

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."

No. 99.

MELBOURNE, NOVEMBER 1st, 1878.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

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IN our last issue appears an article on "Religious Beliefs," from the pen of Mr. E. F. Hughes, a gentleman who delivered a series of excellent lectures at the Temperance Hall for the Spiritualistic and Freethought Association, some three years since. Mr. Hughes is, as a rule, a logical speaker and writer, and as such, what emanates from him is entitled to respectful consideration; we therefore regret that he has, in the concluding portions of his article bearing upon Spiritualism, reasoned as so many anti-spiritualistic writers do, on false premises. He commences by asserting that "Spiritism asks belief in things which have not been proved, at least not to those whose belief is sought, and the proof of which it is not in the power of the many to command." Now, this statement is erroneous. Spiritism, or Spiritualists, do not ask, or expect belief except upon conviction; they know by observation how few become really convinced without some personal experience, corroborative of the recorded experiences of others, and we assert that it is in the power of the great majority to obtain, by earnest application, proofs of the reality of spirit communion. "Spiritism," says Mr. Hughes, "asks this belief on testimony, a testimony declared to rest on proof experienced by those who give the testimony, but which testimony and proof I am at liberty and have the right to challenge, and, if found unsatisfactory, to reject." Here again our friend is at fault; as before said, it does not ask belief, but merely presents for the consideration of the public a record of well-attested phenomena, corroborative of a rational religious philosophy. Mr. Hughes, of course, has the right to challenge the testimony; but, unless he can prove it unreliable, although he may consider it inadequate, we deny his right to reject it. In the next paragraph, our friend falls into a most glaring error, referring to Spiritism as standing equally well with other religions in the matter of testi-

mony. Now a very superficial examination of the Spiritual literature of the day will make it apparent to any rational reader that there is no parallel between the testimony for Spiritualism, and that for any other religion extant. For the first, we have the testimony of thousands of living witnesses, including many men on eminence in the scientific and literary world, who are prepared to personally verify the testimony published in their names; in the other case, we have but printed records professing to be copies of the testimony of alleged inspired men, who lived thousands of years in the past, the majority of whom are not mentioned in contemporaneous histories, and none of whose writings are extant. Where is the parallel? The great mistake into which Mr. Hughes has fallen is the assumption that the testimony of Spiritualists is presented to the world authoritatively. From our experience in this matter we can safely aver, that not five per cent of the Spiritualistic literature is presented in an authoritative form, and in those instances where it is so, the authority is rejected by Spiritualists themselves, who persistently ignore dogmatism in any form. The general motive which prompts publication is the consciousness of the writers that they have discovered a great and valuable truth, and the desire to direct attention to its existence, and indicate the means to its demonstration. It is but natural to expect that in argument or discussion, the Spiritualist should rely on his experiences, and consider his testimony on what he has proved to himself by actual experiment, of infinitely more value than the negative theories of a dozen who have not practically investigated for themselves; and the occasional exercise of an authoritative tone, where the writer or speaker is not a perfect philosopher, is pardonable.

We are pretty well in accord with Mr. Hughes as to the essentials to a satisfactory belief in Spiritism. His first and second propositions we endorse *in toto*, viz., "The phenomena must be real," and "Such phenomena must be the result of spirit agency;" but his third proposition is too ambiguous for our literal acceptance, it reads: "These phenomena must be within general control, not confined to the few, so that belief therein may rest on direct personal evidence, not evidence second-hand." Now, in what sense does he use the word

"general?" If he means common, or within the reach of large numbers, we say that it is already so; if, on the other hand, he means universal, we object to his proposition as unreasonable. Do we find the demonstration of astronomical or general scientific facts within the reach of all? Are not these accepted upon testimony by at least nine hundred and ninety-nine people out of a thousand? Do not those who desire to personally prove them require suitable instruments to do so? And how many, even with the best instruments, would fail to obtain, by their own unaided efforts, the demonstration attained by experts? How absurd, then, is it to demand or expect an exception to the rule in the case of Spiritualism? The Spiritualists simply assert that they have, by investigation, demonstrated to their own satisfaction that the spirits of the departed can and do, under certain conditions, communicate with those still in the body; that this communication does not appear to be supernatural, but governed by law; and that, this being the case, it is a natural inference to them, that by the observation of the same conditions, and the use of appropriate instruments, others may obtain the same proofs as they have—hence, they present to the world the details and results of their experiments, in the same spirit as the student of any other science would do. They are not so foolish as to imagine that their evidence will be received as proof by even the minority of their readers, but they do naturally imagine that their plain, unvarnished statements, and the rational philosophy connected with the phenomena, will at least awaken thought in the minds of a few, and encourage them to start on the road of investigation. When Spiritualists become dogmatists, and seek to proselytize, it will be time enough to demand from them the proofs Mr. Hughes inconsiderately asks for.

In reference to the speech delivered by Dr. Peebles which we copied from the *Banner of Light*, where mention is made of Mr. Thomas Walker, we are authorised to make a few corrections, which, in justice to Mr. Walker, we gladly do. Dr. Peebles having called on Mr. Walker's parents (who naturally feel proud of their son, and consequently exalt his abilities), was informed that Mr. W. had been a teacher; whereas the fact is he had only been a monitor, or pupil-teacher, in a common National School at Preston, in Lancashire. When Mr. W. left that school he could do sums in interest, parse a little, and knew the geography of the British Isles. This was the extent of his fair education, of which Dr. Peebles speaks; and the rest of the statements are of a somewhat similar nature, as, for instance, his being a short-hand reporter, when he is yet but a student of phonography, and far from being proficient. Dr. Peebles, in his anxiety to do credit to Mr. Walker, has set too high a value on these partial statements.

SPIRITUAL INTERCOURSE.

READERS of this paper, who care to take the trouble to refer to a communication from James Martin, in the *Harbinger* of August, last year, will find the following:—"The life thus individualized is not a thing of to-day, or yesterday, but without beginning in its progress, from one stage to another; a straight line, running through an endless series of circles," &c. This statement has given rise to the supposition, that the conscious life of the individual had passed through other phases of existence prior to its incarnation in the earth-life. A suitable opportunity has been sought to make further inquiry respecting this rather interesting phase of man's

history, which seems to be referred to by our friend, for the purpose of obtaining a fuller elucidation of the subject in question, the following request was made, and our friend besought to explain himself. The communication now given will help, in some degree, to a fuller understanding of the question at issue, and we hope to present, at an early period, some other remarks which will still further throw light upon a subject so interesting to mankind at large. The passage through earth-life is inevitable. We are like workmen who have to accomplish a certain amount of work, and the workshop in which we labour will be either dark and gloomy, or bright and cheery, just in proportion as we interest ourselves, or otherwise, about ourselves, and endeavour to realise the light which flows in from our past, and the expectation of circumstances in the future, which shall contribute to at once raise us in the scale of being, and introduce us to experiences of fuller satisfaction. The great want of man is an intelligent study of himself in all his relations, past, present, and future; and it is a matter for congratulation that the intercourse which we may enjoy with our dear friends in the world-spheres, will assist us in acquiring such information as shall aid us in this respect.

In your communication of last July twelve months, speaking of man's growth and development through the innumerable circles of prior and future existence, you have raised a question respecting the nature of his past, and of his expected future condition. Will you please further explain this matter from your present more advantageous standpoint?

"Your question opens up a very important phase of man's history. Indeed, it involves the entire history of his being through all the different modes through which he passes in his progressive experience. Do not, however, think that I can fully fathom the depths of this subject—it is a subject rather to be *learned*, than to be *defined* in speech. I take my stand on some lofty eminence, which commands an extensive view of the road over which I have travelled, and I look back, endeavouring to make out the varied features of that progress. I find it impossible, however, to define with exactitude the individual characteristics, although I am particularly conscious in myself of the results of that progress. The advantage which I reap from the general review of the road over which I have travelled is rather realised in the opening of the chambers of memory, and thereby enabling me to compare the stages of progress, with the means by which they were completed. And so is it with regard to the growth of man; in the earth-life he finds himself placed in certain circumstances—these are novel to him, he cannot realise the fact that his position there is the result of his surroundings, within which he has been placed by a law over which he had no control. In a world where the senses and sensibilities prevail to so large an extent, he is carried away by the material circumstances of his existence, and in these he thinks he finds a complete circle, beginning with the birth into earth-life, and ending when the material structure falls and dies. Within this circle he runs round and round; and because he is so slow to recognise the spiritual basis of his existence, he never rises high enough to look over the boundary-wall which surrounds him, and see, in the facts of spirit-life, the endless vista which marks his previous, and which indicates also the character of his future course. With the awakening of the inner consciousness in men this evil will be remedied; and, just in proportion as the life of the spirit develops, and asserts its control over the gross and material surroundings, will he recognise the fact which, to me, is now so palpable, that we have come from afar, and that we travel on to indefinite distances in the growth of our being as the intelligent creatures of the Infinite Author of the Universe. And, moreover, that the period of our existence, known as the earth-life, is but a speck in the progress. You question me with respect to man's prior condition ere he enters upon his earth-life experience. To this I answer that, whatever he may be in this, his previous condition was of a more elementary character; for it is a law of his being that he must grow and advance by every successive step which he takes."

Can you not give me some account of your own previous experience in particular, as an illustration of what others may have passed through?

"I will try to do so, but the lines of that experience must be read within my being, rather than without it. Man, as to his spirit, is infinite in his resources, and endless as to his existence. I find myself, to-day, in many respects different to what I was yesterday; and this as the result of the operation of the laws of being, which are immutable in their character, and ceaseless in their continuation. I now know that, before I appeared on the stage of earth-life, I had a conscious existence, and distinctive also—an existence as a human being, possessing attributes which enabled me to reflect, and to apply the results of my attainments to the building up of my progressive life, and by means of which I was prepared for the process upon which I next entered. You wish to know if that period of my existence was passed on the earth. I think not; but of this I am certain, that I then lived among beings like myself, and whose distinguishing characteristic was manhood. It has been well said that 'the mind is the measure of the man.' Outward forms may vary—indeed Nature delights in a variety of forms, even though based on the same type—and thus it is with man. Could you behold me now in this advanced stage, you would find the outward form very different in many respects to that which prevails on the earth. Indeed, the outward form, the local habitation of the spirit, and by means of which it has contact with others, is specially adapted to meet the wants of the spirit which dwells within, and may be more or less refined, according to circumstances. With respect to my present position, I feel that I am in a world now—a world adapted to my condition of being, and wherein I have greater freedom of action, with all the associations of a more genial character than they were on the earth. These world-spheres, in which those who have left the earth dwell, are as various as the necessities of the case require; and special location is appointed, exactly in harmony with the more or less advanced stage of the being which has been attained on earth. Questions such as this which you now press upon me, can only be answered in accordance with general principles; but, as we advance in growth, we become more capable of comprehending the elementary states. These states are circles, however, which have their commencement, their progress, and their termination—complete circles, however brief—and in the earth-life you have the type of what all the others are, a rolling and ever-accumulating experience, up hill and down dale, ever learning, ever trying ever attaining, and ever pressing on, with more or less speed, to the horizon beyond, which, when reached, is found to be the starting-point for another. The circles of existence might, with much force, be termed re-incarnations, were it not that this would be misleading to men on the earth, who are therefrom ready to conclude that, of necessity, they must then return to earth, and to precisely similar circumstances to those they now experience. The facts of the case are rather these: The spirit of a man, which has its origin in the most impalpable essences of Nature, has to be trained in accordance with an undeviating law of the Infinite One; and, that this purpose may be effected, the spirit prosecutes its many pilgrimages, and undergoes its varied transformations in circles of life, which, as they terminate, are recommenced—but always in the elementary form of that new stage—and, so far as I can learn, there is no interval between. I know that there are individuals on the earth who think that it is quite unnecessary to trouble themselves about either their past or their future state of being; but I believe that, when men on the earth shall wisely enter upon the study of themselves, and thus, by understanding more of the essential characteristics of their being, to have a greater control of the growth of their present, they will be more successful and more happy as they pass on through circle after circle. And this study of themselves involves the knowledge of what they have passed through already, as well as the anticipation of what they may expect in the future—a study of spirit-growth in relation to its embodiments and its surroundings, and whereby it becomes more and more perfect, as that

term may be understood in its connection with ever-progressive advancement to an inconceivable degree of existence."

You say that you are now in a world adapted to your condition of being; will you further describe this state?

"Your question is pertinent, and well worthy of a careful reply. When once the spirit has escaped from its connection with the earth-life state by the dissolution of the physical frame in which it has dwelt, it then enters upon a life of quite another order; born into it, as it were; raised out of a tomb, and re-embodied in a condition of greater refinement, but of as palpable a character as that which it has left. Here it finds scope for powers which lay dormant when on the earth, and which, when subject to the method of instruction which the new circumstances afford, tends to raise the individual in the scale of being many degrees."

Does this apply to all persons who leave the earth-state?

"Yes, with this limitation; that in the spirit-world sphere, which succeeds the earth-life, there are degrees or stages, just as there were in that. All are not alike as to growth and development, although all are alike the Great Father's children. Personal and individual experience must ever be regulated by growth and development. In my present sphere I find the exact continuation of my earth-life experience, accelerated by the more favourable circumstances in which I stand; and, in regard to my associations, the same law operates—a law of adaptation and sympathy, which draws into very close union the individual members of my circle. There is a sense in which that circle is circumscribed and distinctive, and in this respect it is separated from all others, although between all circles of being there is a connection which makes them one in the Father's kingdom. Hence, I find that the most appropriate term I can use, when speaking of this state of existence in which I am now, is, 'a world-sphere'—a world as certainly as that was in which I lived before, possessing all the characteristics of a world, but whose special features harmonize with the condition of being in which I am. To describe it accurately would be impossible; inasmuch as, while it is as natural as the earth-state was to me then, the essential circumstances of being have, by the process of re-embodiment, become so refined and changed that you could not realize their conditions. And it is as well that it should be so, because, if you could but get occasional conceptions of a higher state, as to its actual realizations, you would be tempted to make unfavourable comparisons with the more severe state of probation through which you are now passing. Every circle of existence through which the spirit has to pass must be accepted, for the time being, as the grand centre of its operations, the platform on which the issues of life are to be worked out, a centre from which must radiate results, built up in obedience to certain laws which then prevail; and the very best preparation for the future is to accept with cheerfulness the conditions of earth-life, and to use them to the highest purpose, viz., a cultivation of the powers possessed, that they may work in unison with the grand designs of the universe—harmony, unity, and use."

You also refer to spirit, as having its origin in the most impalpable essences of nature; will you explain this more fully?

"Gladly would I do so, if I could; but I find, on reflection, that it is as difficult to define a spirit as it is to define the being and existence of God. Spirit is a something which exists—not apart from nature, for that would be impossible—but within it, and upon which it gazes with wonder, as an intelligent man will always regard his surroundings. You cannot divorce spirit from the more palpable features of existence, because spirit underlies these, and forms their base. Hence, I conclude that, while these palpable facts are everywhere presented to man in the progress of his development, he must be *within* them, and of a more refined and impalpable character; the very next step outward from, the incomprehensible centre of all, God, the Infinite Spirit."

I should like to ask, then, how is it that man, as to his spirit, needs to pass through so many circles of existence?

"We will answer this, and other questions, next opportunity; for the present, reflect on what I have said, and endeavour to ascertain if my answers are satisfactory, and assisting to your process of thought."

Marnias Meti."

September, 1878.

H. J. B.

To Correspondents.

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

CLARKEISM UNVEILED.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

DEAR SIR,—In my former letter to you I accused Mr. W. W. Clarke of *plagiarising* and *misquoting*. The latter charge I beg to continue, giving, as heretofore, the necessary proofs. On page 12 of his pamphlet, *Spiritism Unveiled*, he quotes Mrs. Woodhull as being reported to have said, "I am a free lover; I believe I have an unalienable right to change my husband every day if I like." What Mrs. Woodhull *really* said is, "I have an unalienable, constitutional, and natural right to love whom I may; to love as long or as short a period as I can; to change that love every day if I please." (Woodhull's Speech, p. 23). And the lady adds, "I believe in the family, spiritually constituted, expanded, amplified, and artistically organised as a *unitary home*." Next, referring to what he calls the "narrative" of "Dives and Lazarus," Mr. Clarke actually misquotes Scripture! He quotes thus, "If they *believe* not Moses and the prophets"—of course it ought to be, "If they *hear* not," &c.—a very different matter!

The last misquotation that I can now pause to notice occurs on p. 21 of the pamphlet, where he cites Randolph as affirming that "the end is very near indeed." The closest approach in any of Randolph's works to this statement is to be found in his *Ghostly Land*, a supplement to the *New Mola*, where he says (p. 26) ". . . tempests of fire and ice combined will finally convince man that the awful end is very near, very near indeed; but then, as before, he will be mistaken, for God will still live, and the *species* be preserved." How very different from Mr. Clarke's garbled quotation!

Now let us pass on to another charge, which I must prefer against this truly "Christian" writer, viz., *misrepresenting*. He says (p. 7), "J. M. Peebles is an undoubted polytheist." That Dr. Peebles' scholarly education (which Mr. C. allows) may have led him sometimes to use the classicality, "the gods," when speaking of spirits, is quite possible; but it must be well known to everyone who has read any of "the Pilgrim's" works, that he is a firm believer in only one Supreme Being, God. Take, for instance, his explicit declaration on p. 26 of his recent pamphlet, entitled *Christ, the Cornerstone*, "I believe in one living and true God, maker of heaven and earth, and all things." Mr. Clarke makes the same charge against E. V. Wilson, an American medium and author. Now, what are the facts? On p. 386 of Mr. E. V. Wilson's *The Truths of Spiritualism*, I read, "We hold to one God, and no more, infinite in matter and space." Mr. Clarke, on p. 8, says of A. J. Davis, that he "is an Atheist, so far as can be judged from the mystic verbiage that enshrouds all his revelations." Numerous passages from Davis's works might be adduced to prove the utter falseness of this charge. See *Stellar Key*, p. 24, where Davis says, "The great original, ever-existing, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent productive power—the soul of all existences—is throned in a central sphere. . . . This power is what mankind call Deity, whose attributes are love and wisdom," &c. This is the purest *theism*, not *atheism* at all. Mr. C. quotes Davis as saying that "Jesus was a woman." What he *does* say is that "Jesus, in all the organic essentials of his spiritual nature, was a woman; a good, simple-minded, truth-feeling, truth-loving soul." (*Inner Life*, p. 46.) Mr. C. also says that Davis calls the Bible "excellent soft-bark." Now turn to *Nature's Divine Revelations*, p. 554. There Mr. Davis says the word *bible* "is derived from the Greek *biblos*, which

signifies the soft bark of a tree upon which the ancients wrote their thoughts," &c. Davis merely gives an *exposition* of the terms "Holy," and "Bible," according to their *etymology*, and does not employ them in derision, as Mr. Clarke insinuates.

Mr. Clarke accuses William Denton of calling Jesus "a fanatic, and an impostor." For Mr. Denton's estimate of Christ's character, see his new work, *What was He?* pp. 187-197. The following extract, however, from Denton's *Common-sense Thoughts*, p. 40, is to the point:—"If Jesus was no impostor, and he *probably* was not, he certainly was a fanatic," &c. So that Mr. C.'s accusation is only *half* true, and so are other charges which he makes against the same writer. On p. 13 Mr. Clarke quotes Randolph as calling Mr. Denton, "the most wretched and contemptible thing that ever wore the semblance of a man." Now, Mr. Denton needs no vindication, being "above suspicion;" but, in justice to Randolph, I must remark that he (Randolph) was not referring at all to the W. Denton so well known as a spiritualistic writer and lecturer, but to an *entirely different person*! This anyone can prove by turning to Randolph's *Eulais*, pp. 115, 116, 117, and 137. Again, Mr. C. accredits Randolph with teaching in his book, *Disbodied Man*, that children are born in the spirit-world (Clarke, p. 17). Let the reader refer to that book of Mr. R.'s, p. 136, and he will see how utterly erroneous is the statement. There is so much dishonesty and misrepresentation in Mr. Clarke's little tract, that I find it difficult to make a selection. On p. 19 he quotes what he calls three instances of A. J. Davis's dishonesty and unreliability; and yet the answer to every one of those objections is to be found in Davis's own writings! Thus, the objection about the "High Rock Tower Vision," is exposed in *Answers to Questions*, p. 63; that about E. A. Poe is answered in the same place; and that about Professor Vaughan is fully confuted in Davis's *Harmonial Man*. An objection raised by Mr. C. on p. 14 against Davis in *re* the Council of Nice, is answered in Davis's *Penetralia*, pp. 230-243; and, had I time, I could show that Mr. Clarke has carried his familiar habit of misrepresentation into his account of spiritualistic contradictions on p. 17, &c. And yet this gentleman is so well versed in our literature that he can *ocularly* affirm that it contains "nothing of any intrinsic value that was not known before," and that "in its whole range there is not a single valuable or original thought." Though I might say much more in exposure, I think enough has been presented to exhibit Mr. Clarke and his performance in their true light.—Yours, &c.,

E. LEONARD.

BIBLICAL DIFFICULTIES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—The Rev. Dr. Faunce devotes his final chapter to a consideration of the difficulties arising from historic facts. Our review of this section need not be extended, inasmuch as the whole of Dr. F.'s argument is built upon premises to which we totally object. An article, more replete with assumption and sophistry than the chapter under notice, it would be difficult to find; and the ingenuity with which the reasoning is wrought out in no way relieves it from being illogical and unfair; but the particular assumption to which I must call attention is expressed in the following extract (pp. 201-2):—"I would have every young man who approaches the Bible come to it with the true idea of God's *method of revelation* in his mind.* For this is the key to the volume. That method is easily gathered from even a general perusal. God's method is to reveal *Himself* to mankind through a particular race, the Hebrews; and this revelation he will have to culminate in a particular person, Jesus Christ." By our not unnatural repudiation of this prodigious assumption, the very elaborate superstructure erected upon it by Dr. F. is precipitated to the ground. And although there are items in his remaining remarks that challenge attention, they may safely be left alone, until the reverend author shall have given us some sound and legitimate reasons why the

* All the *ITALICS* in the quotation are Dr. F.'s.

hypothetical "young man" should, previously to his examination of the Bible, be indoctrinated with the foregoing special "idea of God's method of revelation."

Let me now hurriedly sum up the results of the series of letters I have taken the liberty of inflicting upon the *Harbinger*.

I. We have seen Dr. F.'s argument against a belief in an impersonal God, on the ground that such belief involves fatalism and *vice versa*, confuted by the fact that Moslems and Calvinistic Presbyterians are both fatalists and believers in a personal Deity.

II. We have seen that Dr. F. is opposed to St. Paul on the subject of individual conception of truth.

III. We have seen that Dr. F.'s argument for the integrity of the Old Testament based upon Christ's supposed endorsement thereof is quite fallacious, and contains an assumption that conflicts with the teaching of both bible and churchmen.

IV. Similarly we have seen that his argument for the New Testament, based upon Christ's alleged promise to inspire His disciples, is invalidated by the fact, recorded in the Bible itself, that the said promise failed in some cases.

V. We have seen that the external evidences for the four gospels (upon which hinge hung the whole of Dr. F.'s argument for the Bible's integrity) are sadly defective.†

VI. The same with regard to other portions.*

VII. We have seen that Dr. F.'s argument, from the antecedent credibility of a Divine revelation, is useless to his cause, inasmuch as there is no proof that, even if the supposed revelation has been given, it is *wholly identifiable with, and restricted to* the Bible.

VIII. We have seen that the Bible fails to supply man with his desideratum of reliable information on certain theologic points, such as the Nature of God, the Eternity of Hell, Forgiveness of Sins, &c., which information, said Dr. F. (pp. 97-8), a divine volume would afford.

IX. We have seen that Dr. F., in attempting to vindicate the Bible from the charge of errors in geology, confines himself to only one small section of Scripture, and entirely pretermits the consideration of geological objections urged against other portions,† and that his vindication of even that small section is inadequate and unsatisfactory, since it violates the obvious meaning of the Biblical words, and is at variance with scientific facts.

X. We have seen that Dr. F.'s argument, derived from astronomy, in support of a *special* incarnation of Deity in Man, and a *special* revelation in literature, is fallacious, his premises warranting only a conclusion that is diametrically opposed to the inference drawn by him.

XI. We have seen that, so far from solving the difficulties about historic facts, Dr. F. has simply evaded them by making an assumption that cannot be allowed.

XII. We have seen his admission that the Bible contains things "hard to be understood," that "there are difficulties with the Bible," and that the book is professedly *human*, although he had previously asserted that it "is without admixture of error;" and that with reference to Genesis and geology, the statements of "revelation" diverge in *details* from the facts of science.

To any who may desire to prosecute or elaborate the examination so imperfectly conducted by me, I would commend the study of the following works:—"Supernatural Religion," Rev. Dr. Giles's "Hebrew and Christian Records," Rev. Dr. Davidson's "Introduction to the Old and to the New Testament, and Reuss's "Histoire du Canon." But an almost equally satisfactory, and a far less expensive investigation can be made by any one who will supply himself with the Rev. John Page Hopps's excellent little pamphlet, "The Plain Truths about the Bible," and with a characteristic tract by Prof. William Denton, entitled "Common Sense Thoughts about the Bible."—I am, &c.,

VOX VERITATIS.

P.S.—In justice to David Page, a most competent

* To summarise this is impracticable here. See *Harbinger* for April, May, June and July.

† Such as those describing the Deluge.

geologist, who by no means sacrifices his scientific deductions at the shrine of political beliefs, I must state that the sentence in my October epistle, which runs thus—"The first, which is that of Page, Smith, Baylee," &c., should be—"The first, which is that of Pye Smith, Baylee," &c. Dr. Pye Smith was a *theologian*.

THE VALUE OF TRACTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—I desire to acknowledge, through your journal, receipt of a number of pamphlets appertaining to the spiritualistic philosophy, and free thought generally, from H. J. Brown, Esq.

Although I have not had the good fortune to make that gentleman's acquaintance; I can say at least, that I thoroughly appreciate the idea of distributing tracts amongst the heathen, (the orthodox of this age) and will scatter them, as it were, broadcast amongst my most bigoted and priest-ridden friends, with the view to clear the mote out of their saintly eyes.

Yours truly,

PHILOSOPHY.

Manaroo District, N. S. W., August 21st., 1878.

IS CHRISTIANITY BRAHMINISM?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

DEAR SIR,—I have said in a former letter (July 9) that Jesus and his Apostles had studied in Egypt and the East, that the revolution effected by them was due to the sacred books of India; new proofs, still more irrefutable, will add themselves to those already given in support of this proposition.

We have seen the material impossibility of all the miracles, of all the superstitions, with which it pleased the evangelists to surround the life of the Christian reformer, in discovering that they were all but a second edition of the same facts and acts already attributed to Christna by ancient India. I am about to show, in a few words, that the Christian Church, continuing the same borrowing system, is but a second edition of the Primitive Brahminical Church.

Moses, the prophets, in a word, the Hebrew religion, knew nothing of the trinity of God, in the sense of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as introduced in the Christian idea!

Whence did the Apostles imbibe this doctrine of Trinity in unity? Nowhere does Jesus define it as a serious dogma; He seems to have been much more a partisan of the simple unity of the Supreme Being than his successors. It is logical to conclude that the Apostles adopted this dogma with their many other borrowings from the theology of the East.

Brahma is God the Father, Vishnu is the Son incarnate in Christna, Siva is the Spirit who presides at the manifestation of omnipotence—the operating afflatus.

Here is the Hindoo belief transplanted into Catholicism; the imitation is flagrant, for it would be absurd to suppose that the Apostles invented this theory of the three persons of the Godhead, when Brahminism, which prevailed not only in India but throughout Asia, had already expressed the same ideas for thousands of years.

We have too long forgotten that Christianity was born in the East, and was there developed before gaining over the nations of the west, and that there must we return if we would discover the sources from which it sprang. Reference to the Brahminical religion will sufficiently show that the sacrifices and sacraments of that creed were adopted almost literally by the new church.

Is Christian baptism anything else than Hindoo baptism? How easy it is to indicate its origin! The partisans of Christna have a sacred river, the Ganges, whose waters should wash out original sin. John the Baptist and his followers have also a sacred river, the Jordon, whose waters are used for the same purpose. This custom, indigenous in the extreme east—the

country of religious ablutions, was doubtless so well known in all the world, that the Apostles subjected Jesus to it, not daring to attribute to Him the merit of instituting the first of their sacraments.

There was but one means of extrication from the difficulty, which was to establish John as the forerunner of Christ, by order of God, which they did. At sixteen the Hindoo is obliged to present himself at the temple to have his purification confirmed by the application of holy oil. And this ceremony is equally made its own by the new religion—by Catholicism. As all children cannot be presented at the Ganges, the Brahmins substitute for the waters of the holy river the waters of purification, in which they dissolve salt and aromatics to preserve it. As it is equally impossible, as the Christian communion increases, to transport all the new-born to the banks of the Jordan, the Apostles, following the Hindoo rite, adopt the usage of holy water.

The ancient Brahmins were religious judges, received public confession of faults, and adjudged the penalty. The Apostles, or Christians, arrogate the same functions, and establish the public confessions alone in use, as we know, in the first times of the Church. It was not until more than two centuries after Jesus Christ that the bishops substituted private for public confessions—an occult agency, whose demoralising tendency is too easily indicated.

Communion did not exist in the Brahminical religion as a sacrament. There is a law for the faithful to eat with the priest in the temple, of the flour, the rice, and the fruits which have been offered to God in sacrifice, and this holy food purifies from all stain. But it is not said that God is present. In adopting this ceremony the Christian Church added this last clause, and that is called the Eucharist. It is nevertheless true that this custom was and is but a copy of the Hindoo usage, that the first believers eat bread and drank wine in common, which resembled in nothing the actual Symbolic Host.

Protestants who deny the real presence, and receive their sacrament in two kinds, pretend with good reason to have thus returned to the simple usage of the first ages. Lastly, to have done with all these borrowings, much more numerous, no doubt, but of which we take only the most prominent.

The Sacrifice of the Mass is nothing else than the Hindu Sacrifice of the Sarvameda. In the Sarvameda, Brahma, victim through his son Christna, who came to die on earth for our salvation, himself accomplishes the solemn sacrifice, by the hand of a Brahmin priest. Does the Christian sacrifice emanate from another idea? Answer who can, or who dare; attacking the errors of others, we shall be glad to recognise our own.

The revolt of the angels, the first creatures created by God, does not exist in Judaism; that is, in the religious constitution of Moses. The revolt of the Devas against Brahma gave birth to the Christian dogma. India again—always India that initiates!

The reader will understand that I pass rapidly over all these things. Wherefore dally with the obstinate force of facts?

A man during three years preaches charity, good will, and confines himself to the practice of moral duties; institutes neither dogmas or ceremonies. The companions, the successors of this Man, who was Jesus, construct after his death a complete religious worship; rites, dogmas, ceremonies, new sacraments, are taken neither from Paganism nor from Judaism. Whence come they, then, if not borrowed from ancient India, which possess the same beliefs, the same exterior manifestations, the same worship, and that from thousands of years before the Christian revolution.

This is not all; Jesus becomes Christ; He re-unites in himself all the mysteries, all the miracles, all the prodigies of Christna. His doctrine, which we only know by his apostles, is the same as that of the Hindoo incarnation. Mary revives the figure of Devanaguy. Herod copies Kansa, the tyrant of Madura. Jordan plays the part of Ganges. Holy water succeeds the part of purification; baptism, confirmation, confession, eucharist, less the real presence, and ordination of priests, all resemble, all modelled one from the other. And the apostles would have us believe that they re-

ceived a celestial mission, and were not inspired from the east by that antique Brahminism which illumined the ancient world!

But let us come to an understanding. I accept the providential mission of the disciples of Jesus, in the same sense as I accept that of Christna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Confucius, and Mahomet, only let me be permitted to consign these people to the fables, dreams, and superstitions of the past, and to erect on the threshold of the future as the guide of modern nations—God and Conscience.—Yours, &c.,

LAYMAN.

Vaughan, October 21, 1878.

THE DEBATE,—A CORRECTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—In the report of Mr. Walker's speeches in the recent debate, I have noticed two rather important defects. In one address (during the third night, I think) Mr. Walker correctly stated that in Raphael's *Prophetic Almanac* for 1821, Queen Caroline's death was predicted, several months before its occurrence, accurately to the very day; and that in Raphael's *Prophetic Messenger* for 1852, the Duke of Wellington's decease in 1852 was also foretold. Yet these two statements are omitted in the published "Report."

The next error occurs on p. 99, where Mr. Walker is reported as affirming that "it is said by T. L. Harris in his work called the "Morning Land," that the principal doctrines of Christianity, such as the resurrection, and crucifixion are the same as those current" in Egypt in pre-Christian ages. Now, Sir, having been present that evening I know that Mr. Walker did not refer to T. L. Harris, but to J. S. Stuart-Glennie, M. A., and Mr. W. not only referred to him but quoted his words, which are as follows * :—

In ancient Osirianism, as in modern Christianity, the Godhead is conceived as a Trinity, yet are the three Gods declared to be only one God. In ancient Osirianism, as in modern Christianity, we find the worship of a divine mother and child. In ancient Osirianism, as in modern Christianity, there is a doctrine of atonement." Now this correction is important, because Stuart-Glennie is a recognised authority on Egyptology, whereas T. L. Harris is not. Probably the mistake arose through a confusion of titles, Harris having a work entitled, I think, "A Lyric of the Morning Land."

I am, &c.,

W.

SPIRITUAL MEDIUMS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—The published report of the discussion between Messrs. Walker and Green being to hand, the friends here in Castlemaine are very indignant at an assertion made by Mr. Green, and feel sore at so long a time elapsing before any reply or remark could be made to it. The assertion made, you will find on page 67 of the said report Mr. Green says a lady at Castlemaine told him "herself, husband, and daughter were all mediums," and at one time they had received information of the death of the Queen, and at another of the death of the lady's father, and in both cases the information was false; and also that the husband had been sent twice to a lunatic asylum, through Spiritualism. Now, this family alluded to are well known by their peculiar and eccentric behaviour, and the pertinacious way they thrust and force their company upon the various circles here, which, I assure you, was most trying to the good nature and courtesy of those forming the circles. The lady in question, I believe, at one time and another has been a member of every church in the town, the converting and re-converting, the washing process, baptizing, &c. Attendance at revivals and love-feasts appears to constitute the sole business of her life, and the neglect of home and home comforts was attributed to be the cause of the poor husband being sent to the

* See in the "Morning Land" chap. iii.

asylum, and not Spiritualism. He, poor fellow, gave himself up to the police, begging of them to take him away, and relieve him from the importunities of the revivalists, his wife being a leader, and thought by some to be more crazy than the poor man himself. Now, if this is the class of people held up as Spiritualists and mediums, can you wonder at lying and deceiving spirits being with such? The total want of harmony, and utter ignorance of the requirements of mediumship would preclude the approach of reliable spirits, and yet these miserable shams are held up as a proof of the falsity of spirit communion. Yea, verily, our theological friends have very rotten reeds to trust to if their faith rests upon such foundations. Apologising for trespassing on your valuable space, at the request of several of the friends I have written this.—I am, &c.,
BETA.

A LETTER FROM MR. TYERMAN,

Virginia City, Nevada, U.S.A.

Aug. 3, 1878

Mr. W. H. Terry,
Dear Sir,

In fulfilment of my promise I send you a few lines from this side of the globe, to let you know of my whereabouts and my doings. I arrived safe in San Francisco on the 19th of June, after a very pleasant voyage from Australia. My short stay at Auckland was one of considerable pleasure, and I trust my lectures were productive of some little good. The interest in my meetings steadily increased, and the last Sunday evening I was there I had a fine audience. The papers treated me fairly, and the only public opposition I met came from the Rev. S. Edger, a so called liberal. Because mine was not an oily-tongued and double faced free-thought, and my spiritualism differed from his version of Christianity—a version which the orthodox repudiate as spurious, he thought it quite consistent with his boasted charity and toleration to specially attack me. Liberality with him, and those of whom he is a type, appears to him to consist in going but a little way ahead of the orthodox and there stopping, becoming immovably fixed, and intolerantly conservative, and denouncing as dangerous radicals other liberals who venture in advance of him. With such weak-kneed, short-sighted namby pamby liberalism I have no sympathy; even orthodoxy despises it, if professed liberals are to be as intolerant towards those who differ from them, either in their views or methods of advocating them, as sectarian bigots, the sooner they stand aside, and seek shelter under the wing of assumed infallible authority the better. The Church of Rome is their proper place. I replied to Mr. Edger in the *Star*, a copy of which I sent you, and I venture to say that his illiberal and unfriendly attack injured himself in the end much more than me.

We spent eight hours at Honolulu, the capital of the Sandwich Islands, on one of which the brave navigator Captain Cook, was killed, but there was not much stirring in the city that day, as it was a public holiday, and most of the people were away at the races. The call makes an acceptable break in the monotony of the voyage, and the passengers enjoy the few hours ashore very much, though the heat and dust are rather disagreeable. I met two or three persons there from the colonies, one of whom used to attend my lectures in Sydney; and it is pleasant to see old familiar faces away from home.

Several Spiritualists in San Francisco received me very kindly on my arrival. There is a society there, but it is not so strong and flourishing as I expected to find it. It numbers in its ranks some excellent persons, and also a few I fear who do more to retard than advance its prosperity. The Lyceum connected with it is in a healthy condition, and is very efficiently conducted. Indeed but for it, it is questionable whether the society would hang together long. I spoke for the society six Sundays, the audiences were fair, but not so large as I have been accustomed to in Australia. There is a strong public prejudice against the hall where the meetings are held; and some of the friends advised me to take another place and run my meetings independently, as Mrs. Britten did

during her last visit; it would probably have been better had I done so, but I did not at the time think it advisable to adopt that course. There are many public circles held in San Francisco on Sunday evenings, and four or five theatres in full swing—things which tell against lectures. But the thing most to be regretted is the division and apathy among the general body of Spiritualists. There are thousands of believers in the city. Some of them are connected with churches; others live to themselves, and for themselves alone; but few rally round the standard of Spiritualism, and assist in maintaining and extending its influence; whereas, if they were as united in spirit, as open in profession, and as earnest in effort as they ought to be, they would multiply rapidly, and soon become a mighty power for good in society. There are a few harmonious and devoted friends of the cause, however, who are doing all they can to sustain it. To them great credit is due, and I gratefully appreciate the sympathy and co-operation they tendered to me whilst in their midst.

There is a public conference and medium's seance every Sunday afternoon, in connection with the society. These meetings occupy two hours, when there is no stranger present to lecture in the afternoon, and when there is, they occupy an hour after the lecture. They are often very interesting and instructive. Persons are allowed to express their sentiments freely on any subject likely to benefit the audience. There are generally several professional as well as private mediums present, and capital tests are often given, sometimes orally and sometimes in writing, and not unfrequently to persons who are total strangers to the medium giving them. I have seen persons, apparently sceptics, manifest great surprise on being singled out of the audience and given the name and several particulars of some departed friend and that by a medium who had never seen them before. The tests are usually openly acknowledged by the parties receiving them; and are often so striking and unmistakable as to produce a very marked impression on the audience. There is no dark circle, no tricks, no collusion, nothing to excite suspicion, everything is open and straightforward, in a public hall, and a good many persons have been converted to a belief in Spiritualism by the manifestations thus produced. I hope something of the sort will be attempted in Australia, when mediums are sufficiently developed to justify them in appearing in public. Such meetings do much good, and what is done at San Francisco is practicable at the antipodes. Mediumship, fortunately is not a local or exclusive gift. It is the heritage of universal man, and time and patience alone are needed to develop in the colonies the test phases enjoyed in America or elsewhere.

There are several fine mediums in San Francisco, through some of whom I received excellent tests; going to them as a stranger, certain departed friends came and gave me very satisfactory evidence of their presence. No other theory would so well explain the answers to questions, and communications that I got as the spiritualistic one. Mrs. Foye is one of the best of those mediums. Her phase of mediumship is similar to Foster's, but she excels Foster in this—she is successful in a public hall before a crowded audience as before a few persons in a private room. I wrote names and questions on slips of paper while she was out of the room, loud raps first announced the presence of the departed, some of them gave their names and messages orally, and others in writing. Several were made simultaneously in different parts of the room, on the table, floor, walls, &c. The writing was done from right to left, and upside down, so that the medium had to turn the paper up before she could read what was written. The communications being mostly of a personal and private nature, I cannot relate them, but they were very convincing to me. I will state one little incident, however, which will speak for itself. I had previously obtained the name of a brother-in-law through two mediums, independently of each other; and they both told me that he was drowned; yet they did not know that I had such a relative, much less that he met with his death in that manner. At the sitting with Mrs. Foye, almost the first message I got was, that George Dunn (the brother-in-law in question) was present, and

that he said he met his death by drowning. I then asked him if he had communicated with me before in San Francisco; he answered that he had *twice*; and on inquiring through whom, he gave me a correct reply. Now I am morally certain that Mrs. Foye had never heard of that relative and had no idea that he had communicated with me through two other mediums in the city; and hence I regarded the message I got through her as a very good proof of the spirits identity. I have advised Mrs. Foye to visit Australia, and I hope she will do so after awhile. She would do the cause much good especially as she could give tests before a public audience, as she has often done in America.

I left San Francisco yesterday morning for this place. The overland journey to the Eastern States is a very long and wearisome one, and I intend breaking it, by stopping at a few places on the way.

Salt Lake City, Utah, August 29th.

I did not get my letter sent off by the last mail, and therefore I will add a few lines to it. I only made a short stay at Virginia City. It is a mining place, and the bulk of the people seem to care for little else than gambling in mining stocks. There are a few Spiritualists there, but no society, nor regular circle that I heard of. There is a Free Religious Society in the city for whom an ex-Methodist minister officiates; and I lectured on his platform.

Salt Lake City, where I am now making a short stay, is, as all the world knows, the head quarters of the Latter Day Saints, as they delight to call themselves. Most lecturers who cross the continent on the Union Pacific Railway stop here, partly because it makes an agreeable break in the long monotonous journey, partly because it affords a fair field of labour, and partly to see the place, and learn somewhat of the people and their system. Mrs. Britten, Dr. Peebles, Mr. Walker and other well known workers have lectured here, and left good fruit behind them. The place contains some twenty-five thousand inhabitants. Of course the majority are Mormons, but there are said to be some four thousand Gentiles here, as the saints designate all outside of their own petty sect. The objects of most curiosity to a stranger are the Temple and the Tabernacle. The former is rising very slowly, and it will be a long time before the topstone is put on amid the shouts of the faithful. The latter is a large building, said to be capable of holding twelve thousand people. A service is held there every Sunday afternoon. It was not full the other Sunday when I was there, but a vast crowd was present; and a more common looking class of people as a whole, I never saw. A stranger could not fail to see the stamp of intellectual and moral inferiority upon them. I suppose this arises from the fact that Mormonism is a system that takes its recruits mainly from the poor, low, ignorant classes. One of the speakers on the occasion referred to was Orson Pratt, perhaps the ablest speaker and writer the movement has in it. The object of his address was to prove that Mormonism is taught in the Bible, and is in perfect harmony with that book. He quoted passage after passage in support of his position; the faithful received all he said as gospel, and appeared to think that he had made out an unanswerable case. Several Methodist ministers passing through here to a conference some distance off—were present; and they appeared to me to feel very uncomfortable as the speaker adduced such a mass of evidence from their favourite book in support of a system they condemn; but had they been allowed to reply, they could no doubt have given a different interpretation to the passages quoted. While listening to Pratt's efforts, I was more impressed than ever with the fact, that the Bible is the most pliable and convenient book in the world, and can be made to support the most opposite and conflicting systems. When will people cease to regard a book that is capable of such different interpretations, as the infallible word of God, and of special authority in religious matters. Of Mormonism I can only say that notwithstanding its being supported by the so-called word of God, the more I see of it the more it strikes me that its religion is a debasing superstition, its priesthood an oppressive tyranny, its polygamy a withering curse; and now that its master spirit has gone, it will be difficult to keep it

together, and impossible to realise the ambitious hope with which its dupes have been flattered.

Most of the four thousand Gentiles of the city were formerly Mormons, who saw through the imposture, and abandoned it. A considerable number of them are Spiritualists, who have a society, and hold Sunday meetings most of the year. They had suspended their meetings for the hot season before I arrived, but they have rallied round me very well since I came, and we have had very good meetings considering the excessively hot weather there has been. I shall leave here for Omaha on Tuesday next. I may just add that Bishop, of whom you have no doubt read, gave two exhibitions here this week, to expose Spiritualism. He formerly professed to be a medium, and then turned exposé, because I suppose it was likely to pay best. There are several of that stamp in America, who have done much to injure the movement. I replied to Bishop on Wednesday evening, and showed the people that his tricks were not like the genuine phenomena of Spiritualism, nor produced under the conditions imposed on many mediums. He told me he intended going to Australia, but had just learned that Baldwin, another ex-medium and exposé, was on his way there, and hence he will remain in America. He said that Baldwin was going there to expose Spiritualism in general and Slade in particular; the latter must therefore look out for his laurels. Spiritualism has survived too many so-called exposures to be in danger.

Yours fraternally,

JOHN TYERMAN.

INTERESTING PHENOMENA.

We have another letter from "Alpha" giving an account of further remarkable phenomena occurring spontaneously through the mediumship of his wife, which pressure of space prevents our printing in extenso. Early in August, whilst sitting at a friends house three miles distant from their own, a cream jug and a glass portrait, suddenly appeared on the table, and were immediately recognised as their property, having been brought that distance by the invisibles. Floral donations in the shape of bouquets, some of them large and well arranged are frequently brought into the house when all the doors are closed. The medium has been for years afflicted with fits, but since the development of her medial powers her husband is always informed by raps of their approach, and the spirits control and help her through the crisis. The following extract may be instructive to some of our investigating readers:—

"Upon another occasion we had the following message rapped out during breakfast time, my wife at the time being in bed slightly indisposed, 'Edra Lenorao must its ot ight.' The interpretation to the above being clearly, 'Dear Leonora must sit to-night.' And here let me remark how often do we get unintelligible and apparently meaningless messages rapped out when in reality their imperfection is owing to obscure influences which we are, at present, unable to fathom."

Our correspondent promises reports of still more interesting phenomena shortly.

A COLORED WRAPPER

SUBSCRIBERS are respectfully informed that the subscription for the current volume of the *Harbinger* from September, 1878, to August, 1879, is now due, and we ask those who have not paid the same to send us the amount promptly, as we are not in a position to run the paper on credit, as many very unreasonably seem to expect. Those receiving their copies in

A Green Wrapper

will please understand that not only the present but last volumes are unpaid for; and those receiving

A Yellow Wrapper

will please remember they are *still farther in arrear*, and promptly remit, to prevent our stopping the paper. In those instances where customers have general accounts with us, the arrears, if any, are charged to them, and White wrappers sent.

ANCIENT FAITHS.

CONFUCIUS.

CONFUCIUS was a great reformer; he was born 551, B.C. "At the early age of 23 he conceived the thought of leading back his fellow-subjects to the models of the stern and virtuous Chinese kings. By him the ancient documents of the State religion were revised. True to the teachings of the Rig-Vedas, Zoroaster, and of Buddha, he described the Infinite Intelligence, the All-pervading Spirit, as the All-Father of all his creatures. He taught no supernatural religion, but a religion more in accordance with the laws of Nature, reason, justice, and humanity, than any other law-giver ever did; and, consequently, the people under him have excelled all other nations in peace, prosperity, population, and duration, and in the privileges they enjoyed. As early as the second century before Christ, the Chinese system of civilization was an accomplished fact, *which has never been equalled in any other country, notwithstanding their supernatural pretension.* The Emperor was everywhere regarded as the centre of the machinery of the State; schools, planned long before, were enlarged and multiplied in every quarter; literary merit, tested by comparative examination, became the single passport in the public service; qualification, not interest, filled all the important offices in the State."

The religion was directed more to men's duties to themselves, in restraining their appetites and passions through reason and natural law, than in the assumed knowledge of an unknown and unknowable God, and in appeasing His wrath by offering sacrifices, and prayers, and faith.

As there is no simpler, surer, and more convincing way of distinguishing good from evil, truth from error, let us draw a few comparisons between these Buddhist disciples of Confucius and the Jews, and judge of them "by their fruit." In an ancient Chinese treatise named the "Tao," we are told "The great business of man's life is not only to master his affections, and escape from everything that tends to agitate his soul, or bend his spirit to the earth, but rather, as we see in Buddhism, to accumulate the greatest stock of merits. Every genuine Taoist labours hard to regulate his wishes, and to purify his intentions; to set his heart right, and then attempt to influence others. He must be humane, abstain from all cruelty to the meanest animals, practice filial piety, be affectionate as a brother, and respect his seniors. He must pity the orphan and the widow, and sympathise with the afflicted; rejoice with those who prosper, help the needy; be humble in prosperity; expose not the faults of others; act from love, without expecting recompense from others, with meek submission to the will of Heaven. Who violates these duties, stifles the growth of virtue, dishonours Heaven, and corrupts public manners."

Some say Confucius manifests no faith in any kind of supernatural religion; the Chinese say that "he yielded obedience to the promptings of his pure nature, which he inherited in common with the rest of mankind." "The people were taught to look up to the Mandarins as their fathers, and to the Emperor as the father of the Mandarins," and "their Great High Priest, who offered up yearly a sacrifice to Heaven, on which occasion he publishes the fact that harmony continues to exist, as heretofore, between the celestial and terrestrial powers, certifies the oneness of the empire in act and interest with the unseen spirit which pervades the universe, and is directing all."

There was a second temple devoted to the earth, the great correlative divinity of ancient China, to whom joy and gratitude were periodically awakened, in contemplation of the powers and general progress of Nature on earth." Showing that the laws of nature were venerated by the Chinese, *not ignored*, as they usually are, *by all teachers of supernatural religions.*

The Chinese, as in most ancient religions, appear to be *Spiritists*. They show great veneration towards the spirits of their departed friends and benefactors; thus, temples in commemoration of their virtues abound throughout China, as well as tombs, where they annually

repair, and offer immolations to their manes. Among the titles of the Emperor is that of "The Son of Heaven," and "The Father of the People;" while he is taught to look upon himself, and exercise sympathies towards them as such, and they to look up with affection towards him. Hence the long paramount peace and tranquility of the empire, both within and without; not like Christian European kingdoms often warring against each other, bursting up into innumerable sects, setting up uneducated, inexperienced, and unprincipled men to rule and govern the State, contrary to the laws of nature, justice, and of reason; for it is as reasonable to pay a gentleman who cannot use a pick and shovel a laborer's wages, and to hire him as such, as to elect men ignorant of history, law, and politics, to legislate for the country. What else can possibly result under such a system, where wisdom and experience are ignored, and the uneducated multitude left to govern, but degradation, confusion, and anarchy.

Let me remind my readers that the Chinese are abstainers from intoxicating liquors, the cause of nine-tenths of the crimes in this country. It will be said that they are given to the use of opium. The opium-eater is, indeed, his own enemy, but he does not disturb the public peace; yet even this is against the laws of China. The first war carried on by England against the Chinese, was caused by the seizure of an English vessel by the Chinese for smuggling opium, which vessel they refused to give up; but Christian England compelled them to admit the deleterious drug. It is but fair to remark that the Chinese are no bigots, but permit missionaries from Christian nations to labour among them without molestation. Their axiom is: "Teach us what is good, if you can." The missionary Ricci taught that the Chinese believe in one infinite and all-embracing spirit, "Teen." That the two great temples at Pekin, in which the Emperor sacrifices to Heaven and to Earth, were held to be sanctuaries of the Eternal Spirit, where he is worshipped as the Creator of the Universe—merely worshipped under different titles.

The Chinese in their moral teaching held out the imitation of the Heavens and the Earth as displayed in their genial nature, exhibited to us in the life and enjoyment of all creatures; yet the check imposed upon evil actions is more commonly the fear of giving umbrage—not to God, but to the Spirits of Earth and Heaven, who are affected, it is urged, by all the works of man, and have to punish or reward them according to their quality. The good man's pathway is encompassed by a host of invisible agents, who are all continually engaged for his protection.

In short, Confucius, in common with Spiritists, believed that the Infinite All-merciful is so inconceivably beyond the conception of all His creatures, as to be unapproachable to the spirits, even of the departed saints; "for the Primordial Reason, the Intelligence which, having formed the universe, still rules it as the spirit rules the human body." This belief is termed "Taoism." "Laotse, the founder of Taoism, was born in 604 B.C. He had always been a scholar and a recluse, alive to the reality of the invisible world, and to the presence of superior powers. Earnest, soaring, and contemplative, his chief aim was to subdue all earthly appetites, and deepen the desire for the unfading and immortal."

That Lao-tse was a genuine Spiritist seems most probable, from the following remarks, which, being written by a missionary, we must make ample allowance for prejudice on the part of the Christian narrator:—"Taoism" is presented to us in its latter stage of development in a very different phase. Preceding, it appears on the hypotheses that "holy men" are so completely identified with the Tao—*Divine Intelligence*—as to have acquired a perfect mastery over natural forces, which are still, however, fettering to ordinary mortals. The Taoist grows most ardent in the cultivation of magic."

To the Christian missionaries of the seventeenth century the Taoists seemed the most abominable sect in China (as we Spiritists do to the orthodox of the present age), "living only to corrupt and fascinate the populace by magical performances, in which they still are said to figure—at one time as mere jugglers, at

another as physicians, at a third as fortune-tellers, at a fourth as gifted with the powers of drawing secrets from the invisible world, through intercourse with those who are possessed by demons. They are, notwithstanding, held in high repute by nearly every class of the Chinese."—from "Christ, and other Masters," by Archdeacon Hardwicke; vol. ii., pp. 58, 65, 75.

The only remarks I shall offer on the above, proceed from one who had similar reflections cast upon his teachings and works: "Blessed are ye," said he, "when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you and falsely, for my sake;" "rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." "If they called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?"

PRESENTATION TO MR. THOMAS WALKER.

THE above excellent Trance-lecturer arrived in Melbourne from Sydney (where he has just concluded a lengthy and most successful course of lectures), on the 5th ult., and on the following morning attended, as was his wont when here before, the Melbourne Progressive Lyceum. His presence there was taken advantage of to present to him a sum of money, subscribed by several of his friends and admirers both in and out of the Lyceum, as an acknowledgment of his disinterested services in connection with the "Green and Walker Debate," which took place in the Temperance Hall last March.

Immediately after the preliminary exercises, Mr. W. H. Terry was called to the platform, and, after welcoming Mr. Walker to the Lyceum, and congratulating him on his labours in connection with the establishment of a similar institution in Sydney, he proceeded to explain the circumstances under which the subscription was initiated. Mr. Walker, he said, had come forward as the champion of Spiritualism, and without any hope or prospect of pecuniary recompense, devoted nine evenings to a debate with a Christian minister, ably sustaining his position, and refuting the arguments of his opponent. Some friends, whilst fully appreciating Mr. Walker's disinterestedness, taking into consideration the short course of paid lectures he had delivered, and his limited means, thought it but just that some tangible acknowledgment should be given him, and the speaker had consented to act as treasurer and collector of a fund for that purpose. After some ten pounds had been collected, the matter was introduced to the Lyceum, and by a collection among the children, and subscriptions by officers and the older members, the amount was speedily doubled, the total amount subscribed being £20 14s. 6d., which he now had the pleasure of presenting to Mr. Walker, Mr. Walker, who, until then, had been ignorant of the intended presentation, briefly responded, thanking the subscribers for their unexpected kindness, and was greeted with hearty acclamation by the members of the Lyceum. The following is the list of subscriptions:—

Mr. A. Halley	...	...	£1 1 0
Mr. G. A. Stow	...	...	1 0 0
Mr. S. G. Watson	...	...	2 0 0
Dr. Motherwell	...	...	1 1 0
Mr. Benson	...	...	1 0 0
Mr. Stevenson	...	...	1 0 0
Mr. Bunney	...	...	0 10 0
Mr. Haselden	...	...	0 10 0
Friend, per Ditto	...	...	0 10 0
Mrs. Cassell	...	...	0 10 0
Mrs. Hancock	...	...	0 10 0
Friend, per Mrs. Wilson	...	...	0 5 0
Friend, per letter	...	...	0 3 0
LYCEUM—			
Mr. Veevers	...	...	1 0 0
Mr. McLaughlin	...	...	1 0 0
Mr. Moore	...	...	1 0 0
Mr. Fischer	...	...	1 0 0
W. H. T. ...	...	...	1 0 0
Mr. Porter	...	...	0 10 0
Miss Donnelly	...	...	0 10 0
Misses Haselden	...	...	0 10 0
Mrs. Ryme	...	...	0 10 0
Mr. E. Barker	...	...	0 10 0
Mr. Carson	...	...	0 10 0
Mr. Cackett	...	...	0 5 0
Mrs. Cackett, senr.	...	...	0 5 0
Collection	...	...	2 4 5½

£20 14 5½

DR. SLADE.

DURING the early part of last month several interesting sittings were held, giving general satisfaction, but Dr. Slade's health failing, it was thought advisable for him to visit Sandhurst and Ballarat, in response to invitations received from there, in hopes that the change of air would prove beneficial. A satisfactory sitting was had by the committee on the 15th, but arrangements could not be made for the conclusion of their labors before his departure. We shall probably be able to report the results in our next. A series of private sittings were given to ourselves and a friend in September and October, at which some interesting results were obtained. On one occasion a bell, on a side table about eight feet from the nearest sitter, was lifted and rung in the air, without any visible contact. This wonderful phenomena was subsequently repeated, and the bell ultimately brought to the hand of one of the sitters farthest from it. On other occasions spirit voices were distinctly heard, and materialised forms clearly seen, without the aid of any cabinet, a small screen being placed at the end of the table to shield the light from the forms whilst materialising. Flowers were taken from the coat of one of the sitters (whilst all hands were clasped together) carried by his request to his hat on the further table, and the hat with the flowers in it brought and put on his head. In a darkened room, masses of soft drapery swept over the heads, faces, and hands of the sitters, whilst both the hands of the medium were held.

The "Ballarat Star" and "Courier," "Bendigo Advertiser" and "Independent," give special reports of satisfactory sittings given to their representatives by Dr. Slade; and "Ormuzd," in the "Avoca Mail," gives a lengthy account of two deeply interesting seances held at Lister's Hotel, from which we extract the following:—

"Two slates were then cleaned, a bit of pencil was put on one, and covered over by another; this time the closed slates were put on Mr. B.'s shoulder close to his ear, in full view of all present, the doctor's left hand was held by myself, whilst with his right hand he held the slates in the position I have indicated. We could all distinctly hear the sound of writing—it's being ticked, t's being stroked. At last, on the signal being given, the slates were laid on the table and the cover taken off, the message ran as follows:—"Dear friends, much joy awaits you all in the true investigation of this much misunderstood subject. We come to earth to give joy to those without hope and comfort, and to those that mourn. I am, Henry Hall." Just at this time one of my friends had his knees grasped by a hand, the other had his leg grasped, whilst I had my chair almost pulled away from under me. The question was then put, 'What Hall is it?' The answer came again on the slate, 'I was head dresser at — drapery store.' Mr. B. said, 'Why, I knew him very well; he died about three years ago. I wonder if he has any message?' Dr. Slade put a bit of pencil on the slate, and requested Mr. B. to hold one side of it with him. The answer was written on the top side, 'I want to see my dear wife, H. Hall,' the pencil point resting at the finish of the last letter l. Then Mr. B. asked, 'Are you happy?' Holding the slate with Dr. Slade as before, the answer was given, 'A good time is coming, I am happy, H. H.' My friend, putting his hand into his coat pocket, produced a book-slate, and asked whether it could be possible for a message to come on it, without contact with the doctor. He was told to try, and placing a bit of slate pencil between the leaves, he held it in his own hand. Immediately the sound of writing came, and when opened we found those words, 'Go on and do all you can to understand this subject, H. H.' I tried but got nothing. Dr. Slade then proposed to dematerialise a book, and he thereupon picked up from the table, Lister's Ballarat Visitors' Guide Book, which he placed on a slate, and partly hid the slate under the leaf of the table, his hand and part of the slate, however, were visible. In less than half a minute three taps were given, and the book was gone. After examining the table all round, even Dr. Slade's sleeve, the slate was placed for the return of the book. In five seconds we heard the three taps, and on withdrawing the slate, the book was found restored to its place. Knocks were now heard all over the room, and the doctor rose from his seat and took the handbell and placed it under the table; it rose up and rang several times."

We observe that the meeting of persons interested in Spiritualism at Gawler, S.A., referred to in a previous issue, has led to the formation of a society for the investigation of its phenomena, Mr. L. E. Marcus being appointed president.

Mrs. E. H. BRITTON continues to draw crowded houses at Sydney, in spite of the opposition of the clergy and the fanatical Dr. Begg. It is generally understood that she will pay Victoria another visit before leaving Australia.

CONCERNING PROFESSIONAL MEDIUMSHIP. (Continued.)

Professional mediumship divides under two heads—evidential and educational.

The first comprises phenomenalism of all forms, and what is known as test mediumship, as well as healing mediumship; the second that form of mediumship that is so well illustrated in the career of our trance speakers. The evidential forms of medial power, as a rule, prove remunerative to those who devote their time thereto. All our noted physical mediums are well and continuously patronised, and receive no inconsiderable income from the exercise of their powers—such is but their right; while educational mediumship with few exceptions, is but poorly rewarded. Many weary miles are travelled, turbulent and captious critics encountered, two, three, and sometimes more meetings are held, and the trance speaker often retires with a very modest pittance for his reward.

The spheres of work for the professional medium fall under the same heads as private mediumship. Phenomenal mediumship is ever best in private circles; the speaking medium can often be most profitably employed in the same way; while each—at a minimum of expense to all concerned—can traverse the town or district they belong to.

Two elements here, however, have to be considered. The first is, that other districts might be benefited by exchange of mediums, and the second is the cost of such exchange. Soon it is found that some mediums are better fitted for such work than others, and such mediums, of the educational phase, become our travelling speakers, doing a national work.

Clearly understanding that mediumship is a natural faculty, and not a "gift," and that one person has as much right to become a "professional medium" as another has to become a "professional" poet, or editor, doctor, or dancer—as all are "professional" who receive pay for the exercise of their art or skill,—the consideration of the question of paying mediums becomes a duty and a right; it ceases to be a matter that sentiment is to decide. How, then, is the payment to be made? Practically two methods are adopted: fees and free-will offerings—bargaining and alms-giving would very often be a more correct statement.

That the travelling expenses of the speaker or medium should be assured, there can be no question; that a reward commensurate with the value of the work done ought to be given, is undeniable; and it is argued, admitting the first as the duty of the engaging party, surely the auditors are the best judges of the amount of the reward to the labourer. Let the average collection of every Spiritual society in England tell how much or how little would be the speakers' pay, if this system was adopted; while the fact that you put a medium or speaker on the almsgiving system is a direct invitation to pander to the purses of the audience, and a sure sap of the independence all public work's experience.

The "fee" remains then. Some speakers demand an extremely heavy fee—and then lecture gratis. Fee pride is detestable in the extreme; while, if the speaker or medium can afford to lecture without fee, but yet takes one, two things are suggested: either they can altogether dispense with pay, or they may be only in part depending on "fees," and can perhaps take less than they charge! Moderate fees—with a liberal margin for exceptionally poor societies or localities—seem the most satisfactory method of meeting the case. As in all other matters, so in this, only those who are fitted for the post can maintain a position as medium or speaker; therefore, no matter what artifices are resorted to for the purpose of pushing up prices or popularity, the "survival of the fittest" will be inevitably exemplified. Fees have ranged from £5 to as low down as the same number of shillings, and even less. Sometimes they include expenses, at other times not. Three plans are now in vogue under which professional mediums are employed: Accommodation is found by local friends free, travelling expenses are paid, and each meeting is paid for by a set fee; or a definite sum is agreed upon, to include travelling expenses, and all meetings,—accommo-

dation being provided as in the first case; or, thirdly, a contract extending over a term is entered into, and a set fee, including all charges, given to the medium or speaker. The writer has no less than five "contracts" in operation at the present time, and, after an experience of five or six years of them, can conscientiously recommend societies mediums, and speakers, to adopt that plan. Societies are able to make the best terms for themselves; the medium is able to offer lower rates for a series than could be offered for isolated visits; and a constant succession of speakers for the societies, and a continual missionary movement of the medium, are maintained, to the benefit of all concerned,—while, again, the district in which a society that makes arrangements such as suggested, is capable—if desired—to make special engagements with mediums and speakers, at a much lower cost than otherwise.

Let those who can work free do so—and their efforts are most valuable. But remember those you require service from are not all able to work without reward. The cheese-paring policy that endeavours to make profit out of the services of a medium or speaker, will always defeat its own end; while that desire to o'ertop all else besides—that makes ambition its key-note, and cares not for fee or its absence so long as "I" am to the fore—will be like

"That vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself,
And falls on the other side."

Summarised, the argument is this: Mediumship is a normal faculty, not a gift; its exercise is as much a labour as the exercise of any other faculty of our nature. The community of Spiritualists benefits by labour devoted to its interests. Justice demands adequate return for unreserved time devoted to the interests of the Cause by public mediums. The thought that finds expression in the effect that professional mediumship is discreditable is an unworthy sentiment, closely akin to cant in many cases. As *workers* public mediums have a right to "the bread that perisheth," when unable to labour without it; principle and fraternal justice should regulate their demand for fees. When able to work without price, *fees should never be received*. The nondescript intermediates mentioned above so soon fall naturally to their proper level that no space need be devoted to their consideration.

That these thoughts may call out others is the hope of the writer. The full discussion of this problem of professional mediumship will help to remove many anomalies, and it is trusted, prevent, as an able public worker recently wrote to the writer, of many being "done to death for nothing at all," which fact is a disgrace to our Cause. Let us hasten to remove it by wiser judgment and kinder treatment.

J. J. MORSE.

SOCIAL SEANCES OF THE VICTORIAN ASSOCIATION OF SPIRITUALISTS.

THE Victorian Association of Spiritualists is at last bestirring itself, and to some purpose, in the interests of the cause. On the suggestion of the President, it was unanimously decided by the committee that seances, both physical and intellectual, should be commenced as soon as possible, for the benefit of members and inquirers generally. For the physical seances, arrangements were made with Dr. Henry Slade, and for the intellectual, with Mrs. Fielden, the well-known trance speaker. This lady, however, generously declined the remuneration offered her by the Association, and insisted upon giving her services free, on condition that the proceeds of the meetings should go towards the building fund of the Association. The committee demurred to accepting so much of Mrs. Fielden's time without making her a suitable return; but it was finally agreed that, at all events for the first four sittings, her kind offer should be accepted with most hearty thanks. The first seance was held in the Masonic Hall on Friday evening, 18th October; the President of the Association (Mr. Deakin) in the chair. There were about eighty persons present. The chairman, when introducing Mrs. Fielden, referred in high terms to her mediumistic powers, and explained that the seance would consist of two parts: The first, in which the medium, by her own spiritual perceptions, would describe such friends of

those present whom she saw; and the second, in which she would be spoken through, by individual spirits, who would answer any inquiries that might be addressed to them, and give what general information was desired.

Passing readily into the trance, Mrs. Fielden gave a great number of first names—in some instances giving surnames also—and indicating their position with relation to the sitters. Of these a number were recognised by those present. Becoming controlled by the spirit of a popular clergyman, late of this city, remarkable for his intellectual endowments and liberality of thought, a most beautiful invocation was given, with an elegance of style and ease of utterance that were themselves remarkable. After this, Dr. Mesmer, the usual control of the medium, delivered a brief address, and then expressed himself willing to answer any queries that might be put. The relation of morality to Spiritualism, and of Spiritualism to the Bible, with many other subjects of importance, were then dealt with in a vigorous and able manner, to the satisfaction of the questioners and all present. The replies were often trenchant, always ready, and were couched in forcible English, which, though with a slightly foreign accent, the doctor rendered with power and fluency. After a most agreeable evening, the meeting, which had been a very attentive and orderly one, broke up with a vote of thanks to Mrs. Fielden.

The next seance took place on the following Friday, when about one hundred persons were present; Mr. H. J. Browne (a representative of the Association) in the chair. After a song, kindly volunteered by Mrs. Cackett, Mrs. Fielden passed into the clairvoyant state, and gave the names of numerous spirits present, several of whom were claimed by friends in the room. Dr. Mesmer then spoke on several subjects, a dissertation on prayer being remarkably fine. The next seance will be held this evening punctually at eight o'clock.

JOTTINGS ON PASSING EVENTS.

BY LAMDA.

THE Green and Walker Debate is published at last, and although neither reporter nor printer has acquitted himself so creditably as one might have expected (by the incapacity of the former, in especial, Mr. Walker is placed at no small disadvantage), still the work deserves an extensive patronage, and will doubtless run through several editions. The question naturally arises, Which debater won? Although speaking only for myself, I think there will be little hesitation with most unprejudiced minds in pronouncing Mr. Walker the victor. Mr. Green's eloquent declamation and rhetoric, his bold assurance and dogmatic assertions, which were not without their effect during the oral debate, fare somewhat ingloriously at the hands of cold, heartless "type." In endeavouring to prove the divine origination of Christianity, Mr. G.'s argument, *at its very best*, appears to be this: We have certain records which are *historically reliable*; in these are predictions, known to have been made antecedently to their fulfilment, which predictions state that at a certain time a certain personage would appear upon the world's stage, and that he would be in the highest sense *divine*. In these records we have an account of the appearance, at the time specified, of Jesus, whose character corresponded with that described by the prophets; he claimed to fulfil the said prophecies; he established a religion; that religion, which is Christianity, *is therefore divine*." Now, I ask, is that a *necessary* conclusion? It may be *probable*, but does it *necessarily* follow? * Mr. W., instead of admitting all these premises, disputed them one by one. He argued that the records are *not* historically trustworthy; that the predictions were vague and ambiguous; that the character of Christ did *not* coincide with that portrayed by the prophets; and that he did *not* claim, but actually *repudiated* divinity. On the second subject, Mr. G. appears to have laboured under the disadvantage of not clearly apprehending what the proposition set forth. Thus he frittered away much valuable

time in calling upon his opponent to produce proof, and give evidences which, by the very wording of the thesis, were *allowed*. In the statement that "the Bible parallels and sustains Spiritualism in all its phases, teachings, and phenomena," the *data*, or things given, are Spiritualism, with its teachings, phenomena, &c.; and what the affirmant had to prove was that these were "paralleled and sustained by the Bible. This Mr. W. fairly accomplished. Mr. G., strange to say, was possessed by the idea that his opponent had to prove the existence and reality of Spiritualism and its concomitants,—an entirely different matter, and one not entertained in the proposition for debate.

I think there are two important lessons to be gathered from the recent discussion. The first applies to future conductors of such affairs, and it is that no reference to, and no quotation from any book may be made by either debater for the purpose of sustaining an argument, unless that book be produced at the time. During the debate, Mr. Green, on the authority of a Professor Carpenter, quoted certain alleged statements from Davis, Tuttle, &c., which may or may not be *bona fide*. Certainly no one at the time could gainsay them. The second lesson is to us Spiritualists. It says, Be careful in what you say, and write, and do. Let all your actions be tempered by soberness, discretion, and common sense. Remember that ye are seen of men who are ever ready to misconstrue and misrepresent.

"Woe comes upon woe!" It was a severe shock to the nerves of the "faithful," when first the discovery was made that our Bible, the authorised version, contained thousands of errors; that mistranslations abounded on every side, and that, stowed away amongst its pages was an occasional interpolation; but comfort was derived from the fact that a new version would soon be made at the hands and under the supervision of the most scholarly men in the land, and anticipation fondly dwelt upon the amended Bible about to be published by special and royal sanction. But alas! how are our best hopes ever doomed to disappointment! The learned revisionists, it seems, have been leaning upon a broken reed, and their labour of love is in vain! The Rev. Professor T. R. Birks, M.A. of Cambridge, and Hon. Canon of Ely, has just published an erudite and interesting work on "The Text of the New Testament," in which he shows that the divines and hierophants now engaged in a recension of the Bible have been working upon the *wrong manuscripts*! He says:—"The present attempt to revise and improve our English Bible is mixed up inseparably with a further question, What is the true original text of the New Testament on which any such revision has to be based?" The learned Professor agrees with Dean Burgon that "the hypothesis on which recent recensions of the text have been for the most part conducted, will on fuller search be seen to be untenable;" and he offers definite reasons to justify his "entire disbelief in the truth and soundness of the greater part of those changes which have been latterly advocated, as if they were restorations of the true and original text of the sacred oracles of God." Verily! to the theological difficulty, "the end is not yet."

SPIRITUALISM is making a stir at Gulgong, N.S.W. A young man named Robbins, formerly a member of the Barnawartha Circle, who appears to be both a physical and trance medium, has set it going, and other media have been developed. Large crowds assembled round one of the houses where the seances were held, and a breach of the peace was committed by one of the anti-Spiritualists, which resulted in a fine of £2. The communications received are not of a low order, but evidently from an intelligent plane of thought. The following is a specimen:—"Great thoughts can never die, they fructify the earth. All that is great and noble in man comes of the vivifying spirit of eternal truth, like unto the floodgates of passion, which overwhelm the mind of man, and lead him on to his destruction, so the spirit of truth shall yet take the world by storm. The human mind shall be illuminated by the light of truth, and cast off the shackles of ignorance. Doubt shall be expelled; men will no longer fear the unknown, but walk in confidence."

* What proves true the prophecies? Jesus. What proves Jesus divine? The prophecies.

MR. THOMAS WALKER'S LECTURES.

THROUGH the inability of the Victorian Association of Spiritualists to make any reasonable arrangement with the present lessee of the Opera House, they have been necessitated to take for the present the Princess Theatre for Mr. Walker's lectures. Although the inconvenient distance of this theatre from the railway station has militated against the attendance, there has been up to the present time an average of about 600 at each meeting. The lecture last Sunday, with the apparently incongruous title of "The Blazing World; or, Moses in Egypt," was one of the best, involving the comparison of the natural development of the earth from an incandescent mass to its present condition, with the Mosaic cosmogony, the utter untenableness of the latter in the light of science and reason being clearly shown, and its absurdities made apparent. Mr. Walker was both logical and eloquent, and carried his audience with him, being several times interrupted by their spontaneous applause. Next Sunday evening the subject is to be chosen by the audience. The Melbourne press still keeps up the "conspiracy of silence," but the *Border Post* of 5th October, gives an abstract of Mr. Walker's Albury lectures, which concludes as follows:—

"There is in Mr. Walker's style of lecturing something so attractive and interesting, that, although one may be a thorough sceptic in the theory of spiritualism, he is, in spite of himself, forced to admire the brilliancy, the eloquence, and the splendid reasoning talent of the man. Viewed even as an oratorical treat, Mr. Walker's lectures are certainly worth going a long way to hear."

MR. JESSE SHEPARD.

THE above-named gentleman, whose musical performances in England and on the continent have excited considerable attention, arrived here from Sydney on the 17th ult. The accounts of Mr. Shepard's seances at Sydney which had reached here being of a conflicting nature, we held our opinions in abeyance until we had an opportunity of judging for ourselves. This was afforded us on the 19th, on which evening a small but select party assembled at the house of a professional gentleman in Melbourne, to hear and estimate the quality of the music presumed performed by spirits, through his organisation. The seance was held in a large and well-lighted drawing room, the instrument used being one of Chickering's American grand pianos, at which, shortly after eight p.m., Mr. Shepard took his seat, requesting those who wished to see the fingering to draw close to the piano. In response, two ladies took their seats at each end of the keyboard, and the remainder of the company (eight in all) formed a semicircle round the player. After a few brief symphonies, Mr. Shepard, or his control, played a most beautiful piece of music, operatic in style, but new to us, and apparently an improvisation, in the execution of which he exhibited the most remarkable command of the instrument—immense rapidity and brilliancy of touch combined with the most perfect harmony, and the delicate modulations and ripples of sound were exquisite. Three other pieces followed, all distinctive in style and beautiful in execution. But the rarest treat was to come, Mr. Shepard informing us that if the lights were turned down he would be controlled to sing. The instrument was turned to bring the performer and audience face to face, and the lights being lowered, Mr. Shepard sang what appeared to be an improvisation, in a fine soprano voice, which at first was rather thick, but gradually became clear and melodious, rising up to C, the note being sustained for at least half a minute—and finishing with a fine burst of melody. After a brief interval, Mr. Shepard announced that the "Egyptian" was there, and would play an Egyptian piece. The style of this music was distinct from anything we ever heard, but the *piece de resistance* was reserved for the last, and professed to be a duet between Lablache and Malibran. Commencing with a powerful bass voice, the transition to a rich soprano was remarkable. It was no falsetto, but a clear distinct voice, with immense range and purity of tone, making it difficult to realise that only one human being was sing-

ing; indeed, at one time we distinctly heard two voices together, but refrained from stating so until we found that others had been similarly impressed. The conclusion we arrived at is, that if Mr. Shepard is not a medium, he is, in a worldly sense, a fool; for if these transcendent musical talents are inherent in himself, he is throwing away both fame and fortune, and subjecting himself to abuse and ignominy by presenting them to the world under the guise of Spiritualism.

Looking over his book of testimonials, we observe a letter from Professor J. F. Kraus, the philologist and eastern scholar, to a friend in reference to Mr. Shepard, in which he states that during three weeks Mr. S. had spent in his house, he had ample opportunities of forming an idea of his musical talent; he spoke eulogistically of the Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, ancient Israelite, and Indian music played by him, and considers him the greatest living musician of his kind. "Are we profited by poetry?" asks the Professor; "Read Klopstock's 'Messiah' and Milton's 'Paradise Lost,' and say we are not. So with music. Listen to the sublime productions of the region of tones, and say you have not enjoyed them. Just as the body relishes the finest eating and drinking, ambrosia and nectar, 'Angels bread and drink,' the world enjoyed music from the most ancient times. When the children of Isreal had come out from Egyptian bondage, and crossed the Red Sea, they expressed their feelings by vocal and instrumental music, led by Merjam, the sister of Moses. King David excelled in music, and connected it with poetry in the Psalms. The prophet Elisha sent for a musician before he would prophecy, in order, as it seems, to inspire him. Sublime music and sublime poetry are two daughters of heaven, like religion." The professor is not a Spiritualist, and objects to his friend calling it the "New Philosophy," by reason of its not being demonstrated to him as such, but concludes by enjoining him to enjoy true philosophy and sublime music.

The following racy criticism in the "Washington Gazette," from Don Piatt, the celebrated American critic, is noticeable:—

JESSE SHEPARD.

"The excitement afforded the town came in on the performances of the above-named gentleman on the piano, to say nothing of his vocalization. It is positively no exaggeration to call both miraculous. Our readers are well aware that we have no admiration for the piano. Indeed, they know that we have regarded that instrument an instrument of torture. Mr. Shepard awakened us to a new sense of positive enjoyment by his performance. He can make the instrument do what we never heard from other fingers. Under his manipulations the dead thing takes on new life, and its heretofore limited expression expands into sweetness and power no words can express.

Nor is Mr. Shepard's voice less remarkable. It is not human at all. Running from a deep, mellow bass to a soprano, where the high C is held for forty seconds, with a clear purity never before approached, one has only to close his eyes to realize that two superhuman voices are pouring melody into one's ears.

We have regarded Carlotta Patti's throat as the most wonderful ever created to amaze and win an audience, but Mr. Shepard gives us a new sensation in that line.

We had received several invitations to hear this singular man, but regarded the best performance on the piano as a nuisance, and never being out of the sound of bad work in that way we politely declined. Mr. Shepard favoured us with a visit. He is a tall well-shaped man of about twenty-five, with a handsome face, remarkable only in the way of expression for its dreamy, abstracted look. Politeness dictated that we should ask him to try our piano, one of Steinway's grand instruments, taking up more room than it is worth, and very awkward in case of fire, as we once found at the cost of a strained back.

"Would you mind turning off the gas?" he asked.

It was an extraordinary request, but being our guest, had he asked the privilege of cutting the Steinway to pieces with a jack knife, our politeness is such that we should have said "Cut away, sir," as if doing us a great favour. We turned off the gas—not a good article, and very expensive—and we were in a solemn gloom

that the dying coal in the grate made enough visible to be ghostly. Our guest threw himself into that Steinway, and immediately we were impressed with the belief that an entire orchestra had opened upon us. That distressing pounding, that separating and distinct sound of notes trying to overtake and mingle, and cannot, disappeared. The keys seemed to melt into each other, and the hated old rankatank seemed to possess itself of the powers belonging to an organ. To heighten this effect a wild, clear woman's voice gave us an air from a mass, and the little room seemed to widen into a vast cathedral, with the music rolling along and echoing back from the fretted ceiling. Of course the surprise, added to the trick of the dark-room, increased the effect. But aside from these there is, as we have said, extraordinary power.

Mr. Shepard gives a concert at Willard's Hall to-morrow night assisted by musicians of acknowledged ability. He ought to be called on to give one at the Congregational church before leaving Washington."

One of the latest accounts is from Mr. Richard Gawthorpe, of the *Globe*, Sydney, who, after stating that he and his wife went to the first seance full of sceptical ideas and suspicion, relates how what occurred there, and subsequently at their own house, completely dispelled these feelings, and thereby satisfied them.

DR. PEEBLES' RECEPTION AT HOME, AND IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA.

WE see by American journals that our zealous co-labourer in the cause of Spiritualism—Dr. Peebles—had a most enthusiastic reception given him at Hammonton, N.J., where he resides; and also in the city of Philadelphia, famous for having been the place where was held the great American Centennial Exhibition. The following is a part of one of the speeches delivered upon the occasion—that of Damon Y. Kilgore's—a distinguished attorney-at-law:—

"Mr. President,—An American citizen (ex-President Grant), now travelling in foreign lands, receiving royal honours, will be given on his return to this city, the greatest ovation ever received by an American. He has been a faithful servant of Mars and Mammon, successful as a general in war, and successful, also, in strengthening the money power. The honors already paid him and those which await his return, are the tribute the world now pays to its heroes of gunpowder and gold. But with no such welcome of heartless pomp and show do we now greet our friend and brother, James M. Peebles.

"The barbarism of war will sometime cease; the sounds of martial music will die away; the gilded trappings of courts will fade; earthly thrones will crumble, and the purchased adoration of unthinking crowds will pass away, leaving no joy behind; but the approving voice of conscience, and the reward it brings, is in itself the highest honor, and will endure forever. A stern fulfillment of duty builds the only monument that will survive the wreck of time, and rear its bold figure in eternity. Such reward and such honour are already yours, my brother, and such a monument you are now erecting.

"You can say with Francis E. Abbot, 'Once I felt the full power of the Christian faith; now I cleave to a faith diviner still. It is *INTELLECT* daring to think, unawed by public opinion. It is *CONSCIENCE* daring to assert a higher law in face of a corrupted society and a conforming Church. It is *WILL* setting at naught the world's tyrannies, and putting into action the private whispers of the still, small voice. It is *HEART*, resting in the universal and changeless law of eternal, transcendent *LOVE*.' As an apostle of this faith, as a living exponent of its *intellect*, *conscience*, *will*, and *love*, in behalf of all true Spiritualists I welcome you to Philadelphia.

"Having known you intimately for many years, it gives me joy to say that, whether upon the broad prairies of the West, sowing seeds of truth received from the immortals; on the beautiful banks of the Tennessee, guarded on either side by hostile armies, or on the battle-scarred steeps of Lookout Mountain, you have nobly urged upon your fellow-men the claims of a never-ending

life, of temperance, purity, and peace. The same untarnished record comes from your tour in the far North-west, when, as a companion to the Government Commission, you visited the hostile Indian tribes. Since then you have gone into every State in our Union, save Florida, as the messenger of unseen guides, and everywhere you successfully defended the great truths of Spiritualism against the combined attacks of ignorance, superstition and bigotry.

"But your spiritual pilgrimage has not been confined to the limits of your native land. You lectured in England ten years since, and in Australia, the first time, several years ago. You gave the only lectures on this subject ever heard in Ceylon, India, or in Constantinople and Smyrna, in Asia Minor. As Consul of the United States to Trebizond, you acquitted yourself with honour. You have looked upon the ruins of the once celebrated churches mentioned in the Apocalypse, at Ephesus and elsewhere. You have studied hieroglyphics, relics, monuments and tombs, the religion and government of the most ancient peoples in every grand division of the globe. You have seen more nations, races, and tribes, than any other American traveller, living or dead. You have stood upon the summit of Chocopa—that miracle in stone—and have heard, through the angel whispers of its builders, of its origin and purpose. It was your exalted privilege to traverse the mountains and valleys of the Holy Land, with celestial guides to point out your way; to walk through Gethsemane attended by angel footsteps, and on Mount Zion to learn from the risen disciples of the Nazarene of the grand mission of the *GREAT REFORMER*. Nay, more; you have learned the one great lesson of human life—the only one that solves life's problem—that the earthly mission of human souls is not simply to be happy, but rather a complete development of all that is written of the *true*, the *beautiful*, and the *good*.

"Accepting truths from all sources, you now return from your second tour around the world, freighted with knowledge and its wisdom fruits. You have come to the right place in good time. We need all the wisdom you can teach. Though Christian in name, we continue to crucify the Christ principle. With all our proud boast of enlightenment and progress, in what virtues do we excel the heathen? Churches and prisons multiply, but crime outstrips them both. Our government rides unconcerned upon a sea of death, but where is the patriotism and statesmanship that will preserve it? Neither the bayonet nor bullets from Gatling guns can save it. *JUSTICE ALONE CAN DO IT. JUSTICE TO ALL* could preserve our nation's life where armies and navies would be sure to fail.

"Amid the external gloom of the present hour, filling so many homes with uneasiness and dread, the spectacle before us gives light and hope. Without any previous concert of action, and almost without notice, this great audience, composed of the very substance of true Spiritualism in this city, is a testimonial of soul which money cannot buy.

"I cannot forbear to express the hope that you will remain with us as long as possible, and that you will take such good care of your health—so husband your resources—as to put in type still other thoughts, thus adding to your numerous books, from which the generations yet to come may read the glorious lessons you have learned of *Truth*, *Wisdom*, and *UNIVERSAL LOVE*."

JOHN TYERMAN IN AMERICA.

By the following letter the reader will perceive that this fearless and indefatigable worker for Spiritualism in the antipodes has turned his steps towards this country, and is now in San Francisco. We hope he will be kept busy during his tour, as he is capable of accomplishing much good by his platform ministrations:—

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE BANNER OF LIGHT.

"Mr. John Tyerman arrived here from Australia per the steamer 'City of New York,' on the 19th inst., and the Spiritualists of this city had the opportunity of listening to a most eloquent and able lecture on last Sunday evening, at Charter Oak Hall. The audience was the largest any speaker before the society has had for many months past, and he was listened to with marked attention.

"Mr. Tyerman is a ready and fluent speaker, presenting his subject in a clear and logical manner, and showing himself thoroughly imbued with the progressive ideas of Modern Spiritualism, and not a whit behind any of our most popular speakers whom we have heard. After spending a short time in California he intends going eastward for the purpose of lecturing on Spiritualism and Freethought subjects, wherever the friends may desire his labours, and we would bespeak for him a most cordial welcome and the confidence of all Spiritualist Societies and Liberalists, assuring him that they will find him a most worthy and genial gentleman, and a very able exponent of progressive ideas.

"The First Spiritual Union Society of San Francisco is in a most healthy and flourishing condition, and the Children's Progressive Lyceum never was more prosperous with us. Mrs. Lavina Mathews is President of the Spiritualist Society for the third year, and also Conductor of the Lyceum for the second year. Her address is 540 Twenty-Third street.

"A. W. ALLEN,

"Secy. Spiritualists' Union and Children's Progressive Lyceum.
"112 Fourth St., San Francisco, Cal., June 29, 1878."

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