

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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IN our last we administered a mild rebuke to the Melbourne *Spectator*, for its misstatements in regard to Mr. Peebles and the cause he advocates, but the spectacle of the large and intelligent auditories which his lectures continued to attract, and the knowledge of the moral influence exerted by them has raised the ire of the editor, and caused him to ignore our kindly admonition, the result being the publication, in the issue of April 7th, of half-a-column of abuse and misrepresentation. "The revolting utterances of Mr. Peebles," as the *Spectator* is pleased to call them, have been listened to by audiences of about two thousand people, without any signs of displeasure, and many have returned again and again to listen to them." This must be a sad, or at least an irritating spectacle for the *Spectator*, indicating, as it does, the lax hold which the dogmas of the Churches have on the minds of the people. It is the revolt of reason against the persistent utterance of irrational creeds and dogmas that causes thoughtful men to leave the Churches and seek elsewhere a pabulum for their religious requirements. What more revolting to the rational mind than the idea of the great originator and sustainer of all the vast systems of worlds which we behold around us being dandled in a woman's arms, spat upon and maltreated by the most insignificant of his creatures, and driven in pain and anguish from his earthly tabernacle? What more revolting than the doctrine of vicarious atonement? Is there a just man on earth who would accept it in practice? If any earthly potentate's laws had been violated by an unruly section of his people, and the criminals condemned to punishment, would any but a savage accept the substitution of one of the best and most innocent of men for them, or be appeased by the voluntary submission of his son to be murdered at their hands? What more revolting than the doctrine of justification by faith

—that a man whose whole moral nature has been warped and soul darkened by a life of wrong-doing should, by the psychological influence of a priest working upon his hopes and fears, be transformed in a few short hours into a fit associate for the angels in heaven! What more revolting to our sense of justice, and our conception of a loving God, than the idea of eternal torment as punishment for a few short years of folly, or still more so for the non-acceptance of the other dogmas we have referred to?

We respect the religious beliefs of others, so long as they are sincere and consistent in them; but when a Christian (?) minister, (as we understand the editor to be) amidst a tissue of misrepresentations, characterises a rational consideration of the Scriptures, or of Christianity, as revolting, an exposure of the absurdities of the system he upholds is called for.

Wesleyanism, like Christianity, has degenerated much since its foundation. Honest John Wesley was a practical Christian and Spiritualist, in a sermon, entitled "Ministering Angels," he distinctly avows his belief, that the spirits of our dear friends and relatives are often near us, interested in our welfare, and doing all they can to influence us for good; yet his professed followers ignore and ridicule this consoling belief, preferring the letter to the spirit, the husk to the kernel. Who are responsible for this state of things but the expounders of Wesleyanism?—the members of the Church imbibe their ideas from them, and believe they are being taught the religion of Christ as expounded by John Wesley, but in this they are much mistaken. Wesley was an earnest, unselfish apostle; his followers were a humble people, and suffered persecution for their belief; but with increase of numbers and power the unselfishness and humility of priest and followers have passed away—pride and a spirit of persecution taking their place.

It is rather unfortunate for the *Spectator* to be obliged to fall back upon noted Materialists in support of the non-spiritual origin of spiritualistic phenomena. We would ask if its editor believes the statements of John Wesley and his family concerning the physical manifestations which for a long time disturbed them; and if so, does he attribute them to trickery or delusion?—and how long will he and his kind ignore the oft-repeated assertion that Spiritualists

do not believe in miracles, but attribute the various manifestations to natural laws, some of which are as yet imperfectly understood—it is he who assumes that the levitations of Mr. Home or Mrs. Guppy are miraculous, and in contravention of natural law. Is it a Christian spirit which prompts him to persist in calling Mr. Peebles the “Seer of the ages,” or a disingenuous device to bring that gentleman into contempt? The animus shown in his writings about Spiritualism will indicate the answer. When will these Christians learn toleration?—when will they become the followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, exhibiting the Christ spirit in their words and actions? We are not iconoclasts, but realise more than ever the necessity of such to break down and clear away the angular structures with which the religions of the day are encompassed, and thereby leave the way clearer for the erection of a more harmonious edifice.

To Correspondents.

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

PROFESSIONAL MEDIUMSHIP.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—The possession of the gift of mediumship on the part of numbers of men and women, when exercised in a professional manner, seems to entail upon its owners a life of suspicion, calumny, trial and suffering. Especially is this the case if the mediums are really honest. The oftentimes strange and fitful character of the phenomena, caused by the presence of repulsive, suspicious persons at the seances, or by adverse climatic influences, illness, or mental derangements of the mediums themselves, all tend to produce manifestations of a very unconvincing kind, and to place these unfortunate persons in the power and at the mercy of their ignorant persecutors and calumniators. So intimately associated with the mediums are the phenomena that it is often difficult, even for experienced investigators to separate them. A knowledge of this fact, and of the laws affecting the manifestations, ought to teach all spiritualists the necessity and propriety of discouraging the introduction into the Australian colonies of paid mediums, excepting for the purpose of the healing of diseases. Mediumship should be held as a sacred thing, and ought not to be made a show of for gain. The temptation held out to dishonest persons to practice upon the credulity of the public by making merchandize of their gift is very great, and to persons of a sensitive character—such as mediums usually are—often becomes irresistible. There are numerous illustrations of the truth of this statement. Take the cases of Gordon of America, and Buguet of Paris. And, if we are to believe Mr. Keller of the Royal Illusionists, we may add the Davenport Brothers to the list. The power is known to be limited in its duration and scope in almost every medium, and cannot always, under the most favorable circumstances, be depended upon. Hence the temptation to supplement it with trickery. No doubt it is a very dishonest and wicked thing to do, and persons guilty of it are unworthy of regard and should be severely punished; but it is a fact that it is done (for human nature must lust after money), and so, as it brings reproach and shame upon all connected with our infant cause, it appears to me that the only way to prevent such an undesirable state of things from growing up amongst us is to set our faces against all paid mediumship. In saying this, I do not for a moment mean to cast a doubt on the honor of hundreds of these mediums in those countries where they are established, but to guard our young country against permitting a new vested interest to become the leader of our spiritualistic movement which would, in too many instances, but prove a snare in its path. I most respectfully submit that there is no necessity for such mediums at all. In hundreds of families there are many of their

members who are mediums, and the truth of spiritualism can be proved within their own households. It appears to me, therefore, that it would be well for all true spiritualists in these colonies to discountenance professional mediums. All persons who are really desirous of inquiring into spiritualism can do so in their own or their neighbor's family; and the phenomena evoked under such circumstances are far more likely to convince them than those obtained through a professional medium at a guinea a-head. If Victorian spiritualists would adopt this course at once, they would be taking up a strong position, and placing a powerful barrier in the way of all charlatans using the movement for low and selfish purposes. Their mediums, too, being all private ones, would escape the injustice and cruelty of police and other prosecutions, and thus the cause be saved from the arts of the conjuror on the one hand, and the buffoonery of petty penny-a-liners of the press and the stage on the other. These few thoughts have been called forth from me through the late prosecutions of mediums in England. I cannot but lament the great trouble and expense to which our English and American brethren have been put to by these trials. Especially has this been made evident in the case of Dr. Slade, whose character for probity is well known, but who, at the instance of two scientific noodles, has had to undergo the unmerited reproach of a public trial, and be branded in the Christian and secular press as an impostor, though his innocence has been established by persons of the highest positions in the land. Of Dr. Monck, the English medium, I do not know so much; but the chances are that he, too, is an innocent man sacrificed to the bigotry and ignorance of his persecutors and judges. In his case I would not be at all surprised if it be true what his friends have reported of his mediumship—should his spirit-friends open his prison doors for him as they did in the case of Peter. If so, what then? Would the human animals who have condemned him believe?—It is not in them, they being without any spiritual knowledge, and living only for this life. I say it is wrong to subject any of our mediums to such a life. Herding with criminals is no place for them. It appears to me, therefore, that our doors should be closed against such a profession, and that we, one and all, should carry on our investigations by the aid of unprofessional and private mediums. Were this plan adopted, spiritualism would be purged from an atmosphere of doubt and suspicion, and our mediums protected from such senseless and apparently vindictive prosecutions as those which have just culminated in the condemnation, I fear, of more than one innocent man.

Sandhurst, 4th April, 1877. THE CHAIRMAN.

MR. PEEBLES—A QUERY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—As by the time this is published Mr. J. M. Peebles will probably have arrived in Melbourne, permit me, through your columns, to ask him a question.

In his volume of “*Travels Around the World*,” he seems to endorse the Biblical account of the walls of Jericho, and speaks of the “mediumistic” priests who circumambulated the city. May I ask Mr. P. if he thinks it was owing to their “mediumistic” that those “holy men of old” succeeded in making the walls fall at the sound of their “mediumistic” trumpets?—or does he regard the Scripture narrative as a fiction?

Hoping for a reply from our able lecturer in your next issue,

I remain yours truly,

Hobart Town, Tasmania.

AMADEUS.

[ANSWER.]

As to the occurrence of the Biblical account above referred to, I neither affirm nor deny. The Bible, a collection of some sixty-six books, written by different authors during long intervals of time, must, like any other book, stand or fall upon its intrinsic merits. Personally, I am an earnest believer in the Bible, believing its history to be history; its proverbs to be proverbs; its psalms to be psalms; its prophecies to be prophecies; its parables to be parables; its truths to be truths; and its errors to be errors. If the walls of Jericho fell, as described, it is the most rational to conclude that the force, though spiritual, belonged to the plane of physical mediumship.

J. M. P.

THE BIBLE VERSUS PAGANISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—I read with some degree of surprise in the *Spectator* and *Methodist Chronicle* of last month, that the "Golden Rule," recorded in the 7th chap. of Matthew, 12th verse, is a sentence taken from the writings of Confucius, the Chinese apostle. This great and good man was contemporary with Pythagoras, and Socrates, who lived about 560 years before the birth of Christ. Thus, when Europeans were barbarians, China had been civilised hundreds of years—one of their encyclopædias alone consisting of 55,000 volumes. The writings of this man—regarded by the Chinese as their Bible—are copied into our New Testament, and called by ministers of religion the Word of God.

Some few years ago, a recitation from Shakespeare was given by a gentleman at a Wesleyan soiree in this neighbourhood, which outraged the feelings of many of the congregation, who had been taught in their Sunday Schools by illiterate Methodist teachers, all that stands printed in the Bible, they are, without any discrimination or judgment, to call God's Word!

You may imagine the surprise of those who felt so offended on that occasion, when informed by a "Constant Reader" (in the *Mount Alexander Mail*), of the Apostle Paul's quoting plays, and making his quotations part and parcel of those Scriptures which they fancy were all dictated by God!

In Luke's narration of Saul's sudden conversion, in the Acts of the Apostles (chap. 9, ver. 5), and also in Paul's defence before Agrippa (chap. 26, ver. 14) stands a most expressive sentence which may be found in Eschylus, and in Euripides, and in Terence—and what is more, that classic sentence is given as proceeding out of the lips of Jesus himself, addressed to Saul, who was exercising his utmost hostility against the early Christians—"It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

Paul was a highly educated man, and he scrupled not, after his conversion, to introduce into his writings words and phrases which he felt to be appropriate and expressive, no matter where he had learned them. Thus we find him quoting a fragment of Meander, the Grecian comic poet, in the 33rd verse of 15th chapter of his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians—"Evil communications corrupt good manners." And if preachers were to introduce into their sermons a few telling passages from our poets, they might convert part of their choking loaf of fossil sawdust into the bread of life. Some preachers enliven, invigorate, ornament their discourses, whether lectures or sermons, with elucidatory and recommendatory extracts. Truth will not be less acceptable for being presented in an agreeable dress. Take Dr. Adam Clarke as an example. He has enlivened, and illustrated, and enriched his commentary on the Bible, with numerous quotations from the poets—Shakespeare being his favorite, from whose plays are many beautiful and appropriate passages. And why should not the clergy of the various churches ornament and enliven their sermons by following Paul's example in quoting heathen poets, and also poets of any age or nation.

That the system of morals professed in the New Testament contained no maxim which had not been previously enunciated, and that some of the most beautiful passages in the Apostolic writings are quotations from Pagan authors, is well known to every scholar. But to assert that Christianity communicated to Man moral truths previously unknown, argues, on the part of the asserter, either gross ignorance, or else wilful fraud.—*Buckle*, vol. i., page 164.

This is strikingly exemplified in the Lord's Prayer, which might have been used by Plato, Pythagoras, or Socrates, by Jew, Gentile, or Deist, without compromising any of their principles. It deals in mere temporal things, avoiding spiritual things altogether.

Wetstein says, it is a curious fact that the Lord's Prayer may be reconstructed almost verbatim out of the Talmud, which also contains a prophetic intimation that all prayer will one day cease, except the prayers of thanksgiving.—*Mackay's Progress of Intellect*.

Rev. Joseph Mendham, in alluding to the similarity between the Lord's Prayer and certain portions of the

ancient Jewish prayers, tells us that if the corresponding passages were collected together, they would nearly produce the Lord's Prayer.

Redford writes on *Extempore Prayer*—Prayers strictly formed on the above model would be considered by all orthodox Christians as extremely deficient, and by no means an adequate exhibition of the principles of Christian devotion. It does not contain any recognition of the medium of acceptance; nor, in short, of any doctrine peculiarly Christian. It is materially deficient as a Christian prayer, on the doctrine of the Spirit's influence, which is one of the distinguishing tenets of the Gospel dispensation. Strictly speaking, it is a Jewish Prayer.

Lord John Russell, upwards of twenty years ago, told the Christian Young Men, in Exeter Hall—"Some there are who shut their eyes to one truth lest it should impair another they deem more sacred; but one truth can no more quench another truth than one sunbeam can quench another sunbeam. Truth is One, as God is One."—Yours, &c.,

LAYMAN.

Vaughan, April 17, 1877.

"THE TWO WORLDS" NEWSPAPER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

A FRIEND of mine, employed in one of the "State Schools," forwarding me *The Two Worlds*, published in Maryborough, writes by the same mail, calling my attention to an article under the heading of "Spiritism." Reading the lucubration I exclaimed at once—rightly named, *The Two Worlds*—earth and hades!—for certainly such a false, uncharitable, and venomous effusion, could have been inspired from no other source than the "Hells" so forcibly described by Swedenborg.

The following passages show the *animus* of this writer:—

"Spiritism, where the phenomena are genuine, and are not the result of fraud and trickery, is the latest and grossest of the many delusions with which the Devil has beguiled the human mind, since the hour he first whispered to Adam and Eve 'Ye shall not surely die;' and ye shall be as gods."

That the Spiritual phenomena now occurring in all the enlightened portions of the earth are "delusions of the Devil," is only a reiteration of the charge that those hypocritical pharisees brought against the spiritual marvels of Jesus and the apostles. Will this writer, since he is on such familiar terms with the "Devil," allow us to inquire how this personal "Devil" got into a moral universe governed by a God of infinite goodness, wisdom and power? Is the Devil self-existent?—No one will presume to affirm this. Did God, then, create the Devil; and if so, for what purpose? Or, is he a fallen angel; and if so, may not all angels and saints fall, thus ultimately depopulating Heaven? And further, admitting the existence and industry of this Devil who is deluding so many millions into Spiritualism, and among them scientists, and the most scholarly men of the world; why does not God destroy him at once? Logically put—either God can kill the Devil and will not; or God would kill the Devil but cannot. Which position do you take? None of your dogmatism, nor pitiful appeals to the legends of a mythical Eden. But tell us, sir, what you possibly *know* about the Devil, and *how* you know it!

"He (the Devil) represents the animating principle, or vital spark in man, as endowed with the capacity of transcending the law of gravitation, after it quits the body at death, and of ascending from the earth—without any kind of inherent impelling, or externally propelling power—into certain regions of space called 'spheres;' where it acts organically without organs, and mechanically without mechanism. It thinks without a brain, sees without eyes, speaks without a mouth and throat, talks without a tongue, smells without a nose, eats without teeth, digests its food without a stomach, touches without hands, walks about without legs, and lifts heavy weights without bones and muscles. It gets 'spiritual senses;' although this is a contradiction in terms; and begets 'spiritual' children, who have bodies composed of 'spirit-matter!' And, although reputed to be free from all 'material environment,' the mind of a person who is supposed to have passed into the 'summer-land,' is described as carrying cauliflowers, flat-irons, sitches of bacon, domestic utensils, and corpulent women through the air, with the utmost ease; and as coming at the beck and call of any medium or circle which chooses to invoke it; the upper-crust 'spirits' being so much in demand that they are assumed to be present—but how, is not explained—in a dozen places at once, in different parts of the globe."

That there is a semi-omnipotent Devil likely to outwit Christ, and get the better of the Almighty, the above tissue of lies, clipped from the *Two Worlds*, furnishes some considerable evidence. Not enough, however, to carry conviction; and, therefore, as there is no personal Devil, the inspiration of this passage, and the whole article in fact, must be ascribed to a demon—a *demon*, possibly professing to have been in some previous “incarnation,” a Jesus, a Shakespeare, or a magnetic “sun-spirit.” It is natural, and to be expected that a certain class of vain ambitious demons, under the cloak of humility will, whether in mortal bodies or vested in the robes of immortality, “*speak lies in hypocrisy.*” The above quotation from the *Two Worlds* seems a very fulfilment of this Pauline prophecy. How sensible in the apostle of old to enjoin upon men to “try the spirits,” that is, test them by your reason, your common sense, and the cultured consciousness of the race.

Here is another specimen of malicious misrepresentation:—

“But to those who tamper with these “manifestations,” where they are genuine, the danger is great indeed; for they are literally “drinking of the cup,” and eating of “the table of devils;” and a baleful fire is communicated to them which withers them up, mind and body. All such proceedings are contrary to the course of nature, repugnant to the law of God, and disastrous to the physical health and mental soundness of those who take part in them. They send more inmates to the lunatic asylums than even religion itself; and Spiritism is, in reality, the last desperate effort of the Devil to retain his dominion,” &c., &c.

It is astonishing to what depths one may sink when coming under the psychological influences of an ambitious woman; and especially is this the case when these magnetic influences are intensified by the unseen presence of a cunning Jesuitical demon who, first magnetising, afterwards infested, and continues to infest this feminine body. The contemplation of such obsessional proceedings makes thoughtful souls sad.

Just as the dishonest doubt every one's integrity, just as the libertine denies virtue to others, so these obsessing demons that people the lower spirit-spheres delight through the tongues and pens of mediumistic mortals to denounce Spiritualism, and talk of its filling “lunatic asylums.” We recommend this writer to read Dr. E. Crowell's statistics, recently gathered from “eighty-seven asylums for the insane in the United States,” and never again repeat the above falsehood!

It is understood by Spiritualists that both the higher and lower intelligences of the spirit-world have access to mankind. And it should be remembered that those lower obsessing spirits invariably make great pretensions. If not originally from the Sun, or Jupiter, then they were great and honored characters when upon earth. They quite often forbid reasoning, and the reading of Spiritualist literature, because they can teach all things necessary to be known. Sometimes they profess much humility and unselfishness, and have even prophesied of an approaching “magnetic fire-wave,” and the almost immediate destruction of the world.”

Hoping both to improve the frisky temper and enlighten the mind of this anonymous writer, touching the teachings and aims of Spiritualism, we have to say that the spiritual philosophy, while repudiating the “Fall of Man;” “Trinity;” “vicarious atonement;” “personal Devil;” and “endless hell torments,” with other minor doctrines common to sectarian Christianity, teaches the existence of one living and true God; the saving influences of the Christ-principle; the certainty of a just and adequate punishment for all wrong-doing; the importance of repentance, and the leading of pure self-sacrificing lives, and the blessed realisation of a present angel ministry to earth.

Spiritualists believe, or rather have a positive knowledge of a future existence through vision, trance, gift of tongues, writing, and other Spiritual manifestations. They consider heaven and hell to be conditions, the spiritual spheres the “many mansions” which Jesus referred, and the different phases of manifestations as necessary as the different workmen upon a temple. Spiritualism encourages toleration, brings messages from spirit friends, cheers the desponding, comforts the sick, brushes away the mourner's tears, and makes the insane sane, healthy, and happy.

Finally, we entreat of this “Two World's” writer, whoever he may be, to carefully study the dialect of truth; to cease bearing false witness against his peers; to cultivate charity and brotherly love; to award to others the moral honesty he claims for himself; to discriminate in the future between religion and christianity, and to hesitate before further misrepresenting Spiritualism, and misconstruing the beautiful teachings of such exalted and loving spirits as, under the good providence of God, communicate with and minister unto mortals.

J. M. PEEBLES.

THE TRINITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—Since Dr. Peebles' third lecture, in which he quoted Wesleyan and Baptist hymns, setting forth the notion that Jesus of Nazareth was the Almighty Creator of the Universe, I have heard several persons say that such notions were confined chiefly to the Methodists and Baptists, and (except in the case of the “Athanasian Creed,” which most churchmen repudiate) were not adopted by the Church of England.

In a hymn-book used by the leading Anglican churches of this city I read as follows:—

Hymn 114.—“O Christ, thy triumphs now begin
O'er captive death and conquered sin.”

“Bow thy meek head to mortal pain,
Then take, O God, thy power and reign.”

Hymn 115.—“Make us to hate the load of sin
That lay so heavy on our God.”

Hymn 117.—“Then the Son, the World's Creator.”
“Clothed in our mortality.”

Hymn 119.—“There our God bore all our guilt.”

Hymn 399.—“Jesu, my Lord, my God, my all.”

Hymn 563.—“Lord Jesus, God and Man,
For love of men a Child;
The Very God, yet born on earth
Of Mary, undefiled.”

In this last line we have the Popish doctrine of the “Immaculate Conception.” It will, perhaps, be necessary to say that the Hymnbook quoted from is “Church Hymns, published under the direction of the Tract Committee.”

Still, Mr. Editor, whilst repudiating the doctrine of the Trinity as blasphemous, I cannot agree with those who consider the doctrine aforesaid as anti-scriptural. In 2nd Epistle of Peter (I. i.) I read:—“Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Now, on referring to the Greek Text, I find the correct rendering of the latter part to be “through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, our God and Father.” Similarly, Titus, II., xiii., should be—“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ, our great God and Saviour.”

I should like, Mr. Editor, to call the attention of Unitarians to the texts, and to hear their explanations.

Yours truly, VOX.

MR. WALKER, THE MEDIUM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER.

DEAR SIR,—With your kind permission I will take the opportunity now offered to inform you of my future course in the colonies, but, before doing so, I beg leave to mention my past success. During the time I have been in Sydney I have been greeted with large houses, and attentive audiences. Seldom have I been shown such courtesy as the Sydney people have offered, and I cannot reasonably wish to have better success anywhere. I have learned to appreciate the benefits of controlled enthusiasm, and to see the good effects of well-directed labor. I feel more than thankful to Brother Tyerman for the good work he has done in the past, making for myself and others, who shall hereafter walk in the path he has cleared, comparatively speaking, easy work. He is a devout Spiritualist, and can endure an enormous amount of work. Dr. Wilson, Mr. Gale, and others, never tire of labor, and are always ready to embrace every opportunity of giving to the world in general the sublime truths of the Harmonial Philosophy. Their

kindness to me I shall always remember, and for their assistance in my meetings I shall always be indebted to them. The public are ready for a spiritual reformation here.

On Wednesday next I sail in the s.s. Rotuma for Auckland, New Zealand, where I intend staying for a week or two, and thence southward to Dunedin. It is my intention then to return to Sydney, deliver a few more lectures, and then come on to Melbourne. I am in hopes that arrangements can be made for my having a successful visit to your city, as it will be my last point of lecturing on my "tour around the world."

In spiritual sympathy,

I am yours,

THOS. WALKER.

OUTLINES OF SPIRITUALISM.

BY FREDERIC BOND.

No. IV.—"CAN SUCH THINGS BE?"

—O—

With regard to the miracle question, I can only say that the word 'impossible' is not to my mind applicable to matters of philosophy. That the possibilities of Nature are infinite is an aphorism with which I am wont to worry my friends."—*Professor Huxley*.

BUT, it may be urged, how can these things possibly take place?—Are they not in direct contravention of the laws of Nature, and thus impossible? This question may be best answered by another:—What is to be understood by the laws of Nature?

It may be confidently asserted that Nature's laws are God's laws, seeing that nothing can occur contrary to the immutable laws by which the universe is governed; nothing can therefore occur which would violate or subvert the laws of Nature. It is very easy to talk about *subverting* and *violating* these laws; it is also easy to assert that the phenomena of Spiritualism are at variance with them. But mere assertion does not prove a theory. One of the most emphatic teachings of modern philosophy is that we can have no *a priori* knowledge of natural laws and phenomena. To say that the movement of any ponderous object without visible contact is a matter of absolute impossibility, is simply a *petitio principii*, and not an established fact.

Moreover, in considering the relation of spiritual manifestations to the miraculous and supernatural, we must first come to an understanding as to what meaning these latter terms convey. Hume, in his petty bigotry and narrow-mindedness, has defined a miracle to be a "violation of the laws of nature"—something which is, *per se*, impossible—and maintains that no amount of testimony can be held sufficient to establish an alleged fact which is not in accordance with common experience. But this definition has already been shown to be misleading, and must therefore be discarded. Far more rational and sound is the definition of Locke. He says:—

"A miracle I take to be a sensible operation which, being above the comprehension of the spectator, and in his opinion contrary to the established course of nature, is taken by him to be divine."

Spiritualists are unanimous in affirming that the facts on which their philosophy is based are "miraculous" and "substantial" in external appearance only; that they are governed by similar laws to those which govern other phenomena; and that unless these laws be supplied they cannot possibly take place. Those who oppose Spiritualism in the name of physical science have yet to open their eyes to the fact that even they, great as they are, are not yet acquainted with *all* the laws and workings of Nature.

It is in consequence of such people presuming to know more than they really do, that Spiritualism has been subjected to the vast amount of misrepresentation it has. And there appears to be no effectual remedy. Scientific investigation is, for the most part, not to be obtained, mainly for the reason that scientists as a body deny *a priori* the reality of the manifestations. The Press, too, has taken up its stand against "the uncanny thing." For years past the public taste has been satiated by seeing the glorious truths of Spiritualism constantly satirized

and burlesqued, whilst its disciples have too often been held up to merciless ridicule and execration. True, there are a few pearls to be picked out of the dunghill, which feebly shine forth, some of the less startling claims of modern Spiritualism, but they are like what angels' visits have been inaccurately said to be—few and far between. The *Spectator* is one of these, and suffers somewhat in consequence. But foremost among that portion of the Press which most vehemently denounces Spiritualism is, perhaps, the *Saturday Review*, a weekly journal aspiring to deal with "politics, literature, science and art." The following extract from the issue of this journal for September 16, 1876, is a specimen of its literature and science—especially science—for its bare-faced and deliberate untruthfulness it could scarcely be equalled. It was as follows:—

The chief fact about spiritualistic effects is that they are never performed in a straightforward, open way, like any honest experiment. They are either done in the dark, or only before known believers and confederates, or within a special place specially prepared; and even when they are done in the daylight the operator is full of tricks to distract attention, and to produce mysterious bewilderment. Take these facts, which are really facts—that spiritual manifestations are never heard of except in a select company in a private room, and under circumstances in which almost any amount of trickery may be practised; that the voices of the spirits usually talk nonsense and bad grammar; and that there has never been a single occasion on which their supposed communications have been of the slightest value—and it will be seen how absurd it is to say that such things deserve scientific investigation. There is nothing which Home does that Houdin, or other honest jugglers, have not done. . . . The moral of the whole affair is summed up in Robert Stephen's remark to the man who used to bother him about perpetual motion:—"If you will take yourself up by the belly-band of your breeches and carry yourself round the room, I will consider the matter."

Leaving out of consideration the last sentence, which is of course only intended to raise a smile, every spiritualist well knows that the "facts" of the *Saturday Review* are wholly unlike other facts: they are contrary to the truth.

It is the story of Galileo and the Aristotelians over again. It will be remembered that Aristotle affirmed the principle that "the velocity acquired by any falling body was in the direct proportion of its weight," and that if two bodies of unequal weight commenced their descent from the same height at the self-same moment, the heavier body would move as many times swifter than the lighter as its weight exceeded that of the latter. Galileo submitted this principle to experiment, and found it to be altogether at variance with fact. He made no secret of his discovery. For this the Aristotelian philosophers made him a target for all their venom and wrath. Galileo maintained that in this teaching Aristotle was at fault—they asserted he was not. The gauntlet for both parties to test by experiment the truth of the Aristotelian principle of falling bodies was thrown down and accepted. The contentionists repaired to the leaning tower of Pisa, where the experiment was to be put into practice. The signal having been given two balls, one twice as heavy as the other, were simultaneously dropped from the summit of the tower, and their descent anxiously watched by the assembled crowd. The balls reached the earth exactly at the same instant. It would have been expected that when his adversaries were furnished with ocular proof of the error of their theory they would have relinquished it, and that Galileo would have received the honour and praise due to him. But such was not the case. On the contrary we are told that "they clung to their former opinions with the tenacity of despair, and assailed the now proud and haughty Galileo with the bitter feelings of disappointment and hate." And such is the manner in which the claims of Spiritualism are met by the majority of scientific men at the present day. Spiritualists maintain that by some force, only recently developed to the extent it now is, tables, chairs, and even human beings, have been raised some feet off the ground without human contact; anti-Spiritualists assert that such a phenomenon is impossible, because it would set aside the law of gravitation. A challenge is issued to submit the matter to experiment, and is accepted. The disputants repair to the house of a "medium," and ocular proof of the truth of the Spiritualist's assertion is soon supplied. But, with few exceptions, the Scientists will not yield. Parrot-like, they still repeat the word "impossible!" To them see-

ing is *not* believing. They must have been imposed on; they saw the table rise, but it was all an optical delusion, or confusion, or both. As for the other phenomena of Spiritualism which they are constantly hearing about, they do not pay any attention to them except to pooch-pooch them. They agree with the *Saturday Review* that it is absurd to say that Spiritual manifestations deserve scientific investigation, because they are merely the result of trickery and imposture; and they affirm there is nothing that spirit mediums do which have not been done by "Houdin, or other honest jugglers." I cannot help thinking that this statement of the *Review* is a deliberate *suggestio falsi*; for that journal must be well acquainted with the fact that these "honest(?) jugglers" have never in a single instance imitated the manifestations produced in the presence of a genuine medium, *with the same surroundings* as the latter. That this is really the fact is amply corroborated by the challenges to these same jugglers which are advertised in the Spiritualistic periodicals from time to time.

Luckily for the cause of Spiritualism, however, all scientific men do not belong to this class. Here and there are to be found men of advanced intellects, and world-famed reputation, who have the moral courage to brook the aversion and ridicule of their quondam friends and bear testimony to its claims. Among such men may be included W. Crookes, F.R.S., who has lately distinguished himself in his discoveries about light, and his invention of the radiometer; A. R. Wallace, a man who, for his contributions to anthropology, has made his name second only to that of Darwin; J. Ashburner, M.D.; the late Professor De Morgan, and Judge Edmonds, the latter of whom was, formerly Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New York; Dr. Hare; Professor Mapes; W. Huggins L.L.D., the famous astronomer; and hundreds of others who for want of space cannot be here mentioned.

The antagonism which Spiritualism has to contend with in these times is only what ought to be anticipated. Every new movement, every new discovery, has at first to fight its way through the ranks of ignorance, prejudice, and superstition. When Galileo announced his conviction that the sun and not the earth was the centre of the universe, and that the sun did not move round our planet, he was reviled and persecuted. When Stephenson talked of constructing his "iron-horse" he was laughed at as being partially insane. When electricity and mesmerism made their first appearances on the world's stage, as recorded by history, everybody was incredulous, and these grand discoveries were sneered at and ridiculed. Spiritualism is the latest "new-fangled notion," and has to meet with similar opposition, &c. The time will come, however, when the truths of Spiritualism, like Galileo's theory, Stephenson's invention, the powers of electricity and mesmerism will be recognised on all hands, and its bitterest enemies will acknowledge the mischief and injustice of their action of to-day. May it come speedily!

MR. THOMAS WALKER.

WE gather, not only from Dr. Peebles, but from the Spiritualist journals of America and the secular press of Sydney, that Mr. Walker is a very superior trance-speaker. Having met with great success in New South Wales, he is now lecturing in New Zealand. Friend Peebles speaks in very high terms of the spiritual intelligences that entrance him in public.

WE commend to the notice of our readers the very able article on "Samuel Johnson a Spiritualist," by Dr. Rohner, which appears in this issue, and more especially the Doctor's concluding remarks. There are, alas! too many Nicodemuses in the Spiritualistic ranks who will sooner or later have cause to regret their cowardice. Many there are cognisant of the fact of spirit intercourse, and knowing its value, who fear to attend a public meeting or lecture, lest their belief might be discovered or suspected by the world; alas for such 'twere better that they had remained in ignorance; they are like the unworthy servant who hid his talents under a bushel.—"Those who know the law and break it shall be beaten with many stripes."

THE MOSAIC CREATION.

(Continued.)

"Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord,"—Prov. xii. 2v.

It is unnecessary to examine minutely further the accounts given us of Creation in Genesis, but I shall point out various statements contained therein, which will not stand the tests used by science to detect falsehood, where accounts said to be true, are published without evidence. All affirmations at variance with well known facts, with reason, experiment, or the works or laws of Nature, SCIENTIFIC MEN REJECT AS FICTITIOUS.

In the commencement of the first chapter this earth is represented as OF AQUEOUS ORIGIN, while ITS FORMATION WAS IGNEOUS. The appearance of its first mountains resembled those of the moon. All the earlier rocks are crystalline, and void of fossils, and by their forms prove to us that at one time volcanoes abounded upon the earth. These are now gradually extinguishing; still there are upwards of 250 active volcanoes on this globe at the present time. While the lower rocks are igneous, all the upper strata are sedimentary, most of them containing marine fossils, and consequently of aqueous formation.

There is abundant evidence that the earth is gradually cooling down, for the early vegetation, both on land and in the sea, as indicated by the fossil remains contained in the lower strata, is distinctly of a tropical character all over the globe.

The dry land is said to have been furnished with vegetation before the sea, whereas the reverse is the case; for the sea was furnished with living organisms long before the dry land, the high temperature of whose atmosphere at that period probably rendered it unfit for animal and vegetable life, while the primeval ocean abounded with fish corallines and testata (shell-fish) before any vegetation existed upon the land. This we learn from the fossil remains of the various strata. The first evidence of vegetation upon the land indicates the existence of a dense tropical vegetation with extending marshes, shallow seas, and thick forest, probably the result of great heat and moisture, deposited in the ocean through floods, to prepare this earth for the habitation of man. The igneous having previously furnished the necessary metals, the zoophyte and shells, immediately before this period (which abounded in the heated ocean), provided a supply of lime—our mountain limestone—a wonderful provision made by the Infinite wisdom for the future comfort and convenience of Man, all of which occur in the vicinity of each other; the coal and lime being necessary for the smelting of the iron and other metals, while the action of the atmosphere and the flood upon the rocks, and decayed vegetation, gradually prepared the earth for cultivation and the abode of men.

Science can demonstrate that the dry land has been thrown up by means of subterranean forces, and not effected by drainage merely as described in the text. Water is a liquid which finds its own level and cannot be piled up, as described "in another place" it would immediately flow back. Moreover, *it is a law of Nature* that the waters of the oceans are in constant motion, attracted by the sun and moon they flow round the earth in tides.

In the Psalms we are told that at Creation "*God stretched out the earth above the waters.*"* This is untrue, and incompatible with the other scriptural statements. To all intelligent men who love the truth incongruities are most disgusting. We object not to Sabbatharians believing in this, but their attempts to enforce their superstitious upon us we will assuredly resist, AND, FOR SELF-PROTECTION, WILL EXPOSE THEM.

It is not true that all things in heaven and on the earth have been created in "six consecutive days!" Animal and vegetable life upon this earth has been gradually developed through a long continuity of causation, most probably through evolution extending over countless ages. This is indicated both by astronomy and geology. The statement that the sun, moon, and stars were all created on one day—the evening and the morning "of the fourth day—to give light upon the earth," is a most

* Psalm cxxvi. 6.

humiliating evidence of the IGNORANCE, CREDULITY, OR DUPLICITY OF OUR CLERGY, who in solemn mockery read the command over to their congregations, as a revelation of God from heaven, every Sunday in their Church service.

The earth's diameter is about 8,000 miles, the diameters of her sister-planets—Jupiter and Saturn—are ten times that size. The sun is a million times the volume of the earth. There are many millions of stars, some of them astronomers calculate to be a million times the volume of our sun. Most of the stars are believed to be suns, and to be surrounded by their worlds; and we are gravely told that all these were created in one natural day!—not in twenty-four hours, but in "one evening and morning!"—"TO GIVE LIGHT UPON THE EARTH," while God, (it is recorded), occupied five days in creating our little planet!! And these things *we are asked to believe without being furnished with any reasonable evidence of its truth*, against the incontrovertible evidence of astronomy and geology, by the professors of a religion who dare not meet us in discussion; and who, as long as they were able, *persecuted, imprisoned, and put scientific men to death*, and "extirpated all heretics." †

It is not true that all animal and vegetable life was created at one period, for each of the various geological formations contains the fossils of animal and vegetable life peculiar to itself, and not the slightest indication of man or his works is to be found till far up in the strata, the fossils of which show a gradual development from the lower to the higher organisms, from a simple cell up to civilised Man. No vertebrata are to be found among the earliest strata.

The age of the earth, as recorded on the margin of English Bibles, taken from the genealogies it contains is also untrue, which proves to us that many of its genealogies are fictitious. That the age of the earth therein given is incorrect is easily proved through either geology or astronomy. Those who wish to examine this subject we recommend to read Sir Charles Lyle's work on "The Antiquity of Man," and any work on astronomy that refers to the distance of remote stars, and the period required before their rays can reach this earth.

In conclusion, let me say, I have pointed out glaring discrepancies between the accounts given us in the first and in the second chapter of Genesis.

Secondly—That the earth is not of aqueous but of igneous origin. It would not be in darkness when full of active volcanoes.

Thirdly—That there is no such firmament as is described.

Fourthly—That the dry land was formed by upheavals, and not as therein described by drainage.

Fifthly—That the sun, moon, and stars are not attached to any firmament.

Sixthly—Nor is our rain supplied from any such source, which shows the story of the flood to be a fabrication.

Seventhly—I have shown that the sea was furnished with living organisms long ages before the dry land was.

Eighthly—That animal and vegetable life was not all created at one period. Multitudes of forms died out in the struggle for existence, and were succeeded by other forms which also perished long before man appeared upon the earth.

Ninthly—I referred to the absurd statement of the creation of all the heavenly bodies in one day.

In short, I have shown that the account of Creation, contained in Genesis, is contradictory with itself, inconsistent with reason, with the laws of nature, and the record inscribed with the finger of God on the rocks for our instruction, from which I draw the following conclusions:—

Firstly—That the whole account given us of Creation in Genesis is contradicted by scientific evidence, and is consequently unworthy of credit.

Secondly—As death was a universal law upon the earth from the beginning, extending over all living organisms, of which Man is the highest known link, it was not therefore the result of the fall.

† See the Solemn League and Covenant contained in the Longer Catechism of the Church of Scotland. It is but justice to acknowledge that they were authorised to do so by their Scriptures.—Tim. iii. 16. Deut. xvii. 12.

Thirdly—As the fall is fictitious, so also must be the atonement. And,

Fourthly—If Genesis is fictitious, the Bible is not the "Inspired Word of God;" and if there be no firmament or heaven for the Saints, what then if Spiritualism be untrue?

SCIENCE.

DR. PEEBLES' THIRD LECTURE.

THE following report we clip from the columns of the *Melbourne Daily Herald*.—

"The Prince of Wales Opera House was literally crowded last evening to hear the third lecture of Dr. Peebles upon the subject of Spiritualism and its relation to Christianity. Founding his remarks upon the words of the prophet Obadiah, 'Saviours shall come up on Mount Zion,' he said that the study of the conservation of forces had demonstrated the fact that the universe knew no loss. Not a particle of dust could be annihilated, neither could a truth be destroyed. Truth, the natural sustenance of the human soul, was incarnated in moral heroes and saviours. When the Chinese called there came Confucius; as Krishna came to the Hindoos, Plato to the Greeks, and Jesus to the Jews. These teachers and saviours came in harmony with the immutable laws of God—came to their own, and 'their own received them not.' The speaker accepted Peter's definition—'Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God.' He was called the 'Son of Man' eighty times. He ate, slept, drank, became wearied, and was finally crucified, a martyr to the principles he taught. 'I see in Jesus,' said the lecturer, 'a teacher, reformer, shepherd, the brightness of the Father's glory, the 'man Christ Jesus!' He repudiated the Calvinistic doctrine of the atonement, pronouncing it a heathen superstition. The Hindoos still sacrificed goats and kids for a sort of sin-offering. The Jews borrowed these practices from the Egyptians, and these again from the Hindoos; and sectarian Christians slightly modifying had woven them into the crimson fabric of a creedal Christianity. Salvation was a matter of soul-growth, of interior unfoldment, and only achieved through good works. He drew a sharp line of distinction between Jesus and Christ. Jesus was a man whose Hebrew name was Joshua. He was generally called Joshua, the Galilean—Joshua, the carpenter's son. Christ signified the anointed, the illumined, just as Buddha signified the enlightened. These saviours were not supernatural men, neither were the marvellous works ascribed to them. The superhuman power possessed by Jesus was spiritual, or mediumistic power. English scientists would denominate it psychic force. Jesus declared that a legion of angels, or spiritual beings attended him. On the mount of transfiguration the spirits of Moses and Elias appeared and talked in the presence of others. Jesus was the great Hebrew Spiritualist of that period, as Ann Lee was of a later. The most practical Christians upon earth were the Shakers. Their mottoes were—purity of life, peace, and 'all things in common.' As a people they were neat, industrious, temperate, charitable; and further—they were *all* Spiritualists.

"Though Jesus, the Saviour, was called by Paul 'Mediator,' though he was the great Spiritualist of his time and era, he could not do all that was required of him. His power was limited. He confessed that he 'could do no mighty works' in a certain place, because of the 'unbelief.' He healed the sick by magnetic power. Lazarus was in a deep trance, similar in appearance to death. An unconscious trance was death to all external things. Jesus awoke him from this state. Now, Jesus was one of the Christ angels, a dweller in the Heaven of Heavens, yet preaching and ministering to all who would receive his holy ministrations. Mediumship was defined to be a channel for psychic force. It existed germinally in all persons, as did music. It was susceptible of use and abuse. The three prominent phases were physical, psychological, and inspirational, corresponding to mineral, mental, and spiritual magnetism. In the ratio that mediumship became better understood, would communications be more correct and intellectual. Reason must try all spirits, and test the truthfulness of all spirit mes-

sages. The speaker enforcing the thought that ancient Biblical marvels and modern marvels must rest upon the same foundation—human testimony—expressed surprise that Christians should accept the testimony of Moses, who slew an Egyptian; Solomon, guilty of many social irregularities; and Peter who falsified; and yet reject the testimony of Wallace, Crookes, Varley, Flammarion, the French astronomer, and other great giant-minded men of the world. All creeds were the work of men's hands. These the clergy were forced to modify just in the ratio that science and free-thought advanced. Hell was constantly becoming more comfortable. Light was reaching the masses, intelligence was making rapid strides, and Spiritualism constantly gaining accessions and achieving victories. This new religion he declared to be in perfect harmony with the marvels and teachings of Jesus Christ. Popular Christianity was anti-Christ. He defined Spiritualism to be a phenomenon, a philosophy, a broad rational religion demonstrating immortality."

THE MELBOURNE "HERALD'S" REPORT OF DR. PEEBLES' FOURTH LECTURE.

THE Prince of Wales Opera House was crowded again last night to hear the lecture upon "Spiritualism, the Foundation of all Religions—John Wesley, a Spiritualist," &c.

After the able introduction by Mr. Ross, which he devoted to corrections concerning Col. Olcott, and Dr. Henry Slade, as well as showing the scale of liberal literature, and the steady spread of Spiritualism in all enlightened countries, Mr. Peebles rising, said in substance, that religion existed elementally in human nature. It was as natural for men, civilised or savage, to worship, as for water to seek a level. Hidden under all superstitions were some precious gems, and germs of truth. There was no conflict between religion and reason. The conflict was between reason and theology—reason and superstitious creeds. God was defined to be Causation—Infinite Spirit. And man, made in his image, was necessarily a spiritual being, and these spiritual forces run like golden threads through all the world's religions.

Gautama Buddha, dying 543 years B.C., fasted and prayed till he saw visions, heard the voices of the gods, and received his heavenly commission to preach against caste, against war, and all the ceremonial forms of Brahminism. He was a fiery Luther to Brahminical India. Buddhists are supposed to number 170,000,000.

Jesus Christ, called by Peter "a man approved of God," was heralded by a convoy of angels. Over Bethlehem's hills they sung "Peace on earth and goodwill to man." The original foundation of Christianity was based upon a dream—for the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, foretelling the coming and the office-work of Jesus. He made the lame to walk, blind to see, and healed the sick by the "laying on of hands." Spiritual manifestations were the seals of his messiahship. He promised that the same signs should follow believers. The New Testament was all aflame with spiritualism.

Mahomet, born 571 A.D., has a following of some 200,000,000. It is asserted by Arabian writers that on the evening of Mahomet's birth the heavens were illumined, that Lake Sama was dried up, and the Parsees' sacred fire extinguished. He saw a golden scroll dropped down before him proclaiming him the last envoy from Heaven. There is but "one God, Allah, and Mahomet is his prophet," became the rallying cry from this time throughout Arabia. And now Mahomedans proudly say the Crescent has more followers than the Cross.

As Spiritualism underlies the three great religions of the world, so it does, said the speaker, the lesser. American Universalists started with Potter and John Murray, both endowed with spiritual gifts. The New Church dates from Swedenborg, who held open converse with spirits and angels twenty-seven years of his life. George Fox, and other of the early Quaker preachers had visions, and heard spirit voices. The still small voice was their guide. Ann Lee, of Manchester, England, was told in a vision to go to America, and found the Millennial Church. She was a spiritualist medium. All Shakers were spiritualists. The London and Melbourne Press to the contrary, there was not a Shaker society nor community in England. The Girlingtones, though so-called, are not Shakers.

Wesleyanism, like other religions, had its spiritual manifestations. Knockings, noises, groanings, and the rustling of dresses commenced in the Wesley family at Epworth, December, 1716. These knockings were heard in Mr. Wesley's study-room, and during family prayers. They were the loudest when the Rev. Samuel Wesley prayed for the King. John Wesley says the sound "seemed to be in the air in the middle of the room." They "could not imitate it by any contrivance." Passing into "different rooms, door-latches were lifted before being touched, and once, when the father was going into his study, he came "near being thrust down" by this invisible power. Was it the devil?—If so, what business had the devil in a preacher's library; and why should he be in attendance at family prayers? Is there, asked the speaker, a personal devil?—If so, did God create him, or did he create himself? And further, if there is a devil, why does not "God annihilate him at once?"

Is it said that this devil was once an angel who sinned, rebelled, and fought in Heaven? Then other angels and saints might rebel and be thrust out of Heaven. This was chilly comfort for Christians. The *Wesleyan Spectator* argued that "spiritism was demonism. This was the charge that the more bigoted of the Jews brought against Jesus Christ. But why should God let loose the demons from the hells, and bar away from earth all saints and angels? Could this be called justice, saying nothing of mercy? It would be quite natural, said the speaker, for Sectarists who had "departed from the faith" of primitive Christianity, and given heed to "doctrines of devils," which doctrines were the "fall of man," "total depravity," "vicarious atonement," and "endless hell torments," to charge Spiritualism with being a system of demonism.

The clergy in preaching so much about "devils," "hells," and "damnation," taught the youth profanity. The entire system of orthodox doctrines was immoral in tendency. If this "demonism" so-called, demonstrated a future existence—if it made the lame to walk, and healed the sick by the laying on of hands, as did Jesus and the apostles, it was doing for the world what the Christian church did not even profess to do. While Spiritualism conserved all the good of antiquity, it reached out its right hand to every new discovery in science, and every beautiful revelation from the world of spirits. It is based upon living tangible facts, rather than the dead marvels of the past. The spiritual philosophy was the growing philosophy of the world. Without visions the people perish. Christians must conquer their pride, destroy their fossilised creeds, and again accept spiritual manifestations. Otherwise they must continue to dwindle away in numbers to ultimately perish in eternal forgetfulness.

BRIEF REPORT OF DR. PEEBLES' LAST LECTURE IN THE OPERA HOUSE.

THERE could not have been less than 2,500 persons present on Sunday evening last, either sitting or standing, to hear the closing lecture, advertised to treat upon the subject of Death—Cremation—Funerals—and the Condition of the Souls of Infants, Idiots, Suicides, and the Wicked in the World of Spirits. The course throughout proved a complete success; thus rebuking the faint-hearted, and putting to silence all carpers and pseudo-critics. It is now an admitted fact that Spiritualism is already a power in Melbourne, and a growing power throughout the colony.

After appropriate remarks by the chairman, Mr. Stow, explanatory of the aims of the "Melbourne Spiritualist and Free-thought Association," followed by a very eloquent rendering of Miss Doten's poem upon "Life," by Mrs. Williams, Dr. Peebles rising and quoting the Revelator's words, "*There shall be no more death*," said in substance:—

That life and death, as God's right and left-hand angels; as positive and negative forces in nature; as musical ripples upon the measureless ocean of existence were both in their turn and time equally beautiful. Insects, animals, men died, not because Adam partook of Eden's fruit, but because they were mortal, being constituted of physically organised substances. The "fall of man" was a fall from ignorance to knowledge—a fall upward one step higher in the march of progress. The law of progression, while infilling, overarched all things.

Men were not placed upon earth to prepare to die but to prepare to live, and if well prepared to live they were prepared for any event, even death, which was but transition, or the transplanting of the soul into the Sunnier gardens of God.

One of three destinies awaited all human beings—a dreamless annihilation: endless hell torments; or a future conscious and progressive existence for all human intelligencies. The latter was the teaching of Spiritualism. The process of dying was just as natural as the process of birth. The spasms and seeming throes of agony during the change were not indicative of pain, but of the soul's effort to burst away from the impaired and crumbling tenement it had inhabited.

The speaker vividly described the burning of a corpse that he witnessed in Calcutta, and referred incidentally to the cremation of Baron de Palm in America. He also depicted the Parsee method of exposing their dead upon "The Towers of Silence," and compared it with Christian burial, expressing for himself a preference for cremation. People should not visit cemeteries and lean over newly made graves, as the sickening gasses rising therefrom generated disease; neither should they, as the custom was in Christian lands at funerals, bend and weep over decomposing putrid dead bodies, even though encoffined.

The practice while unphilosophical endangered the health. The corpse they kissed was but so much dead disorganising matter. The friend they mourned had escaped from the earthy shell, and looking back wondered that the friends did not distinguish between the deserted house and the man that once inhabited it—between the crumbling cast-off body and the resurrected soul.

Funerals were generally conducted upon a too expensive scale. They were also too gloomy and Pagan in appearance. Tombstones and costly marble shafts were unnecessary and unproductive. The ancient Jews mourned in sackcloth; the Chinese mourn in white; the American Mandaan Indians in blue; and Christians in black. Mourning apparel, while often no index to the real inner feelings, was often a pandering to fashion, a burden to the poor, and should be dispensed with, especially with Spiritualists. The American Shakers conducted their funerals sensibly and rationally. No towering headstones disfigured their cemeteries. An ordinary Christian funeral, attended by a long-visaged priest, and closing with the hymn—

"Hark from the tomb a doleful sound,"

was comparable to the second death mentioned in the Apocalypse.

The speaker expressed the wish to be left alone when dying, or at most to have present but one or two calm loving friends. These should sing a hopeful, cheerful song. The body, if not burned, should be laid cosy and comfortable upon its side in a plain coffin, and either a lively hymn should be sung, or a brass band should discourse stirring music; and when the trance-speaking and other exercises are concluded, the funeral cortege should move off quick and bounding towards the cemetery, as though a last kind act was being gladly rather than grudgingly performed.

Each should live as long in the earthly body as possible. Experiences, trials, and sufferings were necessary schoolings. Often the dying were not even for a moment unconscious. Those who died sudden and unnatural deaths remained unconscious for hours, and sometimes for days. Each one at death gravitated to his own spiritual plane of existence; the purer the life here the higher the sphere beyond the grave. Infants grew to the full stature of manhood in spirit-life. Philosophically speaking there were no idiots; all had the Divine germ within, and if not developed in this, it will be in the future world. Compensation and justice were sure to be meted to all. Suicides having purposely severed the thread of life, and cowardly left their allotted work on earth undone, suffered keen anguish and remorse in the spheres of retribution; but God's love was over all. Jesus was still preaching to spirits in prison. Angels delighted to minister to those below them; and so the work of education and redemption would go on till those in the Hells—as Swedenborg would say—were through punishment, repentance, and aspiration, brought up on to the beautiful table-lands of immortality.

Referring to the sad unhappy condition of Astor, Vanderbilt, Stewart, Ward, Singer, and others in spirit-life who, when on earth, were wealthy and selfish, he said that some of these had returned through mediums bemoaning their sordid, worldly, misspent lives. Counted rich on earth, they were now spiritually poor.

As an offset to these, and other unhappy spirits, he read the following communication from a happy spirit:—

"In passing from earth to the abode of spirits I did not fully lose my consciousness. The change was in your evening-time. Leaving the earthly casket, I floated through space, led by an angel-guide to my immortal home. There is nothing on earth with which I can compare it. The light was almost dazzling. The atmosphere glowed with jewels; the head was bathed and illumined with a golden aura, and the whole form immersed in an aroma of brightness. Amid valleys of roses flowed silvery streams. The landscapes were diversified with hills and dales. There were gardens, fountains, fields, art-galleries, bands of music, and white-robed seers and sages ministering to multitudes that seemingly no man could number. It was Heaven. Strive! O, strive! mortal brother to so live as to be fully prepared to meet me when the pilgrimage of mortal life is ended."

THE TRINITY.

River Leven, April 7, 1877.

DEAR HARBINGER,—A reply has already appeared in your journal in answer to "A Friendly Opponent;" still, as I think it does not cover all the ground capable of exploration, I hope you will afford me the opportunity of giving expression to a few thoughts on the subject at issue. The point to be discussed is not whether the God-head consists of a Trinity or not, for that is a question for theologians and metaphysicians; but what we have simply to do with is the law of evidence, and whether a man would be justified in adopting any theory not supported either by sound logical reasoning or facts. True, there are many things in physics we do not understand, but we cannot reject them because their existence is too palpably enforced. Perhaps the most simple things in nature are mysteries to the scientific world, with regard to the laws and principles by which they are governed. Who knows anything about the precise action of the electric fluid, and the wonderful secret of its transcendent energy? Some of its habits are known by the effects, and so we are able in a measure to direct its powers; but if we were thoroughly acquainted with the science of electricity, fresh discoveries would not be continually breaking upon us. Facts have to come first in man's mortal life, and principles afterwards; and heaven is the correspondence between his existence and his experience. Man knows nothing in physics from theory at first, but facts are presented to him through which, by careful arrangement and observation, he is enabled to elucidate a system which he turns to account in further operations. All the greatest experiments ever made were crude experiments at first, and afterwards reduced to a law. We are obliged then to accept things that are forced upon us, though we may not understand them; but when we come on to the theologian's ground how do we stand? The only evidence we can get here consists of certain conclusions we may come to as the result of arguments employed. A great many don't require argument at all, but are satisfied with authority and assertion, from which springs faith; that shows itself to be weak or strong according to temperament. The man with strong faith, it is to him the same as fact, and he wonders others do not see as he does. He will tell you he knows it's true because he feels it here—pointing to his heart—forgetting that his belief is not communicable. Evidence, to be what its name implies, must be capable of transmission, whether the subject be willing to receive it or not. Evidently then on religious subjects there is no evidence but only conviction, which is produced by either faith or argument. The theory of the Trinity belongs to the region of speculation, for we know nothing of it by actual demonstration. The whole may be summed up in a very few words:—In science, we have facts unexplained; in religion we have no facts, but mere theories, and some of them sufficiently fantastic to make theology the mockery of the 19th century.

I am sorry to find that Dr. Peebles is so irate with Hudson Tuttle, as I have a friendly feeling towards "Darwinism" myself. How can it be explained that there should be such a wide difference in the progressive condition of various nations of the earth? Take, for instance the Terra-del-Fuegians, who represent the very lowest point in the scale of civilisation. They don't even know enough to procure themselves the necessaries of life, and their habits are bestial. Scientific men are at a loss to class them, whether as men or monkeys. Certainly they have no tails, and they are not four-handed creatures, or otherwise they have all the attributes of an apish origin. After them come the Digger Indians, the Bushmen, and Andaman Islanders, all in different degrees of advancement, which would seem to give some plausibility to Darwin's theory. I wish Dr. Peebles would give a more satisfactory solution to this difficult problem.

Yours truly, INVESTIGATOR.

WILL some one inform us where, among the old Methodist hymns, or in what collection, these eminently pious lines may be found?—

The world, the Devil, and Tom Paine
Have tried their best, but all in vain;
They can't prevail, the reason's this—
The Lord protects the Methodists.

ATTITUDE OF THE MELBOURNE "AGE."

BELOW, find one among other paragraphs, recently appearing as a sub-editorial in the *Age* :—

"We do not know whether the second advent of the seer Peebles is to be attributed to a relaxed or an increased interest in Spiritualism in Victoria." "Last Sunday Mr. Peebles delivered his second lecture to a theatre crowded with an audience which must have had some motive for going to listen to him." "But the detection of such arrant impostors as Dr. Slade, who has just escaped sentence in London as a knave and a vagabond, has a tendency to shake the faith of the ordinary public; but we gather from their periodical literature that the genuine Spiritualist presents an undaunted front and an unclouded mind to such awkward *contretemps* as the discovery of a Judas among the Apostles. The truth seems to be that it is much more difficult to unbelieve than to believe." "A Bacon passing sentences upon witches, and a Crookes defending the materialisation of his defunct grandmother, may be bracketed together as psychological curiosities of the same order."

Mr. Peebles has never called himself, nor authorised others to call him a "seer." This whole matter originated in cheap "newspaper slang." His "second advent" is clearly attributable to an increased interest in Spiritualism. None witnessing the crowded audiences in the Opera House can doubt this. Dr. Slade is neither a "knave or a vagabond," but a worthy upright man and medium. When the proceedings against him were quashed he left London to fill an engagement in Russia. Taken suddenly ill before reaching St. Petersburg, he remains on the Continent, willing to return to London so soon as his health permits, and he can be assured of a fair trial. The unjust persecution of Dr. Slade has greatly benefitted Spiritualism in England, inasmuch as it brought the evidence of the Naturalist, A. R. Wallace, and other Scientists into Court.

The testimony of Crookes, Fellow of the Royal Society, editor of the *London Quarterly Journal of Science*, discoverer of the metalhassium, &c., must after eight years of study and investigation of Spiritual Phenomena, including "Materialization," carry quite as much weight with thinkers as this Melbourne *Age* journalist.

SAMUEL JOHNSON, A SPIRITUALIST.

By C. W. ROHNER, M.D.

Hamilton.

WELL acquainted as I was with Dr. Johnson's mystic tendencies, and his natural disposition for ghost-hunting, I lately searched Boswell's immortal work for what positive traces it might contain of the sturdy Doctor's opinions on the subject of ghosts, spirits, and an after-life, or "*vie outre tombe*," as the French call it. Whilst thus searching, I found the following remarkable passage on page 301, vol. ii., of Fitzgerald's edition, which is highly characteristic of blunt Sam's earnest violence and fire of enthusiasm when engaged in conversation on subjects he took a warm and lively interest in. The subject under discussion at the time was that of ghosts, and Johnson, when asked by his inquisitive biographical spy what he thought of John Wesley's ghost, and what he had made of his story, replied—"I am sorry that John did not take more pains to enquire into the evidence for it." Miss Seward, one of the interlocutors, here interrupted the doctor, saying with an incredulous smile—"What, sir, about a ghost?" Johnson (with solemn vehemence)—"Yes, Madam, this is a question which, after five thousand years, is yet undecided; a question, whether in theology or philosophy, one of the most important that can come before the human understanding." And so it is to any true-thinking mind. Johnson has clearly seen that the question of a future life is the very backbone of every religion, no matter whether the religion be that of the fetish worshipper, the Buddhist, the Mahomedan, the Jew, or the Christian. Religion has plainly no meaning, without a positive knowledge of a life beyond the tomb. This knowledge, moreover, forms also, even independently of religion, the soundest basis for any system of ethics; for what stimulus to lead a moral life can possibly be stronger than the certain knowledge that the ultimate object of our existence is eternal progression, and that our terrestrial career is only an infinitesimally small arc of that circle of our life whose constantly shifting centre keeps eternally widening its circumference.

That Dr. Johnson possessed in a very high degree the true characteristics of a genuine investigator, an uncompromising love of truth, a comprehensive intellect, and plenty of moral courage to meet the stubborn opposition of a world of cramped minds appears from another important passage on page 249, vol. I. It runs thus:—"We talked of belief in ghosts. He said: Sir, I make a distinction between what a man may experience by the mere strength of his imagination, and what imagination cannot possibly produce. Thus, suppose I should think that I saw a form, and heard a voice—'Johnson, you are a very wicked fellow, and unless you repent you will certainly be punished;' my own unworthiness is so deeply impressed upon my mind that I might *imagine* I thus saw and heard, and therefore I should not believe that an external communication had been made to me. But if a form should appear, and a voice should tell me that a particular man had died at a particular place, and a particular hour, a fact which I had no apprehension of, nor any means of knowing, and this fact with all its circumstances should afterwards be unquestionably proved, I should in that case be persuaded that I had supernatural (superhuman would be more correct), intelligence imparted to me."

"Here, it is proper," continues Boswell, "once for all to give a true and fair statement of Johnson's way of thinking upon the question whether departed spirits are ever permitted to appear in this world, or in any way to operate upon human life. He has been ignorantly misrepresented as weakly credulous upon that subject; and, therefore, though I feel an inclination to disdain and treat with silent contempt so absurd a notion concerning my illustrious friend, yet as I find it has gained ground it is necessary to refute it. The real fact then is, that Johnson had a very philosophical mind, and such a rational respect for testimony, as to make him submit his understanding to what was authentically proved, though he could not comprehend why it was so. Being thus disposed, he was willing to inquire into the truth of any relation of supernatural agency, a general belief of which has prevailed in all nations and ages. But so far was he from being the dupe of implicit faith that he examined the matter with a jealous attention, and no man was more ready to refute its falsehood when he discovered it."

In order to put my original proposition—that Dr. Johnson was a genuine and untiring investigator of the phenomena indicative of the existence of a spiritual realm into a still stronger light—I shall, in conclusion, quote a ghost story related by the great master himself; and as the story in question furnishes a good instance of spirit-identity, I deem it, for this circumstance alone, worthy of the careful attention and consideration of the reader. Here is the unabridged narrative:—"Amongst the numerous prints posted on the walls of the dining-room at Streatham was Hogarth's 'Modern Midnight Conversation.' I asked him what he knew of Parson Ford, who makes a conspicuous figure in the riotous groupe. JOHNSON: 'Sir, he was my acquaintance and relation, my mother's nephew. He had purchased a living in the country, but not simoniacally. I never saw him but in the country. I have been told he was a man of great parts; very profligate, but I never heard he was impious.' BOSWELL: 'Was there not a story of his ghost having appeared?' JOHNSON: 'Sir, it was believed. A waiter at the Hummums, in which house Ford died, had been absent for some time, and returned, not knowing that Ford was dead. Going to the cellar, according to the story, he met him; going down again he met him a second time. When he came up, he asked some of the people of the house what Ford could be doing there. They told him Ford was dead. The waiter took a fever, in which he lay for some time, when he recovered, he said he had a message to deliver to some women from Ford; but he was not to tell what or to whom. He walked out; he was followed; but somewhere about St. Paul's they lost him. He came back, and said he delivered the message, and the women exclaimed 'Then we are all undone!' Dr. Pellet, who was not a credulous man, inquired into the truth of this story, and he said the evidence was irresistible. My wife went to the Hummums (it is a place where people get themselves cupped). I believe she went with the intention to hear

about this story of Ford. At first they made difficulty to tell her; but, after they had talked to her, she came away satisfied that it was true. To be sure, the man had a fever, and this vision may have been the beginning of it. But if the message to the women, and their behaviour upon it were true as related, there was something supernatural. That rests upon his word, and there it remains."

Men of the Johnson stamp are very much wanted in our time. Men of eminence, who are not afraid of staking their names and reputations in defending openly and manfully what they have found by ample experience to be the truth. To my mind the conduct of a Nicodemus, possessing the whole truth, but not having the moral courage of standing by it, is far more humiliating than that of a blindly persecuting Saul; for, while Saul acts according to the dictates of his conscience, believing to do a good work by persecuting the Spiritualists, Nicodemus, knowing the far-reaching importance of his convictions, is unable to bring the paltry sacrifice of his personal support to so sacred a cause, fearing lest he might himself lose the support of his benighted fellow-men. Such conduct amounts almost to giving the lie to the spirit of truth which moves our innermost hearts, and looked at in this light the followers of Nicodemus—the night-owls of Spiritualism—present a most lamentable picture. But let us take courage. As the sun of Spiritualism rises in the horizon, approaching its meridian a point closer with every succeeding year, so will also new apostles arise with stronger heads and stouter hearts, carrying the flaming torch of the newly-born truth at the head of vast armies of enthusiastic followers. In the meantime we must be thankful for our great but isolated Wallaces, Crookes, Varleys, Flammarions, &c., &c., patiently waiting for the time when it will be considered a great distinction to have fought in the foremost ranks of the battle for a life eternal.

AN ADDRESS TO FREE-THINKERS.

(Continued.)

BEFORE resuming the above, I desire to answer a footnote to my last one, written by the editor. It is stated that the analogy represented in my argument does not hold good, because the doctrines of the Trinity, the Atonement, &c., are not "demonstrable by experiment, as are the matters in regard to light," &c. I reply that a person hearing for the first time that in the centre of some shadows there exists light would disbelieve it, saying it opposed his reason; but so soon as he began to experiment he would discover the statement to be true, and would have to accept and believe it though his reason condemned it all the time. Similarly with the Trinity, &c. We rationalise on the matter and, not comprehending, declare it to be absurd; but when, in the after-life, our eyes are opened and we are able to make the experiment as it were, we may perceive the truth of the doctrine. What is wanted in each case is a knowledge of "the facts of the matter." How can we reason but from (and on) what we know? I continue: In some cases reason does not in the slightest enable you to discover either meaning, connexion, or agreement. Take, for example, the statement—"The dead shall rise,"—what aid does reason furnish here? Again, because we cannot comprehend a thing (or fact, or statement), must we therefore reject it? We cannot understand all the mysteries of our own nature. In such cases reason clearly fails.

One more "point" and I must conclude my address to Free-thinkers, reserving that to Spiritualists till next month. You Free-thinkers often ridicule the justice of the God of the Bible. You deem it absurd and impossible that a God of mercy, love and justice, drowned all the inhabitants (save eight persons) for their wickedness, slew hostile armies, regarded one nation with more favor than another, and finally that he will punish all who repent not, but die in their sins, with everlasting punishment. Now, to you Free-thinkers who believe that a God does rule the universe, I say—Does not this God of love and mercy permit in the world all manner of wrong-doing, of disease, of pain and suffering? Have not, quite recently, thousands of lives, and property of

immense value, been sacrificed to the watery god, a catastrophe which no amount of foresight could have averted? Have not the Anglican race prospered beyond all others, and how could they do this except by the permission, the favor of God? You reject the doctrine of eternal torment, because you say "it is disproportionate to the offence." But are there not punishments in this world that are disproportioned to the offence?—If so, they must exist by the will of God, otherwise they would not exist; and if God permits them in this world why not in the next? How often we see a man, by one single fault or sin, incurring a whole lifetime of shame, obloquy and suffering! How often we see poor dumb animals—dogs, horses—maltreated, worked (horses) to death, with perhaps not a day of rest, or a single hour of enjoyment; but day after day, throughout a weary life, drudging in pain and helpless misery. Yet all this is permitted by a merciful, just, and loving God and Father!

If your arguments tell against the God of (biblical) revelation, will they not be effective also against the God of creation?

FRIENDLY OPPONENT.

[Our correspondent does not improve her position by the explanation afforded in *re* our foot-note to her last. The analogy does not hold good, inasmuch as the one thing is scientifically demonstrable, whilst the other is not. The dogmas of the Trinity and Atonement are purely the inventions of the priesthood, *without* the pale of reason and not even warranted by the book on which they profess to found their belief. Early training and blind faith are essential to a belief in anticipation of evidence. There is a good deal of sophistry in the present letter, which is perhaps exercised unconsciously in the writer's zeal for what she believes to be truth; but let her examine into the basis of her belief, and ask herself is it not rather the result of the teaching and example of those with whom she has been associated. We never love the false *direct*, except where it is made to appear to us as truth. When her conceptions of God widen, she will see in the many apparent evils alluded to, the incidence of immutable law, instead of the exhibition by the Divine architect of human attributes and passions. The writer is a lady (though we have in the last inadvertently spoken of her in the masculine sense), and to this she probably owes the exercise on our part of greater indulgence than would otherwise have been afforded.—Ed. *H. of L.*]

THE AMERICAN SHAKERS SPIRITUALISTS.

AMONG other reading matter received by the last mail from America, was a well-written pamphlet, by Elder G. A. Lomas, entitled "*What Shall I Do to Be a Shaker?*"

Those who have listened to Dr. Peebles' series of lectures in the Opera House, need not to be informed that while there is no organised body of Shakers in England, as newspapers have erroneously reported, there are some seventy families, or communities of them in America. And from all reliable accounts, we are led to believe that they are not only an intelligent, industrious, peaceful, and well-to-do body of Millennial Believers, but are all Spiritualists. But we will let this elder and editor of the "Shaker Monthly" speak for himself:—

"We are the most radical Spiritualists of our day. We are thoroughly convinced of spirit communication and interpositions, spirit guidance and obsession. Our Spiritualism has permitted us to converse, face to face, with individuals once mortals, some of whom we well knew, and with others born before the Flood. All spiritual phenomena commonly occurring in the world had an inauguration among us, long before the "Rochester Rappings." By our Spiritualism we have become confirmed infidels to the foolish *Bodily Resurrection theory*; to the untrue and disappointing *Atonement doctrine*; to the monstrous *Trinity scheme*; to the cruel *Predestination belief*, and to all the man-made creeds of the popular churches professing Christianity. We are sure these things are untrue, and we have hundreds of testimonies from those who, when in the body, were as firm in the belief of their verity as any can be now, but who were bitterly disappointed on arrival in the spirit world. We have progressed beyond mere physical phenomena to learn that these are very insignificant, compared with the trance, with open vision, and with the *truths* leading to the higher life of the Spirit. "Walk in the Spirit, and not fulfil the lusts of the flesh."

THE EDITOR OF THE *WESLEYAN SPECTATOR*
CONVALESCENT.

THOSE understanding the sympathetic relations existing between body and mind have feared, quite probably, when reading the recent numbers of the "Weakly" *Spectator*, that its very amiable editor was suffering either from biliousness, or softening of the brain. Such frothy words as the following (see *Spectator*, April 14th), "stimulus," "bottles of soda water," "flatulent," "pranced," "hysterical," &c., indicate that the difficulty is largely cranial. In such cases it is never amiss to recommend strict temperance, cold applications to the brain, abstemious living and constant prayer, with the frequent confession—"O Lord, we have done those things which we ought not to have done,"—which, by the way, if the Lord did not know, long ago, the people did.

While the late attacks upon Spiritualists, appearing in the *Spectator*, are not quite as coarse, indecent, and untrue as the former, still in this issue of the 14th, the editor says that Dr. Peebles' "last visit to Melbourne was a notorious failure." On the contrary, it was such a complete success that, invited, he is with us once again, and has already lectured nearly two months in the Opera House, to audiences varying from two to three thousand, each Sunday evening. Considering the small assemblages of the Wesleyans, and their constant begging, to keep their theological "toggery" in operation, we can forgive the *Spectator* for being a little envious and irritable over our successes. But he must try and cultivate the scriptural graces of calmness and resignation. Possibly he would find a help in singing these Christian lines:—

Jeshurun waxed fat,
And down, his cheeks they hung;
Against the Lord of Hosts he kicked,
And up his heels he flung.

The daily *Argus*, reporting Dr. Peebles' fifth discourse says:—

Mr. J. M. Peebles delivered the fifth of his lectures on Spiritualism at the Opera House last night. The house was crowded in every part. The lecturer referred to the subject of spirit paintings and photographs, in the genuineness of which he affirmed his belief. He had some years ago been doubtful on the subject, until he had obtained unmistakable evidence that the alleged spirit photographs were really pictures of the inhabitants of the spirit world. In the course of his remarks upon spirit communication he made the extraordinary statement that the abolition of slavery in the United States by Abraham Lincoln was effected at the instance of the spirits. Lincoln having received a message through a lady-medium to the effect that success would not crown the Northern arms until the blot of slavery was washed away. The lecturer created great amusement by reading an extract from a Methodist catechism, in which a child is made to answer that naturally he is "an enemy of God, a child of sin, and an heir of hell!" Mr. Peebles dwelt upon the enormity of teaching such doctrines, and contended that "hell" and "heaven" are only symbols of states or conditions of being.

This is the evangelical "extract" to which the *Argus* refers:—"Who made you?—God. Who redeemed you?—The Holy Ghost. Of what were you made?—Dust. What kind of a heart have you by nature?—A heart filled with all unrighteousness. Can you of yourself reform or renew your wicked heart?—No; I am dead in trespasses and sins. What will become of you if you die in your sins?—I must go to Hell with the wicked. What kind of a place is Hell?—A place of endless torment; being a Lake that burns with fire and brimstone. Does original sin wholly defile you?—Yes. What are you then by nature?—I am an enemy of God, a child of Satan, and heir of Hell."

These catechisms and church doctrines, thank the good angels, are rapidly dying out of all enlightened minds. The people begin to think for themselves. Spiritualists and Free-thinkers, undermining the creeds of Christendom and the myths of theologians will, ere long, gently hint to clergymen everywhere to earn their bread like other people "by the sweat of their brows."

THE MODERN REVELATION.

PURSUING the train of thought commenced in the last paper, we find, forced upon us, numerous considerations evolved from a review of the facts of Revelations. The teaching of Spiritualism is broadly that of the Spirit World, as communicated to mankind in History, and as far as precept and information go, its various utterances stand upon the same level before the judgment seat of Reason. Obeying the universal Law of Progress, it is rhythmic, and manifests itself in waves of inspiration, which have either given birth to Religions, such as the Christian or Mahomedan, to sects, such as the Shakers, or Universalists, or have passed out of existence in movements misunderstood by their generation, as Witchcraft. A minor manifestation of this Law is noticeable in the Jewish dispensation, in which periods of inspiration and darkness alternated with marked regularity. Revelation is historically continuous in rhythmic waves, and belongs to epochs, not in one nation or clime, but in all. Though often identified with the name of the greatest prophet in the particular age of its appearance, it is yet notably and universally the work not of one spirit, but of a *multitude*, even creeds like Christianity, which proclaim a unity of source, exhibiting in their sacred writings, the disconnected and individual styles, not only of various mediums, but evident characteristics disclosing diverse personalities behind them. The Christian Epoch did not cease with the life of Jesus, but prolonged itself through the apostles and early fathers, and his advent was preceded by that of John the Baptist. For a further understanding of this striking Truth compare the Philosophies of Bacon or Spencer with either of the Testaments, and the difference between the products of one and many minds is immediately perceived.

The singleness of aim, finish of execution, regular gradations of proof and exposition, together with the harmony and dependence of parts, and the definite treatment of question, which compose the complete wholeness of the former; stand out in strong contrast to the irregular confusion, loose arrangement, vague, and even contradictory statements, of the authors of the Scriptures, who are asserted to have served, not as mediums, but as merely automatic scribes, to present to the world a work, perfect and Divine, for which is claimed a similar author. The method of the Philosophers is one infinitely superior to that of the pseudo-Deity, their belief is distinctly and eloquently propounded—rationally explained, and naturally presented. That of the other is lamentably deficient in *all these qualities*. The gospel cannot be compared with Homer's "Iliad" (which has been supposed the work of a whole class of writers), for oneness or simplicity. Its authors bear as little relation to one another as the Greek Dramatists dealing with the same story, and if Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, be received as independent writers of independent inspiration, why not Moses, Ezra, Jesus, and Paul. The successive Epochs of Revelation might be likened to the Geologic stages of the Earth's growth—Superstition representing the granite, and Materialism the glacial era. The Universe without has risen above these, but it is a melancholy sight to behold in the inner world, those rough rocks still rooted in our harvest fields, and that dismal deadly overflow threatening the pleasant pastures which centuries of labor have wrung from its grasp. Under the cloak of Modern Christianity, Superstition, and Materialism, like the cross and mace under the mantle of the monk, hang side by side ready for any use. All the good which has been done by it came out of Nazareth, and it is a striking proof of the Divine basic Truths of Jesus, that they should have so long sustained the gigantic falsities reared upon them, and the atrocious deeds done in his name.

The incompleteness of the Gospels led ambitious churchmen to the task of improving them. Where they found sense they read folly, where silence was they left falsehood, and where right had been they consecrated fraud. That which in these days bears the title of the

noble Essene, substituting Faith for Righteousness, and Theology for Worship, is a creed utterly foreign to his life, his thought, and his purpose. The simple shepherd's robe has been changed by his betrayers for a coat of many colors, compounded of cast-off Egyptian, filthy Hebrew, and filtered Grecian mysticism, dipped now in blood of atonement and martyrdom till it is dyed a crimson that cannot fade—memorable for ever in the misery of man.

The principles propounded by its exponents are based upon dislocated texts, barren instances, or obscure parables. To accept the words of Jesus does not constitute a Christian in the "Civilised Heathenism" now rampant; which, Pagan in ceremony, profane in pretensions, and prostituted in uses, is gathering near to its fathers, its gray hairs bowing in sorrow to the grave. An appeal to the orthodox Testament shows it to be thoroughly in harmony with the inspirations now received, which is, however, superior in some respects, since our instructors not only reiterate, but extend and explain these doctrines; reasoning upon them, and unfolding their higher or hidden applications. The many most vital Truths which Spiritualism has revealed we have already recounted, also the signs and wonders attending them, far surpassing even those of the great Prophet, who was proud to style himself the Son of Man, and finally the style in which they are being communicated is one, not only attesting the authenticity of the names appended, but in its literary excellence and power, promises lasting benefits to all open to receive. Great thinkers beyond the grave are, through appropriate mediums, continuing the work often left unfinished here, and from their loftier standpoint we are receiving intelligence of the highest value to the race.

Yet these, be it noted, have an entirely personal and impeachable value attached to them by the recipients, who weigh such, whatever the nature or supposed author of the treatise, exactly as they do the propositions of Muller, or the theories of Darwin. By them, however, an immense and inexhaustible field of inquiry and discovery is thrown open to us, co-extensive with, and corrective of that, which we perceive around us, and passing from the immediate Revelations of Spiritualism, it becomes a matter of the highest moment to investigate the effect of these upon the other branches of our knowledge, and so to elevate all our conceptions in accordance with them.

A single novel phenomenon in science often suffices to render whole volumes nugatory, and a few such call for an entire reconstruction of some divisions, more or less permeating and influencing all. What, then, must be the alteration arising from so grand a cause as that we are considering? At first sight it would seem to revolutionise the whole sphere of Being, and indeed it does so, shaking many long-accepted beliefs, ruining a vast host of others, and leaving secure only the broadest Truths. But the age has been working up to it, as it has descended to and become assimilated with its day. Many of its revelations are now of almost established fame, and all are gradually becoming so. The chief of these are omitted here, not from want of recognition or due estimation, but since some repetitions are already wearisome, and there are others demanding attention at this crisis. Libraries of Theologic gymnastics, and of Dogmatic Philosophy, are at once sent into oblivion by the mere fact of its existence, and we may hesitate where first to look, so powerful is the light thrown around us, making the most familiar objects new and strange, in the already imposing accumulation of mediumistic revelations. Yet the first direction of our search is clear. Mr. Mill says: "The difficulties of Metaphysics lie at the root of all science; they can only be quieted by being resolved, and until they are resolved, positively if possible but at any rate negatively, we are never assured that any human knowledge, even physical, stands on solid foundations."

Metaphysicians have always been distinguished into parties according to the theory which they espoused as to the external World, for upon this the whole after principles are founded. *Idealists* deny its existence except

as the fiction of a dream. Mind is the one reality,—Time and Space are its conditions,—Matter is the name given to its impressions, which are destitute of all external causation. *Materialists* affirm the reality of Matter. Mind is merely an attribute as color is. Or, in other words, it is the Brain, whose vibrations are what we call Thoughts. There are various states of matter sensible and insensible. These are all.

But, say the Idealists, what is it enables you to determine the existence of Matter? Is it not Mind by which you know, and whose sensations you are alone familiar with? Mind is the primary, the superior, Matter the dependent, and inferior; obviously only an affection of it. The Materialists finding this unanswerable change ground a little, and reply: If Mind is so supreme, surely we must follow its verdict, and the most distinct affirmation of our consciousness is, that there cannot be a sensation without something causing it. If I touch you there is mutual sensation; when therefore you are brought in contact with anything setting up a similar feeling, it must be that there is an impersonal reality without you. It is impossible to be both subject and object at once, and the subject is necessarily limited in its knowledge to the effect which an object produces upon it. Moreover these phenomena are not in us, they proceed independently of our will, in them we can find precision, order, qualitative and quantitative forces, and the whole weight of human intelligence and experience in its broad significance points to the duality of Being. If you deny this you deny the verity of Mind, and so refute yourself. Whereupon the Idealists ponder, and both parties remain at deadlock until the gordian knot is cut after preparations in Mill and Hamilton, by the most advanced school, whom their founder has entitled, "Transfigured Realists," uniting the inimical thinkers forevermore. Standing as arbitrators between the two foes, they say: The Idealistic Philosophy proves conclusively the existence of a Something called Mind, which even Materialists are compelled to admit;—this is the first Truth. The Materialistic Philosophy proves no less distinctly by its appeals to the first authority the existence of a Something called Matter;—this is the second Truth. But though we may recognise various phenomena of Mind, all sides admit that we remain in utter ignorance as to its real nature from which these are evolved, and just as certainly do we discover that our knowledge of Matter is incomplete and superficial, so that these names which we attach to our dual experiences belong to "Unknown Realities," and we are brought face to face with our third great Truth, "The Relativity of all Knowledge." If the genius of modern metaphysics had not (chiefly through the person of Mr. Spencer) arrived at these conclusions, the Spiritualistic thinkers would soon have done so. Our Spirit friends furnish us with exactly the criterion we require, and by their experience we are now assured of what Reason but so lately prophesied. Matter, as seen by them, is a very different thing to that of which our senses inform us. Their keener perceptions penetrate and render misty the grosser clothing of our Earth. It is in a sense unreal to them, the higher condition of it, insensible to us, being infinitely more veritable to their heightened powers. Yet others above them, holding the same relation to their state as they do to ours find a parallel change. The Matter of the Spheres differs not only from that of the Earth, but in each of its steps is of a separate consistency. Mind and Matter progress together in independent but harmonious activity. Every department of Being is unreal to the inhabitants of another, and if much divided inconceivable by them. The higher the range the less the likeness to our dwelling place, but yet in the highest heard of the Mind or Spirit finds a correspondently refined environment, and even to those upon the pinnacles of the Temple into which we enter, they are Unknown Realities as far as their essence is concerned, and the knowledge of them is relative to their advancement. Neglecting for the time the other speculative issues of Metaphysics which are largely corollaries from this great Truth, we find ourselves next faced by the problem of Theology, which demands what room is there in this Universe, roughly divided into Mind and Matter, for

the Being of a God. It has been argued that as all we know of Matter is resolvable into Force, and the only Force we are acquainted with is Will-Force, that Matter is not as the Poet said the "Garment of God," but a manifestation of His Will-Force. This may be true, but is not proved. As Mr. Wallace, in his magnificent treatise points out, no Spirits ever claim to have seen God, as the orthodox expect they will, and in regard to any direct knowledge of such an entity, are as little enlightened as ourselves. Swedenborg, and other Mystics, ancient and modern, refer to Him as a Spiritual Sun, and Randolph, in his "Disembodied Man," has a rhapsody which half states that he beheld it. Art Magic also advances this conception at length. Regarded as figurative, and recognising the utter dependence of the Planets upon the centre of our System, as discovered by recent Science, this metaphor is a powerful and striking one. The Sun is the highest type of Material Existence, the Life-giver, the Ruler, the Omnipotent of its Creation. But there is a Spiritual Nature in us also, which makes the Human form and character in our sympathies the nearest. All the feelings which belong to such names as Father and Mother, the Relations of Brotherhood, of Parentage, ideas of Will, Intelligence, Government, and Beneficence, all naturally congregate around this symbol, from which we receive a sustenance no less generous, a Light even more Divine. The shape of Humanity is the most beautiful, the most blessed,—higher than sun or star, purer than mornings' rays, richer than golden noons, dearer than evenings' peace. Rising upon the spiritual horizon the glow of its youth makes more than Memnon musical, setting in the radiance of a Christ-like Life it outshines the sunset's splendors. Swedenborg's "Grand Man," is a nobler image than his "Spiritual Sun." He gives both, and on examination they will be seen to be complementary—the Sun signifying the Supremacy in Nature, the Man the Kingship of Spirit and Humanity. Yet they are but images, and must not be mistaken for any thing further. There is no Form worthy of that which contains all Forms, no Symbol complete since it is but a shred of the source of all Symbols. Such light as we have upon this question only serves to show us the dangers of limitation in our embodiment of the Illimitable; it is even doubtful if we can attribute Personality, with its necessary implications of finiteness, unless, with the Swedish Seer, we accept but one Personality in the Universe of which we are the fibres—leaves of one tree, fed by one sap—fractions of one Being. If this be so, the totality of Mind is God, and our former sketch of Creation needs no alteration.

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the soul."

The Universal Spirit unfolding itself, and working up through imperfection to greater Perfectness in myriads of minor agencies, each capable of progressive joy and goodness, is a conception grand enough even for angelic minds, from whom indeed we have received it. They tell us of—

"The Spirit which moves in each and all,
Or when we rise, or when we fall,
Fulfilling the ephemeral,
By help of our Humanity,
Ascending through Eternity.
The All in Each, the One in All,
The All in All Necessity."

This is the Deity to whose shrine Intuition alone can lead us. This is "the power that makes for Righteousness." This is Allah, "the only," the God of Spirits and of Spiritualism. "There are in the Godhead and God Body," says the inspired Davis, "all the persons that were ever developed on any star in the firmament, or on the earth beneath; all men, all spirits, all angels, all archangels and seraphs who people the immeasurable spheres of life and animation; for we live and move, and have our being in the Divine Existence."

A Brahm this, not confinable in creeds, without tribal or sectarian jealousies, without other ritual than that of

Nature, or other worship than that of the aspiring Soul. No fetich degraded to our understanding, but looming up far beyond its farthest flight, without Form, without Want, without "variableness, or shadow of turning."

The Absolute Perfection,—it is yet consecrated and veiled, and to our adoration remains "The Unknowable." Not Unknowable in Ignorance, but from Incapacity, not from Error, but by Innocence, not in its Being, but in the verity and completeness of it. We know that it is a Unity, we boldly ascribe to it Love, Wisdom, and Goodness; we feel it as the Everlasting Presence brooding over the darkest depths of chaos, and bringing forth, Light, Order, and Power. "Closer is it than breathing, and nearer than hands or feet." More than this we do not yet know, more we shall know hereafter. Yet the most Mind can know is—"That God is a Spirit."

ASPYRAL.

OUR FOREIGN EXCHANGES.

By C. W. ROHNER, M.D.

Hamilton.

WE have received by the last mail the following Spanish papers:—"The Revista de Estudios Psicológicos," of November, 1876; the "Revista Espiritista," of December, 1876; and "El Criterio Espiritista," of January, 1877. The "Review of Psychological Studies" contains, among other articles on ethical and cosmological subjects, an interesting paper on organisation, under the heading of "Hagamos Practico un Ideal," or—"Let us realise an ideal." There can in our opinion be no reasonable objection to the organisation of a movement of such vast importance as that of Spiritualism, provided only that care is taken lest the organisation fall into the hands of dogmatising and self-seeking hierarchs and exclusive creedal monopolists. If the valuable lesson of history is carefully considered—that those whose kingdoms are of this world make the worst possible guardians of religion—there need be no fear of anything going wrong with our attempts of bringing order, method, and unity into what is at once the highest science, the profoundest philosophy, and the most positive religion. The "Spiritualistic Review" furnishes a most enthusiastic survey of the social progress produced by Spiritualism in all quarters of the globe, everywhere laying the foundation stone of a human brotherhood and universal peace, which latter *desideratum*, however we are inclined to think, will have to be kept up for some time to come at the expense of vast preparations for war, the "si vis pacem bellum para" being still the dominant motto of modern diplomacy and politics, and likely to remain so for an indefinite period.

The "Criterio Espiritista," strange to say, brings in its interesting pages an article in the French idiom on the situation of Turkey, from a Medium's (Clavaïroz) point of view. It is a kind of prophecy given some seventeen years ago by the spirit of Mahomet, in Arabic; and in it is confidently foretold the not very distant downfall of the empire of the Crescent, a great struggle for the primacy of the nations between England and panslavistic Russia, in which struggle England is going to be worsted, for what reason it does not say, and the Northern Bear will consequently become the master of Turkey; France will recover—it is not said how—her lost Rhine provinces (here the prophet seems to forget that France had not yet lost her Alsace and Lorraine at the time of his prophecy), and Spiritualism will reign universal with Rome for its centre of operations. What will become of the Pope is also left unsaid. Concerning this somewhat bold prophecy, with a slightly Bonapartist coloring, we can only say we shall see what we shall see. Poland and Ireland of course will also get their liberty at last, to which latter part of Mahomet's grand *programme* we say, with all our heart, Amen!

WE see by the New Zealand papers that Mr. Charles Bright has been engaged to lecture permanently in the Princess' Theatre, Dunedin, every Sunday.

A CUTTING REBUKE.

WHEN Dr. Peebles, near the close of his lecture, a few evenings since, in the Opera House, was stating that the most distinguished scientists, authors, and statesmen of the world were almost uniformly unorthodox, and consequently, if the evangelical doctrines were true, suffering Hell torments, he asked—"Do you believe this?" All were silent. He then added—"Is there one of the 3000 now within the sound of my voice who believes that such unevangelical men as Humboldt, Dickens, and Abraham Lincoln are in Hell?—If so, raise the hand." A far back in the pit one man lifted up the hand and arm at full length. "There is one," said the Doctor, "in the pit," adding with great emphasis—"Well, sir, you belong to the pit, and I should rather go to the pit of Hell with Dickens, Lincoln, and Humboldt, than to a psalm-singing Heaven with you, and a class of whining long-visaged saints."

IS OUR QUEEN A SPIRITUALIST?

It is hardly presumable that careful readers of English papers have forgotten the miserable scandal afloat a few years ago, touching a pretended intimacy between the Queen and her Highland footman, John Brown. It died away soon, however, with a sort of tacit understanding that the said Brown was a gifted medium, whom the Queen, ever a mourner, delighted to consult.

The *London Daily World*, and other English journals, have not scrupled to recently say that "the Princess Louise, and her sister-in-law, Lady Archibald Campbell, are among Dr. Slade's most enthusiastic disciples."

And now, our daily *Argus* gives us this paragraph:—"The Queen has sent a portrait of herself (says *London*), with an autograph letter, to Mrs. S. C. Hall. The venerable authoress, who has been in feeble health for some time, is much gratified and cheered by such a recognition on the part of Her Majesty of her laborious and useful literary career." It is well known to the intelligent everywhere that Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall are among the most prominent Spiritualists of London. Mr. D. D. Home was for a long time their guest; and it was while he was at their residence that he held the coals of fire in his hand, and did other marvellous works under the influence of spirits.

By the March mail from England we received a letter from Dr. Monck, accompanied by a circular from his committee, appealing for contributions towards his "Defence Fund." The latter bears no date, the circular is dated Dec. 18, 1876, and the case, to sustain which the assistance is asked, was appointed for hearing on January 11th, but was postponed to January 19th, when the point argued was the applicability of the Vagrant Act to the case. The argument was adjourned to the 26th January, and the case will doubtless have been decided long before the application reached us. The papers being too lengthy to publish under these circumstances, we laid them aside with the intention of acknowledging their receipt in last issue; but through pressure of business, in connection with Dr. Peebles' lectures and other matters, they were overlooked until too late. It is due to Dr. Monck that we should publish the following extract from the appeal, which is endorsed by 93 persons, including Dr. Wm. Hitchman, Mr. Geo. Tommy, M.A., (Oxon), T. Everett, and James Burns:—

"The Committee have very carefully gone into the details of the case, and are quite satisfied as to his innocence of the charge laid against him; and when the proper time comes, which they hope will soon arrive (as they cannot believe the decision of the Huddersfield Magistrates will be endorsed by an English Bench), the Doctor will vindicate his proceedings, and give such explanations as will be fully satisfactory to all lovers of justice and fair play."

Dr. Monck complains that the English law prevents his giving any public explanation of the circumstances of his case, but promises to do so as soon as his trial is over.

MR. JOHN TYERMAN.

THE above able lecturer, and well-known advocate of Spiritualism and Free-thought, arrived in Melbourne by the s.s. Barrabool a few days since, not in response to the invitation sent him by the local association, but by the advice of the Sydney doctors, under whose treatment he has been for some time past. Mr. Tyerman has been unsuccessfully battling against the effects of excessive mental labor, and has at last been obliged to succumb, his friends and medical advisers insisting that change of scene and an entire cessation from brain-work is absolutely necessary for the restoration of his health. Under these circumstances he is reluctantly compelled to vacate the platform for a while; but we trust that a few months' rest will restore his wonted energy, and enable him, before returning to Sydney, to give a course of lectures in this city.

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