

THE Harbinger of Light.

A
MONTHLY JOURNAL
DEVOTED TO

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

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

No. 8. MELBOURNE, APRIL 1st, 1871. PRICE SIXPENCE.

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It is quite clear by the style adopted by our correspondent "Tau Beth," that he already considers himself the victor, and not only considers himself so, but boldly declares, like many more adepts at controversy, that his propositions remain untouched; and "quietly smiles," as he has it, at the puerility of the arguments adduced by his antagonists. This, while it is a most facile way of getting out of a difficulty, and generally of claiming the assent of unthinking minds, is not refuting arguments, nor does it "go down" so readily with those who are in the habit of thinking for themselves.

It is not our intention to deal consecutively with his very elaborate number of paragraphs, which consist mostly of assertions unsupported by proof, even from his own standard of authority, though certainly not ours, for our limited space does not permit. His statement, that all communication with the Spirit-world is interdicted in Scripture, will, we think, pale before the following passages, when read with their context—*Vide* II Kings, xvii. 17. Ezekiel, xii. 24; chap. xiii. 23; chap. xxi. 21, &c.; with that already notorious passage, I Sam. xxviii. 3, 9; for let me draw his attention to what perhaps has escaped his notice, viz., that in neither of these passages is Spirit Communion interdicted, but for the reason that the Spirits lied, ("spoke lies,") and in the latter it was Saul who had put away the familiar Spirits and the wizards out of the land, *not* God, who is said to have become Saul's enemy. Perhaps because he did put them away! Again in verse 16, it was *not* because Saul sought the intercourse with Samuel, that Samuel rebuked him, *not* because there was any divine command prohibiting it, *not* because it was wrong to seek; but, "*because the Lord had departed from him.*" This is the reason assigned. Further, he will find that the Medium

immediately quoted *Saul*, and *not* the *Lord*, as the one who had prohibited it. And see, by the promise made to the Medium, by *Saul*, that it was *he*, or how could he promise that no punishment should follow.

"T. B." will now find that he has omitted some most important passages on the subject. But, further, if he refers to the Acts, chap. ii. 17, he will find that we are to expect something analogous to modern Spiritism from what the apostle Peter says: "That in the last days I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, &c." This, we think, must be a great stumbling-block to those who say Revelation has ceased.

Let us now glance at the latter part of "T. B.'s" assertion, viz: that Spirit-communion is interdicted, unless God choose to send Spirits to communicate, when it is just and right to listen to them. Now we need only go back as far as the beginning of Spiritism in America to show that Spirit Communion was not sought after by *man*, but that *Spirits*, in the first instance, sought and obtained it. "The Rochester Knockings," as they are called, for example, proceeded from the action of Spirits who were desirous of communicating with man; and this is no solitary instance, as he will find if he gives himself the trouble to read the "History of Modern Spiritualism in America, by Mrs. Emma Hardinge," in which Spirits have been the first to seek, and obtain the opportunity. These instances then, according to his own showing, cannot be wrong, for it is not contrary to Scripture therefore it is just and right to listen to them. Further it was by Spirit instruction that circles were formed, so as to facilitate communion this also then cannot be wrong. He might say, "but these instructions may have referred only to the persons to whom they were given, and that it was not intended that every one should seek;" granting so much, he will also grant that these instructions, which he says exist in Scripture, prohibiting it, may have referred only to those to whom they were spoken, and therefore can have no weight with us. But there is, in his standard authority, (Deut. xviii. 22,) a criterion by which we are to know if they are sent by the Lord or not, viz: "When a prophet speaking in the name of the Lord, &c."

Further, is "T. B." prepared to say that these Spirits *are not sent* in answer to the prayers which have been ascending up to God in all ages, and from all lands for more light, because those prayers are being answered in a different way to what he expected or would prescribe?

Is he to be the judge as to the mode by which God shall work? We will leave the question for his consideration. But he may still say, as he has already said, that he has a criterion, by which to judge whether they are sent by God or no, for if they teach another Gospel, or at least one which differs from his, they are most assuredly not divinely sent. But supposing neither we nor the thinking portion of our readers are prepared to accept his judgment on this point, but prefer to look a little further for such testimony as shall be to us satisfactory. Whither would he direct our attention? If he recommend either the Protestant, the R. Catholic, or the Unitarian churches to our notice; he well knows that these differ from each other, as widely as we do from him, though perhaps agreed, against us. Should a thinking, impartial man be found to determine the point what would be his dilemma when told by "T. B." that he "was bound to read Scripture so that it shall not contradict itself!" particularly when he found so many passages in it, which are directly opposed to each other. These e.g. which have already been quoted by "T. B." and reconciled, by him, no doubt to his *entire satisfaction*, though we must confess not to ours, *Vide Ex. xxxiii. 11, Gen. xxxii. 30; Ex. xxiv. 9, 10, 11.* These declare that God *has* been seen by man. Now read the following, which positively assert that God has not been seen at *any time* by man. John, i. 18; Tim. vi. 16. Now *both cannot be true.* But let me draw attention to a few more which may have escaped his attention—"For I am the Lord I change not," Matt. iii. 6; "With whom is *no variableness nor shadow of turning*," James, i. 17; "I will *not go back*, &c." Ezek. xxiv. 14; "God is *not a man* that he should lie, &c." Numbers, xxiii. 19; the above affirms God's unchangeableness. Now read the following passages, which declare in an equally authoritative manner that he does change, and *repent*: "And it *repented* the Lord that he had made man, and *grieved* him at his heart," Gen. vi. 6; "God *repented* of the evil he had said he *would do* and did it *not*," Jonah iii. 10; "Out of the mouth of the Most High proceedeth not evil and good?" Sam. iii. 38; "Thus saith the Lord, I frame evil against you, &c." Jer. xviii. 11; "I make peace and I create evil, I, the Lord, do all these things," Is. xlv. 7; "Shall there be evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Amos, iii. 6; "Therefore I gave them my statutes that were not good, &c." Ezek. xx. 25. The above assert that God is the author of evil. Please to read the following passages denying that God can do evil. "God is not the author of confusion," I Cor. xiv. 33; Deut. xiii. 4; Isa. i. 13. Again, "I and my father are *one*" "My Father is *greater* than I," John, x. 30, xiv. 28. We would not have bored our readers with so many references (though we are prepared with a hundred more, if needed, equally contradictory in themselves) had it not been to show that it is impossible to read this book. (For which we have the greatest reverence, and which we believe we are honoring more by giving to it *only* what is its *just due*, than by demanding for it that which does not belong to it; Infallibility.) So that it shall not contradict itself. And hence that it cannot be an infallible standard of Truth.

There is only one more passage which seems worthy of notice, that is, the already quoted one in John, iv. 1. On this point our correspondent most solemnly assures us that we are mistaken. Perhaps one of the strongest proofs that could be produced in support of our assertion that the Apostle did mean a disembodied spirit, when he made use of the word, is, that the same word is used

when referring to disembodied spirits, in several other passages,—*Vide* I Peter, iii. 19; "He went and preached unto the Spirits in prison," also Luke, xxiv. 37, "They supposed they had seen a Spirit." This surely will suffice to satisfy any mind open to receive truth, that it was disembodied Spirits, and not Christian teachers, that the Apostle spoke of.

We have argued the subject with "Tau Beth" on his own ground, but we entirely disagree with his premises, viz: the Infallibility of the Bible. We consider that we have brought forward stronger evidence from the Bible, in favor of Spirit intercourse, than he has from the same source against it. We thank him for his concluding advice and hopes, but feeling very comfortable in the *Maelstrom* we have no desire to get out of it, and as each eddying circle brings us nearer to the vortex, we derive increased satisfaction in its contemplation.

COMMUNICATIONS.

THE longings of the soul are endless. It craves for knowledge like a thirsty creature under a broiling heat, and when once it is satisfied for a time, it puts forth its love like the perfume of a beautiful flower, though it does not remain long in a state of quietude, for no sooner is it replenished than it empties itself by diffusing the knowledge which it has gained with its influence upon all who come within its sphere. How delightful is the work of the aspiring soul; full of love to all its brethren bearing the divine image of the Creator. It sees wisdom displayed in every variety of form and truth, keeping the entrance to unenumerated laboratories of His expressed thought.

All forms in nature are but the divinely expressed thoughts of deity; in them you behold the working of the divine law of love comprehended in all. Let your thoughts flow upward and outward. Fear not to soar upon the white pinions of truth and knowledge, for the Almighty Father has not set bounds to the awakened spirit and holy intellect. All is before you to gather a knowledge of himself from, and when obtained to be put to good use, not to be hid away from the view of those less, or lower, in the social scale, but expressed in every act of life—both on earth, and in the spheres of the second state of existence.

HOLY and true, just and good, are the laws which regulate the spirit of man. How faint the impression made upon man by the justice of his Father. He perceives very dimly indeed the beauty of the mechanism of his own body—the various and diversified action of the muscles, bones, and nerves. How delicately each is connected, and how dependent one part is upon the other; how harmonious is their united action when all are in good condition. The mind and soul are connected indissolubly, therefore one is the expression, so to speak, of the other, and all united by laws that cannot alter. How beautiful to look upon an harmonious individual; but, alas! there are few, very few so, while in the body. Their sins, or the errors of their ancestors, have left the stain upon their moral nature that a lifetime of many centuries cannot outgrow. This is the work of regeneration, that brings the purer out of the impure, the giving of sight to the blind, and healing the sick in soul. This is the work of angels, leading the blind into the pure light of the Spirit, that they may grow in the beauties of the Creator, lavished around and within them, for there are attributes of the Father dwelling in man which, when rightly considered and developed, shed a lustrous beauty upon his life, and which make him like a god in miniature; but how disastrous to man is the allowing his passions to have the ascendancy, filling up the cup of bitterness that all must drink of before they are fitted to enjoy the higher life of the spirit. There is a time allotted to all when their deeds of evil shall be taken away, and the remembrance of them blotted out of their memory, but all through the power of the Divine Spirit, in his nature, and the help of those who love him—who are constantly aiding in his purification.

Poetry.

"As one who hears through trackless woods
Where he has lost his way, the village choir
Singing hosannas, and by those sweet tones
Is guided where the congregation bow
In worship, I was led from night's dim thrall."
The Spirit Pollok said, "to love and peace
And harmony, I left the lower earth,
Thinking mankind born reprobate, sin-cursed,
Black as perdition, from the mother's womb;
The greater part doomed to an endless hell:
But woke to find that *mercy lives*
And reigns omnipotent wherever God
Hath made an earthly footstool for his throne."
Wherever suns blaze on the steep of day,
Or Spirit-spheres their spiral rings unfold—
Black Terror made my earthly life a dream
Of judgment and perdition—now better taught, I sing
Of faith and hope, and joy and peace
And loving kindness infinite from God.
Flowing to every soul on every world
In the wide universe His word hath made.

Lyric of the Golden Age.

To Correspondents.

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

A TRANCE MEDIUM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

SIR,—I propose to give a brief narrative of what occurred at a recent Spiritual seance, attended by about a dozen persons, including myself. For the first time I was enabled to witness some of the phenomena of Spiritualism, as developed through a "speaking medium," and now record my observations to interest the curious and to stimulate the sceptics. Dr. Johnson says, "Science, though perhaps the nursling of Interest, was the daughter of Curiosity; for who can believe that they who first watched the course of the stars foresaw the use of their discoveries to the facilitation of commerce or the measurement of time. There are, indeed, men who appear satisfied with their intellectual possessions, and seem to live without desire of enlarging their conceptions, before whom the world passes without notice, and who are equally unmoved by nature or art." A. J. Davis writes:—"Scepticism is, I think, the handmaid of Truth. Honest doubt is the precursor of inquiry; inquiry leads to evidence; evidence is the foundation of knowledge. Then fear not, ye sceptics—doubt on!"

To return to the seance. The medium was a lady in private society, who I understand to have gradually developed within a few years to this condition of susceptibility to spiritual control. A brief invocation commenced the proceedings, and the medium at once became evidently animated by the unseen influence. Her eyes closed, and a strange new expression stole over her features, a refined and exalted look, which varied from a calm, soft, rapture to an appearance of intense intellectual thoughtfulness. The character of this change, or transfiguration, as it may be termed, appears to vary much with the nature or controlling potency of the operating spirit. The controlling spirit in this instance announced himself, in a deep impressive voice, as the magnetizer Elliottson. Being requested to put any question to the spirit, either orally or mentally, the medium announced in the same tone, "thou mayest ask and it may be that thy questions will be answered." I therefore did address a number of questions mentally, some of which were replied to in solemn and eloquent words of counsel and comfort, but without any close pertinence,

as it appeared, to the question. This might have resulted from the rapidity with which thoughts arose and confused each other, and a difficulty on my part of mental concentration. But, certainly—and I feel it to be as certain as the evidence of my reasoning and recollection can make it—the questions I addressed in this manner with the most earnest distinctness, were replied to almost as swiftly as the idea took form within me. I am sure that I never opened my lips, and that nothing had escaped to give a clue to my thoughts; and what appeared very remarkable was that as I was, in a naturally habitual manner, mentally framing the question into words, the medium's face lit up with attention and nodded rapidly in token of recognizing the desire that struggled within me. Of course, to the sceptical mind questions answered with merely yes or no might be supposed to be met with a haphazard response. But, in my case, strange to relate, two replies so conveyed impressed me as much as others of a more prolonged and particular order. I mentally asked that the controlling spirit would give me some sign or physical manifestation of supernatural power (thinking of lights and sounds that are often observed in spirit circles,) and the medium's head drew back and an expression of lofty indignation, or at any rate reproof, passed across her features as she uttered in tone that startled all present the sonorous monosyllable "No!" Another question was also so answered, and in what I perceived or imagined to be an equally reproving tone. It referred to one far away, and would be profitless to repeat. But I quickly felt that my enquiry had been conceived in a selfish, unworthy spirit, and accepted as a rebuke the refusal to give the information sought. Then a communication was whispered into my ear, of which I can only recall the general tenor, as from a deep-toned male voice, which seemed to reverberate through the room, and to be as utterly unlike the normal voice of the medium or any capable modification of it as I can well imagine. A gentleman present then, mentally, addressed a question to the Spirit, and received instantly a full, clear, and intelligent reply which we all heard, and could appreciate when he stated the enquiry he had made. The same person then silently expressed a wish to have a message from the spirit of his deceased wife, and a long low address in a soft female voice was ended by a song of exceeding sweetness, which, with the words of affection preceding it, deeply moved the gentleman referred to. He afterwards said, however, that he recognised no familiar voice, such as is stated to be the case when the controlling spirit takes more complete possession of the organization of the medium. Other members of the circle were invited to question the spirit, and did so with various results. At times the medium seemed exclusively under the influence of the ruling spirit Elliottson, while anon a strange disjointed utterance of a pleading voice issued from medium's lips as from a spirit desiring to employ her as a messenger of kind words to some one present. To this the ruling spirit remonstrated in clear audible terms intelligible to all present, and gave reasons why it could not be permitted; among others, that the value of the medium's instrumentality for the spreading of truth would be lessened if submitted to the disturbing influence of a Spirit insufficiently progressed. A gentleman desired a communication from a departed relative. The medium at once read in him an unbelieving condition, in which view he appeared to acquiesce. A strange voice, however, claimed through her to address him as one his male kindred, and appeared to speak with anxious effort, and to feel distress at not being able to recall to the mind of the questioner incidents in the spirit's earthly career. The medium was asked the name, but evidenced great difficulty in uttering it, and then did so with hesitation. The gentleman stated that he did not recognise the name. The spirit pictured incidents in its life's career, mentioning "the time when England warred with Spain," but, failing to discover any recognition in the questioner's thought, appeared chagrined and earnestly requested him to make enquiry among his family as to the incidents referred to. A lady and gentleman were next severally addressed by spirit influences acting through the medium, and in a manner that seemed to assure them that they were communing with those they had loved and lost, and on a second occasion the medium gave utterance to sweetest

strains of melody and in a manner of fervently affectionate feeling.

There is nothing remarkable to Spiritualistic knowledge in this narrative of what transpired at the seance referred to; but, as a thoughtful and anxious inquirer, and one desirous to collate and compare individual experiences, I offer it for publication. To a certain extent the account can be verified by those present with the writer at the seance. The evidence of the reality of spiritual phenomena that presented itself to individuals can only be known in its actual force to those individuals severally. I *know* what were my unuttered thoughts, and I *know* that those thoughts were clearly read by an inhabitant of the spiritual world. I felt, moreover, that the words whispered in my ear were words of truth and kindness—and words that, it seemed given me by intuition to understand, were words of wisdom and weighty import.

Coleridge quotes from an old writer:—"I judge it ten times more honorable for a single person, in witnessing truth, to oppose the whole world, in its power, wisdom and authority, than fighting many battles, and by force of arms gaining them all." It may be that for twenty men that we will meet who are scoffers at Spiritualism there will be found but one disposed to read, reflect and inquire for himself. Spiritualists war not for victory's sake—they battle for the vindication of truth.

It is said, there is a continued antagonism between faith and doubt; and the just reasoner stands as a mediator between the two. Man cannot disbelieve nor believe without *evidence* to produce one decision or the other. The mere expression of belief or disbelief has no meaning unless it is determined by a sufficient and reasonable amount of evidence—internal conscious evidence. All persons of fair capacity and intelligence are enabled to judge of the truth or error of Spiritualism if they will examine its phenomena in a mood of free and unrestricted enquiry—if they will rise from the intellectual degradation of enslaved thought. It has been somewhere written, under spirit influence, that:—"Church and State are two thieves, between whom Truth is daily crucified." Superstition and sectarian intolerance; bigotry and despotism have o'erclouded the world with a mantle of misery, and fouled and darkened the atmosphere of light and liberty that man was constituted to inspire and progress in. The opposition of the priest is intelligible enough; no one was surprised at the angry and vehement protestations against the dis-establishment of the Irish Church. But the antagonism of pompous men of science is based on pride—the sordid vanity of the discomfited schoolmen. One after another, they tell us, "Spiritual phenomena are not reconcilable to the known laws of science." What did the scientific Professors of fifty years ago think of girdling the earth in forty minutes? These vain pretenders are stultified out of their own mouths. They can imagine no progress, no new light; and rest content with the maxims of their shallow experience. What says the spirit of Pollok (or the medium claiming to be so inspired)?

"Suppose no man had ever slept and dreamed,
And one should rise among his fellow men,
Able to pass into that mystic realm
Of outward slumber and interior sight;
Men comprehend things by experience,
And, since his differed from the world around,
No other man knowing the state of sleep,
He would be styled a liar and a knave,
Chained in a mad-house, torn by human wolves,
Doomed by the church, and exiled by mankind."

And so, these pinchbeck philosophers, lightly lacquered with the knowledge of the text books, will believe in nothing that does not accord with the "*established laws of nature*," and in nothing that has not occurred to their *individual experience*. What can they know of Nature's laws, beyond the measure of their present possession of a knowledge which has been advancing since creation? What is meant by individual, or personal experience being the test of belief. No man, it has been justly argued, could be authorized on this principle to expect his own death. Such experience informs him, directly, only that *others* have died. The knowledge derived from experience is but of maximal degree. Coleridge illustrates the distinction between a principle and a maxim, by supposing Adam in the garden, seeing the sun set for the first time,

and being filled with dismay that he might never see it again. The next morning his hope was strengthened, and day after day still more so. But at the end of hundreds of years it was still but a hope so strong as to preclude anxiety; whereas a principle is an eternal truth, at once perceived to be such, independent of any experience, as, for instance, that two sides of a triangle are together greater than the third. Knowledge was necessary to man long before he could have gained experience, or he might have walked upon a smooth sheet of water and been drowned before experiencing its incapacity to sustain him.

"Why, common sense tells me," is a favorite way of commencing a condemnation of the facts of Spiritualism. Common sense, alone, told the sages of former times that the earth could not be round, since men could not stand with their heads downwards. Experience assured the king of Ashantee that water could not become solid. Common sense and experience together, convinced the Pope and Cardinals of the folly of supposing that our world went round the sun. Sound reasoning on experience is the road to truth.

There are happily in the world hosts of free, brave-hearted men of high scientific attainments, men unshackled by "the cruel spirit of fear," who have reasoned upon the evidence of Spiritualism, and believe in its exalted beneficence and immutable truth. From the teachings and examples of these we hope much.

What profits it, some will ask, this knowledge (if it be such) of constant spiritual presence and communication? Your contributor "Number Nip," deals well with this question in your last issue, and I have not space to say more thereanent at present. In the same paper I see also an epitome of a lecture by the Rev. J. C. Symons, who seems generally timorous of according his belief in Spiritualism, but discourses with candour, and concludes very prudently with cautioning against it. There appears, moreover, a continuation of the letters of Tau Beth, in which I fail, amidst much turmoil of words and wandering assertion, to discover any argument of weight. I will, however, refer to the following sentence in his last:—

"You think that 'good Spirit and angel are synonymous.' Granted; but the prohibition of Scripture makes no distinction between Spirits whatever; it simply forbids our approaching them at all except in the person of God, or of the messengers he has directly commissioned."

Tau Beth should know that the word translated angel in the Bible is asserted by Hebrew scholars to signify *messenger*.

I remain, Sir, Yours truly,
COLONUS.

WHOSE DUTY IS IT TO INVESTIGATE SPIRITISM?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

DEAR SIR,—It is, and long has been, a most marvelous thing to me, that almost all our clergy shrink from the investigation of Spiritism; can you inform me why it is so? Surely there must be some reason for it. We hear of investigations in every department of life, but from among the ranks of the clergy. True we sometimes hear a voice from among them, but it is either to denounce, or as a caution, or else it gives forth a most uncertain sound. Now, Sir, I am forced to the conclusion that they have it in their power, if it be an error, to crush it out, or, if it be a truth, and in accordance with the divine will, to advocate and spread it far and near. Further, I maintain that it is their *duty* to investigate, for *should* it be an error, and they fail through indolence or neglect to act the part of watchmen, then the blood of those who are led astray will surely be required at their hands, because they have not placed themselves in a position to denounce it. I say placed themselves in a position to denounce it, by which I mean that unless they investigate, they are not in the position to advocate or denounce. For the public, whose teachers they profess to be, will not accept ignorant denunciations. They will not be satisfied with merely a denial, they must have proofs to substantiate what they say, or it will have the reverse of the end sought; on the other

hand, should Spiritism be of God, and the great agency employed by Him to lift the veil of ignorance from the minds of people, and bring them nearer to himself. How grossly are they neglecting their duty.

I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

IOTA.

CLERICAL INDIFFERENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER OF LIGHT.

DEAR SIR,—I am really at a loss to understand the present position of our religious teachers. To me it is quite inexplicable; can you enlighten me? Not long ago, we had the Dean of Melbourne lecturing against Spiritism; very wisely, however, admitting the phenomena, but most illogically attributing it to the agency of his Satanic majesty. Your correspondent, "Tau Beth," too, has been *trying* to set us all right, by showing, in his most unphilosophical way, that Spiritism cannot be admissible, because the *Bible* (according to his reading) denounces it. But I would like him to point out some thing that is not advocated in the Bible, and afterwards contradicted. Now, in your last issue, we have another champion in the field, who also takes up a most untenable position, for he not only admits the phenomena, and declares it to be quite in accordance with Scripture teachings (and I suppose his great leader, Wesley), or at least, admits nothing is said against such things in them. But, after all, he declares that it would be much better that all should leave it alone, and not have anything to do with the matter. On what grounds, I am at a loss to divine, unless he is afraid that it will admit too much light to the minds of the investigators to allow them any longer to be led by the nose, as they have been so long. Should this be his reason, then I must say, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" If he has any other good reason I think he ought to have stated it, and not left us to grope in the dark respecting it. His refusal to discuss the question through the columns of his (?) paper, shows that he thinks his position is not a very secure one, or he would never hesitate to open them, to discuss what is now becoming the great question of the day, more particularly as the discovery of truth should ever be the great object sought after; and if Spiritism is a truth, then, I say, spread it from shore to shore, for it is the glorious Gospel which Jesus and his apostles taught, but which has since been hidden under a bushel, but is now shedding its light abroad. Spiritism never refuses investigation nay invites it, knowing that it "stands upon a rock," and that all the storms that may beat upon it cannot overthrow it.

I can only characterise their position with regard to this movement as being on a par with that which the religious teachers have always taken with reference to every progressive movement.

I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

VERUS.

HAS SPIRITUALISM DIVINE SANCTION?

(Conclusion).

3. But you say "no man hath seen God at any time." I suppose you would infer from this that Moses did not see God in the burning bush, and that, in fact, it was not God at any time whom the ancient seers communed with, but good and "progressed Spirits," like those who now meet you in circle. If this be your inference, it is a false one; because we are bound to read Scripture so that it shall not contradict itself. We must therefore accept the statement of God's invisibility in the only sense in which it can be true and accordant with the whole context. It is quite true then that, in the strictest sense, no man hath seen or can see God, inasmuch as the finite cannot grasp the infinite. Nevertheless, Jesus truly says "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father," and Jacob says, with equal truth, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved" (Gen. 32, 30). It is also said, "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Ex. 33, 11). The inevitable conclusion is that though, strictly and philosophically, God is invisible, he can assume a visible

and tangible form, and has done so repeatedly in order to communicate with his creatures.

4. You take God's prohibition to refer to "unprogressed" spirits. But this is a mere assumption; where is the ground for it? Scripture affirms nothing about such beings.

5. You say Paul encourages us to seek spiritual gifts, True; but that is not mediumship as you have it. When did the Apostles or early Christians hold seances to commune with their dead relatives and friends, as you do? Never, that we know of.

6. You say, "John realised a communion of spirits when he enjoined the brethren not to believe every spirit, but to try them, &c." Your conclusion is based on a mistake, and does not follow; for there is no evidence to show that the term "spirit" here ever meant other than living men in the flesh, who went about professing to be Christian teachers, but who frequently mixed up with their teachings a great variety of Pagan, Gnostic, or Jewish errors.

7. You say, that "by their fruits ye shall know them." Well, on this ground alone I must reject Spiritism; for, 1. It is itself necromancy and witchcraft. 2. It has, by its familiar spirits, introduced another gospel of such a character that we can only regard the spirits who promulgate it as accursed, although they profess to be angels from heaven. I spoke of this in my last, but no notice has been taken of it. Of course if the present dispensation is drawing to a close (as I hope and trust it is), developments of infernal craft will occur as foretold; and if the devil is to deceive all but the elect, he must certainly not come as a *sweep*, but as a *gentleman*—nay, as a very *angel of light*—and do many things to sustain that character; and doubtless men will yet gather something *very like grapes* of thorns and figs of thistles, as the result of his efforts to deceive.

8. I assume that the communicating spirits are evil, because—1. They encourage men to approach them, and run after them, in violation of the will of God. 2. They preach all over the world the same heresy—damnable heresy, if we are to believe the Scriptures. It is true that God has given the evil one power to mislead men at spirit seances, and for all we know withholds it from those who would counteract them. Well, but has He not given us His Word, which contains ample warning against all the wiles of the devil? Do as I do—believe that Word, and take the warning—and all the devil's power, in this channel at least, will be absolutely *nil*, and that too without the aid of any "good and loving" spirits at all.

9. You say I do not "put forward one iota of evidence" that your communicating spirits are "not God's ministering angels." Surely, Sir, the teaching of false doctrine, as instanced in my last, ought to be evidence enough that *such* angels are accursed. As to the opening communication, "We greet you in the name of God," etc., I must take that for what, *under the circumstances*, it is clearly worth, remembering that to speak lies in the name of the Lord is an old trick, at which demons might be as great adepts as any of the false prophets of old.

10. You say a spirit spoke to Peter, another to Job, and another to Paul, neither announcing his divine commission. Granted; but we do not read that either Job, Peter, or Paul, *sought after* these spirits, at a seance or otherwise; they *presented themselves without*. And so, if a spirit present himself in the same manner, *unsought*, he will deliver his message, if he has one, irrespective of light or temperature, table or alphabet; and no sin can attach to us, seeing that we did not transgress the law which forbids us to *seek unto them*, or *unto those with whom they are familiar*—MEDIUMS. There is no law in the whole Bible against being spoken to by any spirit whatever, good or bad; but *only against making any advances to them ourselves*.

11. You say the Scriptures are "a continuous record of God's intercourse with man through his good spirits." True; but in the whole record there is nothing analogous to modern Spiritism, except Saul's visit to the medium of Endor, for the purpose of consulting Samuel; and that is mentioned with condemnation.

12. You say "the teachings of progressed Spirits accord with the Teachings of Christ," and that "until I

can prove that the communicants are evil," I have "not a leg to stand upon." But I have already proved them evil; because they preach doctrines *totally opposed to Christianity*. See the latter part of my last, to which no one has yet attempted a reply. Your correspondent "Reader" says I assume too much. I assume nothing but that the Bible is the word of God. He says that in "properly organised circles," all communication with the Spirit world is prefaced by prayer. What! Pray to God and then straightway trample on his law! Opposing armies preface their work of slaughter by prayer. Gregory 13th solemnly returned thanks for the massacre of the Huguenots. As well may the burglar begin his work with prayer, and, when it is done, thank God for success. But of what value is such mockery of prayer? Be not deceived; no amount of prayer or praise can ever sanctify sin. He says the Almighty himself almost invariably required certain conditions for the working of his miracles—parallel to my "little arrangements." I demur to this statement. What conditions were required to bring the Flood; to confound the language at Babel; visit Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, at sundry times; bring fiery rain upon Sodom, and drag Lot by force out of it; speak to Moses from the bush, and perform all the wonders of Egypt; divide the Red Sea; set up the terrors of Sinai, and the pillars of fire and cloud in the wilderness; take the priests dryshod over Jordan; prostrate the walls of Jericho; etc. etc.? There is no lack of unconditional power when the Lord wills to work, but there *is* when spirits wish to communicate either false doctrine or the platitudes we so often hear. He cannot conclude that God ever communicated by personal presence, or that the Author of the Universe wrestled with Jacob, and was detained by him "against his will." This last circumstance is not stated; but as for the others, I ask *why not*? He has stooped to do many a smaller *looking* thing than either of these. When on earth, in the person of Jesus, he did things which for depth of humiliation, outraged the conception of his disciples. "Reader" seems to have set up a standard of his own for the Almighty to work up to; and whatever falls short he judges to be *not the work of God*. This is not wise, and "Reader" knows it. I have spoken already of God's invisibility. He says that God and his messengers are often convertible, as in Rev. 22. But the apparent confusion among the speakers here does not prove their convertibility, for such would be absurd; because *then* Jesus the Son (v. 7, 12, 16,) would be God the Father (v. 13)—both *entitled* to receive worship—and the angel who would *not* receive worship because he was *not* God, at the same time. Nor does it prove that God always communicates mediately, and not in his own person; for it does not follow that because God or Jesus communicates by an angel in *one* place, either must of necessity so communicate on *all* occasions. Besides, the matter of the vision *professes* to be communicated to John not by God, nor Jesus, but by his angel (Rev. 1. 12, 16), so that there is no shadow of necessity to confound God, or Jesus, or the elder (where either breaks into the narrative) with the angel who attends the vision. On "Reader's" principle the "He" of chap. 7, 14, and it seems to me as easy to discriminate between the real speakers in the one case as in the other. He says I have no foothold unless I can prove that God does not communicate through ministering spirits *now*. This does not logically follow. God *did* so communicate in the days of old, and yet Saul was guilty of a damnable sin in seeking to commune with the spirit of Samuel. God might so communicate *now*; but that does not justify us in seeking to commune directly with spirits, or indirectly through the mediumship of those with whom they are familiar. He says, "Jesus set us the example." But Jesus set us no example to seek communion with Spirits. Show us where he did? There is nothing in Mat. 17, 3, to prove that Jesus was more active in the matter than he was when the devil met him in the wilderness. Jesus was passive throughout. But if he who knew "all things" had sought to commune with Spirits, it would have given no license to us. He who dwelt in Jesus was not the subject of law. We are its subjects. Jesus forgave sins against God; but have we power to do so? He says no Christian adheres to the Levitical code now. True; and yet there are laws in

that code which are still in force among Christians, and will be so through all time; and if "Reader" will consult the N. T. he will find that Divination—a generic term for every species of Spiritism—is as strictly forbidden there as it is in the O. T. It is quite as easy to fasten Divination upon Spiritists as it is to fasten idolatry upon Romanists. Both will kick very hard against the imputation; but the logical sequence is indelible nevertheless. He asks if John's fellow-servant was a creature in the Spirit. I answer, certainly he was. So for "Reader," and I thank him for his kindly spirit, and fair argument.

"Iota's" first argument about "trying the Spirits" is answered above. That ancient spiritual gifts is not to the point. The gifts were imparted by the *Holy Spirit*, and they who had them never approached the Spirit world at all in the way of modern mediumship; and *that* is the only important consideration here. There is no evidence that "discerning of Spirits" ever meant other than a *correct reading of character*. With the question of the continuance of these gifts we have nothing to do. I trust "Iota" will not be angry at my indulging in a quiet smile at his process of proof that communion with Spirits is right. Permit me to apply it; for instance—The law which governs Spirit communion must have Divine authority and sanction, and therefore cannot be wrong. But the female medium of Endor observed the law, and enjoyed the communion; *ergo*, that communion was lawful and right! Saul too was cognizant of the law, and, complying with it, obtained an interview with Samuel; *ergo*, Saul's act was lawful and right! The law by which man may commune with Spirits is expressed by the conditions which render such communion possible. Those conditions were fixed by God, for ends known to himself, and he has given strict charge not to call them into exercise. THIS CHARGE YOU HAVE NEGLECTED. The law of gravitation is a good and a wise law; but it does not follow that I must needs call it into operation by casting myself from the top of a tower. The conditions which render certain things possible are all very well in themselves; but it may be very ill for us to set them up. And this is precisely the case with the conditions, or laws if you will, of Spirit communion. We are charged to observe them by—*letting them alone*. To notice in full the first argument of his second letter would involve a defence of certain Calvinistic doctrines, which, though as demonstrable as any theorem in Euclid, have no reference to the present question, and, therefore no business here. Suffice it that I do not hold the horrible dogma of eternal torment. It cannot be proved from Scripture. Rom. 1. 24, says nothing about the strong delusions nor the cause of them; let "Iota" consult 2 Thes. 2, 10—12, and he will see that they will be sent as a punishment for the rejection of truth; such rejection proceeding, not from error of judgment, but moral disinclination. Does "Iota" believe the Scriptures on this point? I do. "By their fruits, etc." I have noticed before. He demurs to my statement that demon action, in old times, was entirely subjective. Well, of course, I excepted the few cases of actual possession because they bore no proportion to the world of men, and because there was nothing in them to make us in love with the real operators; *that* was the direct object of my statement. But the case is widely different now; demons are not coming in that revolting form, but as accomplished ladies and gentlemen, angels of light, and teachers of a new philosophy that will put God's millennium far in the shade! And if I read Scripture aright, the greater part of the world will yet be led by the nose whithersoever these Spirits list. I am very glad to find that "Iota" has some respect for our mutual friend, and very old acquaintance—the witch "(?)" of Endor. As to the cases he cites in conclusion, they are not to the point; because they contain no example of any approach to the Spirit world directly or by mediumship; and *that* is what we want to find in Scripture, and that is just what no Spiritist in the world can find. With every respect I take my leave of "Iota." D. Mackay seems to think that God instituted Spiritism because men would not address themselves to Him. Where is the evidence? Are the great majority of Spiritists men who never called upon God? As to the bulk of mankind the Gospel of the present dispensation was never intended

to convert *them*, as is generally, but most unwarrantably supposed, but only to *take out of them* "a people for his name," and when the complement is made up, then "all Israel shall be saved"; but not till then. The Jews, as a people, have been judicially blinded, and the veil which still covers their hearts and minds will not be lifted, spite of all the efforts of good but mistaken people, till "the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." And so "the last shall be first, and the first last." Rev. 15. 5, and 19. 11, are not yet fulfilled, for "the beast, Antichrist," etc. are not yet developed, and their action is *preliminary*.

I think I have now fully replied to all that has been said; and again thanking you for your courtesy and fairness in according me so much space, and wishing you well out of the Spiritual maelstrom in whose marginal currents you have become entangled.

I remain,

My dear Sir,

Very truly and respectfully yours,

TAU BETH.

STRAY NOTES AS TO SPIRITUALISM.

II.

A WORD ABOUT THE EVIDENCE.

IN my last paper I endeavoured to show that accounts of events closely akin to modern spiritual phenomena, are to be found recorded in the chronicles of every nation, sacred or profane, and that should the so-called physical manifestations of the present day prove to be correct, we have at once not only a clue to many dark passages of history, but also very strong presumptive evidence that the details of biblical and New Testament miracles were something more than mere fictions—real and actual virtues.

To deny the possibility of supernatural occurrences in the past is, as I said, to render it exceedingly problematical whether any given event ever occurred, for the evidence that signs, and wonders, and prodigies, were once of frequent occurrence, is tenfold more strong than is the evidence showing that Cæsar once ruled in Rome, and that Alexander invaded Persia. If the one story is necessarily false, what guarantee have we that the others are not equally unreliable.

Possibly the fear of such a result will have but little influence upon the minds of the majority in an age so especially matter of fact as is the present. To a very large proportion of the population the fact of their faith being shaken as to the reality of events said to have taken place in a distant, or even in our own land, centuries ago, would be regarded with utter indifference. "Sufficient for the day are the evils and the good thereof," is adopted as a maxim by hundreds and thousands whose education and culture are far above the average. "We are in the world," say they, "and how we get there is a matter of but trifling moment; we have drifted down the tide of time to the hour which now is, and care but little whether the things said to have been done or witnessed by men who similarly drifted down the same stream ages since, are worthy of credence or the reverse."

The facts, however, related of modern Spiritism are certainly worthy of a little consideration, even by people such as the above; since if all the numerous testimonies as to the occurrence of physical and mental Spiritual manifestations are to be pooh-poohed as inventions of dreamer or the knave, very little dependence can be placed in any narration whatever, even although the same relate to events taking place but yesterday, at our very doors. Persons who are so apt at getting rid of overwhelming evidence as to the truth of Spiritualism, or at least the reality of its phenomena, by summary denials have surely never rightly considered the nature of such evidence, who are the witnesses brought into court, or the circumstances under which a large number of these have severally given their testimonies.

Let us see what that evidence really is.

Setting aside what we see with our own eyes, hear with our own ears, or become cognizant of by some other of our senses, there are at least three sources from which

at the present day we derive that information by which we regulate our daily conduct—viz., the Press, the *viva voce* assertions of those we meet, and the letters of correspondents. We do not commonly implicitly credit the whole of what we so hear, but exercise a due discretion, taking into consideration the character of the informant, or the respectability of the journal. A solitary statement we may reject as unworthy of belief, but if the same fact is circumstantially detailed in some half a dozen papers, if the first account of the event is corroborated by the unasked-for testimony of friends of well-known probity and honor; if we hear the same story declared to be true upon oath in our courts of justice, and find it repeated with all due solemnity in the pulpit; there are few I think who would not—in all cases save that of Spiritualism—accept the statements so received and so verified, as worthy of all belief and confidence. And of exactly this nature is the evidence at present adduced by Spiritualists in support of their statements and theories. Their newspaper paragraphs, however, have a value over that of most such paragraphs, since nearly every one bears the attesting signature of the writer. In a court of law, great stress is laid upon the value of rigid cross examination to elicit the truth, but no evidence has, ever since the world begun, been so unmercifully cross-questioned as has been that of the advocates of Spiritualism. Again, the very nature of the facts detailed renders the most credulous in other things obstinately incredulous in this. The statement of even a witness little given to truth-telling is held to be reliable, if the same tell against the witness himself; and it is remarkable that the statements of the witnesses brought forward by the Spiritualists are of this kind. Almost to a man such witnesses entered upon their enquiry as to Spiritual phenomena with a foregone conclusion that they would be able to demonstrate the fallacy of the whole affair, and by subsequently stating their experiences, they are simply making open confession of past error. And further, a death-bed statement is another kind of evidence usually received as trustworthy. Two men may have been decidedly enemies for years, and yet the solemn assertion under such conditions of the one, that the other had given him a fatal blow, would, is supported by but one trifling collateral testimony, prove amply sufficient to convict the murderer, and probably send him to the gallows. Examined by such a test, the spiritualistic evidence is especially satisfactory. Men have started in life as utter sceptics, they have examined, and being convinced of the truth of Spiritualism, they have boldly declared that truth, and, dying, they have uttered no recantation, have made no open confession that what had hitherto been asserted by them was false, and uttered with a view of passing off a fraud, or of playing upon the credulity of the world. When it is considered that Spiritualists are not generally bad men, anxious to die with a lie upon their lips, or with many lies previously told upon their conscience, the absence of any one instance wherein a spiritual medium, through life suspected of fraud and trickery, in death confessed his error and his sin, is a singularly strong bit of negative evidence in favour of Spiritualism, which the anti-Spiritualists, who adopt the wilful deception theory would do well to ponder over.

NUMBER NIP.

PROOFS OF GOD'S EXISTENCE IMPOSSIBLE.

COULD we have proof of God's existence, there were no God worthy to be proved. Proof shifts its object into other essence, or other truth: but that which is infinite cannot be shifted to aught that is within our capacity. Incomprehensible as eternity, against what background shall our God stand relieved? Say space is filled, and time is filled, and we are a portion of that filling; how shall a part contain the whole?—how shall that which cannot be compassed be known, whether it be entirely proved or not? The poet cannot teach his poetry to a stone; nor can God condense his being to a picture in our souls; he were not God, nor we men. Yet God is in us, the assurance of his presence, whose majesty is the birth of reason. He is not afar, that we should see him. He is in the light of the eye, and in the object that it shines on. He is not a curiosity, a member of a species,

or a thing to be represented by any device. He is the One—the original—the all in all. All creeds acknowledge him. His name needs no interpreter when they say "God created." Boundless and incomprehensible, yet indisputable, the key of all mystery, without form, without centre or circumference, beginning or end, the life, space, and atmosphere wherein all being dwells, words were not made to represent him; we cannot show him to another, nor another to us; yet in the human soul he has said immemorially, "I am!" and there is none beside me!"

It is queried whether God is self-conscious.—If the heavens should burst in thunder and say *aye!* what were we the wiser? We cannot conceive universal consciousness; we cannot receive an answer though it were given. Think not because our language contains the word *universal* that the word must convey to us an idea. It is but the symbol of an inconceivable thought, useful to the finitude of the soul when it would acknowledge a greater than itself.

We delight to fancy a lone and glorious self-love in the Almighty; yet from this method has grown some of the worst of our theological discourses. It has made God in man's image. It has invested him with error, confusion, repentance, and worse than all, anger. It has made folly, sin; it has made policy, duty; it has made pain a judgment and a punishment; it has given to God all the frailties of man, and made man confound himself in efforts to prove—made him stultify himself in professions of faith in proof—that *justice* is lashing us solely for having opposed the will and thwarted the wishes of 'the judge of all the earth.' But from this conceit of God in man's image, bad though it be, worse conclusions are drawn than analogy will sanction. Will our heavenly father torture a child externally for an offence at which his earthly father will but give him a box on the ear? We trace man's cruelty to his weakness—to envy, excess, disease; but all things must obey the will and subserve the purpose of the Almighty, and fear, envy, disappointment cannot ruffle his brow. Even man is noble, generous and forgiving. Place a human life in jeopardy, and many lives will be risked to save it. Friend or foe, be a man fallen, he is the brother of the human race. Scarce a man living would torture his enemy's dog for two days together; and shall He be believed to damn a man—He in whose image man was made?

MR. GOSMAN'S LECTURE.

A LECTURE on Spiritism, was delivered at the East Melbourne Congregational Church, on Tuesday, March 21st, by the Rev. A. Gosman. The rev. gentleman prefaced his Lecture by stating that he did not know whether Spirits were affected by atmospheric changes, but that his own, in consequence of the cold, were in anything but a bright condition. He did not quite like the idea of lecturing upon Spiritualism, it was not his own choice, but although he could not explain the matter, he would do anything to please them. To begin then, he would explain the meaning of certain words that he would have occasion to use. *Spiritism* and *Spiritualism* meant the same thing; *Mundane* is something which relates to earth, and *Supermundane* as well as *Supersensuous* referred to something above or away from the earth. He saw no reason why the subject should not be investigated, and was willing to admit all facts that could be authenticated beyond the possibility of doubt, but thought there were many powers inherent in man of which we, as yet know nothing, and which might account for the phenomena which at present seemed so inexplicable. It was a most significant fact in his own experience, that although he had seen some most marvellous manifestations, the Spirits were *always invisible*. He would divide his Lecture into three parts: First, the Physical Manifestations. That these did occur there could not be a shadow of a doubt, and his audience might dismiss from their minds at once all suspicion that the Mediums were deceiving either themselves or others. He had seen a table on which were resting only the Medium's hands, whirling round so fast that it could with difficulty be followed, and he had seen the same table performing strange movements when no person

was touching it, and where all idea of machinery or collusion was quite out of the question; but if the movements of that table were caused by Spirits, they were certainly not very intelligent ones, for in response to a question he was informed by raps, that the Spirit of a friend he had known two years ago, was present. Well, the Spirit consented to rap out her name, and from that day to this he had ransacked the secret recesses of his brain, as well as every pigeon-hole, and yet been unable to find a clue to the person whose Spirit was supposed to be present. However, as the Spirit in question was a lady's, he did not much wonder. (Laughter). He might also state that the same Spirit refused to tell him her age. (Renewed laughter). It was quite characteristic of the sex, and also of the Spirits (if any), for he found them at all times strongly disinclined to give either names or ages. There were, however, other phenomena which he had witnessed, a lady medium sat before a piano, and after making herself as passive as possible, she was made to play upon the instrument, and that without any conscious desire, or intention on her own part. The music was at first low and mournful, but suddenly it came forth with a burst, and, as far as he could judge, was excellent in time and harmony, and calculated to inspire feelings of solemnity, if any existed in the hearers. When the music was over he was surprised to find the Medium upon the floor, where she had slipped from her seat at the conclusion of the music; and he also noticed that she was quite rigid, and unable to move from her position; but she still retained the power to talk. (Laughter). This is one of the intellectual manifestations, but there are also many others, some of the mediums write under the influence, not a few short sentences, but a whole library of books, both in prose and poetry. He has, himself, seen writings in Arabic, Hindostani, Greek, &c., of which he was satisfied the Medium knew nothing. Yet he was not satisfied that Spirits had anything to do with it, nor was he compelled to disprove that hypothesis or state another, it rested with the Spiritualists to prove their hypothesis, which he submitted they could not do; for some of them, when he tried to argue with them, lost their patience, others their temper, and Mr. Naylor told him to reason for himself; and asked, what is it if not Spiritual influence? He did reason, and where he reasoned, all these troops of Spirits were resolved into thin air at once, and he was left to grope amongst unknown laws for a satisfactory solution upon which to account for facts which undoubtedly have taken place.

He now came to the Supermundane facts—such as the playing of music, sometimes beautifully soft and entrancing, and produced without either visible players or instruments. Under this head he also classed all phenomena existing without the aid of Mediums; such as apparitions or ghosts, and all things that seem to be above nature. Spiritualists refer all these things, as well as other manifestations to Spirit intervention. Before this could be proved, the manifestations must pass the following three conditions, viz: the facts must be authenticated beyond the possibility of a quibble. There must be no possibility of any other hypothesis being tenable, and lastly the personality of the Spirits must be completely established. He submitted that Spiritualism did not pass these conditions, some of the facts being explained as the result of purely mundane laws, and none of them will pass the third condition. In conclusion, he begged of his hearers, if they did investigate Spiritualism, to keep the conditions he had stated in mind, and to retain by all means their moral character and purity intact, let nothing affect that, and remember that it is nothing short of moral suicide to give up the total control of your faculties either to Spirit, Mesmerist, or other person whomsoever. The religious aspect of Spiritualism he must confess, completely staggered him. Some of the writings purporting to come from Spirits, seemed to him dreadful blasphemy, but other communications, for purity of thought, nobleness of sentiment, and beauty of expression, far transcended the highest conceptions of some of the most devout Christians, but the principles enunciated in them were as widely antagonistic as any in the broad field of metaphysical speculation. The proceedings, which had been enlivened by music, &c., were concluded with a vote of thanks to the Lecturer.

VARIETY.

THERE is a proverb among men that no two things are exactly alike; "You cannot bathe twice in the same river," said the ancient; but in the course of ordinary thought we do not reflect upon the truth and beauty of the saying. Let us dwell upon it, for it is blessed.—Turn not to the stars of differing glory, symbols of the human race, and ranging from the golden sun through a myriad galaxies whose snowing numbers drift into the Milky Way, but turn to our own star, Earth. Say first, thou sceptic of divine benevolence, why, in that revolution which brings light for all labor, and darkness for all rest,—why does she not turn plumb upon her axis, like all the wheels that man has put in motion? What dull mechanic boxed her widely-oscillating journals?—Glorious ecliptic! beauty of the material universe! thy designer is the friend of man: Winding, in the "line of beauty," the green and white around the varied world, bringing bright summer and gray winter to him who could love neither alone. Would he have all cold, he can have it. Would he have all hot, he can have it. Would he stand still, and have every grade of hot and cold that his nature can endure, he can have them in one year's passage. Is a year too long—the steamers that round Cape Horn can put him almost a year into a month: Or let him climb a tropical mountain to its icy scalp, and encounter all the zones of the world. Loves he the short day or the long—he may choose. Would he try days without nights, or nights without days—he may prefer, and be gratified.—And every day is a little year on its own account—a wheel within a wheel. From darkness and repose pours up the gray light of the morning, through a pageant of clouds designed for this day only, and amid the hum of living nature the flowers open their dewy eyes. Slowly the day-summer rises to its tropical noon, and slowly it goes down into the arctic-darkness, beyond the western waves. Then darkness deepens, and lo! the auroral stars, that wax and wane through the cold, delicious umbrage of the night, while, hour by hour, new constellations glad the feasting eye with their olden silver service—an heirloom of the world. And man, who beholds all this, and partly for whose pleasure all these were created, has his ecliptic also, and his wheel within a wheel. Through the windings of recorded civilization—through the golden ages that harden into the iron and the brass, and then refine to gold again,—through the dark ages and the bright,—through reigns of terror and reigns of Saturn,—through reigns of philosophy and reigns of madness, man has not been twice alike from the hour of his birth. We are older every moment; we have new accessions of experience, new styles of consciousness, and we see things in a different light. "All the world's a stage"—a stage with new proscenium and decorations nightly, and a change of play: there is many a spicy, quarrelsome recast, and an audience and actors whom we never saw before.

COURTESY.

COURTESY is a distinguishing feature of civilized and intelligent society. It is the most beautiful illustration of the refining power which a higher development of humanity always exerts upon our race. By courtesy is meant that behavior of man toward man which he would ask for himself. It is but a part of the mode of carrying out the great Christian precept which lies at the base of order and harmony among men: "Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you." That this precept, which implies courtesy, is divine, as is all moral truth, is proven by our common appreciation of its fitness and beauty. Do what we may in life, the wheels of society can never move smoothly and well where the spirit of courtesy does not actuate the thoughts and deeds of man in his intercourse with man. Necessary as it is in civilized society, courtesy has its power among the lowest and most savage. That which leads us to do as we would be done by, especially in the more refined and refining intercourse of our lives, is the conciliating angel which, whatever our condition, and wherever we may be, will guard us against every enmity or assault.

OUR OPEN BIBLE.

How frequently do we hear the boast that we possess an open Bible! But can we fairly make good our boast? Do we indeed leave the Bible free and open for all to read and interpret as they choose? Do we not rather require that others shall read it through the same coloured and perhaps distorting glass as we ourselves, from educational training, use? Else why do we see the darkening frown, the lengthened countenance, and the hands uplifted in pious horror, when anyone has the boldness and candour to affirm, "that his own careful, honest, and independent conclusions are different from the popular views." Possessing an open Bible, and protesting against the authority of the Pope and the claims of Romanism, and to force upon us their (paid theologians) so-called infallible interpretations of the Bible, what right have we to make a Pope of our own, and to denounce all who come not within the narrow circle of our own party as heterodox infidels or perverters of truth? Surely our boast is, and ever must be, idle and vain, so long as we demand liberty of conscience for ourselves but refuse to accede it to others! Singularly enough, men dispute and quarrel about the doctrines of the Bible, but in most cases, never see upon what grounds its claims rest to be considered an infallible book, a divine guide, the holy and revealed will of God, and yet, with a strange perverseness, men ridicule and despise the earnest inquirer after truth, who fails to find proof that the Bible has a right to its lofty and flattering titles. Inherited opinions bring us no credit, unless they are confirmed and made our own by careful and impartial investigation; and therefore, before we can form a right or intelligent opinion of the Bible, we must put aside our educational prejudices and our preconceived opinions, and examine the book thoroughly and fearlessly, intent only on finding out the truth for ourselves, and then we shall soon learn to estimate the book at its true value. It will need no very lengthened study to convince us that the Bible, being one of the oldest of books yet known to man, is of great value, if regarded only as a record of the religious life and thought of bygone ages; and if, further, we take into account its many high moral teachings, its sublime poetry, and its noble and encouraging examples of men who, under the most adverse circumstances, led good and holy lives, we shall see good reasons for holding the book in very high estimation. But, on the other hand, when we consider that the Bible is for the most part a history and biography of the Jews, and has been wholly unknown to the greater portion of mankind; that it contains different and conflicting accounts of the same events; that it gives incredible and contradictory reports of God's attributes, and of His modes of dealing with man; and that its statements regarding natural phenomena are inconsistent with the actual facts, then we cannot, with any sense of justice and truth, affirm that the book is infallibly inspired, or that, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, it is the Holy Word of God. None but careless, thoughtless, or prejudiced readers will assert that the Bible contains neither contradictions nor inconsistencies, for its discrepancies are far too numerous to escape the notice of any attentive student. Doubtless it would be a thankless task to enumerate them all, but it may not be uninteresting to quote a few, taken almost at random from the three hundred contradictions which the Bible is said to contain.

The Bible says that—

"GOD CAN BE SEEN AND HEARD."

And the Lord spake to Moses, face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend.—Ex. xxxiii. 11.

And the Lord called unto Adam, and said unto him, where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and was afraid.—Gen. iii. 9.

"GOD IS NEVER TIRED AND NEVER RESTS."

Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary?—Is. xl. 28.

"GOD IS JUST AND IMPARTIAL."

The Lord is upright,.....and there is no unrighteousness in Him.—Ps. xcii. 15.

A God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is He.—Deut. xxii. 4.

There is no respect of persons with God.—Rom. ii. 11.

"GOD IS KIND AND MERCIFUL."

The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.—James v. 11.

For He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.—Lam. iii. 33.

God is love.—1 John iv. 16.

"GOD CANNOT BE SEEN NOR HEARD."

No man hath seen God at any time.—John i. 18.

And He said, thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live.—Exodus xxxiii. 20.

Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen his shape.—John v. 30.

"GOD IS TIRED, AND RESTS."

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.—Ex. xxxi. 17.

I am weary with repenting.—Jer. xv. 6.

"GOD IS UNJUST AND PARTIAL."

For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.—Ex. xx. 5.

Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.—Gen. ix. 25.

For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach.—Lev. xxi. 16 to 22.

"GOD IS CRUEL AND UNMERCIFUL."

I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy.—Jer. xiii. 14.

And thou shalt consume all the people which the Lord thy God shall deliver thee; thine

Who will have *all men* to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.—1 Tim. ii. 4.

I have no *pleasure* in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God.—Ezek. xviii. 32.

"GOD TEMPTETH NO MAN."

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.—Jas. i. 13.

"GOD CANNOT LIE."

It is impossible for God to lie.—Heb. vi. 18.

"ANNIHILATION IS THE LOT OF ALL."

For that which befalleth the sons of men, befalleth the beasts, even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other. Yea, they have all one breath, so that man hath no pre-eminence above a beast..... will go into one place.—Eccles. iii. 19, 20.

The dead know not any thing, neither have they any reward.—Eccles. ix. 5.

They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise.—Is' xxvi. 14.

"THE EARTH WILL BE DESTROYED."

The earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up.—2 Peter iii. 10.

"ANGER IS APPROVED."

Be ye *angry*, and sin not.—Eph. iv. 26.

And when He (Jesus) had looked about on them *with anger*, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.—Mark iii. 5.

"LYING IS FORBIDDEN."

Thou shalt not bear false witness.—Ex. xx. 16.

Lying lips are an *abomination* to the Lord.—Prov. xii. 22.

All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.—Prov. xxi. 8.

"KILLING IS FORBIDDEN."

Thou shalt not kill.—Exodus xx. 13.

"ROBBERY IS FORBIDDEN."

Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him.—Lev. xxix. 13.

Thou shalt not steal.—Exodus xx. 15.

eye shall have no pity upon them.—Deut. vii. 16.

Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling.—1 Samuel xv. 2, 3.

Because they looked into the ark of the Lord (i.e., an old box) even He smote of the people fifty thousand and three score and ten men.—1 Sam. vi. 19.

"GOD DOES TEMPT MAN."

And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt Abraham.—Gen. xxii. 1.

I make peace and create evil.—Is. xlv. 7.

"GOD LIES BY PROXY."

And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet.—Eex. xv. 19.

"ANNIHILATION IS NOT THE LOT OF ALL."

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised.—1 Cor. xv. 22.

And many of them that sleep in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.—Dan. xii. 2.

"THE EARTH WILL NOT BE DESTROYED."

But the earth abideth for ever.—Eccles. i. 4.

Who laid the foundations of the earth that it should not be removed for ever.—Ps. civ. 5.

"ANGER IS NOT APPROVED."

Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry, for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.—Eccles. vii. 9.

Make no friendship with an angry man.—Prov. xx. 24.

"LYING IS APPROVED AND SANCTIONED."

And the woman (Rahab) took the two men and hid them, and said thus: There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were; and it came to pass about the time of the shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out; whither the men went I know not; pursue after them quickly, for ye shall overtake them. But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax.—Josh. ii. 4-6.

Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when she received the messengers and had sent them out another way.—Jas. ii. 25. Ex. i. 18-20, and 1 Kings xxii. 21, 22.

"KILLING IS COMMANDED."

Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.—Ex. xxxii. 27.

"ROBBERY IS COMMANDED."

When ye go ye shall not go empty; but every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters, and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.—Ex. iii. 21, 22.

"ADULTERY IS FORBIDDEN."

Thou shalt not commit adultery.—Ex. xx. 14.

Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.—Heb. xiii. 4.

"HATRED TO KINDRED IS ENJOINED."

If any man come unto me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yea, and his own life also he cannot be my disciple.—Luke xiv. 26.

"A MAN MAY MARRY HIS BROTHER'S WIDOW."

If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger; her husband's brother shall come in unto her, and take her to wife.—Deut. xxv. 5.

"CHRIST WAS TEMPTED IN THE WILDERNESS."

And immediately (after Christ's baptism) the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan.—Mark i. 12, 13.

"CHRIST IS EQUAL WITH GOD."

I and my Father are one.—John x. 30.

"JESUS WAS ALL-POWERFUL."

All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.—Matthew xxviii. 18.

"THE FATHER OF JOSEPH, MARY'S HUSBAND, WAS JACOB."

And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus.—Matt. i. 16.

There were fourteen generations from the Babylonish captivity to Christ.—Matt. i. 17.

Jehoiachim was eighteen years old when he began to reign.—2 Kings xxiv. 8.

Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he began to reign.—2 Kings viii. 26.

Jehoahaz was Jehoram's youngest son.—2 Chron. xxi. 17.

"THROUGH ADAM SIN CAME INTO THE WORLD."

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.—1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.

Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign.—2 Chron. xxii. 2. As Jehoram (his father) was crowned at thirty-two, and only reigned eight years when he died (2 Chron. xxi. 20), yet Ahaziah, who immediately succeeded him, was forty-two. Strange record! youngest son two years older than his father!

It would be easy to give a long list of discrepancies clear and unmistakable as the foregoing, but enough have been quoted to convince any truly candid enquirer that the book is neither infallible nor plenary inspired. If it be asked what good or useful purpose can possibly be served by destroying our faith in the supernatural origin and divine authenticity of the Bible, we reply that Truth is better than error; that truth brings blessings in its train, but error evil; that God being a God of truth, all truth must be God's truth, and therefore, notwithstanding that the Bible is a human fallible production, yet the truths which it contains are just as much God's truths as if the Bible had been miraculously inspired. A true and common-sense opinion of the Bible

"ADULTERY IS ALLOWED."

But all the *neggen-children* that have not known a man by laying with him, keep alive for yourselves.—Num. xxxi. 18.

And the persons (i.e., virgins) were sixteen thousand; of which the Lord's tribute was thirty and two.—Num. xxxi. 40.

And the Lord said unto Hosea, go, take thee a wife of whoredoms.—Hosea i. 2.

"HATRED TO KINDRED IS CONDEMNED."

Honor thy father and mother.—Eph. vi. 2.

Husbands, love your wives ... for no man ever hated his own flesh.—Eph. v. 25-29.

Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer.—1 John iii. 5.

"A MAN MAY NOT MARRY HIS BROTHER'S WIDOW."

If a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an *unclean thing*.....they shall be childless.—Lev. xx. 21.

"CHRIST WAS NOT TEMPTED IN THE WILDERNESS."

And the third day (after Christ's baptism) there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee..... Both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.—John ii. 1, 2.

"CHRIST IS NOT EQUAL WITH GOD."

My Father is greater than I.—John xiv. 28.

"JESUS WAS NOT ALL-POWERFUL."

And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands on a few sick folk, and healed them.—Mark vi. 5.

"THE FATHER OF MARY'S HUSBAND WAS HELI."

Being the son of Joseph which was the son of Heli.—Luke iii. xxiii.

There were but thirteen generations from the Babylonish captivity to Christ:—And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel..... Zerobabel..... Abind..... Eliakim..... Azor..... Sadoc..... Achim..... Elihud..... Eleazar..... Matthan..... Jacob..... Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus (13.—Matthew i. 12-16.

Jehoiachim was but eight years old when he began to reign.—2 Chron. xxxvi. 9.

Ahaziah was forty-two years old when he began to reign.—2 Chron. xxii. 2.

Ahaziah was Jehoram's youngest son.—2 Chron. xxii. 2.

"SIN DID NOT COME INTO THE WORLD THROUGH ADAM."

If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin!—John, xv. 22.

will not deprive us of a single advantage that the Bible can confer ; but it assuredly will prevent a host of evils which naturally flows from the mischievous dogma, that the Bible is necessarily of divine origin,—a dogma which has brought untold misery upon countless millions of God's children. Look ! what a dark, sad page is that in history, which shows us that because this so-called inspired book taught that a witch ought not to live, some hundreds of thousands of innocent people were burned at the stake, on the foolish charge of witchcraft ; and that, as this book declares, that unbelievers should be punished now, and damned hereafter, myriads of the earth's best men and women have been tortured, and butchered in cold blood. Certainly, had not the Bible countenanced the ridiculous idea of witchcraft, and the equally absurd notion that there can be any saving merit in mere belief, the history of Christianity would not be marred with so many foul and ineffaceable blots. Wars, murders, blasted hearts, and homes. These are the fruits of a slavish and superstitious belief in the divine origin and infallibility of the Bible ! Men frequently tell us that unless we accept the Bible as a whole, we must reject it altogether. As well might they tell us to throw away a whole basket of fruit because it contained a few unripe berries ; or to discard the newspaper, because it sometimes contains inaccurate or garbled statements. Indeed, it would be quite as pertinent to ask, "Do you believe the newspaper?" as it is to ask, "Do you believe the Bible?" for in both cases the reply ought to be, "Your inquiry is indefinite. To which particular article or passage do you refer? Both the Bible and newspapers are the collections of miscellaneous and disconnected records, some of which may be true, others doubtful, and some plainly false and unreliable. In conclusion, the Bible contains much that is good, true, and beautiful, and this we accept with gladness ; but it also teacheth the heathenish and baneful doctrines of "The Fall of Man," "The existence of witches and wizards," "The partial favouritism of God for certain men and certain nations." "The satisfaction of absolute justice by means of an unjust atonement." "Vicarious suffering." "Imputed righteousness." "Predestination to happiness or perdition of human souls, which, like clay in the hands of the potter, are moulded at will to vessels of honour or dishonour." And so-called orthodox Christians assure us that it also teaches the doctrines of "A personal devil," and "An endless hell." On all these barbarous doctrines we look with pain and disgust, and believe it to be a foul calumny against the divine being to ascribe them to him. Let us no longer then submit to swallow the chaff with the wheat ; but let us fearlessly "Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good ;" for—

"By education most have been misled ;
So they believe, because they so were bred ;
The priest continues what the nurse began,
And thus the child imposes on the man."

—DRYDEN.

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"But, he would ask, what if the enemies of the Bible take that book from us, will they give us in the place of it? What will supply the tremendous deficiency the loss of that book will cause? To take that book from us would be like taking a plank from a man in the deep sea. We should sink, and nothing could save us."—The Rev. E. Day (Congregational).—*Castlemaine Representative*.

"We must construct our creed and arrange our system out of the Bible. . . . The Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."—The Rev. Thomas James (Wesleyan).—*Adelaide Evening Journal*, May 30, 1870.

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"The Bible is a book composed of sixty-six different portions, written by at least forty human authors, and extending in its composition over a period of sixteen hundred years, and yet, one voice speaks throughout its pages. . . . Such a unity pervading any body of literature is wholly unparalleled. . . . No product of human reason can present a similar phenomenon, and the only rational explanation is that, in very truth, holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. . . . We now possess God's word written ; our concern at present is not with the mode of composition, but with the book as it exists."—"Unity, Credibility, and Authority of the Bible." By the Rev. A. R. B. McCay, teacher of theology, &c. Published at Castlemaine.

"There are times, however, when the ministers and stewards of the mysteries of God must not keep silence when they must be ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines, contrary to God's Word. Such doctrines are proclaimed amongst us now."—Ven. Archdeacon Crawford.—*Castlemaine Representative*, May 30, 1870.

* The Ven. Archdeacon Crawford, at morning service on Sunday last, read a letter he had received from his Lordship Dr. Perry, Bishop of Melbourne, requesting that he would hold a service on Thursday next, for the purpose of returning thanks to God for ANTICIPATING! the desire of his people for rain!—*Mount Alexander Mail*, 6th October, 1869.

WHAT IS SPIRITUALISM?

SPIRITUALISM is the essence of God, cemented and bound together through the bonds of purity and love, and leads to a perfect obedience to the laws of nature physically, intellectually, and spiritually, which are applicable to all the variations to which humanity is subject, and through which is created the kingdom of heaven within ; when that peace which passeth all understanding reigns supreme, and good-will towards all men becomes perceptible through the actions of the creature who is in possession of such a treasure. Reason is the great regulator and plane by which progression is achieved, and is the true saviour from vice and wickedness. Thought is the handmaiden to Reason and these two work together harmoniously, in accordance with nature's laws. Consciousness of a union with the Spirit-world dawns with the unfolding of the Being, and gradually opens up to the earnest searcher after truth—the workings of the laws of the Universe. None can truly realize the holy communion of saints except those who are walking in the spirit or the love of God ; to the enlightened mind, such a communion is divine in its origin, sublime in its conceptions, and is characterized by harmony and peace, creating a child-like humility and a perfect obedience to the voice of conscience, which, though small and feeble, is all-powerful for good when thoroughly awakened, and forms a connecting link with those loved ones who have gone before us to the realms of everlasting progression. Men only can be said to enjoy the works of their heavenly Father, and to hear their sweet anthems of praise, when the spiritual becomes developed in their being and God reigns in their heart as king. When the material in man's nature becomes the servant of the spiritual then he is enabled to look within his shell, and to behold the boundless love, flowing like living streams from the bosom of the Great Creator, in this sending forth those who have gone before us to guard our footsteps and to guide us into the paths of truth and holiness. Babies we are, not able to rise out of your couch without the aid of your guardian angels.

M. T. J.

MRS. BAMFORD'S VISIT.

AN impetus has been given to the Spiritual movement in Melbourne, by the recent visit of Mrs. Bamford of Castlemaine, to the metropolis ; during her short stay here she attended several private seances, and one larger meeting, where upwards of fifty persons were present. She was powerfully controlled by the Spirit of Dr. Elliotson, and his delineations of the characters and mediumistic capacities of some of the audience were very striking, and gave general satisfaction. Several Spirits of the relatives of those present manifested themselves through her, and produced a profound impression. An account of one of the seances by a gentleman present, appears in our columns, and we think will be read with interest by those who have not been so fortunate as to witness this phase of mediumship.

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PRICE 6d.; SUBSCRIPTION, 5s. per annum, payable in advance. Country, 6s.

W. H. TERRY, 96 RUSSELL STREET, MELBOURNE.

Printed by E. Purton & Co., at their Office, 106 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, for the Proprietor, W. H. Terry, and published by him at 96 Russell Street, South, Melbourne.