

THE Harbinger of Light.

A MONTHLY JOURNAL

DEVOTED TO

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

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

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We publish in another column a portion of the Report of the Committee of the London Dialectical Society (appointed nearly two years since, to test the reality of the alleged spiritual manifestations), which has oozed out without the authority of that body, and the reason of the Society's reticence, and their delay in publishing the Committee's Report, is now palpable. These learned societies do not like the intrusion of new lights from without, they do not take kindly to anything discovered outside of the pale of orthodox science; and doubtless when the Committee were appointed it was presumed that their labors would have a very different termination. The Committee's investigations were without doubt the most thorough and searching of any that have yet been instituted to test the reality of the physical manifestations, and the result is a demonstration of the fact of an influence, independent of the investigators—moving heavy, ponderable substances, making audible sounds, and exhibiting intelligence. Sceptics will demur that it was not proved to be spirits; that the Committee did not see spirits, and that, therefore, it may be some undiscovered power; but such arguments are puerile. If it were merely a manifestation of force, their arguments might have some weight; but where can we look for intelligence except to man, spirit, or God? We have heard many persons say, "Prove to me that ponderable bodies can be moved or suspended without material intervention, and I will believe." Will they accept the evidence of these thirty scientific gentlemen? We fear not; like Pharaoh, they harden their hearts, and will not be convinced till conviction is forced upon them. To such, it is of little use, for, when convinced, they neglect to profit

by it—being convinced against their will; still, there are some even, amongst positive, scientific minds, who will be sufficiently interested to approach the subject in a proper spirit of enquiry. It has not yet transpired how far the Committee carried their investigations beyond the physical phenomena; but if they have endeavoured to bring the higher mental phases to experimental tests, we think they will have failed to do so, at least to the satisfaction of all. It would be next to impossible for so large a circle, unless animated by a sincerely religious feeling, to acquire the condition necessary to prove incontestably the mental phases of the phenomena. Even were seeing and speaking mediums developed amongst them, it would not demonstrate to the material perceptions of the majority that spirits spoke or were seen. The portion we publish is (or should be) a sufficient basis for investigators to start from; but if they expect to make any real progress, they must not attempt to bring the spirits to their conditions, but must be willing to submit to the conditions found to be essential by those who have devoted as much time to the study of the spiritual philosophy as they have to other sciences. Wisdom's throne is on high, and men must be willing to approach in humble spirit. He cannot have her debased to meet him—she is full of majesty! Unfortunately most of our scientific men are too proud in their own conceit to submit to what they deem unnecessary conditions, and hence they and the world lose much. However, time, and the accumulated testimony of the truly philosophical minds of many of their brethren of undoubted ability and clear-mindedness who have investigated in all humility a science beyond their ken, will gradually bring these great philosophers of the Tyndall school to a sense of their own littleness, and prepare them for the investigation of the principles and laws of nature. Meanwhile, let man trust to his own reason and good sense, and remember that the Scientific authority is only an authority in those sciences which he has investigated, and is no more competent to judge of spiritual things than any intelligent man or woman who has never studied the abstract sciences. The acquisition of spiritual knowledge and wisdom is open to all, but in accordance with the purity and capacity of the investigating mind, will be the amount of light that it can absorb.

COMMUNICATION.

FEBRUARY 14TH.

You were asking the other day for an explanation of the doctrines of a certain American lecturer, who seemed in his writings to deny the personality of the Creator. But this is nothing more than an example of the vast disparity of ways of regarding the same subject which exists in all departments of mind, both in the body and in the spirit. This same mind will probably carry the same view into the spirit-world, and it will not be until he has arrived at the elevation from which his spiritual vision will enable him to "see through nature up to Nature's God," that he will be able to thoroughly appreciate the soul of things about which he writes now. God, as we have often told you, is an idea utterly incomprehensible by the only partially-developed mind. It is seldom that any one in the body can grasp the conception at all; indeed, to put the matter categorically before you, it is hardly till the spirit is arrived at the higher circles of what you call the fifth sphere, that it arrives at that period of its education, in which it is able to take in the main facts which we learn of His nature. We do not blame this man; we believe he is thoroughly honest in his convictions, though no doubt his views do harm to those whose minds are still in a transition stage, and who have not arrived even so far as he has at a knowledge of how God works in nature. Be content, my friends, in the present to acquire knowledge, to aspire after God and good. The time will come for you, when you will be able not only to aspire after Him, but to commence a knowledge of Him, which you now cannot. Were we to attempt to commence an explanation of what our own daily, hourly, studies on the subject of the Deity are, it would be as incomprehensible to you as the higher branches of mathematics are to a young and only half-educated person. The mind should only have instilled into it the quality as well as quantity of knowledge that it is enabled to retain, and spiritually digest. We could at this moment, without any difficulty, transmit to your minds the words of our own studies for the last few days, but the idea would utterly fail of being conveyed to you, so where would be the use of doing so? Man is essentially a progressive being; were he not so, he would cease to be what God, the Almighty planner, intended him to be, but would sink to a level with the brute creation in the earth life; though indeed they are also progressive, but in a totally different plan and place from yourselves. Be content, we say, to lay up knowledge, to have the satisfaction of feeling that you are daily advancing a step higher in the acquisition of truth, and know that by so doing you are rising a step nearer to a knowledge of God, who is the author and finisher of all truth. The only appreciable idea of God's nature to the partially developed mind is that He is all love, and, as we have often told you, on this foundation the appreciation of the knowledge of His wisdom must rest. Probably your professor, though learned in the general theory of the Harmonial Philosophy, has hardly yet really at heart this cardinal fact, and consequently he fails to arrive at a just conclusion from the fact of his premises being without a firm, and the only true, foundation. This is the origin of the Scripture references to the mental state of a little child, and the necessity of humility, and so on. God, in His infinite mercy, has so planned, that this, the main foundation of His nature, is the one which is at the same time the most necessary to understand, and is also the most easy of comprehension by children, and by persons whose minds are still in a childish state. And thus it is that the wise and learned in the world's wisdom and the theology of books find it difficult to lay all this aside, and to come in spirit to the foot of God's throne, with this one simple idea on their minds, that however intricate and difficult of comprehension the works of the Almighty may be, however impossible it is for the mind in its mundane condition to take in the conception of the power and wisdom of God, that yet there is this fact, which the meanest may appropriate to themselves and find consonant with the simplest aspirations of their nature, that GOD IS LOVE.

WORDS OF WISDOM.

Be guided in every action more by the inward voice than by any external direction, inasmuch as the external is not the real and the internal is the true reality.

Rely not upon any external authority, though it should be presented in the name of the most advanced spirits, for authority forbids the proper exercise of reason, and that which is received without reason can make no appeal to the spirit.

Place reliance not so much on what spirits say as on what they be, for what they say will be but a feeble and imperfect expression of indwelling truth, but what they be involves the inherent qualities of the soul which no change or circumstance can destroy.

Receive only that as truth which can be comprehended by the reason and which has an application to the inner consciousness of the soul, for that which is above or beyond reason cannot be inwardly digested, and that which does not appeal to the consciousness of the soul can do the soul no good.

Finally, let the standards of thought and action which mortals have erected, be made subservient to the divine and immutable standard which is presented in Nature and the developed soul.

Poetry.

HUMAN BROTHERHOOD.

[LEIGH HUNT.]

Abou-Ben-Adhem—may his tribe increase!
Awoke one night from a sweet dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight of his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold.
Exceeding peace had made Ben-Adhem bold;
And to the vision in the room he said—
"What writest thou?" The vision raised its head.
And with a look made all of sweet accord,
Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still, and said: "I pray thee, then,
Write me as one who loves his fellow men."
The angel wrote and vanished. The next night
It came again, with great awakening light,
And showed the names which love of God had blest,
And lo! Ben-Adhem's name led all the rest.

AN "INFIDEL."

AN "Infidel!" how easy said;
But wherefore comes the name!
What is "an Infidel" I ask,
And is it cause for shame.
Is it to take for truth and right
What reason has weighed well,
To prove all things, hold fast the good?
Then am I "Infidel!"
Is it to trust with fearless faith,
The God within the soul;
Heeding the voice that speaks therein,
Spurning all false control.
Trusting in inspiration past,
In inspiration now;
Selecting wheat from out the chaff,
Where'er it comes, or how;
Believing heaven oft fills our souls
With promptings pure and high,
If this—all this—be "Infidel,"
Then "Infidel" am I!
Unflinchingly I face the scorn—
Freely accept the shame—
For if an "Infidel" mean this,
I glory in the name.
With angel breathings round me oft,
With hopes most bright and cheer,
With earnest soul-pants after truth,
I cannot stop to fear.
With love to God and love to man,
To Justice, Truth, and Right,
Heaven grant I ne'er be "infidel,"
To past and present light.
To creed-bound dogmas, false though old,
I've bid a last adieu;—
Your fetters ne'er can bind my soul,
I'm "Infidel" to you.

To Correspondents.

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

SPIRITISM V. SPIRITUALISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

MR. EDITOR,—Have the goodness to spare me a corner in your next issue, that I may reply, once for all, to the several queries and censures of your readers, who keep bothering me, from month to month, about my use of the words *spiritist*, *spiritism*, *spiritismal*, etc.

I am ignorant of the biblical expressions, "comparing spiritual things with spiritual"—"spiritual sacrifices"—"spiritually minded"—"there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body"—and I can discern the difference between things *temporal* and things *spiritual*: but what, in the name of philology, what have such expressions to do with the use and abuse of the words

spirit, spiritist, spiritism, spiritismal, spiritual, spiritualist, spiritualism, spiritualistic? the employment of the last three ill-formed words being (in my opinion) no credit to a gentleman, and discreditable to a scholar. And what do all the quotations from the Melbourne Newspapers which have been sent to me, signify? They certainly do not prove that I am in error in using *spiritist*, *spiritism*, etc., but only show that the Editors have never given the formation of the words a moment's consideration. I can produce Newspaper authority for the wrongly-formed words *agriculturist*, *controversialist*, *sabbatarians*, *sectarians*, and several other preposterous words; but, all the Editors in Melbourne put together, cannot make any words right which are radically wrong. I write,

agriculture,	agriculturist,	agriculturism,
controvert,	controvertist,	controvertism,
sabbath,	sabbatist,	sabbatism,
sect,	sectist,	sectism;

though, until recently, I wrote *sectarist* and *sectarism*; but, meeting with the word *sectist*, the propriety of the formation from *sect* struck me, and I at once adopted *sectist*, *sectism*. I cannot, however, be accused of writing such monsters in language as *agriculturist* and *agriculturism*, nor *controversialist* and *controversialism*, nor *sabbatarianist* and *sabbatarianism*, nor *sectarianist* and *sectarianism*, neither *spiritualist* and *spiritualism*: such self-evident improprieties I leave to thoughtless editors and dictionary-makers.

In reading "well got-up" *spiritismal* (not *spiritual*, nor *spiritualistic*) works published in England, as well as on the Continent of Europe, I observe that the Press is gradually introducing *spiritist* and *spiritism*; and when the propriety of the terms shall flash upon the Americans, they too may be expected to adopt them. I care not a straw, Mr. Editor, which of the two formations your readers follow, only let them not exact from me the adoption of inaccurate, glaringly improper words and expressions, which do not signify what the words are intended to mean. To those of your readers who may fancy that the *littleness* of my remarks ought not to occupy any of your valuable space. I would say—

"Naught that is right, think little;
What reason bids, God bids."—YOUNG.

Heartily wishing success to *The Harbinger of Light*, I shall close by quoting The Advice of POPE.—

"In words, or fashions, the same rule will hold;

Alike fantastic if too new, or old;

Be not the First by whom the new are tried,

Nor yet the Last to lay the old aside."

I am, Dear Sir, yours sincerely,

B. S. NAYLER.

[We do not dispute the correctness of Mr. Nayler's terms. We use the terms *Spiritual* and *Spiritualist* because of its more general use and acceptance by the public. We think, too, it is somewhat more euphonious. The public prefer it, custom sanctions, therefore we use it in our original matter.—ED.]

SUNDAY MORNING SERVICES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

DEAR SIR,—Permit me to say a word or two about our Sunday morning meeting. I am not far from correct when I say that most of the Spiritualists in Melbourne are aware of such a meeting, and, being so, I cannot understand why it is they do not give it their countenance and support.

Sir, I would consider it little short of impertinence on my part to attempt to inform any one (especially those bearing the name of Spiritualists) of the advantages of "organization" in the interest of the believers in this or any other theory, and would simply content myself with stating that if my fellow-believers are aware of such a meeting, it is their duty and privilege not only to give their attendance, but hearty co-operation in all that is calculated to extend to others the light, liberty, and peace which they themselves so richly enjoy. No one will gainsay the fact that if Spiritualism brings anything, it brings all these in rich abundance. And I would say, if the conscious possession of such "fullness of blessing" be not reason sufficient to draw the possessors together for harmonious action, on behalf, and for the well-being of their fellows, then I can conceive of no other reason worthy the name.

Being astonished at the small attendance the last two Sundays, I naturally enquired for a cause. Sir, I shall be exceedingly sorry if I am compelled to believe that what I was informed be the true cause of so many absents themselves. Should such, however, prove to be the case, the meeting, and all lovers of harmony and progress will be infinitely better without them. Assuming it to be true, is there anything manly in such conduct. Is it not rather utterly opposed to that *large-hearted liberality* for which our "philosophy" is distinguished, and the practical exhibition of which is so important that any marked violation of such—similar to that alluded to—inflicts upon our "glorious cause" a positive injury, from which, in the eyes of a discerning public, it must assuredly suffer. We are particular in noticing and condemning the wranglings of creed and sect. Let us be very careful lest we undergo the humiliating guilt of practising that which we severely condemn.

What have our spirit friends been teaching us from Sunday to Sunday in the "Communications" I and many others have listened to with profit and pleasure. It is emphatically the lesson of "Love." They teach that this divine sentiment is absolutely essential to progress; that upon it, as a principle, the universe is governed; and that, consequently, the jar of discord amounts to the act of a rebel against the divine law of harmony instituted by the Great Author of All. I hope, Sir, that those who have not been in the habit of attending at all, and also those who come once now and again, will see the necessity of combined effort in the cause, and for the furtherance of which they will give their "genial" presence at the Sunday morning meetings.

Yours, &c.,

HARMONY.

27th April, 1871.

UNRELIABLE SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—In my last communication I referred, *inter alia*, to Spiritual phenomena made apparent through a trance medium, as experienced by myself. Having had further opportunity of observing such manifestations, I trouble you once more with my individual ideas on the subject, and which may be published if you think proper.

From what I hear, and have been enabled to remark, considerable perplexity constantly arises in the minds of believers in Spiritualism, in view of the apparent inequalities or inconsistencies of controlling spirits, as exhibited through various mediums. With regard to communications, and especially those by planchette, we are continually cautioned, both by spirits and those experienced in commune with them, to accept nothing as true and

perfectly reliable which does not accord with our reasoning—which we cannot approve to our intuitive common sense. And among the multitude of causes why we should not receive these with implicit belief, it is sufficient to say that the imperfect human nature of the medium necessarily tends to cloud, tincture, or pervert the character and terms of communication, just as a defective telescope confuses or misleads the astronomer, who seeks to obtain truth from contemplation of the heavenly bodies.

At a recent seance, the lady-medium alluded to in my last, intimated, in reply to a question, that she was inspired by the spirit of Sir Isaac Newton. One of the audience desired that the controlling spirit should give evidence of his identity by answering certain mathematical questions which he then propounded. The medium promptly refused, and gave further reply from the spirit that to comply would be yielding to a demand for a test, for which the medium was not qualified. This was considered by the cuerist unsatisfactory, inasmuch as the same medium had been employed by spirits to diagnose the phrenological organisation of strangers submitted to her examination, and was admitted to have been successful. A voice through the medium then reminded that she had been controlled by Combe and Elliotson, the first among phrenologists of their day. The enquirer expressed himself still at a loss to understand why the medium, who had been used to give answers connected with one intricate science should not be fitted to give answers relating to another, as it was presumed a question of mental capacity in the passive instrument. On a subsequent occasion, Sir Isaac Newton was again challenged to give evidence of his identity, in animating the same medium, and promised that if another medium present would sit with pencil and paper his signature should be written by spirit force. This occurred, the name being written three times, but the handwriting is dissimilar to the published fac-simile of Newton's signature. Other communications from persons of historic fame have been signed in a manner of exact imitation of the handwriting of the several spirits claiming to control, and this fact is incontestably established. Then, says another enquirer, who is at the same time thoroughly satisfied that the same was written by spirit influence, and independently of any collusion on the writer's part—why could not the same power which coerced the medium to write its name, control his hand to produce the exact sign manual?

These questions I allude to, not as having any weight of interest, in my opinion (an opinion, by the way, of no possible importance), but as illustrating the varieties of doubt and perplexity which pervade the minds of numerous believing Spiritualists. Further, I would remark, that the evidence for and against the truth of Spiritualism is so variously regarded, that in all probability no two observers will accord the same value to any one item.

One person will attach great consequence to inconsistencies of the kind I have alluded to, while others see in them no cause of hesitation in belief. Our views vary with our organization. One man, knowing human testimony to be often false, may be disinclined to believe in the existence of the Pyramids of Egypt, having no better evidence than testimony of a kind that is often false. Another would feel very insufficiently assured when he saw those monuments towering before him in the distance, as it might represent an optical delusion like the *fata Morgana*, but his belief would be unqualified after hearing and comparing the accounts of travellers who have climbed to their summits. Whenever we notice such discordancies, and which merely evidence the crudity of our knowledge of the subject, we have only to think how little we know of the normal operations of the human mind. Take the case of George Bidder, the calculating genius, whose mental powers in one direction as far exceeded those of our most accomplished mathematicians and professors as the gifts of Milton or Mozart went beyond the reach of the dullest poetasters, or the most common-place village fiddler. We discover not merely vast memory of a peculiar order, but an amazing mastery of the intricacies of the most abstruse calculation. He will play with stupendous arithmetical problems like a cat with balls of cotton. Well, and you will

say that that man's brain-power should enable him to excel at any mental occupation for which such faculties suit him to engage in. But the fact is that Bidder and Buxton, and the one or two other similar human phenomena, have proved to be veritable dullards in the way of acquiring any knowledge outside their peculiar faculty. And yet they evidence the possession not only of marvellous memory, but large reasoning capacity and quick intelligence. How is this? No answer has been given. So it appears to be with a variety of Spiritual manifestations—they are surrounded with mystery, while we yet know them to be real. To my view the most bewildering phase of inconsistency appears when a Spirit evidences great power of influence together with most contemptible and offensive silliness of conduct. In a late number of the *Medium and Daybreak* is this precious story of a seance. "John Hills now announced himself by the direct voice, and soon showed that his love of practical jokes continues. He asked if 'Ted,' as he used to call my husband, would like an apple. In a few seconds we heard something fall upon the table; a light was struck, and there was a large leek! On darkness being resumed, the voice said, 'Well, you don't seem to like your apple; will you have a pear? Yes, let it be a pear,' we said. 'You will find two leaves on what I have brought; is not that a pair?' After a little more badinage, characteristic of John Hills, he left. The leek smelt so strongly, we were obliged to put it out of the apartment." What inconceivable imbecility in a spirit endowed with such rare faculty of manifestation! It happens that a witness to this occurrence has sent the account to the "Family Herald," the editor of which thus pointedly comments on it:—"If, when we 'put on immortality,' we are to spend our time in such inane follies and babyish jokes, we, much as we dislike this life in many respects, shall try to remain in it as long as we can, to be saved from such Spiritual degradation." For spirits so to derogate from the dignity and usefulness of the office they profess, is most inexplicable. In the "Year-Book of Spiritualism," lately out, there is reference to the coarseness and flippancy of many communications, such as the following:—"Hallo, old fellow! How are you? Tom Ploxley, I am. Was banged out of my body at Bull's Run. Give us your hand, and a cigar." The editor says—"All this is from the animalism of the medium. There remains 'Ploxley,' but I am not sure of that. A spirit was there, but I am not sure of his identity; and, unless you have all the factors in the intricate problem of mediumship, you cannot find him out." So it seems, and we must wait and labour for further knowledge on the subject. There is a term of astronomers and mathematicians, the "Equation of Error." An American commentator on Spiritualism asserts that its manifestations require to be verified by a process analogous to that employed by the astronomer. We must get the medium's equation.

Professor Crookes, of the "Quarterly Journal of Science," announced, some time ago, that he should be satisfied if the Spirits would influence a delicately poised balance in a glass case before his sight. The foppish pedantry with which this challenge was put forward was to my view most amusing. There is such abundant and exhaustive testimony to the fact of heavy tables being lifted entirely from the ground in full daylight, and without material contact, that the Professor might have been content with. But, no; it was his pet notion of conclusive evidence that the spirits should vindicate themselves in this particular manner under the professional nose. "When I see, I will believe," said the stubborn-minded man of science. Now, Professor Crookes probably never saw a murder committed, and is therefore not warranted in supposing that any body ever was murdered. I myself never saw any person murdered (in the conventional sense of the term). Human beings have been discovered devoid of life, and with their bodily structure variously injured, and men and women have been hanged on suspicion of having been in some way blameable for these disorders, but, according to Professor Crookes' theory, I am not authorized, on the strength of mere hearsay evidence, and facts and statements attested by other people, in believing that anybody ever was murdered. With regard to the diversified phenomena of Spiritual

manifestations, the sum of my present knowledge is the discovery that for my own part I have merely reached the threshold of investigation. But nothing that I have encountered in the shape of mystery about Spiritualism has occasioned me half the amount of astonishment with which I regard the dull prejudice and illogical obstinacy by which it is encountered.

I remain, Sir, yours truly,
COLONUS.

We are requested by "Tau Beth" to correct a Printer's error. It occurs on Page 94, 23rd line from bottom. The bracket portion was omitted. On "Readers" principles the "he" of chap (VIII. I., might be confounded with the "he" of chap VII., XIV.,) etc.

STRAY NOTES AS TO SPIRITUALISM.

III.

ARE THE REVELATIONS TO BE REJECTED BECAUSE OCCASIONALLY TRIVIAL?

THE late Charles Dickens, after giving one or two—evidently manufactured, but at the same time characteristically true—communications entrusted to him, as he reports, by a medium, whilst travelling by rail, (*vide* introduction to "Haunted House,") says:—"As I walked away amid such leaves as had already fallen from the golden, brown, and russet trees, and as I looked around me on the wonders of creation, and thought of the steady, unchanging, and harmonious laws by which they are sustained, the gentleman's spiritual intercourse seemed to me as poor a piece of journey-work as ever this world saw."

Those who have had much to do with deistical controversy will probably remember a somewhat cognate argument, used by Paine, Bolingbroke, and, I think, Colenso, with a view of setting on one side the reliability of the Pentateuch as an inspired record. It is said, by these cavillers, that the order to put to death the Canaanites, and the assertion of the Decalogue, that God visits the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation, are at variance with our ideas of the divine and beneficent being, the evidence of whose existence is manifest in all creation.

It is, however, somewhat unfortunate for the adopters of this particular line of reasoning, that no sooner do we leave Scripture instances, such as those specified, and carry on our researches in the fields of Nature or of Providence, than we straightway discover that these also are full of apparent discrepancies, deviations from the law of order, and examples wherein sufferings the most intense have to be endured, and that, too, for no conceivable moral or just cause whatever. Thus if sacred history tells us that Jehovah ordered the putting to the sword of innocent children, present experience shows us that infants by the score, and by the thousand, are daily hurried to premature graves by diseases over which the power of man has no control. If the ancient moral law had its burnings, its stonings, and its scourgings, for well-defined offences, the laws of human and animal life contain, among their penalties, maladies such as cancer, neuralgia, and the like, the same being inflicted without respect to innocence or guilt. Whilst those who object to the Decalogue, on the ground that it threatens with punishment many unborn when the proscribed offence was committed, surely cannot be altogether ignorant of the fact, that, in every-day life, we are constantly reminded, how the children of drunkards and debauchees suffer unto the third and fourth generation.

The truth is, that, in nature and in revelation, we see only an infinitesimally small part, often seemingly distorted, of one vast whole, which, fully viewed and comprehended, would display nothing but the order, love, and perfection of its great originator. And whether such optimist theory be admitted or not, this at least must be conceded, that the objection of the deist urged on the above grounds against Scripture being inspired, may be used with equal force against the belief in a god of nature or of providence. The cases, in short, are exactly parallel with respect to seeming blemishes and faults.

On this ground, at least, therefore, the argument of the deist is a fallacious one. He must of necessity, on such principles of reasoning, abandon all belief in a just and omnipotent god of any kind—a god such as that represented by Scripture, taken as a whole, or downright atheism being the only alternative.

In more than one respect the defender of Spiritualism against the assertion that its facts are inconsistent with its theory, has an immense advantage over the theologian who essays to similarly champion the Old or New Testament writers. The prophets of Scripture spoke, so says Scripture itself, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, and He being, of course, infallible, a solitary proof of a real, and not a mere apparent discrepancy, would be quite sufficient to overthrow the whole superstructure founded upon the belief in inspiration from such a source. On the other hand, Spiritualism is simply based "on the cardinal fact of spirit communion and influx;" and while it "recognises a continuous divine inspiration in man," it does not for a moment assert that every seance is presided over by Deity, or that every word written or spoken by a medium emanates from the Great Spirit who cannot lie, and who cannot be deluded or deceived. Quite the contrary: it admits that the souls of all men, good or bad, wise or ignorant, possess, in a greater or less degree, the power of hovering near and communicating with those whom they loved or hated whilst in the flesh.

From the very nature of the agents, therefore, the greatest diversity, both for good or evil, might rationally be expected in the messages so, and from such intelligence received; the fact of the message having been received remaining exactly the same, just as a message received by telegraph is a message, and comes from an intelligent agent, whether the information given be satisfactory or the reverse, whether it be true or false.

But scorning to take advantage of any such loop-hole of escape as the last-named, let us see how spiritualistic phenomena shape themselves when judged of by the standard such as Mr. Dickens would set up.

*No one would accuse that writer of disrespect for scriptural authority, and therefore it may be safely assumed that he admits, in addition to the harmony and sublimity of the natural world alluded to, biblical events as a criterion with which we may compare, and by which we may judge as to the consistency or otherwise, of those strange revelations which are now said to be given us by means of mediums from day to day.

Now, if there be any one maxim specially enforced throughout the whole of Scripture, both by precept and by example, it is this, "Despise not the day of small things." Not in exact words, but in spirit, certainly, the admonition is repeated by every biblical penman again and again. In one sense it can be said to have been the very text of the Saviour in all his discourses, in all his teachings. In all he did mere conventionalism, such as is now sought to be advanced, as something by which modern spiritual manifestations may be judged, was completely set aside. The history of the world does not contain such another instance wherein the wisdom of the wise was confounded, as that afforded by the revolution brought about by Christ and his apostles through the foolishness of preaching; whilst the facts dwelt upon in Jewish traditions, and the subsequent story of the Christian faith, form at once most fitting preludes and sequels to such a religion of humility and self-abasement as was preached eighteen centuries ago in the wilderness of Judea. It is almost invariably in Scripture, as we often see it in profane history, the great passed by and the insignificant taken. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings praise is perfected; and if spiritual phenomena are to be regarded as spurious, because seemingly trivial, and coming from altogether unexpected sources, we shall have to look with derision upon some of the actors in events the most sublime that have ever stirred humanity to its deepest recesses.

Thus God himself wishes to speak with man, and he passes by the high priest Eli, and addresses the infant Samuel, or he reproves a prophet through the mouth of an ass. On Horeb, a strong wind, a mighty earthquake, and a fire passed before Elijah, but the Lord was not in these, but in the still small voice which followed. Once in battle arrayed, the Philistines put forth their mighty

man, whose height was seven cubits and a span, who was armed with helmet and breastplate, and greaves of brass, and bore a spear like unto a weaver's beam—Goliath of Gath. And against this giant, God sent forth his champion, who was neither a captain nor a warrior, but a shepherd boy, and whose arms were a staff and a sling and five small pebbles taken from the brook. New Testament history is no less corroborative of the same fact, for the Messiah, who was expected to appear as a king, came as a carpenter. It was thought he would ally himself with the learned and the Pharisee, but he made companionship with the beggar, the publican, and the magdalen. The Jews had for ages looked forward to his entrance as a prince, who should destroy their enemies; but He himself was despised and rejected of men, was seized, and buffeted, and spat upon, and lastly, was crucified between two thieves.

Taking illustrations of the same principle from the facts of profane history, the case is rendered no less striking. The Grecian boy, Alexander, overthrows the hosts of Xerxes; and the equally juvenile Charles of Sweden spreads terror over Northern Europe. The despised sloven, Cromwell, and his similarly valued followers, vanquishes the princely Rupert and his proud army of cavaliers. The parvenu Napoleon dictates terms at Vienna and Berlin to the haughty Hapsburgs and the ambitious Hohenzollerns; and now, by a strange turn of fortune, poor under-estimated Germany has crushed, in six short months, the greatest military power of modern days.

Turning to science, and one is confronted with the story that the fall of an apple suggested to the mind of Newton—what is, at once, the grandest and simplest theory of the universe. Watt looks musingly at a tea-kettle singing on the hob, and straightway conceives the idea of the steam-engine. With a three-cornered prism of glass, the astronomer analyses the sun and the stars; and to the circumstance that a bit of amber rubbed attracts light bodies to itself, the civilized world of the nineteenth century owes the most wonderful invention of any age or people.

A tolerably long array of facts these, going to show the lightest trifles are not altogether to be despised. Let those who are honest enquirers say whether spiritualistic manifestations, as we now see them in their infancy, are in reality so insignificant, weighed by the above standard, as to give no promise of greatness in the future; and so immeasurably beneath certain acknowledged spiritual acts of bye-gone days as to be utterly unworthy of our credence or attention.

Relative to the fancied absurdities of the same facts, I shall have a few words to say in a future paper.

NUMBER NIP.

MR. M'LEAN'S LECTURE AT STAWELL.

In the course of a lecture on "The Philosophy of Mind, materially and Spiritually considered," delivered by Mr. James M'Lean, at Stawell, on the 3rd April, that gentleman introduced models of the ancient Urim and Thummim, and the modern planchette, to demonstrate the analogy between them. Pressure of space prevents our copying the very favorable report of the lecture from the *Pleasant Creek News*. It was presided over by the Mayor of Stawell, and appears to have been largely attended, and to have given great satisfaction. Mr. M'Lean has since been invited, by a unanimous vote of the Stawell Mechanics' Institute, to deliver a lecture on Spiritualism, which we shall notice more fully.

MR. LEECH'S LECTURE AT CASTLEMAINE.

REPORTED ESPECIALLY FOR THE "HARBINGER OF LIGHT,"
BY E. E. MARTIN.

IN my last lecture I gave it as my opinion that we do not reach history till we enter the Abrahamic period. I believe also that it was understood that to-night we should enter into the consideration of the life and character of the great Arabian Sheikh. Before doing so, there is one purely historic myth which I believe it will not be unadvisable for a few moments to refer to. It is said that at one period the whole world was of one speech, and that a multitude of men assembled on the Plains of Shinar, and proceeded to build a tower, whose summit, it was proposed, should reach to Heaven, and that the Almighty, as a punishment for their presumption, confounded their speech, and caused from that time divers tongues to be spoken. I need hardly tell you that such a narrative as that bears evidently upon its face the sign of having been written in a period when the education of man was in a very infantile state. Modern research and genius has altogether dissipated the old folly as to speech having been in the first instance given to man as a miraculous or divine gift, and with that also the fable that all existing languages sprung from one common root. Both, I venture to aver, belong alike to fable. There is no reason for one moment to suppose that man acquired language more than any other art, or great faculty which has elevated his being, on a sudden, and apart from the process of progression. Language originally grew out of human wants. As human wants developed and enlarged, so also did language. The lower creatures have to some extent, no doubt, a kind of language of their own. The most savage and primeval man had some rude form of speech, capable of giving expression to his coarse, low, and sensual wants. The rudest creature that ever bore the human form had sounds, probably monosyllabic, to represent articles of food, clothing, and his general material wants. As his wants became improved, so did his language: but for many ages there was no subjective speech—that is, no words capable of conveying ideas apart from the objective. Many missionaries who have travelled amongst savage tribes, after learning all that it was possible to learn of their languages, have found in numerous instances that such language did not contain words adequate to convey subjective ideas, so they have been obliged to give artificial words of their own creation. Beyond all doubt there are proofs to show that languages originally were rude and meagre, and in the course of time developed progressing with, and in consequence of surrounding progression. From the beginning of human history there were various forms of rude speech, from which to some extent the various languages now in existence sprung. Philologists possessed of skill and research, like the late Chevalier Bunsen, have been able to discover words in different languages which have exactly the same meaning, but have no resemblance whatever, as far as sound is concerned; and many of the languages now spoken have no common root. We may therefore remit this story of Babel to the region of myth and fable. We pass now into what begins to be the true historic period of the Book of Genesis. Abraham leaves his father's idolatrous home in the land of the Chaldeans, and starting, either stimulated by intuition or the voice of God in his soul, he journeys towards what was to be his future home. He took with him his orphan nephew Lot. They set out together. I regret that the opening days of Abraham's history somewhat disfigure his name. Entertained at the court of the Egyptian king, and being led by an unworthy fear, he induced his wife to represent herself as his sister. The lie, as is often the case, precipitated the danger it was destined to avert. It is always a wiser, braver, and safer thing to speak the truth, no matter what the apparent impending consequences. It is a proverb with some soldiers that the bullet which passes the brave man always smites the coward. This, whether true or not in war, is a fact in God's dispensation. The fair face of the Chaldean woman excited a passion in the heart of the Egyptian king. Here, in the narrative, we see the hand of erring man. Abraham had sinned. He told an untruth, and the punishment of Heaven—Heaven's wrath—descends, not upon Abraham, but upon the innocent host. I have no such conception of my Heavenly Father as to believe that He would countenance, much less perpetrate, such an act of injustice. I will quote the words of the great Chaldean himself, where he says—"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" When the bolt of divine vengeance flies from the Almighty hand, it strikes not the innocent head. His judgments are sure, not miraculous, or wayward, and they act without blunder. Let us not in any wise be dismayed because Abraham's fair fame is a little clouded. There is no such thing as perfection in this life. There has been no such thing as perfection. But I do not despair of the time coming when man's spiritual nature will be perfected. I look forward with true hope and faith for the true Messianic era. I do pay this book the just tribute to say that it speaks apparently with truthful voice concerning its heroes. But it is my duty—and if it wounds any one it is to me a more painful duty—to eliminate some fables which do not honor its pages. Nevertheless, I look upon it as the grandest book which man's spiritual aspirations have bestowed upon us. It has, as I have said, the same great recommendation, that it speaks the truth of its heroes. When I peruse the pages of modern or mediæval ages, I find that the faults of their heroes are suppressed or glossed over, and their virtues exaggerated. But here the truth is told. Abraham was a sublime and glorious man, but he had his faults, and often the more powerful the mind and the grander the soul the more sometimes does it descend into ignominious and sudden ruin. The man of high and holy aspirations to-day may to-morrow sink into moral ignominy. The very strength of beauty causes the greater

MEDIUMS, just beginning to receive some manifestations, and anxious to unfold the loftiest gifts, often impatiently wonder at the tardy progress of their development. This feeling of impatience should teach them the need of discipline, and that they are not yet prepared for higher unfoldings. They need delays and trials to strengthen them, lest they become "exalted above measure." So with laborers who are already in the field. They wonder why the world is not convinced and converted at once. Faint not. The harvest-time shall come. "Learn to labor, and to — wait."

shame in bitter and pitiful folly. But let us carry out for ourselves the more pleasing and edifying office of discovering the grand and nobler portions of their being; and in the life of Abraham are many such traits of true nobility. The flocks and herds of Abraham or his orphan nephew are spread over the plains, and there arose a strife between the herdsmen of Lot and those of Abraham. Lot was the far less noble of the two. He ought in all honor have yielded to his elder and superior. But Abraham, with true nobility of mind, yielded to the lesser. "Let there be no strife between us, for we be brethren. Take thou the right hand and I will take the left; or take thou the left hand and I will go to the right." The covetous eye of the younger looked over the sloping plains watered by the Jordan, and he chose the richer pastures. In after days the choice proved to him to be a disastrous one. He went there rich in flocks and herds, and he left it a fugitive and a beggar, hardly escaping with his life. The unselfish act of Abraham proved his salvation. Men and brethren, the root of all bitterness of earth, social, domestic, and political, is selfishness. And when Confucius said "Do not unto others as you would that they should not do unto you;" and when Jesus uttered in nearly the same words, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," both men struck at the root of human misery and woe. Abraham was rewarded for his magnanimity. But let us not look for reward, for likewise if we do we shall be disappointed. The apostle of the Gentiles says, "He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." The man who seeks his happiness in the sensuous things of earth will find that the gold in his hand will turn into dead leaves, but the man who has followed high and noble ends will not always meet with a present and substantial reward. The Judge of all the earth pays not always in gold and silver, and houses and lands. And he who would do well and live unselfishly let him not seek his reward in earthly things, but rather seek a reward in his own conscience—the voice of God speaking to his own inner life. This brings us to the memorable narrative of the destruction of the cities of the plain. In the valley of Jordan, separating the wilderness of Judea from the ancient land of Moab, lies a strange tract of water. Wild mountain scenery wraps in its barren bosom a lake fifty miles in length by twelve miles in breadth. The shores, which descend precipitously to the water's edge, contain no shell, no fish, no bird, nor other sign of life. More like molten lead lies the waste of waters than a living lake. Even the rays of the sun itself casts no shadow over the black expanse of lifeless liquid. Its bituminous waters are said to be so acrid that if the eye or lip are touched by it, the sensation produced will be like burning vitrol. The Arab, as he passes, points to it and speaks in a hushed breath; and others, less superstitious, look on it with a kind of dread, for far beneath those waters are buried the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, the waters at once a pall upon their dead, and an abiding witness of their sudden and awful destruction. The narrative tells us that the people of those cities were exceedingly wicked. Not wicked according to our conceptions of wickedness, but wicked with an awful degradation of humanity; descended to a lower level than the perishable brute. We are told that the Lord, as a judgment, rained fire upon them from Heaven. How that a people occupying cities or towns in the valley of Jordan did perish awfully and suddenly, we have every reason to believe. That they were wicked, hideously, unutterably wicked, may be also true, but that God directed upon them, specially, this sudden destruction, I do not believe, because I do not think that from the beginning till now God has ever, by any direct act of His, caused the destruction of the world, or any segment of it, either of all its inhabitants, or any portion of his people as a punishment for sin. In the sure and inevitable course of His judgment and law, He never turns aside to specially punish either nations or individuals. Every evil deed will as surely bring its punishment as surely as effect follows cause. The nation that does wrong to another people, the ruler who wrongs his subjects, lay up for themselves or their descendants sure and inevitable punishment. Every selfish and every cruel act that you or I may do receives its due punishment. Every impure or evil thought which we cherish, every unholy act, will certainly bring upon us retribution, as surely as God is, and is the rewarder of them that do righteously. But all these results come into operation by the process of natural, material, or equally natural spiritual laws. So did it in the later days overwhelm Herculaneum and Pompei. I never heard that those cities sinned over and above other such cities. Lisbon perished, yet I do not know that there was more sin in that city than in Oporto, Madrid, or Paris. It is not because those cities perished that we are to presume that they were very wicked or very good. Hear what Jesus says: "Think you that those upon whom the power of Sileam fell were sinners above other men? I tell you nay; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." The earthquake and volcano, the sinking of the land, or the upheaval of waters, may have caused destruction, and men may have been sinners, but we have no right to link the two facts together. We are told that as the patriarch sat in the doorway of his tent, he saw two strangers—these were angels, spiritual beings, sent by the Most High, to give Abraham notice, and then to warn his kinsman. The narrative tells us a strange story. It says that spiritual visitors partook of a material meal in the tent of Abraham. Now here you clearly trace the hand of erring humanity. Doubtless there is a grand truth in the story. Whether it is true that Abraham simply received some divine monitor, which enabled him to warn Lot, and through that his kinsman escaped, or that he received it in some more direct way, we cannot venture to tell. There is on the face of the story the hand of human error; but we may eliminate the great truth I have named. I myself have come to the conclusion that there are means of communication between the material and spiritual world. All will admit this.

All who believe in the spiritual life will probably concede that. I go a little further. I believe it is possible for the great and good of earth, who have left the flesh, and the spirits of our household friends to communicate words of counsel, warning, and encouragement to their friends on earth. In humanity, there has been, in various ages, a certain class of men and women who, above their fellows, are capable of becoming the media of this power. This power has been described by many names in many lands. The Hebrew prophets and prophetesses, the pythonesses of the Oracles of Delphi, have possessed the power in a greater or lesser degree. So have not a few of the Celtic races: amongst the Highland Scotch were those who had the gift of what was called second sight. I confess to you that I myself am simply groping after knowledge and light in this matter. Though possessed of no such mysterious power myself, I am enabled to receive it from those upon whose honor and veracity I am enabled to rely with perfect confidence. I have no doubt that Abraham was possessed of this mediumistic power. Nearly all the great religious leaders and teachers of the earth have declared themselves to be possessed more or less of this faculty. Moses, Jesus, Confucius, Zoroaster, Mahomet, and others of less repute, and he would be blinder than the blind, and would take much more upon himself than I would venture to do, who would say these men were liars, or self-deceived enthusiasts. Abraham, I believe, did receive a direct intuition of the coming event. Some guardian spirit, who felt in him a deep interest, and who possessed a knowledge of the hidden forces of nature, might have been able to give him warning of the vast upheaval, and then the sudden fall of the cities of the plain. I think those of you who have been in the habit of listening to me know that I do not believe in Special Providence. My opinion is that when once the Almighty has made a law, he has never broken it or set it aside. The All-Wise one needs not to patch and mend as occasion arises, like poor mortals. In Him resides perfection. He sees afar off exactly what will be required, and makes His laws unmistakable. But I can easily understand how He works indirectly or through subordinate agents, and gives warning of impending danger, and delivers men in great crises. It is averred, and the story is well authenticated, that on one occasion a skipper was moved by some unaccountable impulse to alter the course of his voyage. The alteration took him several hundred miles out of his course, and it brought him into a parallel of latitude rarely travelled by ships. He came upon a water-logged vessel, still tenanted by a few half-famished creatures. I myself knew of an engineer employed in the West of England, who was impelled by some unaccountable impulse to leave the shop, where he alone was, and go to a distant part of the yard. He had no motive to do so. It was simply an irresistible impulse that induced him to leave the shop. He left, and went, as I said, to a distance, and whilst away the boiler of the engine burst. Had he remained at his post, he would have been shattered to pieces. May not guardian spirits, who can see with keener eyes than we, move the spirit of those they wish to benefit to act as they desire? And why not we all, you say. Because of our want of suitable power. This inward monition enabled Abraham to warn Lot. We are told that he sent to warn his other relatives, but they laughed, and regarded him as one who mocked them. If the voice of living man fails, need we travel far to find a reason why the Spirit's voice is not always able to save? There is a story in these early pages in reference to Lot and his daughters which I hope future compilers will have the discretion and decency to leave out. I have but one word to say in regard to it—I do not believe it. This narration of the incestuous origin of the Moabites appears to me to be an afterthought of some Jewish scribe, to cast dirt upon his Moabitish brethren. Up to a certain period of the life of Abraham he was childless. We know how the owner, in fatherland, of some old manor-house yearns for an heir to succeed to the estate and titles, but we have no idea of the ardent yearning of an oriental chief for children when he is childless. Various systems have been adopted to get over the difficulty. So strong has been the feeling that the British Government in India has been obliged to concede the right to rajahs to adopt children in the event of their being childless. To some extent the late mutiny arose out of a complex difficulty of this kind, in which Nani Sahib was the chief actor. Abraham intensely desired issue, and at last he took Hagar, his bondswoman, to his bed. You will remember having read the histories of the life of Mahomet. The Christian writers have branded that great man as a sensualist, though it was by no means a trait of his character. Until the age of forty he lived a stainless spiritual life. Upon the death of his wife Kahdijah, he took unto himself other wives. Professor Kingsley is of the same opinion as myself, that Mahomet merely took a plurality of wives in order to secure the realisation of that desire which is found to be strong in every Oriental—the desire for children. That which he practised himself he was obliged to allow in others. Ishmael was the only heir in the tent of the great chief for a long time, but in after years Isaac was born. Then follows another episode, which is a stain upon the character of Abraham. The handmaiden and her son were thrust forth into the wilderness. But when we read the life of Abraham we must not read his times according to ours, or lives of that date according to ideas of our own day. There are incidents in their lives which in their times were taken as matters of course, but if repeated or enacted in our day, would shut a man out of all decent society; and the friends of orthodoxy often find themselves hardly pressed to explain these seeming outrages according to their own tenets. They tell us there was one dispensation then and another now. Men and brethren, be assured of this fact, a virtue of two thousand years ago is not utterly evil to-day. Nor is an outrage or wrong of those days a virtue now. But there are such things as eternal morality and artificial morality. Society having developed, has

wisely established its code of laws on morals, and the man or woman who sets him or herself up against them, will meet the fate of the man in the allegory, who cast himself against a stone, and was broken. Let them beware lest the stone does not fall upon them and crush them to powder. This much I am bold to say—sometimes social and domestic laws established by society are not in accordance with eternal justice. Take, for example, the marriage laws. There is existing in Britain and the British dominions a law which says that a man shall not marry his deceased wife's sister. A more causeless or inhuman law was never enacted. There is no reason, moral or physical, for its existence, yet, a sort of artificial shame has been brought upon good and true women because they have dared to set it aside, and act upon the right dictated by their own conscience. On the other hand, the laws say nothing against marriages within a degree of affinity against which I say Nature has spoken with all her voice in children deaf, dumb, and idiotic. Human legislation wars against God shamefully, painfully, and untruthfully in divers laws enacted by man against women. If women had a voice in legislation, they would get more justice. A man may obtain a divorce against his wife, if she is unfaithful to him, but a woman cannot for the same cause. What is the difference? If man dishonors and sets to shame his wife, why should he be put upon a higher pedestal than she? Again, I say, the law is monstrously uneven in its tenor. Often women marry men who desert them, and yet they are linked for ever to such cowards and ruffians. I say here again the law of man is at enmity with the law of God. And the way we find a solution to the contraries, actions, and events in the lives of the great and good of the earth, is simply by explaining that society and civilization, and our sense of justice and right, have been, and are still, developing. In the days of Abraham, domestic and social ethics were not so strict as now by many degrees. The rules of society then did not make it equally shameful to drive a woman forth, but to us it would appear like an act of ruthless barbarity. And in these biblical histories we are not called upon to imitate the cruelties of a savage age, but to imitate some of the grand acts and noble virtues of a people who often, even in those dark and remote periods attained, a high standard of virtue and truth. These giant men of ages past are Virtue's time-worn pillars. They stand in eloquent grandeur to mark the progress of the human race. These figures are august, and yet severe. A little rough, yet it is the roughness of rough times, made to our eyes more rugged through being viewed in a milder air. They are the stern and noble marks of progress, to which we may look back with feelings akin to shame when we remember how small the distance we have placed between them and in the course of so many ages. By looking and comparing we may take heart and courage. The world has developed to a large extent in the course of 2400 years, yet its development in the next period of the same duration will far exceed the rate of progress in the past. Two thousand four hundred years hence we shall be as far removed from the present as we are now from Abrahamic times. And let not any be dismayed because of the clamour of the multitude or the outcry of the priest. Whenever there has been an innovation made on the side of right and justice at the cost of Conservatism, the loudest outcry has always been from Churchmen. When it was proposed to abolish the old system and introduce a new Divorce law, not only the bishops of the Church of England, but clergymen of other denominations, raised their voices against it. But the palm of intolerance and bigotry was carried off by the established church. The rich man, who could spend £2000, could procure a divorce against the wife who had dishonoured him; but the poor man must be linked for ever to the woman who had played harlot, because he could not afford to pay a large sum to rid himself of the cumbrous tie. This law—extending its benefits to the rich and withholding them from the poor—was upheld and contended for by the clergy, who should have been the first advocates of righteous and impartial judgment. Women, for ages have been slaves to men's iniquity. But a short time ago a man might utterly desert his wife for years, and when by her own industry and frugality she had accumulated a few years' earnings, the ruthless beast might come back to take from her at one swoop that which he had not helped to get, and that which he would never restore. At length, this and one or two other iniquitous anomalies were altered at the instance, first of all of some heroic women in America, who had the courage to demand equal justice. Many a silly scribe and hollow-pated wit has attempted to make merry at the expense of those women who at first had the courage to raise their voices against unequal and unjust laws. But thank God the day is dawning. The night of superstition, ignorance, and intolerance is fast waning, and although we may not live to see the full fruition of these things, we hope there will be a day on earth, not far distant, when there will be a race of men who will see the true Messianic age, and when all intolerance, superstition, and wrong will pass away from the face of an emancipated and regenerated world.

THE STAWELL PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION.—We understand that the first question that will engage the attention of the above recently-formed Association will be Spiritualism, which subject they intend to give a thorough investigation. If they do this, we have very little doubt as to the result. Indeed, after the result of the London Dialectical Society's investigation, no scientific society can with decency pooh-pooh the subject. They must either accept the phenomena as a scientific fact, or disprove it.

REMEDY FOR INTEMPERANCE.

WE have examined the evil of intoxicating beverages, that we may get some insight into the mystery of their being here, giving affliction, in order that we may have practical judgment to devise plans to mitigate the evil. The soul of man craves excitement, as the stomach craves appetite to give relish to its food. It is to its capacity for excitement, for elevating itself above normality, that the human mind owes its great superiority. He who has no susceptibility to excitement is as hard to move as a mountain.

Inasmuch as we cannot destroy the love of excitement, and as the stupefying occupations of life will seek relief from it as a necessary recuperation, our task should be not in vain efforts to stifle nature, but, by wise devices, to minister to this acknowledged want of humanity in some form that will be acceptable.

In countries where the vine grows, it is found that wine becomes a general beverage in substitution for spirits. It is less harmful, and more useful. Where malt liquors are largely introduced, they tend in the same direction; viz., to supply excitement with lessened intoxication. Wherever cheap public amusements are offered, we find they are accepted, and, in a great degree, they wean from intoxicating resorts. In the absence of these, and where there is much leisure, on Sunday, for instance, we find that intoxicating beverages obtain larger demand. From these facts, let us gather suggestions.

The nations of the earth, with great accord, akin to instinct, have one day in the week to rest from labor. Of this day a part is given to public devotion, and a part to recreation, social interchange, and public amusements. In England only, and in America, to which she gave her institutions, is the day confined by law, as far as possible, to rest alone; excluding recreation and all public amusements. It is to be seen by comparisons which system best subserves morality and temperance. It is precisely in these latter countries where intoxication prevails the most.

The interest of religion is supposed to be promoted by these restrictive laws; but the power of the Church over the conscience is not equal to that of the States of Europe where no such coercion is practised. We who seek pretext for austerity in the sabbath of Moses may, if we find it unprofitable, easily prove that there is no connection between our Sunday institution and that of Moses; which Christianity rejected, and, to make rejection certain, chose a different day for our rest. At least all Christendom, except the two nations mentioned, so regard it.

The Parisians are the most cheerful and social people in Christendom. The Sunday institution does a great deal to make them so. The shops of Paris are closed on Sunday by common desire, and without restriction of law, or pressure of organized effort. No churches in Christendom are more crowded on that day. The Church has till noontime to do its work; and, if it do it well, the time is ample. At that hour, by concert between the church and government, all church doors are closed for the day; and the priests and the people go forth together for recreation. In a spirit of fervid devotion, a reverential awe, such as is not apparent in our churches, the people, having heard counsel from above, go forth to practise what has been inspired, viz. kindly sociality between neighbors, and general courtesy.

The Congress of Workingmen, Frankfort, 1863, resolved "to cultivate those higher tastes and amusements which repress all habits of debauchery."

In Paris, it is the careful duty of the government to invite all the world to recreation on Sunday. Innocent excitement and amusement are provided in such varied abundance, that every one is filled. Beautiful promenades, zoological gardens, menageries, ornamental parks, galleries of pictures, statuary, and other exhibitions, are thrown open free of charge of admission. Music enlivens the air. A thousand cheap and varied entertainments invite the imprisoned laborer to come forth and taste the innocent diversities his nature craves. All the world is drawn forth by the irresistible attraction. A general spirit of joy and of neighborly affection is

kindled in every bosom. The malice our gloomy ascetic carries in his heart into the next week melts away when parties meet in this happy mood. Everybody is sober; nobody can afford to lose the enjoyment by being inebriated. When thus kept, it is a day when one is inspired to ask and to tender forgiveness.

If word of mine
Have harmed thee, rashly spoken, let the winds
Bear all remembrance of it swift away,

Do even as thou wilt, that this dispute
Live not between us, a consuming fire
Forever!

HOMER.

It is a day to extend communion between man and man; to promote virtuous union between the sexes; to inspire affection, and ripen love. It is a day that drives dull care away, and gives sorrow to oblivion. It is a day to rejoice in the gift of life. It is a time to awaken man to the contemplation of his Creator's works, and to kindle in his soul a lively sense of the indulgent kindness of Heaven. To the young that joyous day opens a paradise. Earth becomes a sunny heaven: the very atmosphere breathes love, and is redolent of sweet odors.

Move among the crowded multitudes, that thus, light of heart, orderly and gracefully trip in innocence and harmony under the smiles of Heaven, and you may see, that, where wise men legislate, the curse of intoxicating debauchery, born of fanatical bigotry, finds no place in the dark catalogue of social evils. Is it not a superstition without fair foundation, that God is pleased with the sacrifice of our little pleasures, the refusal of his proffered blessings? It is, perhaps, wiser to believe, that, when Heaven offers gifts, it is religion to enjoy them, distrust and ingratitude to refuse them. What is wanted is, as in France, to get the Church to see that it is the interest of religion to consider the people's equal necessity for recreation as for devotional exercises on Sunday; to be convinced of two things,—viz., that one service is better than two to do the allotted work of the Church in a day, if it be well done; that recreation which is not vicious would repress intoxication that goes against the Church, and promote social intercourse, which helps to bring people into religious organization, and gives them taste for moral instruction. The ministers of religion equally require recreation, and opportunity to mingle with the people when in their most courteous mood for profiting by words of softened gravity, aptly spoken as social converse offers occasion.

There may be other ways of weaning men from intemperance. This way has the advantage of proved success. We are quite sure that we shall not be relieved (as we may be) from the excesses of intemperance, till we give it some such diversion as we have indicated.

THE BEAUTIFUL.

THE love of the beautiful is universal, or if not universal, the exception is so slight as to weigh nothing in the balance. The eye, as by a divine instinct, turns from ugliness and deformity. It must gaze on forms of beauty or its vision is repulsed and withered. So, too, the ear delights only in sounds that breathe of the fairest proportion; sounds full, round, flowing, and harmonious. But while the beautiful and the love of it are universal, its interpretations are as various as the fancies of man. One recognises it in gay and flashing forms, in sparkling and fiery colors; another beholds it in grave and subdued colors, in calm and quiet forms. One delights in the beauty of the ocean, another joys in the beauty of the skies, another has rapture in the beauty of earth, and still another, looking within his own being, beholds there the most beautiful of visions. The beautiful is in accord with the intellect and affections. That is most beautiful which is most loved and desired. It may be flowers, it may be song, it may be solitude or excitement, it may even be gold or fame, and it may be—how possible—the dear face and loving heart of woman. In variety, splendor, and perfection, there is abundance of it for all. It is in every path, charming and alluring, leading some upward, into diviner regions of the spirit, and some downward, into the deeper pits of sense. Yet who can doubt that God has ordained it all to a wise end—to the final unity and melody of the great brotherhood of man.

A WONDERFUL INVENTION IN ELECTRICITY.—Those who know how Mr. C. F. Varley, the electrician to the British Submarine Telegraph Co. has so fearlessly borne public testimony to the truth of Spiritualism, at the risk of losing a high scientific reputation, will be glad to hear that he has brought out one of the most remarkable inventions of modern times. He has invented some new telegraphic instruments, whereby three messages can be sent at the same time, from end to end of a single line of wire, without the signals interfering with each other, thereby gaining the power of vastly increasing the message transmitting capacity of all the overland telegraph wires at present in use throughout the world. He does this by super imposing a great number of small electrical waves upon the currents as ordinarily used in working the Morse printing telegraph. By properly timing the pulsations, so as to have two sets of waves in the line which are not synchronous with each other, and by the construction of instruments which are sensitive only to one particular set of waves, he manages to get three messages through the wire at the same time. The receiving instruments are like large fiddles, about five feet long, and a thick iron wire stretched from end to end makes a humming noise every time a wave-signal is sent along the line, hence the invention may be called "Varley's Singing Telegraph." It has to be practically tried on the wires in common use; we, however, have easily read messages by it, which we sent through one hundred miles of wire, of the same conductivity, and electrical resistance as that in common use for the postal telegraph work of the United Kingdom.—*Glasgow Herald.*

THE LONDON DIALECTICAL SOCIETY AND SPIRITUALISM.

THIS literary society was established some three years since, to consider "all subjects, with a view to the elucidation of truth;" taking up questions not ordinarily investigated by other scientific societies. Sir John Lubbock, Bart., F.R.S., is the president of the society; and among the vice-presidents are Prof. Huxley, F.R.S.; Lord Amberley, Mr. G. H. Lewes, and Miss Frances Power Cobbe. At one of the meetings a physician read a paper on some very ordinary phenomena which he had witnessed himself; and it was stated that the physical and other facts of Spiritualism were believed to be real by Prof. De Morgan (President of the Mathematical Society of London), Mr. C. F. Varley, C.E., F.R.G.S.; Mr. Robert Chambers, Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, Mr. William Howitt, and others of like eminence. A somewhat acrimonious debate followed; and a committee of thirty persons was appointed to "investigate the phenomena alleged to be Spiritual manifestations, and to report thereon." This committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. Edmunds, comprises members of the legal, medical, and clerical professions, as well as a few engineers and architects, and several gentlemen of eminent scientific and literary attainments.

The following, a little in advance of the printed copy, is a portion of the experimental sub-committee's report. The intelligence and high social positions of the parties, as well as the momentous nature of the subject itself, give it importance:—

"Since their appointment, on the 16th of February, 1869, your sub-committee have held *forty* meetings for purposes of experiment and test. These meetings were held at the private residences of members of the committee, purposely to preclude the possibility of pre-arranged mechanism or contrivance.

"The furniture of the room in which the experiments were conducted was, on every occasion, its accustomed furniture.

"The tables were in all cases heavy dining-tables, requiring a strong effort to move them. The smallest was five feet nine inches long by four feet wide; and the largest nine feet three inches long and four feet and a half wide, and of proportionate weight.

"The rooms, tables, and furniture generally, were repeatedly subjected to careful examination before, during, and after the experiments, to ascertain that no concealed machinery, instrument, or other contrivance existed, by means of which the sounds or movements hereinafter mentioned could be caused.

"The experiments were conducted in the light of gas, except on a few occasions specially noted in the minutes.

"Your committee have avoided the employment of professional or paid mediums; the mediumship developed being that of members of your sub-committee—persons of good social position, and of unimpeachable integrity, having no pecuniary object to serve, and nothing to gain by deception.

"Your committee have held some meetings without the presence of a medium (it being understood that throughout this report the word 'medium' is used simply to designate an individual without whose presence the phenomena described either do not occur at all, or with greatly diminished force and frequency), purposely to try if they could produce, by any efforts, effects similar to those witnessed when a medium was present. By no endeavours were they enabled to produce any thing at all resembling the manifestations that took place in the presence of a medium.

"Every test that the combined intelligence of your committee could devise has been tried with patience and perseverance. The experiments were conducted under a great variety of conditions; and ingenuity has been exerted in devising plans by which your committee might verify their observations, and preclude the possibility of imposture or of delusion.

"Your committee have confined their report to *facts* witnessed by them in their collective capacity; which facts were *palpable to the senses, and their reality capable of demonstrative proof.*

"Of the members of your sub-committee, about *four-fifths* entered upon the investigation wholly sceptical as to the reality of the alleged phenomena, firmly believing them to be the result either of *imposture*, or of *delusion*, or of *involuntary muscular action*. It was only by irresistible evidence, under conditions that precluded the possibility of either of these solutions, and after trial and test many times repeated, that the most sceptical of your sub-committee were slowly and reluctantly convinced that the phenomena exhibited in the course of their protracted inquiry were veritable facts.

"The result of their long-continued and carefully conducted experiments, after trial by every detective test they could devise, has been to establish conclusively—

"First—That, under certain bodily or mental conditions of one or more of the persons present, a force is exhibited sufficient to put heavy substances in motion without the employment of any muscular force, without contact or material connection of any kind between such substances and the body of any person present.

"Second—That this force can make distinctly *audible* sounds to proceed from solid substances not in contact with, nor having any visible or material connection with, the body of any person present; and which sounds are proved to proceed from such substances by the vibrations which are distinctly felt when they are touched.

"Third—That this force is frequently directed by intelligence.

"At *thirty-four* out of the forty meetings of your committee, some of these phenomena occurred.

"Delusion was out of the question. The motions took place in various directions, and were witnessed simultaneously by all present. They were matters of measurement, and not of opinion or of fancy; and they occurred so often, under so many and such various conditions, with such safeguards against error or deception, and with such invariable results, as to satisfy the members of your committee by whom the experiments were tried, wholly sceptical as most of them were when they entered upon the investigation, that *there is a force capable of moving heavy bodies without material contact, and which force is in some unknown manner dependent upon the presence of human beings.*

"In conclusion, your committee express their unanimous opinion that the one important physical fact thus proved to exist—that *motion may be produced in solid*

bodies without material contact, by some hitherto unrecognised force operating within an undefined distance from the human organization, and beyond the range of muscular action—should be subjected to further scientific investigation, with a view to ascertain, if possible, its true source, nature, and power."

The *London Globe*, in a May issue, said, "During the past four weeks, meetings of the Dialectical Committee on Spiritualism have been held with closed doors, without the members being able to agree as to the report which they will issue. All the reports of the experimental sub-committees have, however, been received and adopted. These all bear strong testimony in favour of the reality of the manifestations; and a report based on the reports of these sub-committees is now in process of preparation."

SPIRIT FORCES IN NATURE.

BY S. B. BRITTAN, M.D.

THE human mind may not number the worlds in space. How many exist and silently traverse the illimitable void, beyond the utmost reach of the telescope, we may not know. How far the divisibility of matter extends without the limits of microscopic inspection, we cannot determine; and by what intricate laws and immeasurable lines the superficial phases of existence, cognizable by the senses, are connected with the secret sources of inward power and the presence of the central Life, the finite understanding may fail to comprehend. But however vast the empire of being, and numerous the worlds that revolve in space, the Universe, in its most comprehensive sense, is ONE. The gravitation of worlds; the specific forms of being on their surfaces; the relations of separate entities, and all the phases of vital manifestation involve and illustrate the principles of a sublime harmony, and thus reveal a common source and centre in the Divine Unity. The creative energy, the animating soul,—God, is, and therefore all these exist. "*The Spirit giveth life*;" and so innumerable worlds come up out of chaos, and revolve about many central suns. The earth waits for the daily baptism of light. Morning wakes the living, conscious world to activity, and the evening invites to repose. Day is replete with glory, and Night is full of the revelations of life; organic forms are pregnant with happiness, and every instant plenary of blessing.

Here, in the midst of this immensity, surrounded by myriads of worlds, with the illuminated heavens bending over and closing lovingly around him, is MAN, the last divine work in the natural world—man, the crowning glory of creation, and the express image of God! In the vast realm of physical existence he is the central figure. While his feet press the earth, he yet stands within the outer courts of God's spiritual temple. A light from heaven shines in at the windows of his mortal tabernacle. It warms the heart, glows in the countenance, and informs the mind. Man, indeed, is the connecting link in the chain of universal Being—the intervening medium between two worlds—the Visible and the Invisible. The essential elements of both states of being meet, and are blended in his nature. The common earth, which enters into the composition of his body, is transfigured, and rendered radiant and glorious by the presence of his spirit.

With this two-fold constitution in view, we may comprehend something of the mystery of human nature and the philosophy of human feeling, thought, and action. That man is frail and prone to wander is due to the inevitable conditions of this mortal life. His undying aspirations, and the infinite possibilities of his spiritual constitution, show us that he came from the Father, whose omnipresent spirit "is the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Constituted as he is, and occupying as he does a middle ground between spirit and matter—the earth and all that is perishable on one side, and heaven and immortality on the other—it is but natural that he should discover numerous evidences of the presence and close relationship of his invisible kindred. If his mind is not warped by false education, he instinctively looks for their foot-prints along

the shadowy confines of this world. In the silent watches the devout and loving spirit hears mystical voices from the other side of the river. When the world's faith is active, and the vision is quickened by the influence of the spirit, the white arms of angels are here and there thrust through the gloom in blessing. The mantle of night is rent in twain by loving hands, that we may see through the dark folds and rejoice. And thus angelic visitors leave the everlasting doors ajar, that we may catch glimpses of "the glory that shall be revealed."

Mysterious proofs of the Divine presence, and a constant succession of spiritual manifestations on earth, are precisely what we have to expect. The scepticism that denies this resolves itself into practical atheism. If God made the world and still governs it, why should we not constantly anticipate new evidences of the presence of Spirit? And will it be said that any man has faith in God who merely admits that he is ever present, while he boldly denies the tangible demonstrations of his power? The god of such men is the creation of history. At best he was before Moses, and cotemporaneous with the Christian fathers. We are required to conceive of him as having no present vital connection with the world, at least of a nature that admits of demonstration to the souls of men through their senses. But when did the Divinity that once walked amongst men and inspired their minds and hearts, suspend his functions? Are the ministers of the Celestial State all dead and buried? If they are not, why should they not look after human affairs as they were accustomed to do in the early history of the world? Did Moses and the prophets need to be thus closely watched, and are we really qualified to go alone and take care of ourselves? Such a conclusion is consonant to our self-love rather than our reason.

It is worthy of notice that the peculiar people who deride the claims of our faith and philosophy, by representing that the communicating spirits exhibit less knowledge than they possessed on earth, virtually assume the *total suspension of certain divine faculties and functions*. In their conception, not only are the active powers of the spirit enfeebled by the destruction of the body, but something more terrible than a mortal paralysis appears to have seized and smitten the innumerable hosts of heaven. It is confidently affirmed that they no longer come here as they did when the earth was new. They are dumb, and can not speak to us; they are powerless, and can make no sign that we can discover and interpret. This is the natural inference from the dogmatic assumptions of many religious teachers. The only remaining alternative is found in the unwelcome conclusion that the inhabitants of the invisible realm are *indifferent* to our welfare—that they do not come to instruct and strengthen us, because, alas! they have outlived the strong and tender sympathies of the human heart. We are unable to conceive a more melancholy and repulsive idea of the other life and world; but we are happy in the assurance that all such views are false in fact, and that they can have no place in the rational mind.

If spirit and matter co-exist and blend in the grand economy of the world; if subtle forces interpenetrate the realm of material things, obviously the various phenomena which result from this intermingling of invisible principles with the elements of matter are not only natural, but they are inevitable. It follows, therefore, that, in a normal condition of the world and man, spiritual phenomena, of an orderly character, are most likely to occur. The old patriarchs, prophets, and philosophers—whose habits were comparatively simple and severely natural—were endowed with remarkable spiritual powers. Such peculiar gifts and the phenomenal illustrations were in-wrought with the Egyptian and Grecian mysteries. Indeed, many of the most illustrious names in the ancient history of the heathen world are intimately associated with this subject. Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato were great lights to mankind, and perhaps wiser men than Moses, Solomon, and St. Peter. And they were earnest believers, having the evidence necessary to conviction in the development of their own spiritual faculties. We must respect the just claims of great and good men, whether we find their names in the sacred canon, in profane history, or the newspapers. The most significant facts may occur in the most obscure places. It adds,

nothing to their intrinsic importance if they are witnessed in the palaces of kings; nor are we disposed to overlook the same when they transpire in the hovel and the manger. The truth is, spiritual phenomena depend on the presence of God and his ministers in the natural world, and on the fitness of men to be the receptacles of inspired ideas and of his spirit.

It is not ordinarily a diseased state, either of body or mind, that renders one susceptible of spiritual influence. The divine afflatus sustains no possible relation to flatulence; sweet and solemn prophecies never emanate from imbecility; and the world's greatest revelators have not been lunatics. Moses, Lyeurgus, and Solon were eminent among inspired lawgivers. Isaiah was a great prophet, who beheld from his sublime spiritual elevation the final triumph of humanity, and the universal reign of "Peace on Earth." The fair youth of Samos, author of the Pythagorean philosophy, whom men called divine, was a wonderful seer as well as a profound philosopher. Socrates, the wisest and noblest of the Athenians—hero, sage, and moralist, recognized the frequent presence of a spiritual adviser having a distinct personality. Mahomet, who speedily destroyed the idol worship of his country, and effected the greatest revolution that has occurred since the foundation of the Christian religion, was not only a military conqueror and visionary enthusiast, but the founder of one of the principal religious systems of the world. The Swedish seer was the most learned and intellectual man of his time, and yet he religiously affirms that he held uninterrupted intercourse with the Spirit-World for nearly thirty years. It was a fair young Shepherdess—inspired by an angel or spirit, whom she believed to be St. Michael—that discovered the sword of the old cavalier in a crypt of the Church of St. Catherine. Thus armed, spell-bound, and nerved by the mysterious agent, the gentle girl led legions of France against her invaders, and the recreant King Charles VII. to his coronation at Rheims. The "Man of Destiny" was victorious while he followed his star, and only fell when conquered at last by his own mad ambition.

The revelation that is clearest and most essentially divine is the truth of Spiritualism. "God is a spirit," and God made the world, therefore the Universe itself is one grand Spiritual manifestation. Hence, all visible phenomena proceed from invisible causes. Subtile forces, that elude the faculties of ordinary observation, produce stupendous changes in the superficial aspects of the world. Super-terrestrial beings have power to modify the fundamental laws and the essential conditions of human existence. Thus the mysterious agents move in our midst, silently, but with irresistible energy. They never cease to operate, but they are seldom visible save in the results of their action on matter and mind. Intervening objects offer no resistance, and they are neither limited by time nor space. Who can suppress "the powers of the air?" Who can extinguish the light of the Spirit? It kindles the elements, and earth and sky flame with ethereal mysteries. It breathes in the souls of unborn men, and they are inspired from the womb. It rouses the dormant energies of slumbering nations. The invisible powers touch the throne, and it crumbles away. Crown and sceptre ignite, and the chains of the slave are fused in the divine combustion. The earth quakes and swallows up old dynasties. New political and religious systems are inaugurated. A strong hand opens the gate of glorious eras. Even "the land of shadows" becomes luminous, and in the light of the spirits' presence "death is swallowed up in victory!"

SPIRITUALISM seems to be gaining rapid hold upon a large number of our thinking folks in this neighborhood, what between lectures and circles, anent the new philosophy, we are rapidly drifting into a new state of spiritual belief. Mrs. Bamford, who has recently caused such a sensation in Melbourne, whilst in a trance state, has just completed an engagement at Pleasant Creek, where she has eloquently addressed several mixed audiences, under spirit influence, to say the least of the whole phenomenon, it is most wonderful.

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