

THE Harbinger of Light.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL

DEVOTED TO

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

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

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CONTENTS.

	Page.
Pulpit instructors	223-4
Communication	224
A Spirit's Exhortation	225
Poetry—"Beyond the Tomb" (Review)	225
The "Argus" Review of Dr. Carpenter's Article	225-6
Our London Letter	226-7
Secular Education	227
Knowledge, the Cure of Evil	227
The "Argus" on Spiritualism	227-8
Mr. Duffy on Temperance	229
A Sermon which might have been delivered at St. Jude's Church	229
Progress in Tasmania	230
A practical hint to Spiritualists	230
Facts	230
Circle Teachings	231
Pools and Madmen	231
What Spirits Teach	231-2
A Spiritualist's Funeral	232
Miracles and Modern Science	233

"THE spirit of the times has an obvious tendency to better the condition of those to whose industry we owe the necessities of life." These words are taken from an address, delivered by Mr. Gavan Duffy at a temperance meeting in Ireland thirty years since, and now quoted elsewhere in these pages.

If the good tendency spoken of so long ago by our Chief Secretary was obvious then, we are happily enabled to say that it is far more apparent and demonstrative at the present day. The emancipation of the working classes is the great reforming movement of the age, and no subject of wider importance is now occupying the reflections of thinking men throughout what we call the civilized world. That knowledge is power is true to a certain extent, and to aid the power of mankind to free themselves from the tyranny of wealthy taskmasters and monopolists, they should obtain first a knowledge of themselves. When once men begin to understand that they are born into the world with a natural right to share in its fruitfulness, and that the productions of the earth were intended by the great Creator to be as common to all as the rain and sunshine, then they will have acquired the moral power which such knowledge must give them. When mankind further learn where they came from through ages of development long long past and unrecorded; why they are in this life, and the nature of its continuation in the spirit world, they will more fully perceive their rights and privileges as members of the common human family. Until the working classes thoroughly understand why they have no occasion to walk the world abjectly, and moil mourn beneath the yoke of the capitalist, they will not stir to free themselves with sufficiently united energy. This necessary knowledge, which we have pointed to, the teachings of Spiritualism will soon be discovered as perfectly adequate to supply. Spiritualism will reveal

to thoughtful men the injustice of human laws, and the errors of orthodox religion; it will show how injustice leads to crime, and error creates misery. With regard to the tyranny and oppression of modern State rule we have nothing to say just now; as an occasion presents itself for exemplifying the ignorance of the pulpit teaching of the period, which must not be passed over.

Virtue is said to be the ground work of happiness, but a shrewd writer has remarked that no two religious professors quite agree what virtue is. To burn a heretic, says one: to be a heretic, says another. This conflict of opinion pervades and characterises all the most popular pulpit doctrines of the day. Hear what the Bishop of Melbourne has to say about practical religion. It must have been very comforting to orthodoxy to see a letter from His Lordship in defence of "the faith once delivered to the saints," and to see it in that backsliding publication, the *Argus*, which has lately lent its support to infidelity, sabbath desecration and woman's rights. "The more interested people are in foreign missions, the more would they help to convert the heathen at home," is the Bishop's opinion. Still, it is not very clear to a mind untrammelled by episcopal teaching, how giving five shillings to assist in converting South Sea Islanders to our popular Christianity will render the donor more able, or more willing, to give another crown to our City Missions. But his Lordship's great feat of reclamation is conveyed in the announcement of the spiritual capture of "fifteen Chinese converts, who, I trust, shall all sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." Now, why should not these Christian recruits sit down with their immortal countryman, Confucius? Neither of these historic characters knew anything of Christianity; and why should the three first named be better company than one, respecting whom all history and tradition assert that his life and teachings would not compare unfavorably with those of Jesus? But as to Abraham, he is well known to have attempted the murder of his son, and to have got himself and his wife Sarah into trouble through telling a barefaced lie. And then Jacob, his grandson, (whom the Bishop seems to think it a great honor to sit down with,) what tricks was he guilty of for the purpose of depriving his brother of his father's blessing, and defrauding him of his birthright. Perhaps,

for one of the inferior clergy this exploit with the fifteen pagans might have been very creditable practice; but for a Bishop to boast of—for the spiritual head of the established church—it really seems a poor thing to have converted a little knot of Chinamen from Confucius to Jacob. Following in the same path of rescuing sinners who had no suspicion how wicked they were when they came into the world, and what fearful punishment was in store for them when their bodies return to life at some unknown period after death—following the Bishop's example, another champion of orthodox religion has busied himself successfully in teaching a native black child of tender years the church catechism, and preparing it to receive the rite of confirmation; which is the Established-Church passport to heaven—"Admit the bearer, Charles Melbourne."

Then we have the "high" and "low church" teachers, both quite "within the pale," and yet the one deeming it right to do what the other considers rank sinfulness. Again, certain of the established church clergy will have it that the biblical account of the ages of Adam, Noah, &c. is literally correct; while others, more advanced, tell us that years were reckoned by moons—and so on to the end of every chapter in the Pentateuch. It is only here and there, one among thousands, that men stir themselves to ask what is the meaning of the words of the established church service. Unthinking blind followers of blind teachers go and talk, or listen to, language they cannot understand. "The communion of saints," (they know not what it means); "the forgiveness of sins," (through the substitutional sufferings of Jesus, as they are told); the resurrection of the body, (*i.e.* the gathering together and reconstructing myriads of particles that have passed through countless changes, and been scattered thousands of miles asunder!); and "the life everlasting," which in their view signifies eternal torment for all God's human creation, excepting the very small proportion who have been patted on the head by a bishop or sprinkled by one of his curates, and who are content to accept as truth what they have never independently thought about. "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be"! What jargon is this, to the understanding ears of those who learn from Nature, and believe in the great law of progression which in the order of God's providence has ruled this world and all that therein is through countless ages from the dawn of its commencement.

Enough for the present concerning our pulpit instructors; it is not to these we must look for assistance in raising the social condition of the working men. Nor is it to our law makers we can turn for true sympathy with the needs and distresses of the laboring class. Neither is it to the selfish, greedy capitalist, nor to the lazy and vicious holder of large territory and possessions to the exclusive use and occupation of which he has no natural right. If those who create the world's wealth and contribute with their own exertions to the comfort and enjoyment of its inhabitants, desire an equitable share of the rights and privileges that appertain to the great brotherhood of man, they will have to work for their end unitedly among themselves, and independantly of any aid from established statecraft, or orthodox religion.

The light that is to enable the working men to solve the problem how their freedom and elevation among their fellow men may be best accomplished, is a light that will not come to them from State-ruler nor from priest. The workmen must be taught the truths of Nature before they can clearly understand their inherited rights as members of the great human family. With this knowledge there shall reach man's possession all that is needful for his advancement—and this knowledge will be found in the true teachings of Spiritualism.

COMMUNICATION.

To do always that which is right must be our sole endeavour, not to do only that which pleases. Through self-denial and self-sacrifice alone can we rise to the height of our moral nature. The performance of these virtues refines and purifies the mind and leaves us open to the impressions of our guardian angels, and thereby hastens our spiritual growth. In all relations of life if we seek to promote the happiness and welfare of those around us it will return upon ourselves. The knowledge of having performed an act of charity softens and purifies the mind of the person who performed the deed. There is no pleasure like unto it. To help and to comfort the poor and distressed is the duty, and should be the pleasure, of those who are placed in more comfortable circumstances; and the Father hath said, "Who giveth unto them giveth unto me, and I will reward him." It is sad to see so many revelling in profusion, and so many suffering from want, when the earth produces abundantly for all. See to it ye who are blessed with plenty; share your gifts with those who are in want, and your Heavenly Father will repay you, yea even three fold.

To do right because it is right should be our sole endeavour, not in the hope of any reward either in this world or the next, but for its own sake. This has been the cause of much misery in the second sphere. Spirits who have lived, as they thought, a perfectly good and pure life upon the earth have passed to the next stage of their existence demanding the reward due to them for the good they have done, and slow and painful is their awakening. For a long time they wait thinking that the reward must come, that they are not recognized, and refuse to hear any comfort or receive any help. But, by degrees slowly, they are made to understand the mistake they have made, and accept the help offered to them to rectify it. All our acts must be dictated by love, they must be the natural outflow of that love of God which is implanted in each one of us. The performance of a good act brings its own reward at once in the comfort and satisfaction we feel in performing it, and we must look for no other. Once we begin to open, as it were a debtor and creditor account with the Almighty, then all the reward which would naturally follow upon good actions is lost, and there can be no other. We can do nothing for God. All we do is for ourselves, and must flow naturally from love or it is useless.

To do always that which is right demands from us a careful survey and rigorous judgment upon our actions and their motives. We must carefully watch these and be sure that there is no selfishness.

This is the great snare of humanity, and sometimes it is so secluded or disguised that even we ourselves are unconscious of it until a careful review of our conduct reveals it. It is so often the case that we do what we think is right, but if we investigate a little we find that selfishness is the moving principle. The best means to root out this evil is every night, before we sleep, to think carefully over the events of the day and investigate the motive which led to each act. This rigorously done and a determination to improve, as far as we are able the succeeding day, with prayer will bring success.

Melbourne,
February, 1872.

AN EXHORTATION.

FROM A SPIRIT.

Do not fear the results of a good and truthful undertaking. Do your duty faithfully, fearlessly, and continually, trusting to the righteousness of the cause for its ultimate success; for triumph it will, so sure as it has its foundation in the immutable and eternal laws of the illimitable universe. Exercise your own judgments in all your undertakings. Keep cool and collected always, and especially in moments of success, as well as in moments of trial. An excited state is never a clear state, Spirits will assist you in your efforts to elevate mankind; but they will never relieve you of your own obligations as individual members of the great brotherhood. Live in harmony with all, and let your influence over all be pure as far as it goes. It is far better to exert but little influence in society, of a pure and elevating kind, than to exert a powerful one of an adverse character. Whatever you do, be careful to do right, and it will need no undoing. Reason is the basis on which the superstructure must rest, for it is the wisdom-principle on which the universe is built. Never act upon anyone's opinion without exercising first your own reasoning power upon the subject, for so sure as you do, you will commit many needless blunders. You have all minds of your own to unfold, and how shall you unfold those minds, except you exercise those powers. Spirits out of the body have feelings deep and abiding for the well-being of those in the body; but they cannot develop your minds independent of self-exertion—that would not comport with the known laws which govern mind. The mass of minds who believe in the reality of spiritual communion do not comprehend the true mission of spirits. Spirits do not come to bind minds to their standard of wisdom: but they come to assist in freeing, expanding, elevating, and illuminating minds, that they may all realize the inner life and its glorious truths. A great work of reform is commenced upon earth, and our hearts and hands are in that work. We are the friends of truth, and members of the human family, as much as when in the body. We think, reflect, and act in accordance with the law of progress. We are not infallible oracles: we know what we have learnt, we advise in accordance with that knowledge, and with the best of our judgments under the circumstances. We are liable to mistakes as well as you; but we are not to blame for your mistakes. If mediums get excited, and give their impressions for ours, we are not accountable for it. If spirits in the body control mediums to speak their sentiments, it is their business, not ours. Reflect on these sayings, and draw your inferences.

Poetry.

REVIEW.

We have received from the author a volume entitled "Beyond the Tomb and other Poems," by Thos. Bracken, Published by Clarson, Massina & Co., Melbourne. Some of the poems are of more than ordinary merit, and full of progressive ideas and foregleams of immortality. Lamenting the inconsistencies of the priesthood, he says, (in *Beyond the Tomb*)—

Even they, the shepherds who should guide
Their flocks along the path of peace,
Are oft-times foremost to divide,
—Lest fierce sectarian feuds should cease;
Full flushed with stiff dogmatic pride,
As if each held of Heaven a lease.
How many preach of peace and love,
Yet practice not what they dictate;
How many turn their eyes above,
Yet fan the flame of bigot hate;
Soft words at times have power to move,
But noble deeds have greater weight.
Religion, 'neath thy fostering care
Man's soul to adoration warms;
When all around seems bleak and bare,
He finds sweet comfort in thy arms,
And offering up his heart in prayer,
He feels thy power, and owns thy charms.

Sweet comforter, thou art the gleam
Of bliss that lights the poor man's course—
Thy lustre gilds the toiler's dream—
Thy thunder crushes brutal force—
Thy soothing showers of nectar teem
On hearts long seared by foul remorse.

But there are those who forge thy mark,
And with thy robes their loins invest;
Who hurl their foes to regions dark,
Content that they themselves are blest;
Who succour not the sinking bark—
Who have no help for the distressed;
Who fling their brimstone in the teeth
Of all who echo not their note;
Who hide their sordid souls beneath
The lining of a reverend coat;
Who speak of an "immortal wreath,"
Yet over earthly treasures gloat.

Man is immortal—shouts the wind—
The grave is but a place of halt;
His spirit cannot be confined—
Within the precincts of a vault;
His virtues rich reward shall find,
And punishment awaits each fault.

"The Boy and the Year" is pretty and instructive. "The Winds," in the metre of *Poe's* "Bells," is excellent. "An Exile's Reverie," a poem with a national ring about it, obtained the prize of the Caledonian Society of Otago in 1869. As a whole the collection will bear favorable comparison with many of the works issued from the London Press.

To Correspondents.

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

THE ARGUS REVIEW OF DR. CARPENTER'S LEADING ARTICLE UPON SPIRITUALISM IN THE LAST NUMBER OF THE QUARTERLY REVIEW.

"All these and such-like minor details, in reality constitute the demonstrative evidence that witnesses cannot resist; but they are swept away with a single stroke of their dashing pens, by the aforesaid critics! and consequently a totally false impression of facts is conveyed to the minds of non-witnesses.—"Scepticism and Spiritualism."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR—In the Argus Review I find these words—"In fact the conclusion arrived at by the reviewer is, that Mr. Home was in a position to press the machine with his fingers, and that such pressure would effect the result marvelled at. That Mr. Home did press, and that such pressure was probably intentional, but that had Mr. Home been perfectly honest, unconscious muscular action would have produced precisely the same result."

I am one of those who have been induced to believe in the supermundane cause of the phenomena of Spiritualism, chiefly by the conflicting and self-convicting arguments upon the opposite side.

I observed the reported phenomena were accounted for by anti-spiritualists, in these three different ways:—1st, by dishonest trick and deception; 2nd, by a force unknown to science, exercised unconsciously, and designated by a variety of uncommon terms conveying no definite meaning easily comprehensible; 3rd, by the power of evil spirits.

Though it is manifest that any one of these theories combats the other two, I observed that it is not unusual for the anti-spiritualists to merge the three objections, or arguments, into one, oblivious to the inconsequential, train of their arguments.

Has not Dr. Carpenter set these lady-like philosophers an example, by merging into one, the two first mentioned theories, by which phenomena marvelled at, are supposed to be accounted for.

Amongst the scientific world Dr. Carpenter is a "master in Israel" who would have expected such reasoning from him?

I quote again from his review, as reported in the *Argus* of the 3rd January, 1872:—

"The climax of spiritual wonders is reached by Mr. Hearne, who is conveyed in open day, by invisible agency, into the house of Mr. Guppy, the doors and windows being all closed. A fortnight afterwards a return visit was paid by Mrs. Guppy to Mr. Hearne, the lady being brought by invisible agency into a room of which the doors and windows were fastened." . . . "But when we are called upon to believe in the levitation of the human body, and in the power of incorporeal spirits to move heavy masses of matter without ostensible agency, the question is one to be decided, not by elaborate discussion, but by the direct appeal to educated common sense. Is it more likely that these events actually occurred as narrated, or that the witnesses to them were deceived by their own imaginings."

This seems to be fair common sense reasoning, that is to say it suggests that of two wonders we should believe in the least wonderful. Given, 1st wonder: Witnesses without traceable object, are governed by a distorted imagining, leading them, one and all, at the same time, to give false information of what they so plainly saw, that it would seem impossible they could be mistaken.

2nd wonder. Levitation of a human body without visible agency. Grant that "educated common sense" selects the first of these wonders to believe in, being driven to the choice of one or the other.

Can we be sure that we are then safe, seeing, that this educated common sense, has led so many astray, and obliged them to change their minds respecting the occurrence of phenomena, say the movement of light bodies without visible agency? Can we be certain that Dr. Carpenter's "direct appeal to educated common sense" will save us from the same error when contemplating the probability of the same movement of heavy bodies?

The fact is, supermundane agency throws common sense out of its calculation.

However let us carefully balance the two wonders, and see if the scale dips upon that side, indicated by Dr. Carpenter. "Is it more likely that (First) these events actually occurred, or (Secondly) that the witnesses to them were deceived by their own imaginings."

Abstractedly "actual occurrence" is the most wonderful and least credible, and "deceived imaginings" the least wonderful and most credible. But circumstances do not allow us to stop here and view the respective questions abstractedly. We are compelled to give something to the conjecture of "actual occurrence," viz., a record well authenticated, upon high authority of occurrence of events of exactly the same wonderful kind. Mr. Home is not Mr. Hearne, or Mrs. Guppy, and yet two peers of the realm, walk about the streets of London declaring they saw Mr. Home float in the air more than once. The magnitude of the improbability of this wonder, viz., "actual occurrence," becomes lessened by these facts. On the other hand, there are no records equally well attested of a circle of witnesses being "deceived by their own imaginings."

To suppose such a wonder, therefore, we must accept it in all its unreduced magnitude by any precedent.

This fact turns the scale contrary to Dr. Carpenter's reading, and leaves the "deceived imaginings" the greater, and more incredible wonder of the two, in the estimation of "educated common sense."

In answer to Dr. Carpenter's question—Is it more likely? I reply 'yes it is,' from reasonings above stated.

If Mrs. Guppy had died as she entered Mr. Hearne's house, the whole facts of the case would have been brought out at the inquest, and reliable testimony obtained, removing all question of fact. Why should not equally reliable testimony be obtained under existing circumstances?

In this way the anti-spiritualists might establish the precedent so badly wanted by them, viz., a glaringly false story from a circle of Spiritualists.

It seems waste of time to enquire into the truth of the facts of, or cause of, phenomena of lesser magnitude, when those of greater magnitude, and so easy of elucidation as far as truth goes, remain questionable.

If these facts are true Dr. Carpenter will no longer urge his muscular action, as a sufficient cause for all effects witnessed, and the theory of the learned man, and all his brothers in science falls prostrate.

If facts from the lips of Home, Guppy, Hearne, and their friends the peers are untrue, we shall obtain a first conviction of spiritualistic truthlessness. The challenge is bold enough.

I am, Sir,
Your obdt. Servant,
W.

OUR LONDON LETTER.

DEAR HARBINGER—The writer does not know how you may be situated in the vortex of Australian Spiritualism, but at your antipodes here we have an agitation going on, which for diffusiveness and vitality has scarcely been exceeded at any other period of the world's history. All classes of society, except the very lowest and most sensual, are being deeply interested in the subject of Spiritualism. Clergymen are preaching about it, some admitting the facts, but assigning the Devil as their author, others the spirits of bad men. The greater proportion of our reverend countrymen, however, really say nothing, but merely cull from periodicals, and stealthily visit circles when they come to London and gain all the information they can on the subject. Despite their anomalous position, parsons are human beings as well as the rest of us, and have the same intellectual predilections and spiritual aspirations as have mankind in general, and hence we are not surprised to find that notwithstanding their creed they will look into Spiritualism. The scientists, deeply immersed in egotism of another description, are beginning, like the frogs in spring, to protrude their heads above the waves of ignorance in which they have hitherto existed in matters spiritual. Their croaking is neither amusing nor instructive. The most stupid theories are being propounded in scientific journals to account for the belief in spiritual phenomena. We say belief because many of these exceedingly wise gentlemen suppose that tables do not really move, but that the sitters get into a peculiar state of mind and only believe that they do. At the annual gatherings of the British Institution, held this year at Edinburgh, the subject came forward in a very prominent manner. Professor Allen Thomson, of Glasgow, in one of the opening speeches, denounced it strongly, which called forth rejoinders in the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, and from many Spiritualists. Mr. Crookes has also been promulgating his experiments with Mr. Home. He has adapted mechanical contrivances, so as to show by the movement of indices that objects do move by means other than mechanical or chemical. Of course he proves nothing but what has been self-evident from the very first spiritual manifestation. He has simply enabled himself to state that the object did move a certain distance equivalent to resisting a weight of so many pounds. All this is of course adapted to the primary state of knowledge in which his scientific confreres are at present, but of little practical value to those acquainted with Spiritualism. As might be expected the newspaper press are abusive. Paper makers' accounts, rent of premises, and payment of wages, absorb a good deal of money, and our gentlemen of the press scorn to be martyrs for the sake of public enlightenment, and the consequence is, now, when race-horses are not running, nor parliament sitting, and the big gooseberries have all been dissolved into jam, and public executions done away with, the newspapers must cast about for something to "raise the wind," and they have found in Spiritualism a matter which appears to be profitable from the number of times they refer to it. They usually begin by over-stating and misrepresenting facts so extravagantly that they are more wonderful and incredible than *bona fide* phenomena; and they wind up with the logical inference that spiritual mediums are gross deceivers and unscrupulous tricksters, and ought to be suppressed by law. Of course this is all silly enough, but it goes down with the public as people are naturally interested in the spiritual or marvellous, and love to hear assumed spiritual facts denounced.

We look to your side of the globe with a growing interest, and have a deep regard for all your movements. We have just had letters from Melbourne and Castlemaine, and have been pleased to receive portraits of some of your most distinguished workers in the cause. Mr. Terry appears to be possessed of an active enthusiasm and energy, which admirably adapts him to prosecute this movement. Mr. M'Lean of Castlemaine seems to possess a meditative and philosophical type of brain, which will render him a useful and wise counsellor in this young and rising movement. We would gladly exchange portraits with a number of other of your Australian friends, including Dr. Richardson, an excellent letter from whom appeared in the *Medium* a few weeks ago. Also Mr. Leech and Mr. Bamford, and indeed many others too numerous to mention. Time will not permit the mention of many new works which are exciting attention here, but I hope to be permitted to speak to you again.

I am, truly yours,
J. BURNS.

SECULAR EDUCATION.

MR. EDITOR.—SIR—I was not a little surprised, in reading in your last issue a letter signed Mary Storey, that she should be labouring under the impression that no educational institution, of a secular character, existed in this colony for the education of the young, when in your issue for months past there has appeared an advertisement of the "Fitzroy Secular Academy," conducted by Mr. Manns, the object of which is stated to be "not the teaching of any creed or dogma, but of inculcating principles of morality, and cultivating a true sense of honor."

Mr. or Miss Mary Storey, for a reader of your paper, must have been a very careless one or she would have necessarily seen, that in one instance at least, what she advocated and spoke of as a desideratum had been already forestalled, and that for months past. I am afraid Spiritualists are, upon certain occasions, quite as much in ignorance as to the real signs of the times as are many others.

I am,
Yours, &c.,
NUMBER NIP.

KNOWLEDGE, THE CURE OF EVIL.

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul."—*Pope*.

MR. EDITOR—Permit me to address your readers upon the great and glorious theme of universal harmony. I hope to be able to prove to their minds that the so-called evils, as well as blessings, are, in the language quoted above, but parts of the great whole, and also, in the words of the same author, that

"All discord's harmony not understood,
All partial evil's universal good."

All Spiritualists must be aware that one of the great points taught by Spiritualism is endless progression. Go back as far as we choose—to the first remove of matter towards organisation—to its first appearance as mineral, vegetable, or animal organisation; or only to the first of the human species; still from that point, whichever it may be which our minds choose for a starting-point; I say from that point, Spiritualism teaches us, there is, through all eternity, and will be, gradual, ceaseless progress; by which is meant a constantly increasing approach toward the Great Fountain of all knowledge, power, and goodness. If, then, we can appreciate that it is to be the work of endless ages to reach perfection in these qualities, we shall feel how very limited must necessarily be the present development of mankind both on this side and the other. And as "knowledge is power," how can we presume that we are able, in our present ignorance, to fathom the great whole, and say that this is right, and that wrong? Shall we not rather feel that if God is infinite He has power to grasp the finite, and make every movement of man subserve His great plan of universal development, harmony, and consequent happiness? Do not let us, for one moment,

allow ourselves the thought that it is within the scope of our power to disarrange the plans of the Creator of the vast universe. And shall we not see that, if we have no power to disarrange, then the great *First Plan* must stand undisturbed; and can we doubt that a plan projected by infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, is free from inharmonious parts or points, which, when viewed in connection with the whole, are wrong? We all apprehend that ignorance is one of the greatest evils, when abstractly considered; and is it not a *negative*—a *relative* evil? Is not knowledge universally acknowledged to be its remedy—its infallible cure? But we do not blame a man for his ignorance, and yet do we not all know that that very ignorance is the *parent of all the crimes* for which we censure our fellows? Do we not all know that as knowledge—general intelligence and consequent moral virtue—increases, just in the same proportion does crime and misery decrease? If, then, ignorance is the *parent of crime*, and man is not blameable for being ignorant, shall we curse him for his acts, in the form of what we call *crimes*—they being the offsprings of that Parent? Or, on the other hand, shall we say that, because one of our fellows is deeper in the slough of ignorance than ourselves, and hence commits a crime, at the thought of which our more enlightened understanding shrinks with disgust, and because we have no right or power to blame him, that hence we owe him no duty? Is it not rather imperative on us to make every effort in our power to instruct our erring brother in such truths as shall show him the cause of his errors, and create in him that same disgust and abhorrence of them as we ourselves feel, thereby effectually and permanently securing him against a repetition of the same? And do we need any other inducement to do this than the pain we feel when such errors are committed? When we can fully appreciate that knowledge is the unfailing remedy for *all* evil, then will our generous natures burst forth with all their innate force to instruct, elevate, and refine every brother and sister, who has not yet revealed in his conduct or life, that he has attained to our growth and development. Spirits, as well as mortals, disagree, or rather are in different degrees of development. They are only finite creatures like ourselves, and make no pretence to infinite knowledge, and hence we must not be disappointed that there are sometimes seeming discrepancies in their teachings; but one thing they do know—and we must feel that they *may* be correct—it is this; they have attained a *physical* growth in advance of their brothers of earth, and hence if their mental advancement be at least equal to ours, they certainly have one advantage over us, which will render them profitable to us as teachers while we remain in the flesh—I mean, their far-reaching, clairvoyant, view of things which we can only see less perfectly.

And now, fellow travellers all, I hope the above hasty remarks may elicit a profitable discussion upon the great and sublime truths so feebly portrayed by me.

May a feeling of Love and Charity characterise all our doings with our fellows, "in the body and out of the body"—mundane and ultramundane.

VOX E. DESERTO.

THE ARGUS LEADING ARTICLE UPON SPIRITUALISM.—Issue of the 17th January, 1872.

"In the high prophetic phrase He causes the wrath of man to praise Him, and twists and wrenches evil to good."—*Emerson's Conduct of Life*.

"There is a class too who, fearing that you may be right, will strongly oppose you from the apprehension that if, indeed, you be right, they must be eternally miserable, and thus they oppose you for fear that some spark will light up their minds and expose the darkness of error which there exists. A great, a very great, many clergymen will ignorantly oppose you because they cannot admit that any new idea is of any good."—*Communication from Swedenborg to a circle at Dr. Dexter's house on the evening of Sunday, 15th May, 1853.*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR—Though the Melbourne *Daily Telegraph*, the Colonial country papers, and the English and Continental press, have freely devoted space in their columns to the puzzling subject of Spiritualism, the *Argus* has heretofore preserved a cautious silence upon the question; this has been all the more remarkable from the

fact of the admitted increase of converts, its gaining ground as a subject of conversation, and the well attested phenomena becoming daily more and more confounding to unbelievers. That paper's first deliverance, therefore, may be viewed with interest, not only on account of its long and somewhat mysterious "reserved fire" upon what has often been called the "topic of the day," but on the further grounds of the *Argus* being the most influential journal in these colonies, supported for many years past by a larger amount of skill and capital than any other paper in the southern hemisphere.

Let us enquire into the consistency and reasoning of the article in question.

Spiritualists regard Spiritualism as a new dispensation as vast as that brought to light by the coming of Jesus.

The *Argus* article opens by terming it—"That fresh form of religious mania and new superstition which goes by the name of Spiritualism." A little further on the editor writes—"We now learn from the letters of 'J. S.' how thoroughly destitute this newly-born faith is to any claim to the recognition or belief of reasonable beings, and how utterly impossible it is even for its most accomplished disciples to adduce evidence in its support likely to be deemed conclusive by any but the most credulous."

Having so designated Spiritualism he goes on in the very next line to describe its effects. Herein he very properly "tries the spirits" by judging the tree by its fruits—"by their fruits ye shall know them." Well, what are these effects which he so truly, yet with such wonderful inconsistency, sees as the only outcome of Spiritualism. I quote his exact words—"An inevitable reaction against those rationalistic views which lead to uncompromising materialism."

It strikes me that the editor of the *Argus* and the Spiritualists are herein exactly at one; and I believe these effects, so nicely worded and defined by the editor, to be both in the present and in past the design of all miraculous Revelation, and I believe that to be miraculous Revelation, where we see intelligence combined with such action by unseen agency, as appears to us a violation of the laws of nature. Though the editor admits the effects, he will probably not go so far as to admit the design. But even so, how can he account for such a cursed cause, producing such glorious effects? The pulpits throughout Christendom have been labouring, all but fruitlessly, for the last eighteen hundred years, urging mankind to devote their hearty efforts to laying up immaterial treasure in heaven, not material treasure on earth. No reaction against such uncompromising materialism is brought about by those pulpits, but it is, and will be (according to the editor of the *Argus*), by "a mania destitute of claims to belief." Here surely is a wonderful thing, if the literary gentleman is right in his designations and his judgment of the reality of certain effects; in any case he is wonderfully inconsistent.

If the satan of "superstition and religious mania" casts out the satan of "uncompromising materialism" surely satan cannot stand.

Every phase of that opposition with which Spiritualists are confronted is life-like in its immediate suggestion of the same trains of argument recorded in the New Testament, the Spiritualists being now in the position of those who joyfully accepted Christ's advent; the anti-spiritualists in the position of those who rejected the merciful dispensation.

This is very clearly pointed out by Thomas R. Hazard in the leading article of the "Banner of Light" of the 2nd December, 1871, and at the hazard of offending the editor of the *Argus*, and the circle of readers bound up and incorporated sentimentally with that literary luminary, I shall make a quotation:—"The more I have investigated the phenomena of modern Spiritualism, and the wonderful complex character of spirit mediumship, the more clearly I have been enabled to comprehend how exactly its character and phenomena correspond to those which occurred through the ministrations of Jesus of Nazareth and his mediumistic disciples. Addressing his discourse to the chief priests of that day, Jesus said to them—"The publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." Now what did Jesus mean by the kingdom of God? certainly not a place, but a condition, a gospel, or dispensation of some kind.

Such, in short, as he first brought to light and preached in Judea, which gospel the publicans and harlots were more ready to receive than were the Priests of that day, just as they are the gospel of modern Spiritualism.

The parallel is too self-evident to need illustration. Where is there a church, a university of learning, a legislature, or a convocation of learned and scientific men in all our land, that would not shut up the mouth of any inspired preachers of the gospel of modern Spiritualism, or where is there a conductor of either the secular or religious press that will permit its beautiful truths to be alluded to in its columns, otherwise than to sneer at them?

However to return to the editor's admission of effects produced, and to throw myself on the side of his argument there, and not let one word slip (let the reader read them over again), I will just quote some other *Argus* editors in other parts of the world, so that our good editor of Collins-street may see that he is labouring in good company.

I love to entrap one in the ranks of the enemy, and make his arguments do the work of an apostle in the cause Spiritualism.

It was in this way that quite lately (that is to say in my letter in your last issue) I caught an *Argus* correspondent signing himself "M. C.," who, like the editor, made an admission more honest than judicious for the support of the cause of anti-spiritualism.

Mr. "M. C." held, with regard to the Scripture miracles and the phenomena and manifestations of modern Spiritualism, that, owing to their exact sameness, there were two doors, and two doors only open to consistency; over the portal of one of these was inscribed "belief in both;" over the other "disbelief in both." In short he thought the old and the new miracles so exactly alike that we must believe all, or disbelieve all, to preserve anything like consistency in our incredulity or faith.

To the arguments of "M. C." I joyfully add those of "E. A.," i. e. editor of the *Argus*, and go on to show how good men agree with him as to certain effects flowing from certain causes.

The celebrated "Robert Chambers" writes—"I have studied Spiritualism wherever I have gone in America, and the result is most satisfactory. There the great fight is over, and you hear little comparatively said of it, but you find it in all the churches, it has given new evidence, new life, new heaven to Christianity there."

Judge Edmonds (another equally celebrated name) writes:—

"I saw that the 'exposures' of the philosophers were unavailing to turn back a single believer, that the denunciations from the political rostrum and the pulpit were alike powerless to arrest its progress, and that ridicule was unable one instant to retard its onward march. I saw many cool, calm, capacious minds examining, and never failing to believe. I saw the Atheist bowing to its supremacy, and acknowledging his responsibility to his God, and the future; and I saw, without exception, that the believer was both wiser and better, both as to God and his fellow. All this I saw—this consonance with the laws of nature and with God—these marks of a divine origin, and I could not resist the conclusion: 'this is indeed of God, and man may not withstand it!'"

When to the editor of the *Argus* I add the names of Robert Chambers and Judge Edmonds I introduce the editor into good company; but I will just quote one more writer upon the religious state of America: "Many regular churches and chapel goers, many who for their children's sake and the sake of their servants, have had Bible readings and family prayers in their houses for a series of years without once tasting the comforts of religion, without once feeling an assurance of immortality, have been roused from their lethargy, and become new creatures through the regenerating influence of Holy Spiritualism."

I don't see how these writers differ from the editor of the *Argus* in their observations of the effects of Spiritualism as respectively quoted in the different parts of this letter.

Odd indeed would it be, and contradictory beyond all precedent, if such good effects could be produced by base, false, foolishly credulous, superstitious, maniacal means.

I am Sir, Your obdt. Servant,
CALDECOTT.

THE PREMIER OF VICTORIA ON THE TEMPERANCE CAUSE.

THE following is an extract from a speech delivered by the Hon. G. Gavan Duffy, at a banquet given, about thirty years ago, in honour of Father Matthew, who was himself present:—

Mr. Duffy said—When total abstinence ends in merely redeeming a man from the vice of intoxication, it stops far short of the point which propagators intended it to attain, and which it is capable of attaining. We have not only bad appetites to restrain but great faculties to cultivate, and the latter is not the least important portion of our duties; for the man whose heart and imagination are not opened and exalted by cultivation, is no more the perfect creature that God intended him to be, than if eyes and hands were wanting in his physical organisation. I think, then, teetotallers ought to be found assiduously cultivating the intellects which they have been taught to rescue from the fogs and mists of intemperance. You, Father Matthew, have taken from the people a sensual material stimulant; ought you not in return to give a moral stimulant? You have quenched one thirst; ought you not to incite another thirst? A thirst which is not to be slaked in a whiskey shop, but in the library or lecture room—a thirst for knowledge. The human mind is never idle? least of all will it be idle when its healthful action is no more impeded by the unnatural excitements and depressions of intemperance. It is your duty, then, to find it employment which will make it wiser, happier and better. To effect this I would propose that in all teetotal societies a system should be pursued which I am glad to say has the perfect concurrence of the illustrious guest of the evening. I mean that our temperance societies should not only be associations for the diffusion of total abstinence principles, but for improving the morals and cultivating the understandings of the people. I do not doubt of seeing the day when every town will have its temperance hall, and every temperance hall its school-room, its reading-rooms, its lecture-rooms, and its exhibition-rooms, and even its public baths, and gymnasium, for the operative classes. Let the teetotaler come to be recognised, not only by his sobriety and respectability, but by his intelligence; not only by fulfilling life's duties, but by enjoying life's virtuous pleasures; till the very sensualist is forced to confess that the way to happiness is not through the gross indulgence of our passions, but through their virtuous restriction. It will be an irresistible demonstration in favour of our principles, if we can teach the intemperate that not only are we more respected, more enlightened, more successful in the world, but more happy than they are. Not only do we escape the penalties of intemperance; not only are we not sent to the workhouse by drink; not to the hospital by vice, or to the prison for crime, but we have discovered and enjoy pleasures of which the self-indulgent imagine little, and the besotted tippler can know nothing.

A SERMON,

WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN DELIVERED AT ST. JUDE'S CHURCH, CARLTON.

"He made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth."—GENESIS i, v. 16, 17.

Here, my brethren, we have an explicit statement of facts, to set against the audacious, the blasphemous assertions or hypotheses of science. For what say these modern followers of the astrologers, the alchemists, and the necromancers of the days of old? They tell us that these lamps, which were hung in the dome of the sky at the creation of the world, "to give light upon the earth," and which are re-lit every evening, and extinguished in the morning, are so many worlds—inhabitable and inhabited worlds!—that there are millions of suns, each with a planetary system of its own, and all revolving round some great central sun, which the daring investigations of science have not yet succeeded in discovering. My friends, can you conceive anything more unscriptural or impious than this? Is it not in direct contradiction of the law and the testimony, and must it not be affirmed of these scientists, that "there is no light in them?"

For just consider the awful conclusions to which these abominable deductions of science would conduct our weaker brethren. Employing that reason which the Devil has bestowed upon us in order to ensnare and destroy his miserable victims, misguided men would argue in this way, "If there be so many millions of worlds, and if all these be inhabited by myriads of beings, is it rational to conclude that the Infinite and Eternal God who created them would descend from his sublime altitude for the purpose of leading a life of destitution and of persecution upon earth, and of being crucified upon the cross, in order to appease the wrath of His other self, and to save a mere fragment of the human race from the perdition to which He had previously doomed them in consequence of a weak-minded woman having incautiously eaten a crab-apple many thousands of years ago? Thus would the sceptics and scoffers reason. And I must confess, dearly beloved brethren, that if the stars were suns and planets, and not—as we are assured by the law and the testimony—lamps created for the especial service of the earth, and not called into existence until after it was—that is to say, on the fourth day of creation, the sceptics would not be without a plausible ground for their objections to the great scheme of the Atonement and for their denial of the godhead of Christ. But we, my friends, know better. We take our stand on the law and the testimony, and our feet are planted on a rock. The doctrine of the plurality of worlds I pronounce to be a damnable and unscriptural heresy. It is a mental delusion traceable either to unconscious cerebration or to Satanic influence. It is like those two other delusions which, I deplore to confess, find such widely-spread acceptance. There are men who tell us that a spoonful of stagnant water contains thousands of organised beings—vital and in motion. But you have only to look at a spoonful of water to perceive the monstrous erroneousness of this hypothesis. The fluid is transparent, and there is not the least trace of animal life in it. We are also told that the air we breathe is peopled with spirits. How ineffably absurd! Is it not as transparent as the water? Can you see the spirits, or hear them, or taste them, or smell them? No. Therefore they do not exist. As I told you last Sunday "the great object of these Spiritists is to persuade the world that the dead still live," and thus to prove the immortality of the soul. Frightful doctrine! appalling heresy!—no doubt invented and disseminated by the Father of Lies. As I then said, quoting the words of a medical gentleman, who acquired his knowledge of spiritual philosophy in an apothecary's shop, as I obtained my acquaintance with theology behind a linen draper's counter,—"I believe it to be the most tremendous enemy of God, morals, and religion, that ever found foothold on earth; the most seductive, hence the most dangerous form of sensualism that ever cursed a nation, age, or people. It is godless, non-religious, opposed to the Bible, and all ecclesiastical organisations. It is subversive of human dignity and public morals, and destructive of all we hold most dear and cherish most sacredly."

Ah! my beloved friends, reject a doctrine which teaches you that the love of God is co-extensive with His power, that there is no atonement required, that the theory of original sin is founded on a fable, that all men will be saved, that there is neither a physical hell nor a physical Devil, that the human soul never had a beginning and will never have an ending, that progression is infinite, that the human race is one family, and that we should love our neighbours better than ourselves. Reject all such impious notions, because, as my medical friend observed, they are opposed to "all ecclesiastical organizations"; and if these were overthrown I might have to relinquish my comfortable parsonage, and my equally comfortable stipend, as well as the social consideration I enjoy, and perhaps have to fall back on peddling pins and retailing remnants.

WE have received the first five numbers of the *Australian Penny Magazine*; a small monthly devoted to Spiritualism, published by Mr. Sinclair, of Sydney, the articles are well selected and interesting. The January No. contains an account of a projected Co-operative Association, and other interesting matters.

PROGRESS IN TASMANIA.

HERE, as in all parts of the civilized world, the great theme of interest is Spiritualism. The universality of the facts and phenomena of spirit communion and their independence of each other, is good indirect evidence that this revived Gospel is not the word of man. In the northern part of the island the narrow and dismal creeds of past barbaric ages still flourish amid a rustic and credulous population, although even among these there are many who are yearning for more light. A lady, resident in Launceston, has just given to the public a little work, entitled "*The gate, and the glory beyond*," in which the ministry of departed spirits as guardians of the living is advocated as a pleasing reality. The cloud of witnesses ever accompanying us is plainly shown not to be a fable.

In Hobart Town, the capital, there are absolutely some who will only believe that they can understand. While those who ought to be, and who were formerly, the spiritual guides of the people, are still preaching the incomprehensible doctrines of three being one, of a collection of venerable writings full of error being the infallible word of God, of the Deity being subject to human passions, of blood being necessary to atone for error, laymen are venturing to think and to reason on their behalf.

I have met writing mediums in four families. In one family spirit voices are constantly heard, not by one person only, but by three individuals of mature years, and sound judgment, who are in full possession of all their senses. The spirit form has been seen by others during the last twenty years, who were, until very recently, in complete ignorance of the subject of Spiritualism.

One gentleman is in the habit of leaving a blank sheet of paper and a pencil in a locked room, on this paper he finds now and then messages purporting to be written by those gone before. All these occurrences are convincing evidence to those to whom they are presented.

Circles meet regularly at several houses and all the anathemas of those interested in keeping the people in ignorance and in upholding the existing fables called theology, cannot persuade our friends that their relatives who communicate, have by the act of dying become converted into devils; the injunction "try the spirits" holds good now as well as 1800 years since, and the advice to love, to be pure, to be temperate, is "confirmation strong as holy writ," that the theologians of the day are as much out in their conception of Spiritualism as they were about Geology, Phrenology, Animal Magnetism, Life Assurance, the origin of Species, or Vaccination; new ideas are to them sources of danger; nevertheless they cannot stay the onward march of this last and most powerful enemy of sacerdotal rule, and here as elsewhere it is silently leading members of all the churches from the horrid ecclesiastical idea of eternal torment being the fate of the vast majority of all who ever lived. Here as elsewhere the Congregationalists are the most liberal, and I have met several who admit that the conduct, and not the belief, regulates our future.

A PRACTICAL "HINT" TO SPIRITUALISTS.

A General Meeting of the members of the Progressive Spiritualists' body was held on Wednesday evening at the Psychological Rooms. The attendance was good, and Mr. McLean, President of the Society, occupied the chair. The draft of prospectus for the erection of a Lyceum was submitted and approved of. A sketch of the building was also submitted, and it was arranged to engage professional skill for the preparation of suitable plans: The building will, it is said, be situate at the corner of Sloane and Skene Streets; it will be of brick, with granite foundations; when completed it will be of large dimensions;—104 feet x 36 feet, but at present only one section will be constructed, being 24 feet x 36 feet. Its cost will be met by the issue of 100 shares at £3 each, of which already 75 have been taken up. The prospectus will be issued to-morrow, and we have no doubt that the shares still unapplied for will be speedily

taken up. It is the determination of the promoters to erect the building free of debt—a resolve which is certainly to be applauded. Immediately on the shares being taken up the erection will be commenced. A meeting will be held on Wednesday evening next, when the balance of shares will be allotted. In the meantime Sunday evening services are continued in the Commercial Assembly Room.—*Pleasant Creek Chronicle*, Feb. 9th.

PROSPECTUS

of the

STAWELL LYCEUM BUILDING ASSOCIATION.

"To be Registered under Companies' Statute 1864. Capital, £300 (with power to increase). 100 Shares of £3 each, £1 to be paid on allotment, and remainder by monthly instalments of 5s. per month per share. *Provisional Directors*: Mr. William Crellin, Mr. Thos. Hewitt, Mr. Geo. Lamont, Mr. A. A. Lambert, Mr. Jas. McLean, Mr. John Punchard, Mr. Joseph Walters, Mr. E. G. Welch, and Mr. Richard Yates.

The above Company has been formed for the purpose of supplying a want long felt and acknowledged in this Borough, viz., a suitable Building, in which Public Lectures may be delivered and Meetings held in connexion with questions of importance, relating to that Religious, Social, and Political Progression which forms such a leading feature of the present day.

It is intended that a service shall be held on each Sunday for the expression of Rational views on Religious Subjects, in connection with which, arrangements are now being made for periodical visits from some of our leading Public Lecturers.

During the week the Building will be available for all purposes of General Instruction and Advancement.

The Management will be in the hands of a Board of Directors, to be elected by the Shareholders.

The Building will be let for such sums and for such purposes as shall be approved of by a majority of Directors.

Over two-thirds the number of Shares are already subscribed, and a suitable and very Central Site has been purchased; the Promoters therefore contemplate commencing building operations forthwith.

Plans of Land and proposed Building will be submitted to intending Shareholders in a few days.

Shares may be had on application to any of the Provisional Directors, or to James Granger, Secretary."

FACTS.

People cry for facts—here are a few—1st. It is a fact, that some persons have such a dread of being *unpopular*, that they will not openly communicate what they know; and when required to certify to the facts which they themselves have witnessed, they modestly decline, or submit the results of their experience *anonymously*.

2nd. It is a fact, that the aspiration for wealth and worldly power, the fear of being subject to ridicule, and an undue regard for conventional respectability—or such cowardly device—prompts some people to imprison their best thoughts, and to dishonor the truth.

3rd. It is a significant fact that men are sometimes governed by a selfish worldly policy, even in matters which concern their spiritual interests; and also that they esteem it a privilege to remain under the same sordid administration.

4th. It is a fact, though almost incredible, that certain persons, who *utterly refuse* to certify to what they know, are among the first to call for more facts, and to demand that the same shall be made valid by the indorsement of responsible parties.

5th. It is a fact that if all persons were of this class, it would be impossible to establish any fact in Science, Philosophy, or spirit manifestations, by adequate testimony.

6th. It is a fact that some persons are very sorry these things are facts.

CIRCLE TEACHINGS.

There are many who cannot be persuaded to avow a belief, until they find company enough to keep them in countenance. It was said at a circle not long since by a spirit designating himself as F. C.:

"The work goes on bravely. The great men of earth are engaged, and the self-conceited wonder at so much credulity. You have only to keep still and let the work go on."

It was inquired: Are we then to be silent in regard to it?

"No; but when the ignorant abuse and ridicule you, take no notice of what they say. God is omnipotent. You have a pilot at your helm who will guide you safely through."

One of the party remarked that he had read lately in the "Bee Hunter," by Fenimore Cooper; that, to deny the evidence of our senses, is an act of greater weakness than to believe that there are mysteries connected with our moral and physical being that human sagacity has not yet been able to penetrate: and we repudiate the want of manliness that shrinks from giving its testimony when once convinced, through an apprehension of being derided, as weaker than the conduct of those who withhold their belief.

One of the party objected, that nothing above the plane of our comprehension has been given by spirits. It was replied: "Let it be remembered that truth *beyond* our comprehension, or unappreciated, is *no* truth to us. If it be above our inner consciousness, we cannot receive it; but when adapted to our mental states, it forms the ever-radiant pathway of mending progress. The Spiritualists of this day are standing on the stepping-stone of the world's reformation—yea, of the world's redemption; and let me exhort them to patience, to perseverance, and to untiring industry, united with sound reason and gentle forbearance; for on these depend their success, and the success of the cause in which they are engaged. All the angels in heaven cannot move it forward without their assistance. It seems to me that could they feel—I speak now more particularly of the mediums—that if they could feel themselves the lever, upon which so much depends, they would certainly lose the reluctance, so much manifested by many of them, and go forth with a whole heart, to live and die in this great work of love and mercy."

"FOOLS AND MADMEN."

"I don't see that Mr. Tyerman is in the smallest degree disqualified for being a teacher of Spiritism by having been a lunatic or even by being one still. In the kingdom of the blind, as we know by an old proverb, the one-eyed man is king, and when the followers are fools, there is nothing out of place in the leader being a madman. When the disciples are so rapidly fitting themselves for becoming inmates of madhouses, it is delightful for them, and for us, to discover that their guide has been there already."—*Melbourne Correspondent of the Otago Witness.*

In the foregoing extract we have an admirable specimen of the logic of the anonymous assailants of Spiritism. Unable to dispute the reality of its phenomena, and incompetent to deny or to impugn the truths it reveals, they fall back upon mere virulent abuse. It is such a short and easy method of dealing with an opponent. It saves a world of ineffectual argument. It obviates the labor of investigation, and does away with the obligation of patient thought, and of the careful examination of evidence. "You are all fools, and you are qualifying yourselves for admission into a madhouse." Charming conclusion! and one which must contribute so materially to augment the self-complacency of the writer. In him wisdom is incarnated, and the healthiest of brains governs and inspires a pen which drops golden sentences with every dip of ink. With one wave of his goose-quill he annihilates Spiritualism in all ages—the sages of Asia and of Egypt, the prophets of the Old Testament, the philosophers of Greece, Christ and his apostles, and clouds of witnesses to the truth of the closeness of the relations which subsist between the visible and invisible world. They were all fools or madmen. Their claims to sense and sanity have been submitted to the judgment of the infallible newspaper

correspondent—whose mental gullet is incapable of swallowing any fact that is not vouched for by his own senses—and his decision is final. What a pity so confident and illustrious an authority does not undertake to enlighten mankind himself with respect to this world and the next; to reveal the truth to these poor fools and undeveloped madmen, and thus rescue them from the thralldom of folly and the calamity of delirium. How can he reconcile it to his conscience—he, a journalist, and therefore a teacher of men—to permit so many hundreds of his fellow creatures to fall into such terrible delusions? Here are men and women absolutely guilty of the appalling wickedness of studying to learn and to fulfil God's will on earth, and to obey the "two commandments upon which hang all the law and prophets;" and yet this pre-eminently gifted man—this sagacious seer of the folly and the madness of Spiritualism, does not lift up so much as his little finger to save us from the lunatic asylum here, and eternal perdition hereafter! No, he buries his warning voice in the folds of a newspaper, published at the further end of New Zealand, and all that reaches us is a faint and muffled echo, in which the words "fools" and "madmen" alone are audible. He even finds something "delightful" in our inevitable dementia. What a magnificently constituted mind the man must have!

WHAT SPIRITS TEACH.

THEY teach that there is one only true and living God, or Great Positive Mind. They teach that His works (the works of Nature) are the great volume of His revelation. That, in them and their teachings, there is order, uniformity, and harmony.

They teach that where there is harmony there is truth; and where there is discord there is error, hereafter as well as here, are to be known and judged. (From this we must infer that there is much error in the Christian churches, for there is much discord in them.)

They teach that everything in Nature, animate and inanimate, is progressing from a lower to a higher, or from a grosser to a more refined state or condition.

They teach that, through an unfortunate organisation and surrounding circumstances, misdirection and mis-education—may lead to vice, crime and misery in this life. These influences cease in part, if not in whole, when what we call death, separates mind or spirit from the body; and that again the mind, soul, or spirit becomes, or continues to be, subject to this law of progressive unfolding or development.

"Progress means upward or onward, never downward or backward." Hence spirits never grow darker or more miserable, as some think, and have contended

They teach that all are not equally happy in the spirit-world; that the degree of happiness the spirit enters upon depends upon the life it has lived here, and its moral and intellectual improvement or development while in the body.

They teach that in the spirit-world, there are dark and bright spheres; that vice, crime, dissipation, debauchery, bigotry, idolatry and ignorance, all tend to the dark spheres; while honesty, uprightness, virtue, knowledge—visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, all lead to an inheritance in the brighter spheres, and real happiness.

They teach that "Faith without works is dead."

They teach that Jesus was the most highly developed mind or spirit, in human form, while he was on the earth. That the miracles which he wrought were by Spirits through him as a medium, (hence the term mediator,) and hence Spirits operating through the mediums which he selected, could do (as he said) the same and even greater things than he did.

They teach that a day is dawning when mighty wonders will be wrought by spirits through mediums, to the confounding of the self-wise, the learned and the ignorant.

They teach that pain, sickness, and suffering, are the legitimate penalties of violated universal and unchangeable law; and are not dispensations, or special providences. Hence they teach reward for obedience, and penalties for disobedience. Thus all the great practical truths

Jesus taught, spirits teach also. Spirits *do not* teach creeds, or sectarianism, or dogmas, or ordinances. They *do not* teach that any one sect or church, is just right, and all others wrong.

They teach—in short—that to “Love thy neighbour as thyself” or the law of love, is *the* law, which was from the beginning—to which all other laws must be subservient. It is *the* law, unceasing in its demands, inexorable in its penalties, and extending its resistless sway from the highest and most perfect, to the most debased and degraded. To those who live in its requirements, it gives joy, and faith, and courage; to those who oppose and deny it in their lives, its penalties are vexations, disappointments, degradation, and despair. The further we carry our selfish projects, the closer do obstructions from this law beset our path, until the wanderer from divine love, turns from the bitter waters of sin to that fountain which alone can satisfy his thirst.

A CHALLENGE.

SHOULD any gentleman of unexceptional character, who is in fair repute as a man of science or a theologian—and in whose abilities the public, and especially the opposers of Spiritualism, have confidence—feel moved to oppose the views of Spiritism “as propounded by the Spiritists of Melbourne and elsewhere” by a *presentation of facts and arguments*, we are authorised to say that he will be met with alacrity, and in sincere love of truth, by a gentleman who undertakes to *maintain* these views; and we are willing the “The Harbinger” be used as the medium of communication by the public, and that three columns monthly, if required, will be appropriated for that purpose.

A SPIRITUALIST'S FUNERAL.

The death of the subject of this notice occurred at his residence Stawell West, on Friday night last. Mr. Wakeham was a native of Plymouth, England, and had resided in South Australia and Victoria in all a total of thirty-five years, being one of the first borough councillors of Adelaide. He was also one of the pioneers and prospectors of the Pleasant Creek Goldfield. At the first formation of a local Mining Board, Mr. Wakeham was chosen to represent the miners of the Pleasant Creek Division, which position, with the exception of one year, he has filled ever since, being several times elected chairman of the board. The interests held by the deceased gentleman in the Stawell reefs have latterly proved valuable, and he has consequently been enjoying an independent position for the last few years of his life. A correspondent, writing from Stawell, sends us the following particulars as to the funeral, which took place on Sunday afternoon last, at four o'clock:—

“Two or three thousand people followed the remains of the late Mr. Wakeham to the local Cemetery on Sunday afternoon, the cortege being composed of the Pride of the Wimmera Lodge G.U.O.O.F., the Stawell Branch of the Victorian Association of Progressive Spiritualists, of which bodies the deceased was a member, and a numerous assemblage of the residents of Stawell and other localities, the rear being brought up by a number of carriages and horsemen. Messrs Lyth, Grainger, and Reading, M.M.B.s, and Mr. Payne, Clerk of the Mining Board, officiated as pall-bearers. When the procession reached the cemetery, that enclosure was found so completely filled as to almost prevent the bearers of the remains from reaching the grave. On the coffin being laid over the vault, which already contained that of the late Mrs. Wakeman, Mr. James M'Lean, President of the local association of Spiritualists, delivered the following address, which was listened to with marked attention:—Friends,—It is a commendable custom that the wishes of the departed should be observed as far as possible in reference to the funeral ceremonies. Our departed brother, during the last hours of his earth-life, and while perfectly conscious, urgently requested that the friends connected with the religious body to which he belonged—the Progressive Spiritualists—should conduct his burial service.” Mr. M'Lean then offered an impressive prayer, after which the following hymn was sung by the

Spiritualist choir, and joined in by those present:—

DEATH is the fading of a cloud,
The breaking of a chain;
The rending of a mortal shroud
We ne'er shall meet again.

Death is the close of life's alarms,
The watch-light on the shore;
The clasping in immortal hands
Of loved ones gone before.

Death is the conqueror's welcome home,
The heavenly city's door,
The entrance of the world to come;
'Tis life for evermore.

Death is the mighty second birth,
The unveiling of the soul;
'Tis freedom from the chains of earth,
The pilgrim's heavenly goal.

Death is a song from seraph lips,
The day-spring from on high;
The ending of the soul's eclipse,
Its transit to the sky.

The coffin was then lowered into the vault, while the President repeated the following words:—“Forasmuch as it has pleased Almighty God of His great mercy to call our dear brother from earth-life, we therefore commit his material body to the earth, in the sure and certain hope that he still lives.”

The following address was then delivered by Mr. James M'Lean:—“A purely natural death is not an event to be dreaded, but rather to be hailed with delight and joy. How welcome is the stranger spirit to all its kindred spirits in the spheres; and how great and glorious, and how bright and beautiful is the change from that old material casing of man when the spirit reaches its new abode in the everlasting body—the true and refined casing or habitation for the immortal soul. When the spirit takes its flight from this to a progressive and more happy sphere, why do we regret and mourn as if we had for ever lost it? Never be regretful, but rather rejoice that the spirit is ‘born again.’ Do we regret and mourn when a spirit is born in the material body? Then, if not, how much less ought we to regret when that spirit leaves the material for the spiritual—the impure for pure—the transient for everlasting. The sorrow and sadness of the friends that are left behind by the departed spirit arise from the theological ideas mankind have been trammelled with for so long, and which is the cause of so much uneasy care, trouble, and anxiety to them—the result of educational doubt and uncertainty of an after state. When will mankind throw off that weighty incubus from them? so that the true light of reason may flow into their minds, and thereby rob the change called death of all its terrors. We do not believe more firmly in the trees and shrubs that surround us, in those monuments which we now see here, than we do that human life, once granted, never perishes. A death-change there is, often terrible to witness, leaving us behind, desolate and forsaken, for a few years on earth, but—no death. We never go down to the grave, we cannot be confined within the tomb. The material body is a cast off garment—sacred indeed; as sacred as are all mementoes which memory connects with those we have loved and lost; but yet it is only a cast off garment—encased—to which are paid the rites of sepulchre. We believe that the one life succeeds the other without interval, save a brief transition slumber—it may be of a few hours only. ‘To-day,’ says the Great Teacher to the repentant thief, ‘shalt thou be with me in Paradise.’ We believe in the meeting and recognition of friends in heaven; that while we mourn here below there are joyful re-unions above; also, that the spirit-world is one of ‘many mansions,’ to be occupied by those who are fitted to enter therein. This is because they are fitted, and not by any earning of heaven—for which of us is faultless enough for that? Yet there are the prepared and the unprepared, and that determines our lot in the next world. There are in heaven duties, avocations, enjoyments, even as various as are those of earth, but far higher and nobler in scope and purpose.”

The service was concluded by the following doxology:—

Eternal praise to God be given,
By all on earth, and all in heaven;

The First, the Last, who reigns alone,
And fills an undivided throne.

THE members of the Grand United Order of Odd-fellows present then conducted their solemn service, which concluded one of the most remarkable funeral ceremonies ever conducted in Victoria.—*The Ararat Advertiser*, Tuesday, 20th February, 1872.

THE HONORABLE J. M. PEEBLES' VISIT.

We have much pleasure in announcing the intended visit to these colonies of that talented author and lecturer Mr. J. M. Peebles, formerly the United States Consul at Trebizond, and for some time past a popular lecturer on Spiritualism in England and the United States, at the period of our last advices Mr. Peebles was lecturing to crowded houses at New Orleans, after a very successful course at Troy. There is no doubt from Mr. Peebles' large experience and extensive knowledge of Spiritualism, its Facts, Phenomena and Philosophy, and his ability and eloquence as a Lecturer, that his visit here will be productive of much good.

MIRACLES AND MODERN SCIENCE.

THE *a priori* EVIDENCE.

It is somewhat remarkable that what is regarded as the strongest point of a system at one period may come to be looked upon as the weakest in another. The sublime morality of the early Christians failed to convert Saul of Tarsus, yet the same man changes into a devout apostle after being once addressed miraculously from on high; whilst Nicodemus, contaminated, as he no doubt was, by the leaven of the Pharisees, coming to Jesus by night, freely confesses "Rabbi we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do the things which thou doest except God be with him." And yet at the present day no part of the Christian religion is regarded with so much suspicion as are those same wonders in days gone by appealed to as the very bulwarks of the faith.

Is there any good grounds why this should be so? In other words is there any antecedent reasons for supposing a miracle impossible or improbable? Is the question one to be decided by purely *a priori* considerations, or ought it not rather to be regarded as one of evidence, to be answered affirmatively or negatively in accordance with the testimony?

And first what is a miracle? Watson, the Wesleyan theologian, says—"It is an effect or event contrary to the established course of things; or a sensible suspension, or controlment, or deviation from, the *known* (mark that word for it is of the greatest importance to the question) the *known* laws of nature; wrought either by the immediate act, or by the concurrence, or by the permission of God, for the proof or evidence of some particular doctrine, or in attestation of the authority of some particular person."

This very clear and reasonable definition would, if generally known, do much towards destroying the force of sceptical arguments against the possibility of a miracle occurrence. According to this statement such an event is not something that cannot occur but something that *must* occur should God who rules all things see fit to interfere.

In one sense a miracle is not a display of God's power, as power. Of the existence of that power we hear far stronger proofs in the world around us. The fact that the winds and the sea obeyed Jesus Christ is in no way so wonderful as is the circumstance that winds and sea exist at all. That Christ raised Lazarus from the dead,

may that he, himself, rose from the dead and ascended into glory, is not more astonishing than that you and I and millions of mankind have been formed into thinking beings out of the dust that perisheth. On the other hand, in accordance with the definition, given miracles, as we find them recorded in Holy Writ, serve as credentials whereby priests and prophets, and evangelists, inspired by God, proved the veracity of their doctrines and their declarations.

It is somewhat wonderful that even modern Rationalism—contemptuous as it is in the denial of miraculous interpositions—willingly admits the necessity of revelation, and regards not only Moses but Shakespeare, Homer, Newton, and all poets, statesmen, and philosophers as being inspired. In some respects such persons place the inspiration of the sacred writers on a lower level than that of the mere poet, since, say they, the former is hampered by an excrescence, in the shape of impossible wonders such as miracles are termed. Such objectors, however, seem to have started with an error. They forget, altogether, that inspiration must, of necessity, be a miracle in itself. If the truths revealed by the poet sprung from an inordinate amount of intellect, or greater than average powers of perception, then such revelation would not be the work of inspiration at all; and, if there was any direct interference on the part of Deity, or other superhuman intelligence, to reveal to any particular man the truths referred to, that alone is the strongest argument in favour of the miraculous, proves its actuality beyond a question.

Let it now be granted that just so much of the miraculous may be admitted as possible. That it is even probable that God has, in this way, revealed Himself to man. Allow this solitary proposition and what have we?

Clearly a message may have come to us from a superior being which it is our bounden duty to obey, or at least to investigate. But the message comes through a messenger who is obligated to give some proof as to its origin. To prove this origin, what is more consistent with reason, than the plan as set forth in the Bible record? A man for instance, such as Moses, is sent as an ambassador from God to Pharaoh, and the wonders he performs prove, not only to the king but to the assembled magicians, that the hand of the Omnipotent was with his servant. The priests of Baal assert the power of the rival deity and all Elijah's eloquence, his piety, and his influence fail to convince even the children of Israel of the imposture, but the fire descending from above and consuming the outspread sacrifice settled the question beyond a doubt. Similarly John the Baptist, by a voice from Heaven; the centurion by the wonders of the crucifixion; the Philipian gaoler by the earthquake; and the sailors, by seeing Paul remain uninjured by the viper that had bitten him; are one and all convinced by the events witnessed; a natural instinct, if nothing further, teaching them unerringly how no such things could happen save by an intervention essentially supernatural in its nature.

Objectors to miracles; as an evidence, forget altogether the singular power ever attending miracles employed as evidence. Of the whole number mentioned in Scripture I do not remember one that can truly be said to have, in this respect, proved a failure. Be the wonder great or small it was a shot that invariably hit the aimed-at mark. Sometimes a solitary man is converted, as Cornelius; sometimes a servant of Christ is instructed, as Peter in the same case; or at other times thousands are pricked to the heart as were the witnesses of Pentecost.

One of the principal arguments against miracles, raised by modern philosophy, urges that the idea of God having made laws which he is subsequently under the necessity of violating is altogether destroying to an infinitely wise and powerful being. From the definition of a miracle, previously given, it does not, however, follow that for God to work a miracle, a change in, or violation of, any law is, in the very least, a necessity.

(To be continued.)

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