earth, and I wait for higher truth-knowledge to be given to me in that spirit life which is the outcome of this earth life for all men! It will be seen, I trust, from this statement that I flatly reject all orthodox falsities, all materialistic delusions, all the ignorance of the past, all the dogmas of man! God and Spirit shall be my only teachers; they shall be my only leaders and saviours!

If I have committed faults requiring expiation, far rather let me endure the penalty like a brave-hearted spirit than, like a coward, sneakily clap all my offences on an unoffending brother-man, taking refuge therefrom like an orthodox poltroon, in a supposed vicarious atonement which has never yet been fully completed! and which is, therefore, utterly impossible! Theologians may bluster and fume, but that fact is as I say, and it damns their theology, derived from the ignorant ideas of the past.

Never yet has the "true glad tidings" been preached in all its beautiful celestial simplicity of "great joy" to mankind. Does not the world need it now to chase away from all hearts the gloom of nearly 1900, added to 4000, years? Nearly 6000 years have elapsed since the terror first fell on the Earth, filling it with darkness and despair.

Do we not then need a new revelation, teaching us what we ought to know, and what none can be satisfied without knowing?—what death is; and what it is not! Is it wrong for us to ask this from the Supreme Father that He would drive this horrible gloom, doubt, and despair from us for evermore? Are all mankind to be indeed doomed to so horrid a fate as the wishes of the wretched orthodox have for ages declared? or is it otherwise than as they say? Surely such an appeal as this to our Father will not be made in vain! Nor is it in vain. The answer comes at last, declared to all men by the Eternal Father of all through an angel ministry, proclaiming as they did 1883 years ago "glad tidings of great joy" to all people, flowing from an Eternal Father Spirit's love, and testified by myriads of spirits and angels, the true witnesses of what they affirm, that death is new birth out of earth life into spirit life—a life under changed conditions with new bodily forms into the spirit world—the glorious summer-land, the land of eternal progression, not of eternal stagnation nor of eternal despair! Thanks be to the Supreme Father for this glorious, true "glad tidings of great joy" indeed, this unspeakable gift! Alas, you orthodox, and you materialists, and you too, O atheists! who are these who darken God's counsel, purpose, and love towards man by words without knowledge? Here have you, calling yourselves Scientists (and such scientists!) been disputing for ages on the assumed supremacy of matter in the Universe, and yet you scientific noodles forgot to enquire, might there not be something besides and beyond matter—something unseen—which you knew nothing about? Is it any wonder that, like sheep, you orthodox, scientists, and all went astray; you turned each one to his own way, a prey to all the

dingoes and wolves evolved from the mazes of your false and treacherous orthodox philosophy and theology, devouring you, silly sheep, by the doubts and fears you could not overcome?

UNITARIAN MINISTER.

Jan. 16th, 1883.

PRAY FOR THE DEVIL.

I give the following poem at the request of some who heard me recite it at one of my lectures. Its author is unknown to me.

WILLIAM DENTON.

"O God," he said, "it cannot be
Thy morning star with endless moon
Should lift his fading orbs to Thee,
And Thou be happy on Thy throne!
It were not kind—nay, Father, nay—
It were not just, O God, I say;
Pray for the devil—Jesus pray.

How can Thy kingdom ever come
While the fair angels howl below!
All holy voices would be dumb,
All loving eyes would fill with woe,
To think the lordliest peer of heaven,
The starry leader of the seven,
Could never, never be forgiven.

Have mercy on the souls astray;
O Father, think upon Thy child:
Turn from Thy own bright world away,
And look upon that dungeon wild.
Oh God! oh Jesus! see how dark
That den of woe; oh, Saviour, mark,
How angels weep, how groan; but hark!

He will not, will not do it more;
Restore him to his throne again:
Oh, open wide that dismal door
That presses on the souls in pain;
Then men and angels all will say,
Our God is good; oh, day by day,
Pray for the devil—Jesus pray.

All night Aquirae knelt alone—
Alone with black and dreadful night
Until before his pleading moan
The darkness eddied away in light.
Then rose the saint, and 'God,' said he,
'If darkness change to light with Thee,
The devil may yet an angel be.'

The Leader of Jan. 6th reprints from the *Whitehall Review* a ghost story, said to have been related to the Queen by the Marchioness of Ely, of the apparition of a lady which had appeared through several generations to the occupier of a particular room in Loftus Hall. The accounts given by living witnesses who occupied the room prior to the rebuilding of the Hall, are clear and in accord, showing that some curious psychological influence pertained to the apartment, the witnesses not being influenced by pre-possession, and in their normal condition, when the apparition appeared one of them, endeavouring to grasp it, found it intangible.

The Rev. A. R. Kieffer, Rector of Christ Church, Warren, Ohio, U.S.A., has followed in the footsteps of Canon Wilberforce at the Newcastle-on-Tyne Congress, by reading an essay before the North East Episcopal Convocation on the duty of the Church to Spiritualism, (published in the religious newspaper "Standard of the Cross") in which he reviews its evidences and teachings, gives his own experiences in private circles for years, and with Henry Slade, whom he considers a genuine medium, and says "let the Church investigate, and appoint committees of her learned and scientific men to look into the phenomena and give us their judgment." The full text of the paper appears in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* of the 2nd of December last. It is evident that the weighty accumulation of the facts of spiritualism is surging with such force against the gates of the church as to make those inside question their position seriously, but this can only result in their benefit. What has our liberal-minded Bishop of Melbourne to say in the matter?

MODERN MIRACLES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "HARBINGER OF LIGHT."

SIR—Two very interesting articles are in our Reading-rooms just now on the subjects of "Modern Spiritualism," and "Occult Phenomena."

I refer to the article "Modern Miracles" in the *Nineteenth Century* for November last, and a Review thereof by Mr. Gilbert Elliot, in *Leader* of the 13th of this month.

A short extract or two would, I think, open the minds of many to a more ready reception of the wonders of Modern Spiritualism, presuming they had not done so before. I give the recorded wonders only, without comment on them, and begin with the *Nineteenth Century* article, by Richard F. Clarke, who is a member of the learned Order of the Society of Jesus, which ought to give weight to his words. He writes, p. 789:—"Let us suppose, for instance, one who allows the Gospel and Primitive Church Miracles, but rejects the wonders of our own day, and treats Lourdes as of no efficacy, beyond a medical spring. Our first answer to such a one would be to point out the logical inconsistency of his position. * * * He that denies the presence of this miraculous power in the present day, virtually denies the permanence of the spiritual gift of the Holy Spirit indwelling in the Church of God, and impugns the truth of Christ's promise to his disciples. * * * Take, for instance, St. Winifred's Well, in North Wales. The inquirer into its efficacy will find an almost continuous stream of pilgrims throughout the year, and at times large and organised pilgrimages. They have every reason to believe that the saints' miraculous power goes on working wonders up to the present day. Protestants believe in the curative powers of the Well. * * * The apparitions and miracles at Lourdes have received the explicit sanction of the Bishop of the Diocese, who has himself visited the Grotto many times. * * * We have a right to tell opponents that their clumsy hypothesis of the curative force of a powerful imagination will not account for cancers healed in a moment, and tumours disappearing instantaneously. * * * Our witnesses are not the uneducated, but skilled witnesses; we do not dig up our testimony from the records of an uncritical age, but we bring them out into the full light of the nineteenth century."

Now, Mr. Editor, allow me to add a few of the wonders (allowed as facts) by the reviewer of Mr. Clarke's article, viz.—Mr. Gilbert Elliot, a gentleman who has been thirty years in India. All these accepted, I think a little room will be made for some of our modern spiritual wonders.

Says Mr. Elliott:—"Mr. Clarke offers an article on 'Modern Miracles,' and establishes the truth of the very wonderful cures of diseases at Lourdes, which no known medical treatment can cure. The facts cannot be denied. So far Mr. Clarke is perfectly right. * * * Concerning the miracles at Lourdes, and other places, I hope to show that they are invariably the effect of natural causes. * * * I do admit that miracles, in the proper sense of the word, '*wonderful phenomena*,' have occurred, are happening, and will be observed throughout the history of man. * * * The power the Indian Brothers have enables them to project a letter through space to persons to whom they wish to send it, and they can apparently as easily project their own bodies, or the major part of them, over great distances, so as to be present with persons they want to communicate with."

I quote no more, Mr. Editor, and make no remarks. I am only disposed to look on, and pronounce it a very pretty fight between these two gentlemen, and hope in the upshot to gain a little credit for such wonders as I import, not from India or France, but from America in attestation of miraculous cures, in opposition to the theory of the Bishop of Melbourne, who "WILL HAVE IT" that there have been no such things heard of (in the estimation of sober Christians) since the days of St. James.

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

The *Bendigo Advertiser* of December 20th devotes a considerable space to the review of Mr. Denovan's recently published book, concluding with the following sensible remarks:—

"The best thing to be done is to take the book and read it through, and if its readers are then convinced, they will not want the testimony of bricks and mortar. If they should still remain sceptical, they will have enjoyed much interesting and entertaining reading. There will be a strong temptation on their parts, perhaps, to turn a good deal of it into ridicule as being much like a revival of the old beliefs in witchcraft, fairydom, and devilry generally, which have long since been blown to the winds. But they should remember that there are really "more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in their philosophy." Our forefathers, who burned poor old women alive for crimes of which they must have been innocent because utterly incapable, would have laughed to scorn the idea of electricity being placed under man's control, or as steam being used as a motive force. We have only five senses, heaven help us, and they are insufficient for the discernment of all the arcana with which we are surrounded, and when any of these are made apparent the discovery of them is due, not to our own perceptible ability, but, as a rule, to the merest accidents. Notwithstanding the great advancement made in science within the past half century there is without doubt much yet of an astounding nature to be revealed. Wise as we may think ourselves, we are still utterly ignorant of many of the mysteries of the Great Universe. Therefore none are in a position to deny that there may be truth even in a doctrine, which, for our own part, we confess we find very difficult of belief. In his recently published work Mr. Denovan has left very little to be added to the arguments and testimony in favor of spiritualism, and we would therefore commend it to the attention of all who may feel interested in the subject."

FREETHOUGHT LIBERALITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "HARBINGER OF LIGHT."

SIR,—My children have to-day reminded me that I have now been in this world fifty-seven years. Of that time not a little has been spent in observing the so-called "free-thought" and kindred movements. Now, Sir, will you permit me to point out what I find to be one prominent defect in these? It is *apathy*!

Freethinkers come far short of the religious sectarians in zeal for "the cause." There is no getting over that fact, Sir, and I do not think you will attempt to dispute it. The other day, during my peregrinations, I happened upon some numbers of a periodical called "Freethought." It seemed to me excellent in every respect, and the articles were such as would find place in any first-class English magazine. The December number (1880) especially I thought worthy of the universal support of Freethinkers; for it contained a sketch and admirable portrait of the late John Tyerman who did more than any man living to advance the cause of spiritual freedom of thought in these colonies—not to mention several articles of indubitable merit one amongst them, entitled "The Allen Revelation" being the most consummate piece of satire in opposition to "orthodox" christian pretensions that I ever met with.

Well, and what was the fate of "Freethought?" Simply this: it had to become defunct because *freethinkers* wouldn't support it! Now, Sir, I call that disgraceful. The single number of "Freethought" to which I refer, is in itself worth a whole year's subscription, and yet "Freethinkers" (as I am burn their cheeks to cinder) had not the decency to support it! Yours obediently,

LIBERTY.

[There is certainly a lack of organisation and sustained action amongst Freethinkers and Spiritualists as compared with the orthodox bodies, but still they never sleep. As one organisation dies out another rises out of its ashes, as one good journal passes out of existence another takes its place, and in the instance referred to the "Liberal" of to day occupies the ground that "Freethought" did yesterday.—Ed. H. L.]

CONTEMPORARY NOTES.

In the course of a recent sermon preached at Natal upon Vaccination, by the Ven. Archdeacon Colley (whose strong and clear testimony to the reality of Spirit-maturation was referred to during the now memorable Church Congress discussion on Spiritualism), he characterised vaccination as "a moral evil; a physical curse; and a psychological wrong;" and gave utterance to the following noble sentiment:—"I would like to oblige my Churchwardens, who fear their minister's straight-speaking may be injurious financially; but I must keep faith with the public, and would myself rather pay for the privilege of teaching what I apprehend to be the truth, than be paid not to preach it." It would be well were more of the gentlemen of the cloth animated by the like feeling.

We are satisfied that the time is not far distant when spiritual maturation will not be regarded with so much distrust as at present. As spirits, we are arriving at a more definite understanding in these matters; all we ask of mortals is to be honest with us, and let us do our work in our own way, for no matter how sincere you may be, there are connected with spirit growth things not explainable to mortals. Take a spirit, no matter how well informed in the general routine of mental unfoldment in maturation, and they could not explain the phenomena; while they may be masters of certain elements because they are spirits, they cannot give in detail all the processes passed through necessary for making their appearance in fangible form.—*Olise Branch.* (Spirit Communication.)

Spiritualism does not need to beg for advocates and adherents. In the present status of the Spiritual course, no recruits worth having will come to our standards, except the disinterested, the conscientious and those who have a supreme love for Liberty and Truth. Whoever apologises for being a Spiritualist shows a lack of moral courage, or that he is only a half-way Spiritualist.—*Psychometric Circular.*

The great need at present is the multiplication of facts illustrating the laws of spirit-control, manifestation, and communication; and a systematic, logical collation of those facts. Spiritualism is now making progress among the people by means of the phenomena presented through the various public mediums, and in private circles; and the very accumulation of facts thus obtained will insure the triumph of the cause. The acceptance by the people at large of the truth of spirit-manifestation will compel the respectful attention of scientists and theologians, and nothing else will. They cannot paddle their canoes against the general tide, but will be carried along with it; and until the tide rises high enough, they will not budge from their position of worldly honour and emolument.—*Professor Kiddle.*

One of the most interesting facts stated by the learned Dr. Le Rongee in his narrative of his investigations in the country of the Mayas, both interesting and startling to christians, is his statement that the last words of Jesus when expiring on the cross, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani"—are pure Maya vocables, having a very different meaning to that attributed to them by the Evangelists. "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—who have thus done him an injustice, representing him in his last moments—as despairing and cowardly, traits altogether foreign to his life. He evidently did not speak Hebrew when dying, since the people around him did not understand what he said. The true meaning of the Maya vocables—"Helo, Helo, Lamah, Zabac, Ta, Ni,"—is "Now, Now, I am sinking; darkness covers my face." Dr. Le Rongee states that these vocables are so familiar to the Mayas of Yucatan at the present day, that they are in daily use amongst them, and that should anyone use these words in their presence, they would at once show solicitude, and inquire what was the matter. This discovery also gives something of a clue to his education. Where could he have become instructed in this language, not spoken in his

day by any nation in the continent of Asia? We find a hint towards an answer when we come to examine the traces of this language in Egypt, in which country he is stated to have spent the earliest years of his life. It is a well known fact that persons who have discussed for many years a language acquired in youth have uttered their dying words in the language thus familiar to their youthful mind, though so long disused.—*Psychometric Circular.*

Colonel Ingersoll, in criticising his reverend critics lately, said:—"Dr. Thomas seems to think that I should approach these things with infinite care, that I should not attack slavery, or polygamy, or religious persecution, but that I should mildly suggest—mildly—should not hurt anybody's feelings. When I go to church the ministers tell me I am going to hell. When I meet one I think there is no hell, and he says, 'what do you want to hurt our feelings for?' He wishes me 'mildly' to suggest that the sun and moon didn't stop, that may be the bears only frightened the children, and after all Lot's wife was only scared. My doctrine is, if you don't believe a thing, say so; no need of going away around the bush, and suggesting maybe, perhaps, possibly, peradventure. That is the ministerial way, but I don't like it."—*Religio Philosophical Journal.*

The *Daily Telegraph* of January 27th has a very sensible leading article on "Belief in the Supernatural" which is well worth reading. It indicates the advent of a more rational era in the press treatment of spiritualism, which has hitherto been not only unphilosophical but unjust. If our contemporary maintains its present attitude towards spiritualism and psychology, neither spiritualists nor their opponents will have reasonable cause to complain.

The Melbourne Progressive Lyceum will hold an Exhibition Session at the Peperance Hall on Monday February 19th. In addition to an exhibition of the salient features of the Lyceum, two operettas will be performed by the juvenile members, and the adult members and friends will finish with a Dance. Friends of the Lyceum are requested to secure tickets early, and to make the entertainment known as widely as possible.

Catalogue of Books on Spiritualism.

(Continued from last month.)

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This splendid work, by the foremost Naturalist of the world, contains a lucid narrative of his personal experiences of spiritual phenomena, with arguments as to the relations of Spiritualism to the vexed question of "Miracle," the "supernatural," &c.
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- Evolution of Spirit from Matter, and how the spirit body grows; from the dictation of the late Professor Faraday. 15s.
- Old Truths in a New Light. By the Countess of Caithness. 15s.
- An earnest endeavour to reconcile Material with Spiritual Science and with Scripture. 6d.
- Other World, The; or, Glimpses of the Supernatural. By the Rev. F. G. Lee, D.C.L., Vicar of All Saints, Lambeth. 2 vols. £1 2s. 6d.
- "Glimpses of the Supernatural," being facts and records relating to dreams, omens, apparitions, warnings, second sight, &c. 8s.
- Other World Order. By William White. 3s. 6d.
- In which the author sets forth the stages of religious belief through which he passed, from Calvinism, through Swedenborgianism, to wider and more rational views, and puts many of the statements of the Swedish seer in a new, clearer, and more reasonable light. 8s.
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