

THE
Spiritual Magazine.

Vol. V.]

MARCH, 1864.

[No. 3.

SPIRITUALISM IN FRANCE AND AMERICA.
THE TWO GREAT HERESIES.

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IN every new dispensation heresies spring up as certainly as suckers from nut-trees. The old proverb immediately demonstrates its truth:—

“Wherever God erects a house of prayer,
The devil's sure to build a chapel there.”

Wherever a new truth is proclaimed, that opposing principle which has always exhibited itself throughout the world and its ages, starts up beside it, and assumes a shape, at first, something like it, but which grows gradually more and more unlike and antagonistic as it succeeds in drawing away the original followers of the original truth. Christianity had these wild offshoots bursting up all around it. Nicolaitanes, Gnostics, Manicheans, and the like contended with it, not for a participation in its truth, but for being its sole possessors. There were false Christs, false apostles, false gospels, false epistles, and false doctrines in abundance. Nor could the evil be put down without producing other evils—evils which have been a curse and a snare to the Church ever since. To brand and annihilate these heresies the Church sent forth its thunders, and hence came persecutions, creeds, bans, and anathemas. Hence bitterness in the heart of that which should have been all charity; hence dragonades and *auto-da-fés*, which very soon crushed the truth and the error together, and left the once verdant olive groves of the faith, the blackened tracts of spiritual desolation, over which no longer sported the bird and the butterfly, but where all venomous things have ever haunted.

Spiritualism has not escaped this fate any more than Christianity. The modern forms in which the spirits have been permitted to hold intercourse with us, have not been reserved exclusively to the good. In that same broad policy which has

always distinguished the plans of the Almighty and the Allwise, he has opened the doors of earth wide to the invisible host, and said, "Behold there, my creature, man—try him, instruct him, cheat him if you can, and let us see whether with the reason and the faculties I have given him he is worthy, by his exercise of them, to inherit the worlds I have prepared for him." No doubt, in the Divine mind, at the same time, has stood prominent that great truth which Milton has clothed in words: "Let truth and error grapple, for truth is the mightiest, and is sure to prevail."

As a natural result of such spiritual freedom, almost every man who has come into Spiritualism has received communications from spirits assuming great and venerated names, that would not stand the touchstone of the Scriptures, and accordingly, many of these have been suffered to drop, as the false metal, which they were. Others, in more ambitious minds, have been held fast as truths fit to compete, and even to supersede the Christian code. This state of things has been more conspicuous in America and France than England. America has its Mormonism, its Free Loveism, its Super-Christianism, its Paganism, a species of what is called in France, Fusionism, all claiming to be of spirit dictation, and therefore all true, each one more than the other. In France, there are scarcely two leading Spiritualists who believe alike. Each has his own theory, his own adherents, and fights manfully for his particular dogma in volume after volume. Szapary and Du Potet deny individual spirits as agents. Du Potet thinks the phenomena "purely physical, and proceeding from intelligent forces which exist in space." Yet he is himself not at rest with this creed, and adds: "No one can produce these or anything like them of himself; these require a foreign aid, and time will, no doubt, bring the discovery of the real nature of this aid." Szapary, starting from the same point, and rejecting individual spirits, goes a little further: "Table-moving," he says, "is a phenomenon of psycho-magnetism." But, he quickly adds: "The spirit of the individual perceives the magnetical particles of the dead in the rooms, and furniture used by him, and through the indwelling idea of them they become present to him, move him, and even speak through him." This is coming, if not to individual spirit agency, to the hair's breadth of a hair's breadth of it. He says too, "Do the theologians perceive no finger of God in these phenomena? Do the philosophers discern in them no higher spiritual activity of man? Is no hitherto believed and imagined nerve-action of men revealed by them to the physiologist? Does the physical philosopher perceive in this no humanism and Spiritualism, which puts to shame all electro-magnetism? Are they not struck dumb before a power which seems to unfold higher laws of nature, and to subject them to the

will of man? Shall not the artificer of these laws know how to make an application of them, which shall lead even children to incredible results?" Szapary, led on by his enthusiasm, approaches still nearer than Du Potet to a full-length Spiritualism. In fact, it would require a hair-splitting intellect to cleave one from the other.

But Gasparin (properly Swiss, but addressing himself to France) advances yet a step further. Szapary, whilst contesting ghosts and their table-moving congeners, admits the fact of "the invisible concatenation of spirits, which goes so far that the human soul, in its individuality, can transfer itself into past times, and through their modes of vision can think and judge." But Gasparin, while ascribing modern manifestations to electro-magnetism, admits all the direct manifestation of spirits in the Old and New Testament, and in the Apostolic times, which having done, the wall of a mere *ipse dixit* which he attempts to build up between the Apostolic and the succeeding times, will keep nobody from leaping over, much less spiritual activities.

On the heels of these magnetic theorists and trembling reasoners, who shut out the spirits at the front only to let them in at the back door, walks up Mirville, and tells them bluntly that they are all talking of what they don't understand. That the things which astonish them, and lead them into such cobwebs of reasoning, are all spirits, palpable and individual, but then they are all—devils! Mirville is a fine example of the "seek-and-ye-shall-find" principle. He seeks and finds devils everywhere. He sees them in the Presbytery of Cidville, where the furniture took to moving about; tongs, poker, and hammer took to flying; and knocking spirits, who seemed rather jovial, rapped out a variety of tunes on demand—*Clair de Lune* and *J'ai du bon Tabac*. His friends, the Benezets and Laserres, at Toulouse, found only devils in the knocking spirits which visited them, especially as one of them bit the finger of Madame Laserre, and left the marks of his teeth in it. M. de Mirville is resolved that all spirits manifesting themselves, whether grave or gay, playful or spiteful, shall be devils.

Holy Mother Church goes a step beyond him; and in this instance is more liberal, for she admits some of the manifesting spirits to be holy; namely, those who influence mediums who are willing to accept the guidance of the clergy. Spirits who come to Protestants must, in her eyes, of course, be diabolical, and not less so, such as communicate with Catholics who have assumed a Protestant independence of ecclesiastical dictation. The Curé d'Ars was a medium of the accepted class, and figures largely by his portraits and photographs amongst the Catholic saints; the Abbé de Prunoy-sous-Ablis, no doubt, is a medium

of the true Catholic stamp, whom the mischievous spirits have often attempted to annoy at mass in his church; Sœur Collette, patronized by Pio Nono, is in the odour of sanctity; Sœur Pierre de Tours, and Father Dominic, an Italian monk, were the same; as is yet Sœur Patrocínio, so famous for her influence in the Court of Spain. These, and many other instances, are proofs that Mother Church has full faith in both angels and devils being actively at work mediumistically in our day, though she appropriates all the good agents to herself. Another step above the Catholic Church are the Spiritualists, who confess the action of both good and evil, without attempting to monopolize either.

Now all these various believers form what they would be loath to suppose, a complete ladder of faith. Each constitutes a particular rung or step, one a little above the other, from the Magnetist who lies at the bottom, to the Spiritualist at the top, and so whilst each thinks himself a unit, and *the* unit, he is a unit in unity, constituting a scale by which the general reasoner climbs to the summit, where he can comprehend the whole structure. In all that we have hitherto seen, there is but the natural struggle and expression of individual views and biases; that can do little harm, and that lead ultimately to good, but beyond these, there are the great heresies, that are the evil geniuses of the system. The two primal ones are the French heresy of Re-Incarnation, and the American one of Paganism.

France is divided into two great schools, of the Re-Incarnationists, and Anti-Re-Incarnationists. The originator and propagator of the Re-Incarnation theory is M. Rivail, or better known as Allan Kardec. His theory is fully propounded in his *Livre des Esprits*, and is zealously advocated in his *Revue Spirite*. The two sects may be at once recognized, and their writings at once known by Re-Incarnationists calling themselves *Spirites*, and their system, *Spiritisme*. The orthodox believers retain the universal terms of *Spiritualisme* and *Spiritualistes*. As the *Spirites* have their journal, so also the orthodox Spiritualists have theirs, ably conducted by M. Piérart, who never ceases to protest zealously against and vigorously to expose the errors of the Re-Incarnationists.

These believers do not go the length of expecting ever to come back again to earth, as the Hindoos do into the bodies of animals, but merely into those of men and women. They imagine that when people have not made a proper progress in their earthly life, they are sent back like naughty boys and girls at school, and put down once more to the bottom of all classes; a rather odd way of getting forwards, it must be confessed by going backwards. One would have imagined that a God of universal power and resources had sufficient means of correcting and purifying his refractory children in infinite space and infinite

duration, without sending them back again to crowd this little orb. Not so think the *Spirites*: and what they believe, they believe on the teaching of spirits. Kardec's book, which to the *Spirites* is like Joe Smith's new bible to the Mormons, is dictated by spirits, and the sect is continually receiving confirmations of the doctrine from other spirits. When asked for any Scriptural basis for such a doctrine, they point to the fact of Moses and Elias re-appearing, as they are pleased to say, in their bodies on the Mount of Transfiguration, and to Christ's assurance that Elias had been re-incarnated in John the Baptist. Now, the Anti-Re-Incarnationists satisfy themselves with answering that Elias and Moses no doubt appeared in their spiritual bodies, and that John the Baptist was but a re-appearance of a spirit of the same class as that of Elias. That at most, the single re-appearance of Elias in John the Baptist, were this admitted, as a substantial and not a psychical fact, would only support the idea that God, for a rare and special purpose, may re-incarnate a spirit and by no means proves that re-incarnation is an essential and prevalent part of his system of human spiritual education. They profess to look in vain through the Old or the New Testament for any evidences of any such system. That on the contrary, the whole spirit and tendency of Scriptural revelation point onwards to higher and higher progress:—to "the many mansions" which the Father has for the residence and perfecting of his children in the spiritual world. They contend, and I think justly, that the theory of re-incarnation altogether destroys the principle of personal identity, and of the hope of future recognition of mutually attached souls. All those sacred hopes of reunion of friends and relations there are ruthlessly trampled under foot by this theory. They say, if Elias has really been re-incarnated in John the Baptist, then there no longer exists an Elias or a John the Baptist. Either Elias on returning to the spirit world returned to his original form and name, or he remained in the form and name of the Baptist. Either then, on entering that world, we must look in vain for one or the other of these sacred characters. There must be an Elias, and the Baptist must have melted into a memory; or there is a Baptist, and the place of Elias knows him no more.

This is invincible reasoning, and applies to all the spirits of the great and the unknown dead who have gone before us. When these Re-Incarnationists receive professed spirits as Socrates, Fenelon, or Lamennais, how can they believe that there are certainly any longer any such persons? When we shall enter the spirit world, and ask for the sight of those great patriarchs, poets, philosophers, and philanthropists, who have charmed, strengthened, and guided us, if this theory be true, we may

ask for them in vain. We shall be told that there are no longer any such spirits as bore those names. That they have since successively resolved themselves into other personalities on earth, and are but names in heaven. We may be referred to the records of the skies to trace Samson down into some modern boxer; Solomon, with his harem, into Brigham Young, or re-appearing, with his Proverbs, in Martin Tupper. We may ask for Alexander the Great, and get Napoleon Buonaparte; for Solon, and receive him in his most recent mould, as Jeremy Bentham.

There is to us a still more revolting idea presented by this doctrine. If it be true, a fond mother may be caressing on her knee a tender infant whom she lovingly embraces as flesh of her flesh, and spirit of her spirit, whilst it may be actually the re-embodied soul of some hardened old murderer who ought to have been, and probably has been, hanged half a dozen times for his villainies! Brothers and sisters may be living in affectionate intercourse with some thrice-incarnated scamp who has breathed sensual pestilence through society before, and will do it again. Horrible, hateful idea! impossible to God, and intolerable to Man!

But, say the Re-Incarnationists, "We have the most solemn assurances of the truth of this doctrine from the spirits." No doubt of it; and they might receive the same assurances from others that Buddhism, Brahmism, and Mahomedanism, are all the only truth. There is, however, a test of truth in these matters based on the prophecies and the fulfilments of ages, and there is a continual necessity of saying to spirits that deny this sole test, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" But, indeed, there is no accounting for tastes. Surely, any one who had endured the thralldom and inconveniences of this body for one lifetime, must have a strange love of physical slavery who would not say, on an invitation to enter a second body, "No, thank you."

It is highly to the honour of M. Piérart that, in his *Revue Spiritualiste*, he has manfully fought, and most ably reasoned, against this desolating heresy: a heresy which has flown like wildfire over France,—especially over the South,—and won over the great majority of the Spiritualist body. Every friend of spiritual truth must wish him God speed in his war on this nuisance—a delusion that strikes at the roots of all those consoling hopes of recognition in the hereafter which cheer and support us in the present. That hope based on the Gospel, that in the heaven of God we shall once more find ourselves received to the embraces of our beloved ones,—our parents, our brothers and sisters, our children, our lost consorts, our friends, by whose side we have fought the conflicts of time, and trusted to rejoice over our victory through eternity. Rather than believe that

when the invisible becomes the visible, we shall find our dearest ones gone, God can scarcely know whither, through a dozen new metamorphoses, let us believe nothing. But, happily, every day the voices of the departed are crying in our ears,—“Here we are, all unchanged in love, unchanged in identity, unchanged in anything but in the nearer approach to the centre of Love,—the all-embracer and recognizer of all individual attachments.”

Let us now take a glance at the great heresy of American Spiritualism. In France, M. Turreil has endeavoured to build up a system of moral guidance by rejecting all revelation, and making a philosophy of life out of a mixture of Pagan teachings. This he has entitled *Fusionism*; and Fusionism boasts its thousands of adherents.

But Fusionism is by no means the growth of France alone. In America, with certain modifications, it has its apostles. Mr. Hudson Tuttle has recently published a second volume of what he calls *Arcana of Nature, or the Philosophy of Spiritual Existence, &c.* This work is a fair specimen of Fusionism as it exists in America; the object of which is to fuse Materialism, Super-Christianism, and Spiritualism into a new and, as they think, an advanced faith, by proclaiming Matter everything, God himself of course, and spirit only a finer kind of matter. Mr. Tuttle lays down his fundamental principle boldly and frankly in his introduction, p. 14. And to make it more emphatic he puts it into capitals:—“All things which exist are material; without matter nothing exists.” This he calls a “sublime axiom,” and tells us that his volume is based upon it.

This is sufficiently oracular and, indeed the whole book is extremely pretending and dogmatic in its tone: yet, with an assumption of clearness and precision, there is singular confusion in the statements of the volume. As we have seen, everything is declared to be matter, and without matter nothing exists. Yet spirit is constantly presented in antithesis to matter, except in some cases where the relative qualities of spirit and matter appear to be reversed:—“We pause for a moment to review the dogmatic theories the world in its ignorance has entertained. Our task is light, for in reality, it knows little of truth. What can the dark *Materialist* know of spirit? What the so-called *Spiritualist*, who attempts to rob existence of matter?” p. 16. Having delivered himself of this luminous sentence, Mr. Tuttle then expands his self-gratulation into this grandiloquous apostrophe: “Stupendous systems of theology, time-hoary volumes of saints and fathers, we revere you. We recognize the attempts you have made, though they have been abortive. But your day has passed! The present demands a more satisfying system than a childish play on words, the polemics of the schools, the cant

of doctors." True, the age demands it, but does Mr. Tuttle supply this more satisfying system? If spirit be in reality only matter, then of all men the Materialist should be the one to understand it. If the materialist cannot understand it, nor the Spiritualist either, how can the latter rob existence of matter? If spirit be matter, neither the Spiritualist nor any one else can rob existence of it. This certainly does not advance us a step out of "the cant of doctors," but looks as much like that cant as pea to pea.

Having solemnly affirmed, however, that there is nothing but matter in the universe, our author goes on all through his book, talking of spirit not only as existing, but as being especially existent: "The same immortal spirit freed from the body must be the same as it was in the body, with all its emotions and desires the same." p. 39. Now it is the first duty of a philosopher who introduces a new theory, to settle his terminology. Without this he can lead us into nothing but confusion. If he gives new qualities to a substance he should give it a new name. To apply to it a name long used to designate another substance or principle is inextricably to confound it with that substance or principle. Therefore if spirit be matter and nothing more, he should have banished the very word spirit from his nomenclature. If it does not exist, it should not appear to exist. Let us see then, how his last sentence stated according to his own "sublime axiom," will come out:—The immortal matter freed from the body (which is matter) must be the same as it was in the body, that is, the immortal matter freed from matter must be the same as in matter.

"To introduce a true and dignified Rationalism is the prime object of spirits," that is of matters, p. 53. If there be no such thing as spirit, but only matter, there can be no such things as spirits—*ex nihilo nihil fit*. There can, in a universe where matter is everything, and where without matter nothing exists, be nothing clearly but matter, and if portions of it move, they are only moving matters.* Whether the Rationalism introduced by such phraseology is either "true or dignified," can be no dubious question.

"Man is a spirit as much while in the body as out of it, and consequently as far as his corporeal state will permit, governed by the same spiritual laws. From this cause confusion arises, as there is a perfect blending of phenomena at the borders of the two states," p. 61-2. Certainly. If man be not a spirit, but simply matter, he is as much a spirit in the body as out of it, and out of the body as in it, not a spirit at all; and certainly from this kind of language confusion arises and there is a perfect blending of confusions, and we may apply Mr. Tuttle's own terms regarding

electricity at page 109, to this very loose diction: "Of the terms *positive* and *negative*, they may be employed in the arbitrary sense given them, but if understood as representing two fluids, or different states of the same fluid distinct and independent of the cosmical ether, they should be discarded as rather giving the air of philosophy to presumption, than belonging to true science." Mr. Tuttle should discard his terms, and invent new ones, or leave us in possession of our old and sufficiently distinct ideas. His theory to us has "rather the air of presumption, than of true science."

What can be the meaning of the following sentence? "We utterly discard the usual classification of *spiritual* elements which places the imponderable agents with them, or makes them *material* elements. Separated from the realm of the ponderables by the infinite repulsion of the atoms of that ether in and by which they are manifested as effects, they cannot nor must not be employed in philosophical discussion as *material* agents. By so doing, confusion is introduced into the *spiritual* domain, and the idea of introducing broad generalization becomes utterly hopeless. We have endeavoured to shew what a broad generalization covers the field of these agents, and we shall find equally grand ones pervade the truly *spiritual* domain." p. 131.

Now if there be no such thing as spirit—if all be matter, and without matter nothing exists; how can there possibly be a "truly *spiritual* domain?" We have here spirit and matter placed in direct antithesis of the positive assertion as "a sublime axiom," that one of these things does not exist in any part or condition of the universe. Then we have the imponderables classed as *spiritual* agents—that is, according to the author's own positive and sublime theory, as nonentities, as agents, *non agens*; and separated by "an infinite repulsion of atoms" from the realm of ponderables. That is, being matter, they are separated by an infinite repulsion of atoms of an ether, from matter. They are spirit and they are not spirit. Truly, in his own language, the confusion is hopeless.

Again at p. 155: "Spirit and its essence—the mind—evade the scalpel of the dissector; it cannot be examined in the crucible or retort; it is unseen by the eye, unheard by the ear, and is only recognized by its effects. Yet, it must be *material*, or the effect of materiality, for without an adequate cause there can be no effect.

"The phenomenon of physical agents cannot unlock its mysterious domain, and if anything is learned of its nature it must be by studying itself, not by the rushlight of metaphysics, but by the clear light of positive science."

Here we have confusion enough again. Spirit, we are now

told, must be material—and for what reason? Because “without an adequate cause, there can be no effect.” But why should adequate causes exist alone in matter, and be themselves matter? So far as we know of mind, which Mr. Tuttle calls the essence of spirit, it rules over and treats matter at its will. The mind of man dominates over matter whether coarse or pure, whether ponderable or imponderable, far beyond what matter itself, as we know it by properties, can do; and from the Divine and infinite mind we daily see the infinite world of matter ruled, swayed, organized and modelled into a thousand forms, and exhibited in a thousand modes that baffle our profoundest research, our acutest conception. Is it not the grossest of absurdities to say that this Infinite Mind is not an adequate cause for all this; for all and infinitely more than we can comprehend? The nature, mode of existence, mode of operation and essential properties of that mind we can form no adequate idea of. The proudest, noblest, most widely and deeply grasping intellect which ever existed, the combined effect of all such intellects that have ever existed have yet failed, and we are persuaded will yet, and perhaps, to all eternity, fail to comprehend the nature of that mind. We, therefore, give to this unknown, and in this state of being unknowable power, life and essence, the name of spirit; and as spirit such minds as that of Mr. Tuttle had better leave it. It is plainly, as judged by its effects distinct from any property of matter that we know anything, or, perhaps, are likely to know anything of. He says himself, that if “anything is to be learned of its nature, it must be by studying itself:” that when the body dies, it is found to be independent of it. In other words, that it is something wholly distinct from matter; has no recognisable properties of matter; it can neither be seen, nor heard, nor known, but by its effects. Eluding all grasp of matter, then, how is it to be studied? Mr. Tuttle says by clairvoyance. It is true that we there perceive it in a condition of greater freedom—as acting more as an independent agent; yet still it is neither free nor independent. It can range the universe by its faculties; it can put forth a vision almost omniscient; it can perceive what we call spiritual objects; yet it is still bound to the body, and surrounded by its material influences. What we do perceive of its real nature only more really awakens our wonder, by presenting properties more and more distinct from matter, more and more allied to the miracles of thought. Instead of impressing us with a sense of its *material* nature, it impresses us with a sense of its ethereal and incomprehensible character—a character allied to that of the Great Universal Mind, which at once sways all material, and inspires all intellectual worlds. That this is a spiritual substance, omniscient, omnipotent, and inscrutable, has been the

deepest and most settled thought of the deepest and most capacious minds of all ages and countries; and will, no doubt, remain so when the properties of matter through countless ages are all analyzed and become familiar. In this great and eternal fountain of all power and knowledge, we are quite satisfied that there exist adequate causes for all the spiritual and all the material agencies and developments of the universe. In Mr. Tuttle's own words, "the phenomena of physical agents cannot unlock this mysterious domain." Yet, if this agent called spirit was material in its nature, physical phenomena might and would unlock its mysteries.

Throughout this volume there present themselves passages that support this idea, and would appear to have been written by the author before he had arrived at his *material* conclusions; at all events, they are in most salient opposition to them. As: "The propositions which we advance and seek to maintain by the facts classified under the foregoing divisions, are—*Mind can exist independent of the physical body: Mind is referable to the spiritual body.* In their support we bring forward the vast volumes of facts of prevision, prophecy, clairvoyance and magnetism—a force sufficient to crush all opposition." p. 162.

"Mind is an effect of superior causes, and if those causes do not reside in the physical form, there must be some higher source to which it is referable. Back of the external phenomena must be a hidden power; that power is the spiritual nature of man, as incarnated in his spiritual body, to which mind must be referred as an effect." p. 165.

"In the chapter on the origin of spirit, the idea was advanced, and attempted to be sustained, that the spirit possessed a material body." p. 223.

In all these cases the old phraseology, and apparently the old idea, that spirit is something essentially different to matter, is kept up. Following close on the last extract comes this:—"Mind, the essence of the spirit, cannot be detached from spiritual matter." If by spiritual matter the author means spiritual substance, distinct from what we term matter, his idea is our own, but after the positive announcement of his "sublime axiom," that everything is matter, the language, to say the least, is inexact, and the idea is at variance with his grand axiom.

Mr. Tuttle says his sources of information regarding his theory are magnetism and the spirits themselves. I have dealt with the magnetic or clairvoyant source, and as to that of the spirits, let us take the author's own evidence as to its reliability:—"The sources of error are numerous, the channel imperfect, and hence sentences will flow from the medium widely different from those we (the spirits) strive to utter. The higher, purer, and

more intellectual the spirit and the medium, other things being equal, the purer the communication: and the lower and more debased the spirit and the medium, the more inaccurate and disturbed the ideas which will be given. The more elevated the spirit, the better it can control the mind; the lower the spirit, the better it can control the matter." p. 174.

We all know how various and contradictory are the statements of spirits. Those often coming in the highest names of the departed have promulgated very unsound ideas. Spirits of all kinds seek mediums of their own natures and creeds. Nothing is better established in Spiritualism all over the world than the maxim—*qui ressemble s'assemble*. The grand difficulty of Spiritualism is "the trying of the spirits" that present themselves, and on the apostolic principle finding out "whether they be of God." Spirits have taught Mr. Tuttle that everything is matter, and that nothing without matter exists. How does he know that he has got hold of the higher and purer, the more elevated spirits, whatever may be the mediums that he employs? We are quite satisfied that he has not, for this is not the worst thing that he teaches with a great flourish of trumpets and air of positivism. There is a systematic depreciation of Christ and Christianity in his volume. A proclamation of a newer and *higher* revelation. Here are the proofs of it.

"Christianity has taken one step, for it is progressive." After describing the Mosaic dispensation, the author proceeds:—"After a thousand years Christ came, and gathered all the best ideas of the ages, advanced to the outposts of thought and began a new dispensation. Pure as the crystal stream when it flowed from him, we know how vastly it has been corrupted, until it no longer slakes the thirst of the present. Does it teach enough of God, of immortality, of the true life?" p. 48. And Mr. Tuttle proceeds to think that it does not. Why? Because it has been corrupted, and because he thinks it needs explanation, which, he says, no *perfect* revelation does.

Now, in every word of this we take exactly the opposite view. Christ gathered the best ideas of the ages. Where? In the joiner's shop, where we are told he worked and obeyed all the commands of his nominal father, till he commenced his great mission at thirty years of age? Such places are not the schools in which the best ideas of the ages are gathered. Those ideas Christ, who we are told was with God and was God before the world began, brought with Him. His doctrines have been corrupted. Where? In the world and in artificial churches, but not in the Gospel itself. There they exist as pure and as vital as ever to those who accept Him; and the simple and great basis of them—love—love to God and to your neighbour needs

no glosses or explanations. They are so clear that he that runs may read. But there are discords and wranglings in the world. Why? Because men do not choose to adopt the Divine law of love and union. Is Mr. Tuttle sure that Spiritualism will need no explanations? Here he and I are at issue at once on some of its dictations. Will Spiritualism, or any other ism, put an end in this world to discord and wranglings? God send that it may, but I have no such hope. America, where it so largely prevails, with its most frightful of all brotherly wars, shows no sign of it. But let us proceed.

“While a resident on earth (one of Mr. Tuttle’s spirits *loquitur*), I was indoctrinated in the religious absurdities which prevail in that sphere. I was taught to believe in a personal God and devil, one having supreme control over heaven, and the other over hell: *and still more absurd the mission of Christ*. He came not, as I supposed, to forgive sins, but as a reformer, to point the way.” p. 191.

Now, if Christ’s mission was a true mission, which the author admits, then this spirit was undoubtedly a lying spirit, for nothing is more clearly or repeatedly asserted in the Gospels and by Christ himself than that he came to forgive sins; and not merely as a reformer to point the way to heaven, but to diffuse through the human soul that lost life and power by which men *could* follow. “I am the Way, the Truth, and the *Life*, and no man cometh to the Father but through Me.” It is Christ who, according to his own most solemn assurance, not only *points* the way, but *is* the way, and who alone has the power to raise man at the last day. “He who believes on Me shall never die. I will raise him up at the last day.” This class of Sophists, these Fusionists, must either renounce the Gospel or accept it. If they accept it, they must accept its most solemn averments. If this be true then, there can be no higher revelation than that of Christ—no man or system can go beyond Him, because He is the Way, the Truth, the Life. He is the Saviour, the preserver and the raiser up of the human soul; and without Him the path of eternal progress, the highway to the astral throne of Divinity, is barred up.

But Mr. Tuttle’s spirits tell us that “We are more philanthropic than man. Many there are who adopt the transcendental precept, ‘Do unto others as you would have others do unto you;’ and not only that, but a still higher, DO ALL FOR OTHERS, thus eradicating every vestige of selfishness.” p. 253.

By man here is meant Christ, who is classed with Zoroaster, Confucius, Mahomet, and the like: but it is not necessary to expose the miserable sophism of a *higher* law than that of Christ, “Love your neighbour as yourself.” If you do that you will do

all that is possible for him. Eighteen hundred years have elapsed without our having arrived at *that* point. Christ gave in His life the true meaning of His doctrine. He lived and died for the good of mankind. It is impossible to conceive a higher standard of conduct. If Mr. Tuttle's spirits have such a standard let one of them incarnate himself as Christ did, and shew it visibly and practically on earth. Let him take upon him all the pains and penalties of his doctrine bodily, and if he cannot demonstrate a higher standard of philanthropy than that of Christ, which is impossible, we will at least confess that he is sincere. Till then we shall prefer adhering to the revelation of Jesus Christ, heralded by ages of prophets, attested by the most glorious and humane miracles, and followed by more civilizing and ameliorating influences than any other theologic and moral system ever has been, or is ever likely to be. In our opinion the true mission of Spiritualism, and it is a great and magnificent mission, is to recall to the knowledge and restore to the consciousness of mankind the Christian faith, with all its Divine and supernatural power. Spiritualism has not yet revealed any truth that is not existent in the Gospels, nor is it likely to do so. Its business is to exhibit the reality of its connection with God and his angels, with the life and spirit of the Divine world, and to open our earth-dimmed eyes to perceive all the wealth of celestial wisdom in the Christian revelation.

It is precisely these infidel sophisms, this "*facilis descensus Avernus*," of Materialism which a Pagan class of spirits are teaching, that is calculated to form the most fatal obstruction to Spiritualism itself. This is almost the only just accusation brought by its enemies against it, that it is Materialistic and is seeking to undermine the Gospel truth. These are "the seducing spirits teaching doctrines of devils" that the apostle warns us of; and it behoves the English Spiritualists to speak out plainly, and to disavow and denounce all such spurious, foolish, and delusive teachings. Thank God that the first-class calibre of American mind—that of the Edmonds, Hares and the like, stands nobly for the Christian faith: and that the English Spiritualists generally have been too clear sighted to be imposed on by such shallow and illogical spirits. It is the duty of every man not to be dictated to by the spirits, but to hear and judge their communications by the same principle of common sense, that he judges of the statements of his neighbours in the flesh. Satisfied that no system besides Christianity has the same guarantees of long-continued prophecy, of its fulfilment through the ages, and of substantial and nobler principles of life, he will reject all spiritual infiltrations that are opposed to it, and he will soon find all such spirits shrink away and bestow their flimsy pomposities

of spurious philosophy on minds opened by self conceit and weakness of judgment to receive them. With such tinsel and over-strained pretences of intellectual acumen and philanthropic fire the French Revolution began, and ended in something even worse than the worst corruptions of Christianity, in an ocean of fratricidal gore and a hell of cruelty and atrocious crime. The only test of genuine manifestations from the Divine source is their conformity to the dictates of the only religion which has historic evidences coeval with man, and the moral principles on which all human civilization is based.

THE POLYTECHNIC GHOST, AND MR. PEPPER.

THIS interesting exhibition, which in spite of its mechanical attractions, would not have had so long a run with the public, but for the prevailing belief and fear of the realities which it travesties, has been throughout accompanied and illustrated by a lecture written for the occasion. The lecturer has had some phrases put into his mouth, for the benefit of the orthodox public, and which he has given out with manifest gusto, inveighing against "the wicked and blasphemous imposture of spirit-rapping." These have always been received with applause and other loud signs of approval. It happened two or three weeks ago, that a gentleman, one of the audience, remained after the performance, introduced himself to the lecturer by asking him if he knew anything of the so-called spirit-rapping, and on receiving the answer that he did not, the gentleman told him that it was too bad to introduce his ignorance in such terms before a public audience, and that he felt himself insulted by such remarks. He insisted as a penalty that the lecturer should forthwith put himself in the way of acquiring some positive knowledge on the point, and he proposed to take him and another of the officials to Mrs. Marshall's. A cab was called, and the three drove off at once to Mrs. Marshall's, and there the foolishness of the lecturer was confounded, and the two were obliged to acknowledge that the publicly-alleged imposture was no imposture at all, but a very wonderful and undoubted fact. The three drove back to the Polytechnic, and they were introduced to Mr. Pepper, who was informed by his officials of the perfect cure which had been so speedily performed upon them. Mr. Pepper was also invited to undergo a similar experience, but he excused himself by saying that he did not wish to be convinced. On being remonstrated with for the impropriety of the lecture, he promised that the false statements should not be repeated, and we hope that this promise may be kept.

Mr. Pepper has been very fortunate with his patent ghost, not only before the public, but before the law courts where his patent was assailed. We say fortunate, because we have some doubts of his patent being a good one, for want of novelty. We have met with an exact description of the alleged Dircks and Pepper invention in an old magazine, which seems to cover the whole ground. At page 266 of the *Universal Magazine* for June, 1749, is the following statement:—

A Method of making the Picture of anything appear in a Light Room, by DR. HOOK.

Make a hole of about a foot in diameter, or bigger, opposite to the place, or wall, where you design the picture; without this hole place the object you would represent, in an inverted position, and by means of looking-glasses set behind it, if the object be transparent, reflect the rays of the sun, in such a manner, that they may pass through it towards the place where it is to be represented, and let it be surrounded on every side with a board or cloth, that no rays may pass beside it; if the object be a statue, or living creature, it must be very much enlightened, by throwing the sun-beams upon it by refraction, reflexion, or both: then place a broad convex-glass between the object, and where it is to be represented, that the picture may be formed distinct; the nearer its situation is to the object, the more is the picture magnified on the wall; and the further off, the less: if the object cannot be inverted, as is the case in living animals, and candles; then let two large glasses of convenient spheres be so posited at proper distances, to be found out by trials; that the representations may be as erect, as the object themselves.

The several objects, the reflecting and refracting glasses, and the whole apparatus, as also the persons employed in managing them, must be placed without the hole, so as not to be observed by the spectators in the room.

The same thing may be done with much more ease in the night time, with torches, lamps, or other lights planted about the objects.

SPIRITUALISM IN BIOGRAPHY:—WILLIAM BLAKE.

THE conjunction of the spiritual with the natural, or, in other words, the outflow from the invisible into the visible realm of being, and the co-ordinate activity of both, form a principle of far-reaching application, and one which, if fairly grasped and followed out, would help to clear up many obscurities in what is called the philosophy of the human mind.

It may, for instance, be fairly concluded that those who are gifted with genius, or who attain a high degree of excellence in some special department of human thought and activity—literature, art, science, philosophy, theology;—owe much of their force of character and their success, not alone to original endowment of faculty and natural fitness, improved, perhaps, by culture, but also to this further fact, that they thence, by law of spiritual affinity, come into correspondence and association with those of like quality to themselves in the spiritual realms of being; becoming, as it were, the matrices into which ideas and images flow and take form. Not that they are mere automata, but that

being thus, to conscious perception, in greater nearness—in more direct *rapport* with the higher world of thought and beauty, while their labours take form and colour from the capacities, qualities, habits, and uses of the human instrument; these, in their inception and substance, are due to that surrounding world of spirit-life, whence all great and noble thoughts—all truth and beauty, however variously expressed, have their outbirth.

“When all goes well with me,” said Mozart, “when I am in a carriage, or walking, or when I cannot sleep at night, then thoughts come streaming in upon me most fluently; whence, or how, is more than I can tell. Then follow the counterpoint, and clang of the different instruments; and, if I am not disturbed, my soul is fixed, and the thing grows greater and broader, and clearer; and I have it all in my head, even when the piece is a long one; and I *see it* like a beautiful picture, not hearing the different parts in succession as they must be played, but *the whole at once*. That is the delight! The composing and making is like a beautiful and vivid dream; but this *hearing* of it is the best of all.”

No wonder that men of genius who are true to their great gifts, who retain their simplicity of character and singleness of heart uncorrupted by worldly and selfish aims, are often the subjects of experiences which seem to the many a more fit theme for derision than acceptance or argument, that they are unintelligible or misunderstood,—their highest verities being “illusions,” and their most sober statements of their own experience, “extravagancies and superstitions.” Socrates and Swedenborg have been called madmen by those who rank among the *savans*.

The owls and bats in full assembly find,
On strictest search, the keen-eyed eagle—blind.

“I am convinced,” says Meister in his *Lettres sur l'Imagination*, “that devotees, lovers, would-be-prophets, illuminati, Swedenborgians, are all indebted to illusions for their miracles, their presentiments, their visions, their prophecies, their intercourse with angelic beings, and their visits to heaven and to hell; in a word, for all the extravagancies and superstitions of their contagious reveries. At the same time I have no hesitation in declaring that, under the same circumstances, men of genius have conceived the greatest beauties and most original portion of their writings; that the geometrician has discovered the long sought for solution of his problem; the metaphysician constructed the most ingenious of his theories; the poet been inspired with his most affecting verses; the musician with his most expressive and brilliant passages; the statesman with expedients that all his experience had failed to discover; and the general of an army

with that comprehensive glance which decides the battle, and secures for him the victory!" Wonderful indeed!

It is somewhat singular that the two most remarkable "visionaries" of modern times should have been contemporaries,—living here in London at the close of the last century;—the one, "a placid, venerable, thin man of eighty-four, of erect figure and abstracted air, wearing a full-bottomed wig, a pair of long ruffles, and a curious hilted sword, and carrying a gold-headed cane," we have already named—Emanuel Swedenborg;—the other, at that time an engraver's apprentice, is the subject of the present sketch—the spirit-seer and artist—William Blake.

William Blake, the son of a London hosier, was born at 28, Broad Street, Carnaby Market, November 28th, 1757. All his knowledge beyond reading and writing was evidently self-acquired. London at that time was not the "huge wen," to use Cobbett's phrase, which it has since become, and the boy Blake was able to take those country rambles of which he was so fond, and which stored his mind with life-long pastoral images. It was on one of these excursions on Peckham Rye, by Dulwich Hill, as in after years he used to relate, while quite a child of eight or ten, perhaps, that he had his first vision. Sauntering along, he looked up, and saw a tree filled with angels, bright angelic wings bespangling every bough like stars. Returning home, he told the incident, and only through his mother's intercession escaped a thrashing from his honest father for telling a lie. Another time, one summer morn, he saw the haymakers at work, and amid them angelic figures walking.

At first, the idea of Blake's father was to bring his son up for his own business, but this soon had to be relinquished. The figures of Raphael were more attractive to the boy than those of Cocker: he drew designs on the backs of all the shop bills, and made sketches on the counter. At ten years of age he became an artist, and at twelve, a poet. Scraps of paper and the blank leaves of books he covered with groups and stanzas. The preliminary charges of launching him in the career of a painter being too onerous for the paternal pocket, it was decided that he should learn the collateral art of engraving, and at the age of fourteen he was bound apprentice to Mr. Basire, an engraver in Lincoln's Inn Fields. There had been an intention of apprenticing him to Mr. Ryland, a man of greater talent and fame than Basire. Blake was taken by his father to Ryland; but the negotiations failed in a singular way, which Mr. Gilchrist thus relates:—

"The boy himself raised an unexpected scruple. The sequel shows it to have been a singular instance—if not of absolute prophetic gift or second-sight—at all events of natural intuition

into character and power of forecasting the future from it, such as is often the endowment of temperaments like his. In after life this involuntary faculty of reading hidden writing continued to be a characteristic. 'Father,' said the strange boy, after the two had left Ryland's studio, 'I do not like the man's face: *it looks as if he will live to be hanged!*' Appearances were at that time utterly against the probability of such an event. Ryland was then at the zenith of his reputation. He was engraver to the king, whose portrait he had engraved, receiving for his work an annual pension of £200. An accomplished and agreeable man, he was the friend of poet Churchill and others of distinguished rank in letters and society. His manners and personal appearance were peculiarly prepossessing, winning the spontaneous confidence of those who knew or even casually saw him. But, twelve years after this interview, the unfortunate artist will have got into embarrassments, will commit a forgery on the East India Company:—and the prophecy will be fulfilled."

Among other employment, Blake was sent into Westminster Abbey and various old churches in and near London, to make drawings from the monuments and buildings. Basire was employed to engrave. To this work he devoted himself with great enthusiasm, and it exercised a beneficial and lasting influence on his habits of feeling and study. "Shut up alone with these solemn memorials of far-off centuries—for, during service and in the intervals of visits from strangers, the vergers turned the key on him,—the Spirit of the Past became his familiar companion. Sometimes his dreaming eye saw more palpable shapes from the phantom past: once a vision of "Christ and the Apostles," as he used to tell; and I doubt not, others. For as we have seen, the visionary tendency, or faculty, as Blake more truly called it, had early shown itself."

During his apprenticeship the Muses, too, were not neglected; he composed a number of poetical pieces, among which was a dramatic poem. John Flaxman, a judge in all things of a poetic nature, was so touched with many passages, that he not only counselled their publication, but joined with a gentleman of the name of Matthews in the expense, and presented the printed sheets to the author to dispose of for his own advantage.

But Blake did not suffer the engraver to be merged in the poet. On the contrary, he was careful to attain proficiency in his art. He served his master faithfully, and studied occasionally under Flaxman and Fuseli. Yet withal, his views were too unworldly to make it probable that he was on the right road to wealth or vulgar fame. "Were I to love money," said he, "I should lose all power of thought; desire of gain deadens the genius of man. My business is not to gather gold, but to make

glorious shapes expressing godlike sentiments." His days were devoted to engraving, which afforded him a respectable livelihood; and his evenings to making designs and paintings, and illustrating these with fitting verse-accompaniments.

At the age of six-and-twenty, he married Catherine Boucher, a young woman of humble connections, who lived near his father's house. If Blake had hitherto displayed his disinterestedness, in his pursuit of art for its own sake, and for the sufficient blessing which the active contemplation of its mere truth and beauty brought him; it was to be expected that the same spirit would, in some degree, live and shine in all his relations with the world; and would especially come forth under the circumstances of his new position, as a lover and a husband. In the widest sense, he was an artist here; and his courtship, and marriage, and married life, are a series of living designs, beautiful, picturesque, and unaffected. He was describing one evening, in company, the wrongs he had endured from some capricious fair one, when his listener, a dark-eyed generous-hearted girl, said to him, "From my soul I pity you." "Do you pity me?" said Blake." "Yes; I do most sincerely." "Then I love you for that." "Well, and I love you," she responded; and this was the beginning of their courtship.

Their married life was in all respects a happy one. Mr. Gilchrist says of Mrs. Blake—"Catherine was endowed with a loving loyal nature, an adaptive open mind, capable of profiting by good teaching, and of enabling her, under constant high influence, to become a meet companion to her imaginative husband in his solitary and wayward course. Uncomplainingly and helpfully she shared the low and rugged fortunes which over-originality insured as his unvarying lot in life. She had mind and the ambition which follows. Not only did she prove a good housewife on straitened means, but in after years, under his tuition and hourly companionship, she acquired, besides the useful arts of reading and writing, that which very few uneducated women with the honestest effort ever succeed in attaining: some footing of equality with her husband. She, in time, came to work off his engravings, as though she had been bred to the trade; nay, imbibed enough of his very spirit to reflect it in designs, which might almost have been his own."

In 1787, the artist's peaceful happiness was gravely disturbed by the premature death of his beloved brother. Blake affectionately tended him in his illness, and during the last fortnight of it watched continuously day and night by his bedside, without sleep. When all claim had ceased with that brother's last breath, his own exhaustion showed itself in an unbroken sleep of three days and nights duration. "The mean

room of sickness had been to the spiritual man, as to him most scenes were, a place of vision and of revelation; for Heaven lay about him still in manhood, as in infancy it 'lies about us' all. At the last solemn moment the visionary eyes beheld the released spirit ascend heavenwards through the matter-of-fact ceiling, 'clapping its hands for joy'—a truly Blake-like detail. No wonder he could paint such scenes! With him they were work's day experiences."

But though his brother had ceased to be with him in the body—in hours of solitude and inspiration, his form would appear and speak to the poet in consolatory dreams—in warning or helpful vision. Of this helpfulness, Mr. Gilchrist relates the following anecdote:—Blake was desirous of publishing a series of his designs and poems, but he had neither money nor credit; and though he could be his own engraver, he could scarcely be his own compositor. How could he be his own printer and publisher? This many a day was the subject of his anxious but unavailing thought. His departed pupil and brother solved the problem for him. "In a vision of the night, the form of Robert stood before him, and revealed the wished-for secret, directing him to the technical mode by which could be produced a fac-simile of song and design. On his rising in the morning, Mrs. Blake went out with half-a-crown, all the money they had in the world, and of that laid out 1s. 10d. on the simple materials necessary for setting in practice the new revelation. Upon that investment of 1s. 10d. he started what was to prove a principal means of support through his future life,—the series of poems and writings illustrated by coloured plates, often highly finished afterwards by hand,—which became the most efficient and durable means of revealing Blake's genius to the world. This method, to which Blake henceforth consistently adhered for multiplying his works, was quite an original one."*

This little volume, the writing, designing, printing, engraving, colouring, and binding of which was all the work of his own hands, assisted by his wife, was the *Songs of Innocence*, to which, five years later, was added the *Songs of Experience*, as completing the series. The *Songs of Innocence and Experience* consist of

* Allan Cunningham's account of the matter is this:—"He was meditating, he said, on the best means of multiplying the sixty-five designs of his *Songs of Innocence*, and felt sorely perplexed. At last he was made aware that the spirit of his favourite brother Robert was in the room. To him he applied for counsel; the celestial visitor advised him at once. 'Write,' he said, 'the poetry, and draw the designs upon the copper with a certain liquid,' (which he named, and which Blake ever kept secret,) 'then cut the plain parts down with aquafortis, and this will give the whole, both poetry and figures, in the manner of a stereotype.' The plan recommended by this gracious spirit was adopted."

from sixty-five to seventy scenes, presenting images of domestic sadness and fireside joy, the gaiety, innocence, and happiness of childhood. Every scene has its poetical accompaniment, curiously interwoven with the group or landscape, the design and poem forming warp and woof in one texture, so that to divorce them "is like pulling up a daisy by the roots from the green sward out of which it springs." "As he drew the figure, he meditated the song which was to accompany it, and the music to which the verse was to be sung, were the offspring too of the same moment." Blake tinted both the figures and the verse with a variety of colours which, while pure and delicate, gave the whole a rich and lustrous beauty; the mere tinting of the text and border often makes a refined picture. His method of colouring, says Cunningham, "was revealed, too, in vision, and he believed himself bound in honour to conceal it from the world."

Wordsworth affirmed that to him these poems "were more significant than the works of many a famous poet." Blake's biographer says:—"To me many years ago, first reading these weird Songs in their appropriate environment of equally spiritual form and hue, the effect was as that of an angelic voice singing to oaten pipe, such as Arcadians tell of; or, as if a spiritual magician were summoning before human eyes, and through a human medium, images and scenes of divine loveliness; and in the pauses of the strain, we seem to catch the rustling of angelic wings. The Golden Age independent of Space or Time, object of vague sighs and dreams from many generations of struggling humanity—an Eden such as childhood sees, is brought nearer than ever poet brought it before."

Dr. Wilkinson, in the preface to an edition of the *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, which his brother, Mr. W. M. Wilkinson, published in 1839, says of them:—"They are remarkable for the transparent depth of thought which constitutes true simplicity—they give us glimpses of all that is holiest in the childhood of the world and the individual—they abound with the sweetest touches of that pastoral life, by which the Golden Age may be still visibly represented to the iron one—they delineate full-orbed age, ripe with the seeds of a second infancy, which is 'the Kingdom of Heaven.' The latter half of the volume, comprising the *Songs of Experience*, consists, it is true, of darker themes; but they, too, are well and wonderfully sung; and ought to be preserved, because in contrastive connection with the *Songs of Innocence*, they do convey a powerful impression of 'the two contrary states of the human soul.'"

In this same year, 1789, Blake published the *Book of Thel*, a strange mystical allegory, full of tender beauty and enigmatic meaning. Thel, youngest of "the daughters of the Seraphim,"

(probably intended as a personification of humanity), is afflicted with scepticism, with forebodings of life's vanity and nothingness. The following lines from this poem are probably no inapt description of the on-goings of the author's mind at the time:—

The eternal gates' terrific porter, lifted the northern bar;
Thel entered in, and saw the secrets of the land unknown:
She saw the couches of the dead, and where the fibrous root
Of every heart on earth, infixes deep its restless twists:
A land of sorrows and of tears where never smile was seen.
She wander'd in the land of clouds, thro' valleys dark, list'ning
Dolors and lamentations; waiting oft beside a dewy grave
She stood in silence, list'ning to the voices of the ground.

The effect of the whole, poem and design together, is as of a wise, wondrous spiritual dream, or angel's reverie.

Thel was followed in 1790 by a still more mystical poem:—*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, an engraved volume, illustrated in colour, the most daring in conception, and gorgeous in illustration of all Blake's works. As the title dimly suggests, it is an attempt to sound the depths of the mystery of evil; to take a stand out of and beyond humanity, and view it, not in its relation to man here and now, but to the eternal purposes of God. The book has also five distinct, but kindred, prose compositions, each entitled *A Memorable Fancy*. I give a short quotation from one that the reader may compare it with the *Memorable Relations* of Swedenborg.

I was in a printing-house in hell, and saw the method in which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation.

In the first chamber was a dragon-man, clearing away the rubbish from a cave's mouth; within, a number of dragons were hollowing the cave.

In the second chamber was a viper folding round the rock and the cave, and others adorning it with gold, silver, and precious stones.

In the third chamber was an eagle with wings and feathers of air; he caused the inside of the cave to be infinite. Around were numbers of eagle-like men, who built palaces in the immense cliffs.

In the fourth chamber were lions of flaming fire raging around and melting the metals into living fluids.

In the fifth chamber were unnamed forms, which cast the metals into the expanse.

There they were received by men who occupied the sixth chamber, and took the forms of books, and were arranged in libraries.

In 1793, Blake published "a singularly beautiful and characteristic volume, pre-eminently marked by significance and simplicity," containing seventeen plates of emblems, accompanied by verse, with a title or motto to each plate. Its title is, *The Gates of Paradise*, and the verses at the commencement, embodying an ever-recurrent canon of Blake's theology, elucidate the main intention of the work.

Mutual forgiveness of each vice,
Such are the Gates of Paradise,
Against the Accuser's chief desire,
Who walked among the stones of fire.

Jehovah's fingers wrote The Law :
 He wept ! then rose in zeal and awe,
 And in the midst of Sinai's heat,
 Hid it beneath His Mercy Seat.
 O Christians ! Christians ! tell me why
 You rear it on your altars high ?

“ What is man ? ”—the frontispiece significantly inquires.

Other books followed in quick succession : *Visions of the Daughters of Albion, America, Europe, Urizen, The Song of Los, Ahania, Jerusalem, Milton.*

Blake's biographer urges very truly that “ It is hard to describe poems wherein the *dramatis personæ* are giant shadows, gloomy phantoms—the *scene*, the realms of space ; the *time* of such corresponding vastness, that eighteen hundred years pass as a dream. And yet, though the natural impulse is to close such a book in despair, we can testify to the reader, that were it his lot, as it has been ours, to read and re-read many times this (the *Europe*), and other of the prophetic volumes, he would do so with a deepening conviction that their incoherence has a grandeur about it, as that of a man whose eyes are fixed on strange and awful sights invisible to bystanders ; to use an expression of Blake's own on a subsequent occasion, it is as if the ‘ visions were angry, ’ and hurried in stormy disorder before his rapt gaze, no longer to bless and teach, but to bewilder and confound.” A similar judgment is passed by Cunningham on the *Urizen* : he says, “ It is not a little fearful to look upon : a powerful, dark, terrible, though undefined and indescribable impression is left by it on the mind, and is in no haste to be gone.”

And yet these poems contain many passages, not only of grandeur and sublimity, but of clearness, simplicity, and beauty, as well as of fervid devotion. This is from the *Jerusalem* :—

Trembling I sit, day and night. My friends are astonisht at me :
 Yet they forgive my wand'rings. I rest not from my great task :
 To open the eternal worlds ! To open the immortal eyes
 Of man inwards ; into the worlds of thought : into eternity
 Ever expanding in the bosom of God, the human imagination.
 O Saviour ! pour upon me thy spirit of meekness and love.
 Annihilate selfhood in me ! Be thou all my life !
 Guide thou my hand, which trembles exceedingly, upon the Rock of Ages :
 While I write.

The following passage describing Golgonooza, the “ Spiritual four-fold London,” shews that Blake, sometimes at least, wrote according to Spiritual correspondencies, and perhaps, were these strange poems studied with this in view, they might not be quite so obscure to the reflective reader as they confessedly are at present.

Lo !

The stones are pity, and the bricks well-wrought affections,
 Enamelled with love and kindness ; and the tiles, engraven gold,

Labour of merciful hands : the beams and rafters are forgiveness :
 The mortar and cement of the work, tears of honesty : the nails
 And the screws and iron braces are well-wrought blandishments,
 And well-contrived words ; firm fixing never forgotten,
 Always comforting the remembrance : the floors humility :
 The ceilings devotion : the hearths thanksgiving.

This poem contains a song *To the Jews*, from which I take the following verses Personifying Jerusalem, Blake sings of her:—

She walks upon our meadows green,
 The Lamb of God walks by her side,
 And every English child is seen,
 Children of Jesus and His Bride.

* * * * *

The Rhine was red with human blood,
 The Danube roll'd a purple tide,
 On the Euphrates Satan stood
 And over Asia stretch'd his pride.

He wither'd up sweet Zion's hill
 From every nation of the earth,
 He wither'd up Jerusalem's gates,
 And in a dark land gave her birth.

He wither'd up the human form
 By laws of sacrifice for sin,
 Till it became a mortal worm,
 But, O ! translucent all within.

The Divine Vision still was seen,
 Still was the human form divine ;
 Weeping, in weak and mortal clay,
 O Jesus ! still the form was Thine !

And Thine the human face ; and Thine
 The human hands, and feet, and breath,
 Entering through the gates of birth
 And passing through the gates of death.

And, O ! Thou Lamb of God ! whom I
 Slew in my dark, self-righteous pride,
 Art Thou return'd to Albion's land ?
 And is Jerusalem Thy Bride ?

Come to my arms, and never more
 Depart, but dwell for ever here ;
 Create my spirit to Thy love,
 Subdue my spectre to Thy fear.

The poem *Milton* is very like the Jerusalem in style : it would seem, in fact, to be a sort of continuation : an idea borne out by the verses in which its singular preface concludes :—

And did those feet in ancient time
 Walk upon England's mountain green ?
 And was the holy Lamb of God
 On England's pleasant pastures seen ?

And did the countenance Divine
 Shine forth upon our clouded hills ?
 And was Jerusalem builded here
 Among these dark Satanic hills ?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
 Bring me my arrows of desire!
 Bring me my spear: O clouds, unfold!
 Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight,
 Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
 Till we have built Jerusalem
 In England's green and pleasant land.

"Would to God that all the Lord's people were prophets!"—NUMBERS ii. 29.

The pictorial illustrations to these books are as weird, mystic, and symbolical as the poems themselves. Thus, in the *Jerusalem*—“Female figures lie among waves full of reflected stars: a strange human image, with a swan's head and wings, floats on water in a kneeling attitude, and drinks: lovers embrace in an open water-lily: an eagle-headed creature sits and contemplates the sun: serpent-women are coiled with serpents: Assyrian-looking human-visaged bulls are seen yoked to the plough or the chariot: rocks swallow or vomit forth human forms, or appear to amalgamate with them: angels cross each other over wheels of flame: and flames and hurrying figures writhe and wind among the lines. Here and there some more familiar theme meets us,—the creation of Eve, or the Crucifixion; and then the thread is lost again. The whole spirit of the designs might seem well symbolized in one of the finest among them, where we see a triple-headed and triple-crowned figure embedded in rocks, from whose breast is bursting a string of youths, each in turn born from the other's breast in one sinuous throe of mingled life, while the life of suns and planets dies and is born and rushes together around them.”

In 1800 Blake, at the invitation of Hayley, the biographer of Cowper, removed from his humble residence in London to a pretty cottage by the sea at Felpham. He spent here four of the happiest years of his life. By the sea shore and in the seclusion of the country “he forgot the present moment, and lived in the past; he conceived, verily, that he had lived in other days, and had formed friendships with Homer and Moses; with Pindar and Virgil; with Dante and Milton. These great men, he asserted, appeared to him in visions, and even entered into conversation. Milton, in a moment of confidence, entrusted him with a whole poem of his, which the world had never seen, but unfortunately the communication was oral, and the poetry seemed to have lost much of its brightness in Blake's recitation. When asked about the looks of those visions, he answered, ‘They are all majestic shadows, gray but luminous, and superior to the common height of men.’ His wife often accompanied him to these interviews; she saw nothing and heard as little, but she was certain that her husband both heard and saw.”

His residence at Felpham, under Hayley's protection, might have proved a turning point in his life. Had he complied with Hayley's wishes, and set himself as a miniature painter to please patrons, he might have climbed to fortune and fame. It was a "Choice of Hercules," for him once again. But he had made *his* choice in boyhood, and he adhered to it in age. He felt a longer stay at Felpham would be perilous to "that vision and faculty divine" which he prized above all earthly things. He feared to become a trader in art, and that the visions would forsake him. He even began to think they *were* forsaking him. "The visions were angry with me at Felpham," he would afterwards say; and so, in 1804, he returned to familiar London, where he passed the remainder of his days.

In 1808 Blake produced his popular *Illustrations to Blair's Grave*. Mr. Gilchrist says of them:—

The Series in itself forms a poem, simple, beautiful, and exalted: what tender eloquence in *The Soul hovering over the Body*; in the passionate ecstasy of *The Re-union of Soul and Body*; the rapt felicity of mutual recognition in *The Meeting of a Family in Heaven*. There meet husband and wife, little brothers and sisters; two angels spread a canopy of loving wings over the group, one remarkable for surpassing sculpturesque beauty. Such designs are, in motive, spirit; manner of embodiment, without parallel, and enlarge the boundaries of art. Equally high meaning has the oft-mentioned allegory, *Death's Door*, into which "Age on crutches is hurried by a tempest," while above sits a youthful figure, "the renovated man in light and glory," looking upwards in joyful adoration and awe. And again, the *Death of the Strong Wicked Man*: the still fond wife hanging over the convulsed body, in wild, horror-struck sympathy, the terrified daughter standing beside, with one hand shutting out the scene from her eyes; while the wicked soul is hurried amid flames through the casement. What unearthly surprise and awe expressed in that terrible face, those uplifted deprecating hands! *The Last Judgment*, unlike the other designs, is a subject on which great artists had already lavished imagination and executive skill. But Blake's conception of it is an original and homogeneous one, worthy of the best times of art. What other painter since Michael Angelo could have really designed anew that tremendous scene? . . .

Now, in maturity, as when in youth producing the *Songs of Innocence*, or in age the *Inventions to Job*, we see Blake striking always the same mystic chord. The bridge thrown across from the visible to the invisible world was ever firm and sure to him. The unwavering hold (of which his "Visions" were a result) upon an unseen world, such as in other ways poetry and even science assure us of, and whose revelation is the meaning underlying all religions,—this habitual hold is surely an authentic attainment, *not* an hallucination; whether the particular form in which the faith clothes itself, the *language* of Blake's mind,—souls entering and departing from material forms, angels hovering near poor human creatures, and the like emblems, be adequate or not. In such intensity as Blake's, it was truly a blissful possession; it proved enchanted armour against the world, the flesh, and the devil, and all their sordid influences.

The *Last Judgment* was enlarged by Blake, and repeated as a fresco, into which he introduced some thousand figures, bestowing much finish and splendour of tint on it. He also furnished an elaborate explanation of the design.

In 1809 Blake exhibited his principal works to the public; these he illustrated by a catalogue, as unique in its way as the

works themselves. Two pictures entitled "The Spiritual Forms of Nelson and of Pitt," he thus refers to:—

These two pictures are compositions of a mythological cast, similar to those Apotheoses of Persian, Hindoo, and Egyptian antiquity, which are still preserved in rude monuments, being copies from some stupendous originals, now lost, or perhaps buried to some happier age. The artist having been taken, in vision, to the ancient republics, monarchies, and patriarchates of Asia, has seen those wonderful originals, called in the sacred Scriptures the cherubim, which were painted and sculptured on the walls of temples, towns, cities, palaces, and erected in the highly cultivated states of Egypt, Moab, and Edom, among the rivers of Paradise, being originals from which the Greeks and Etrurians copied Hercules, Venus, Apollo, and all the ground-works of ancient art. They were executed in a very superior style to those justly admired copies, being, with their accompaniments, terrific and grand in the highest degree. The artist has endeavoured to emulate the grandeur of those seen in his vision, and to apply it to modern times on a smaller scale. The Greek Muses are daughters of memory, and not of inspiration or imagination, and therefore not authors of such sublime conceptions. Some of these wonderful originals were one hundred feet in height; some were painted as pictures, some were carved as bas-relievos, and some as groups of statues, all containing mythological and recondite meaning.

Having to design and engrave a series of illustrations to the *Divina Comedia*, with characteristic fervour and activity of intellect, Blake at sixty-seven years of age, applied himself to Italian, in order to read Dante in the original.

In 1823 he produced twenty-one *Illustrations to the Book of Job*, the most original and characteristic of all his productions. Mr. Gilchrist has reproduced them in photo-lithographic fac-simile. Such a representation of utter desolation, of misery and despair, unique and terrible as his "Let the Day perish wherein I was Born," was surely never given before or since. Cunningham says of this series:—"It was in such things that Blake shone; the Scriptures overawed his imagination, and he was too devout to attempt more than a literal embodying of the majestic scene. He goes step by step with the narrative; always simple, often sublime—never wandering from the subject, nor overlaying it with his own exuberant fancy."

The term "Inventions," by which Blake designated this series, might with peculiar force be applied to all his works, as expressive of their original and unique character. It was this striking originality in all he did that caused Fuseli to exclaim with candid, if profane, emphasis, "Blake is d—d good to steal from." His friends used to call his dwelling "The house of the Interpreter."

Blake had now reached his seventy-first year, and the strength of nature was fast failing, yet he was to the last cheerful and contented. "I glory," he said, "in dying, and have no grief but in leaving you, Catherine. Why should I fear death? nor do I fear it; I have endeavoured to live as Christ commands, and have sought to worship God truly in my own house, when I was not seen of men." He said to a friend, "I cannot think of death as more than the going out of one room into another."

One of his early pictures, *The Ancient of Days*, was such a favourite with Blake that, three days before his death, he sat bolstered up in bed, and tinted it with his choicest colours and in his happiest style. He touched and retouched it, held it at arm's length, and then threw it down, exclaiming, "There, that will do! I cannot mend it."* He saw his wife in tears—she felt this was to be the last of his works. "Stay, Kate," he cried, "keep just as you are, I will draw your portrait, for you have ever been an angel to me." She obeyed, and the dying artist made a fine likeness.

"On the day of his death" (Sunday, August 12th, 1827), writes his friend Smith, who had his account from the widow: "He composed and uttered songs to his Maker so sweetly to the ear of his Catherine, that when she stood to hear him, he, looking upon her most affectionately, said, 'My beloved! they are *not mine*. *No!* they are *not mine*.' He told her they would not be parted; he should always be about her to take care of her." A humble female neighbour who was present said afterwards, "I have been at the death, not of a man, but of a blessed angel." As he had told his wife, death did not part him from her; with trembling voice and tearful eyes she told her friends that his spirit was still with her, as in death he had promised. His biographer says of him:—

"All I have met, who at any period of the poet-artist's life knew much of Blake, speak with affection of him. A sweet, gentle, lovable creature, say all; courageous too, yet not bitter." One of Blake's friends, Samuel Palmer, writes of him:—"He was a man without a mask; his aim single, his path straight-forwards, and his wants few; so he was free, noble, and happy. His voice and manner were quiet, yet all awake with intellect. Above the tricks of littleness, or the least taint of affectation, with a natural dignity which few would have dared to affront, he was gentle and affectionate, loving to be with little children, and to talk about them. 'That is heaven,' he said to a friend, leading him to the window and pointing to a group of them at play." Gotzenberger, the German painter, on his return to Germany declared:—"I saw in England many men of talent, but only three men of genius—Coleridge, Flaxman, and Blake; and of these, Blake was the greatest."

Dr. Wilkinson, in his preface to the *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, has well pointed out the peculiar quality of Blake's genius, and what appear to him, its excellencies and defects. I

* This figure was drawn by Blake in 1794, from a majestic figure he had beheld in vision, and which he subsequently affirmed made a more powerful impression on his mind than all he had ever been visited by.

quote his criticism the more freely that copies of this edition of the *Songs* are now almost as rare as the originals:—

They who would form a just estimate of Blake's powers as an artist, have abundant opportunities of doing so, from his exquisite Illustrations to the *Songs of Innocence*; from his designs to *Blair's Grave*, *Young's Night Thoughts*, and the *Book of Job*, in all of which, there are "glorious shapes, expressing godlike sentiments." These works, in the main, are not more remarkable for high original genius, than they are for sane self-possession; and shew the occasional sovereignty of the inner man, over the fantasies which obsessed the outer. Yet he, who professed as a doctrine that the visionary form of thought was higher than the rational one; for whom the common earth teemed with millions of otherwise invisible creatures; who naturalized the spiritual, instead of spiritualizing the natural; was likely, even in these, his noblest works, to prefer seeing truth under the loose garments of typical, or even mythologic representation, rather than in the divine human embodiment of Christianity. And accordingly, his imagination, self-divorced from a reason which might have elevated and chastened it, and necessarily spurning the scientific daylight and material realism of the nineteenth century, found a home in the ruins of ancient and consummated churches; and imbued itself with the superficial obscurity and ghastliness, far more than with the inward grandeur of primeval times. For the true inward is one and identical, and if Blake had been disposed to see it, he would have found that it was still (though doubtless under a multitude of wrappages) extant in the present age. On the contrary, copying the outward form of the past, he has delivered to us a multitude of new hieroglyphics, which contain no presumable reconditeness of meaning, and which we are obliged to account for, simply by the artist having yielded himself up, more thoroughly than other men *will* do, to those fantastic impulses which are common to all mankind; and which saner people subjugate, but cannot exterminate. In so yielding himself, the artist, not less than the man, was a loser, though it unquestionably gave him a certain power, as all unscrupulous *passion* must, of wildness and fierce vagary. This power is possessed in different degrees, by every human being, if he will but give loose and free vent to the hell that is in him; and hence, the madness even of the meanest, is terrific. But no madness can long be considered either really poetic or artistical. Of the worst aspect of Blake's genius it is painful to speak. In his "Prophecies of America," his "Visions of the Daughters of Albion," and a host of unpublished drawings, earth-born might has banished the heavenlier elements of art, and exists combined with all that is monstrous and diabolical. In the domain of terror he here entered, the characteristic of his genius is fearful reality. He embodies no Byronisms,—none of the sentimentalities of civilized vice, but delights to draw evil things and evil beings in their naked and final state. The effect of these delineations is greatly heightened by the antiquity which is engraven on the faces of those who do and suffer in them. We have the impression that we are looking down into the hells of the ancient people, the Anakim, the Nephilim, and the Rephaim. Their forms are gigantic petrifications, from which the fires of lust and intense selfish passion, have long dissipated what was animal and vital; leaving stony limbs, and countenances expressive of despair, and stupid cruelty. . . . The visionary tendencies, and mysticism of Blake, developing themselves, as they did, under the shelter of a religious parentage and education, carried him to the mythic fountains of an elder time, and his genius which was too expansive to dwell in classic formalisms, entered into, and inhabited, the Egyptian and Asiatic perversions of an ancient and true Religion.

Blake declared that in becoming an artist he acted by command: the spirits said to him, "Blake, be an artist!" One of his friends says:— "His eyes glistened while he spoke of the joy of devoting himself to divine art alone." "Art," he said, "is inspiration. When Michael Angelo, or Raphael in their day,

or Mr. Flaxman does one of his fine things, he does them in the spirit.* Those who are familiar with the "spirit drawings" by mediums in our own day, will only need to cast a glance at the designs of Blake to be convinced of their similar origin. So with his literary compositions. He said, "When I am commanded by the spirits, then I write; and the moment I have written, I see the words fly about the room in all directions; it is then published. The spirits can read, and my MS. is of no further use." In a letter to his friend and patron, Mr. Butts, dated April 25, 1803, he writes:—"But none can know the spiritual acts of my three years' slumber on the banks of ocean, (at Felpham) unless he has seen them in the spirit, or unless he should read my long poem (the *Jerusalem*), descriptive of those acts; for I have in these years composed an immense number of verses on one grand theme, similar to Homer's *Iliad*, or Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the persons and machinery entirely new to the inhabitants of earth. (Some of the persons excepted) *I have written this poem from immediate dictation*, twelve, or sometimes twenty or thirty lines at a time, without premeditation, and even *against my will*. The time it has taken in writing was thus rendered non-existent, and an immense poem exists which seems to be the labour of a long life, *all produced without labour or study*. I mention this to show you what I think the grand reason of my being brought down here."

Mr. Gilchrist remarks that Dr. Wilkinson's *Improvisations of the Spirit* "profess to be written under precisely the same kind of spiritual guidance, amounting to abnegation of personal effort in the writer, which Blake supposed to have presided over the production of his *Jerusalem*, &c." Dr. Wilkinson describes the process as follows:—

"Last Autumn (1856) my attention was particularly directed to the phenomena of drawing, speaking, and writing, by Impression: and I determined to make an experiment of the kind, in composition, myself. The following Poems are the result. Let me now explain more precisely what is meant by Writing by Impression, so far as my own personal experience is concerned; for I cannot refer to any other.

"A theme is chosen, and written down. So soon as this is done, the first impression upon the mind which succeeds the act of writing the title, is the beginning of the evolution of that theme; no matter how strange or alien the word or phrase may seem. That impression is written down: and then another, and another, until the piece is concluded. An act of faith is

* Of Raphael, it is affirmed that he painted visions presented to him by the spirit of his mother, who hovered over him and assisted in the execution of his work.

signalized in accepting the first mental movement, the first word that comes, as the response to the mind's desire for the unfolding of the subject. However odd the introduction may be, I have always found it lead by an infallible instinct into the subject. The depth of treatment is in strict proportion to the warmth of heart, elevation of mind, and purity of feeling, existing at the time: in other words, in proportion to the conditions of Love and Faith. . . . This book was given just as the reader reads it: with no hesitation; without the correction of one word from beginning to end: and how much it differs from other similar collections *in process*, it were difficult to convey to the reader. Suffice it to say, that every piece was produced without premeditation or preconception: had these processes stolen in, such production would have been impossible." Dr. Wilkinson adds that in this method of composition, "As a rule, it requires twice as long to copy a poem as to write one."

Another instance of similar improvisations is to be found in the poems of Harris; but in his case the improvisations are delivered orally. In the introduction (written by Professor Brittan) to his *Epic of the Starry Heaven*, it states:—"The poem bearing the above title was spoken by Thomas L. Harris in the course of fourteen consecutive days, the speaker being in a *trance state* during its delivery. From one hundred and twenty-five to two hundred and fifty lines were dictated at each session, of which there were twenty-two in number, and the precise time occupied in communicating the whole was *twenty-six hours and sixteen minutes*. On several occasions, while the *Epic* was being delivered Mr. Harris was unexpectedly entranced, under rather unfavourable circumstances, and in two instances, as will appear from the Appendix, he was absent from his lodgings when the *trance* occurred. The general appearance and manner of the *improvisatore* while subject to the influence of Spirits, was much like that of a person in an ordinary magnetic sleep. There was a slight involuntary action of the nerves of motion, chiefly manifested at the beginning and close of each sitting, or during brief intervals of silence, when some new scene appeared to the vision of the medium. The eyes were closed, but the expression of the face, which was highly animated and significant, varied with every change in the rhythm, and was visibly influenced by the slightest modification of the theme. The voice of the speaker was deep-toned and musical, and his enunciation distinct and energetic. Occasionally he exhibited considerable vehemence, but when the nature of the subject required gentleness, his voice was modulated with great delicacy, and at times his whole manner and utterance were characterized by remarkable solemnity and irresistible pathos."

Blake held the ancient faith of the pre-existence of the human spirit. In a letter to Flaxman, whom he styles, "My friend and companion from eternity," he writes,—“In my brain are studies and chambers filled with books and pictures of old, which I wrote and painted in ages of eternity before my mortal life; and those works are the delight and study of archangels. Why, then, should I be anxious about the riches or fame of mortality?”

He believed too in fairies; he had even seen, he declared, a fairy's funeral. "I was walking alone," he said, "in my garden. There was great stillness among the branches and flowers, and more than common sweetness in the air. I heard a low and pleasant sound, and knew not whence it came. At last I saw the broad leaf of a flower move, and underneath I saw a procession of creatures the size and colour of green and grey grasshoppers, bearing a body laid out on a rose leaf, which they buried with songs and then disappeared."

No wonder that men, especially in that age of shallow and empirical philosophy, deemed Blake mad. This, however, was not the judgment of those who knew him best. "To Blake's surviving friends," says Mr. Gilchrist, "to all who knew more of his character than a few casual interviews could supply—the proposition is, I find, simply unintelligible; thinking of him, as they do, under the strong influence of happy, fruitful, personal intercourse remembered in the past; swayed by the general tenor of his life, rather than by isolated extravagancies of speech, or wild passages in his writings. All are unanimous on the point. And I have taken the opinion of many independent witnesses." If mad he were, it was a madness which infected everybody who came near him. It was a shrewd observation of Cowper's, singularly applicable to Blake:—"You will ever observe that they who are said to have lost their wits have more than other people."

Blake drew a distinction between the spirits he saw and ghosts. The former, he affirmed, were perceived by the spiritual sight, the latter by the bodily eye. Once only did a ghost cross his path. "Standing, one evening, at his garden door, and chancing to look up, he saw a horrible grim figure, 'scaly, speckled, very awful,' stalking downstairs towards him. More frightened than ever before or after, he took to his heels, and ran out of the house."

Blake was not only a spirit-seer, he was also a spirit-portrait painter. According to Cunningham, his conversations with spirits would fill volumes,* and an ordinary gallery would not

* Blake affirmed in the latter years of his life that he had much intercourse with the spirit of Voltaire. When a friend inquired in what language Voltaire spoke, Blake replied, "To my sensations it was English. It was like the touch of a musical key: he touched it probably French, but to my ear it became English."

contain the heads which he drew of his spirit-visitors. "All are marked," says Gilchrist, "by a decisive portrait-like character, and are in fact evidently literal portraits of what Blake's imaginative eye beheld." Among the heads which Blake drew was one of King Saul, who, as the artist related, appeared to him in armour, and wearing a helmet of peculiar form and construction, which he could not owing to the position of the sceptre, see to delineate satisfactorily. The portrait was therefore left unfinished, till some months after, when King Saul vouchsafed a second sitting, and enabled Blake to complete his helmet; which, with the armour, was pronounced, by those to whom the drawing was shewn, sufficiently extraordinary.

Blake was requested by his friend John Varley to draw the likeness of Sir William Wallace—the eye of Blake sparkled, for he admired heroes. "William Wallace," he exclaimed, "I see him now, there! there! How noble he looks—reach me my things!" Having drawn for some time with the same care of hand and steadiness of eye, as if a living sitter had been before him, Blake stopped suddenly, and said, "I cannot finish him—Edward the First has stepped in between him and me." "That's lucky," said his friend, "for I want a portrait of Edward too." Blake took another sheet of paper and sketched the features of the Plantagenet; upon which his majesty politely vanished, and the artist finished the head of Wallace.

"And pray, sir," said a gentleman who heard Blake's friend tell the story, "was Sir William Wallace a heroic looking man? And what sort of a personage was Edward?" The answer was: "There they are, sir, both framed and hanging on the wall behind you; judge for yourself." "I looked," says our informant, "and saw two warlike heads of the size of common life; that of Wallace was noble and heroic, that of Edward stern and bloody. The first had the front of a god, the latter the aspect of a demon. I have sat beside him from ten at night till three in the morning, sometimes slumbering and sometimes waking, but Blake never slept; he sat with pencil and paper drawing portraits of those whom I most desired to see. I will shew you some of these works." He took out a large book filled with drawings, opened it, and continued: "Observe the poetic fervour of that face—it is Pindar as he stood a conqueror at the Olympic games. And this lovely creature is Corinna, who conquered in poetry in the same place. There, that is a face of a different stamp—can you conjecture whose it is?" "Some scoundrel, I should think, sir." "There now, that is a strong proof of the accuracy of Blake—he is a scoundrel indeed: the very individual task-master whom Moses slew in Egypt.—This head speaks for itself. It is the head of Herod." A remarkable portrait, too, is that of *King*

Edward the Third as he now exists in the other world, according to his appearance to Mr. Blake. Another bears this singular title—*Portrait of a Man who instructed Mr. Blake in Painting and in his Dreams.*

Sometimes Blake had to wait for the vision's appearance; at others, in the midst of his portrait, he would suddenly leave off, and, in his ordinary quiet tones and matter-of-fact air, would remark—"I can't go on—it is gone! I must wait till it returns;" or, "It has moved—the mouth is gone;" or, "He frowns; he is displeased with my portrait of him." If any one hazarded a criticism to him on these portraits, he would calmly reply:—"It *must* be right; I saw it so." Once a young artist complained to Blake how he felt deserted by the power of invention. Blake turned to his wife suddenly and said: "It is just so with us, is it not, for weeks together, when the visions forsake us? What do we do then, Kate?" "We kneel down and pray, Mr. Blake!"

It seems just now the fashion with biographers when they have to relate any facts of a supernatural kind more startling than usual, to retreat within the lines of respectability under cover of a disclaimer that, however strange, these facts have nothing to do with modern Spiritualism; as if fearful that but for their friendly warning people would not be able to discern the difference. One is grieved to find a writer like Mr. Gilchrist descending to this pitiful artifice; but like the rest of the tribe, he cannot let his facts tell their own story without having a feeble fling at "the table-turning, wainscot-knocking, bosh-propounding 'Spiritualism' of the present hour." As to the 'bosh-propounding,' according to his own free admissions, not a little of the alloy of bosh was mixed with the sterling ore in Blake's compositions; and when mediums of the present hour are, like Blake, privileged to see and hold direct converse with spirits, they, like him, have little or no experience in those ruder forms of manifestation so often found necessary and effective to establish the reality of spirit-existence, and arrest the attention of less gifted mortals. However these may be despised by men little acquainted with the actual influence they have exerted, it is yet true, and their sufficient justification, that they have led many to adopt what Mr. Gilchrist tells us was a tenet of Blake's, "That the inner world is the all important; that each man has a world within greater than the external;" but to this end the conclusions which they tend to establish must be thought out, just as some of the most important conclusions of science have, when thought out, resulted from facts, which to superficial observers, had appeared very insignificant.

T. S.

TITLES OF OLD BOOKS.

“ The Strange Appearance of the Spirit of Edw. Aven, late of Marleborough, to his own Son, on the 23rd, 25th, and 26th of November last past; with his confession of money he had formerly borrowed of Mr. E. L. and forsworn; and also of a Robbery and Murder committed 39 years ago, of the truth whereof the reader may be satisfied by the carriers of Marleborough, arriving at the Rose at Holborn Bridge, or any other persons lately coming thence, having been attested publickly before the Magistrates of the Town. 1674.”

“ Strange and Wonderful News from London-wall, being a relation of a house miserably disturbed on Friday, April 3, 1674, where bedding, apparel, household stuff were cut to pieces by invisible means, etc. 1674.” One sheet 4to.

“ A true Account of divers most strange and prodigious Apparitions seen in the air at Poinstown, in the county of Tipperary, in Ireland, March the second, 1678-9, attested by 16 person that were eye-witnesses. Published at Dublin, and thence communicated hither. London, 1697, 4to. These wonderful sights were ships, forts, dogs, bulls, etc., fighting in the air about sunset, most probably only meteors, or clouds of a singular form.”

“ A true Relation of an Apparition in the likeness of a bird with a white heart, which appeared hovering over the death-bed of some of the children of Mr. James Oxenham, of Sale Monachorum, Devonshire, Gent., with a cut, etc. London, 1641.” 4to.

“ News from Puddle Dock in London; or, a perfect particular of the strange Apparitions and Transactions that have happened in the house of Mr. Edward Pitts, next door to the Still at Puddle Dock. 1674.” 4to.

“ A true Relation of the horrid Ghost of a Woman which hath frequently been seen in various habits in the house of Nich. Broaday, at the Three Mourners, in Deptford, upon the 3rd, 4th, and 6th of this instant, April, 1673, by Peter Griffith, Robert Predam, and John Stolliant, belonging to His Majesty's ship called The Monk, and several others of the family. London 1673.” 4to, 8 pages.

“ A Sermon, preached at Harbury, in Warwickshire, May 4, 1755. On occasion of a conversation said to have passed between one of the inhabitants and an apparition in the churchyard belonging to that place. By Richard Jago, M.A., Vicar of Harbury.”

“ More Devils, or the Devils of Moorgate; being a true relation of the late wonderful and mischievous practices of an evil spirit, haunting the house of a widow, living in White Lion Court, over against Moorgate; it is attested by several eminent inhabitants of the Parish of St. Stephen, Colman Street, there being also then present two ministers of eminent note. 1674.” One sheet 4to.

“ An Account of several spirits seen and spoken to at the house of Mr. John Thomas, at Cow Cross. 1680.” 4to.

“ A strange, true, and dreadful Relation of the Devil's appearing to Thomas Cox, a hackney coachman, who lives in Cradle Alley in Baldwin's Gardens, first in the habit of a gentleman, with a roll of parchment in his hand, and then in the shape of a bear which afterwards vanished away in a glance of fire, at 8 o'clock on Friday night, October 31, 1684.” 4to.

“ A Narrative of the Demon of Spraiton in a letter from a person of quality in the county of Devon to a gentleman of London, with a relation of an apparition or spectrum of an ancient gentleman of Devon, who often appeared to his son's servant; with the strange actions and discoveries happening between them at divers times; as likewise the demon of an ancient woman, wife of the gentleman aforesaid; with unparalleled variety of strange exploits performed by her; attested under the hands of the said persons of quality, and likewise a reverend divine of the said county. With reflections on drollery and Atheism; and a word to those that deny the existence of spirits. London, 1683.” 4to.

ANSWERING SEALED LETTERS.

THE following, taken from the *Banner of Light*, was communicated to a circle at Boston, through Mrs. Conant, in trance, in reply to an inquiry on the above subject:—

In attempting to show you the *modus operandi* of answering sealed letters, allow us to illustrate our subject. Here is a letter containing, doubtless, the written thoughts of some earthly friend. This, perchance, is directed to some certain individual spirit, or spirits. We know not now if the disembodied desires to become possessed of a knowledge of the contents of this letter, that they may satisfactorily answer the same. What course shall be pursued? Let us see. First it is necessary to ascertain whether or not the disembodied spirit can exist in the mental atmosphere of the medium for a length of time sufficient to answer the requirements of the case; for it is no more possible for the disembodied spirit to exist for any length of time in the atmosphere of some mediums, than for you to ascend twenty-five miles above the surface of the earth, and from thence calmly take note of your surroundings. We say it is quite as impossible for certain spirits to come into *rapport* with certain mediums dwelling upon your earth, as it would be for you to take your mortal body with you to the spirit-world.

But provided the friend who has been called upon to answer this letter should be fortunate enough to find himself able to exist in the atmosphere of your medium for a sufficient length of time to answer the requirements of the case in question, then there is a something more to be done. What is it? Let us see. It is now necessary that a connection be established between the atmosphere of the medium and the writer of the letter. This can be done—though they dwell thousands of miles apart, as easily as if they were occupants of the same apartment, provided the law of attraction is active. But should the law of repulsion be active on either side—that is to say, on the part of the medium or writer of the letter—then you cannot form the desired connection. In short, you may as well undertake to make oil and water mingle, as to form the connection before mentioned, when the law of attraction is of necessity absent. But on the contrary, if the law of attraction is active, the connection may at once be established between the medium and the author of the letter.

After the necessary connection has been formed, then the attention of the spirit is directed to the letter—for what purpose? To make itself at once acquainted with its contents. No: for the disembodied is unable to see literally and read the contents of this letter; nor would it be able to were you to take off the envelope and display it to human gaze. How, then, shall the spirit possess himself of the required knowledge? You will perceive, or have perceived that your medium before answering a sealed letter, generally takes it in her hand. She will always place the fingers upon the letter, sometimes run them over the letter for a minute or two; but should you ask her why she does this, in all sincerity she would answer, I do not know; nor does she know why this is done. It is done because it is necessary to concentrate a certain amount of animal magnetism upon the letter, and that can be done more easily by mortal contact, or the work of concentration can be facilitated in that way.

By the concentrated force of this animal magnetism, the characters are made to appear to their spiritual view precisely after the same manner that persons interpret writing in lemon juice. By applying to it heat or caloric for a short time, the handwriting becomes dark brown, and you are able to read it, where before it was white and indistinguishable to human vision. So the animal magnetism upon the envelope or outside of the letter, is thrown there for the special purpose of bringing out the characters embodied in the writing. If the animal magnetism is strong enough to bring the letters out to the spirit's view, then you may be sure of a clear and satisfactory response to the question or questions contained in your letter.

All things are fashioned by law, and these manifestations which seem so

simple in themselves, are governed by law. Yet poor humanity sees fit to prescribe no limits to that law. "Oh," say some, "If it be true that spirits can return, then let them come and speak directly to me. I desire that they commune with me alone, without the assistance of a third person." You might as well expect to receive telegraphic communication from New York when your wires have been cut. These manifestations that seem so simple are governed by law, and you and I must bow in humble submission to that law if we would make it our servant.

THE LATE MR. WILLIAM STOCKTON COX, OF
JERMYN STREET.

AN earnest, straightforward, honest, kind, and strong-hearted man passed away from our sight on Sunday morning, the 24th of January, 1864, when the angel of death rendered our friend's body no longer habitable by his spirit. He was one of the "Greatheart" family in all the relations of his life; and there are few of the moral movements of progress, for these thirty years past, with which he did not associate himself, and help forward by his counsels, and his wise research.

No record of the early introduction of Spiritualism, and of its struggles into notice in this country, would be complete which did not frequently introduce his name, and speak of his bold public advocacy, and of his private assistance towards all those poor ones, who need countenance and support, through the battles which are inevitable in putting forward a new truth. Like almost all the champions who have come to the front in aid of the facts and philosophy of Spiritualism, our friend was at first a decided opponent of them, and was originally a Materialist and sceptic of all Spirituality. A disciple and firm friend of the late good Robert Owen, he went through that long campaign of Socialism, which however short of the highest needs of mankind it has proved itself, shewed at all events, an earnest loving heart, and a desire to reform the social inequalities which then disgraced our country, and which even now exist, after all the ameliorations of our later times, in no small degree.

The study which this inquiry brought with it was all turned to good account, and with an active and zealous mind, sharpened by conflict with the ignorance of the day, Mr. Cox was ready in the first cropping out of mesmerism and clairvoyance, to go into the inquiry, with the strength of a freed man. His reverence for facts ensured a favourable reception for all that would bear inquiry and analysis; and once assured of his ground, his philosophical mind was at no loss in throwing away all such of his prior ideas as he now found were incompatible with the truth. A new world opened to him—the world of mind and of new

forces. Henceforth, Socialism was only true to him for its physical ameliorations but not as a terminal philosophy. The next development of Spiritualism was not long in coming, and here again its facts were what he first sought and proved as a humble student. His mind expanded as he progressed in its study, and found how it opened out the spirit-world as the true world of causes, and gave a soul to man, and a possibility of communion with those who had hitherto been considered as lost. A new religious power was born within him—no longer warring against science, but one that used science as its handmaid.

Shakespeare said, "Let the players be well used." Mr. Cox recognized those who had been the means of bringing him this new truth, and henceforth his motto seems to have been, "Let the mediums be well used." His kindly sympathy for them he retained to the last, and when his last hour came, it found two of them standing over his bed, and then kneeling in prayer as his spirit rose, untrammelled longer by his fleshly body.

There is not one of those who came within his knowledge but had their wants relieved, and wise counsel given, along with more material needs and with no stinting hand. In this way it happened that perhaps no one in this country had seen so much of spiritual phenomena as Mr. Cox, and his mind enabled him to make use of all he saw, by storing it in its proper place and order. No one had so continuously and so long drawn around him those who had these wonderful facts to shew, and excepting by his sorrowing family, there are none who will more feel his loss. We join our heartfelt sympathy with those of his household, whose grief is too sacred and too new to be more nearly touched upon, and whose greatest comfort now must be the memory of his well-spent life, and the surety that he will still be near them in that more intimate and holy communion of the spirit, which is, alas, almost a lost hope amongst so many, who are called upon by an all-loving Father to grieve over these bitter separations. To the end he was true to his faith, and almost his last words were, "Not death—change!" May we not hope that the void thus left in our ranks will not be long altogether vacant? We trust that his bright example will not be without early fruit.

LEVITATION (BUDDHA LIFTED IN THE AIR).—It is related of Siddhartha, who was the great reformer or Luther of Brahminism, and the establisher of the religion called Buddhism, that "when five months old, he sat in the air, without any support, at a ploughing festival."—*The Rev. Spence Hardy's "Eastern Monachism."*

Correspondence.

LETTER FROM A LADY IN GERMANY.

December 18th, 1863.

MY DEAR MR. —,— Pardon the liberty which I take in addressing you, but as I have been a spiritual medium for the last four years, and have been blessed with some of the most beautiful manifestations of which I have ever heard, I think it may be right to follow the advice of a friend and make others participate in the blessings which I myself have experienced. Before relating my present experience I will describe to you an apparition which it pleased God to send to me when I was a young child of five and a half years old. This is the only apparition which I have beheld in a waking condition. Its explanation I did not receive until I was forty years of age, when the spirit-power gave it to me. My father's last illness being tedious and of two years' duration, my mother sent me and an only sister to a boarding-school in order that she might wholly devote herself to the care of her husband during the last years of his life. It was at this school that I one night awoke and perceived a female form in white standing at the foot of the bed behind an open door. She held forth something in her hand which I mistook for folded linen—for my folded clothes lying at the foot of the bed. Believing that this was one of the teachers come to scold me for neglecting to properly fold up my clothes, I was about to justify myself when I perceived that the features of the one who stood before me, were those of a stranger. Not venturing to address her, I waited for her to speak. The figure, however, remained silent and motionless; I awoke, therefore, the child sleeping beside me. She being angry at my awaking her, covered up her head with the bed-clothes and went off again to sleep. I endeavoured, also, to do the same, but curiosity soon prompted me to look up and see whether "the pretty lady" were gone. No; there she still stood smiling upon me, and now I remarked with astonishment that through the whole length of her person, I could see the crack of the open door. This struck me as singular, and as if fascinated, I determined to watch her until she departed, admiring her dress which fell towards her feet in regular and straight folds and was much prettier than the usual night-dress. As the light grew stronger she gradually faded before my eyes, and childlike, I amused myself with watching how long I could perceive any outline of her form. At last she entirely vanished, and I fell asleep. But never have I forgotten this vision. In after life on seeing a corpse lying in a coffin, I recognized the dress which I had so greatly admired, as being the robe of death.

It was not until I obtained the gift of spiritual-power that I received an explanation of this apparition. Through spiritual-writing I asked an explanation and received an answer. "It was I, your guardian angel, who, by the permission of God, appeared to your childish eyes, in order that you might believe when afterwards I should come and write." I asked, "And what, pray, was that which you held in your hands?" To my surprise the reply came—"The papers upon which I write." The papers upon which I write spiritually are of a large size on account of the writing occupying a considerable space, and are quite unlike the paper ordinarily used for writing. This idea had never occurred to me, and filled me with surprise when I saw it written through my hand. I hastened to the bed of my own child, aged then five years and a half old, and found that his folded night-dress presented the same size and appearance as the papers referred to. Since then I have beheld no apparition, and cannot but regard this as a special act of Providence in order to give me faith.

Before I became a Spiritualist I possessed no faith in Christianity, but now, thanks be to God, like St. Thomas, I can say, "My Lord and my God." I received the writing-power from two ladies, who communicated it to me through the *psychograph*. My hand first began to move slowly. Afterwards I gained the power of writing very much as a child learns to write at school, making figures, letters, and then entire words all in a large handwriting. The power then

began to answer questions. The more I prayed and the more I exercised the gift, the more I found it to increase in strength and wisdom. Gradually the writing became smaller and more resembling a "running-hand." At the desire expressed through the psychograph my hand began to rise of its own accord and to choose passages from Scripture, which were explained to me by the writing so clearly as to remove all my doubts. The great truths of Christianity were taught me in such wise as none but the Spirit of God could teach them. Life was infused into that which formerly had been to me the mere dead-letter, and the truth of Christ's promises (so long denied by professing Christians), *that those who believe should do his works*, was shewn me by the power. To perform some of these works, being even granted to myself, when possessed of sufficient faith. Great trials of faith have been sent to me throughout the four years and a half of my experience, but God has sustained me through them all, and will, I trust, enable me to overcome until the end.

As I never sought or would accept any other communication than that with the Holy Spirit, all the writings which I receive are explanations of Scripture, the power first choosing a text and then commenting upon it. The language I believe to be my own, but the spirit and the meaning are certainly inspired, being sometimes quite at variance with my proper sentiments and pre-conceived notions. This gift, which I assuredly consider to be from God, I can communicate to others by the imposition of hands with prayer. Many wonderful results have proved that it can be no other than the Spirit of God which our dear Saviour promised to all who ask for it. To nearly all my prayers my hand is raised to open the Bible, where the answer will be pointed out immediately. For instance, on praying that God would teach me what to do in order to please Him, my finger at once pointed to the 28th and 29th verses of the 6th chapter of St. John:—"Then said they unto Him, what shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." And then followed a charming comment upon faith as the only means of performing works that please God.

My dear late husband, who obtained the power from my hand, possessed the faculty of writing the chapter and verse for which we had to look in the Bible before we would know its contents. Thus his hand having written a beautiful sentence, we asked, "Who writes?" His hand was moved to write in reply, "Christ in you." My husband then said, "I should like to have some Scriptural authority for this. Answer, "See St. John vi., 20, also Luke vii. 15; these texts being, "It is I, be not afraid," and, "He that was dead sat up and began to speak." We then asked, "What will He graciously say to us?" Answer, "John xvi., 12,—I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now." We asked, "When?" and my husband's hand wrote, "Soon." Since this time I have had wonderful testimony to its being Christ's own power.

I cannot say that my experience has been so much a display of wonders, although these have not been wanting—as by and bye I shall shew you—so much as a leading and guiding into all truth as promised by the Saviour. Here is an example. The power once wrote that our souls must live three times before returning to the bosom of God. I asked, "Which, then was the present life?" The answer came, "The first, or material life, is that of the body; the second, or spiritual life, in the soul; and after that the third, or celestial life in heaven—body, soul and spirit being three distinct beings, though united in one, thus proving the Trinity of God, in whose image man was created. The power then shewed me that Christ had revealed those three persons in Himself. In the body He died; in the soul He arose, and appeared to his disciples (in the spiritual body which passed through walls and barred doors), and He appeared on Mount Tabor more brilliant than the sun. The power writes that these spiritual manifestations are the forerunners of our Saviour's second coming in the spiritual body to judge the world, and of our own change into that body and life with Him during the millenium in the spiritual world (or new earth) mentioned in the Revelations, chap. xxi., at the end of which our celestial life in the spirit will begin. This outpouring of the spirit is as the first streak of dawn before the rising of the sun; but as man's free will cannot be coerced, he

is allowed to find what he seeks, and only a good life can bring manifestations from good spirits, whilst the contrary has, of course, an opposite effect.

Mr. Harris's definition of Spiritualism appears to be most correct. The power grows and increases according to our faith and obedience, and I believe that God will be glorified and our Saviour also, by the demonstrations of his love and power through those who believe. Especially will woman be chosen to shew forth his strength since He now reveals Himself in his feminine attributes, and in the weaker sex his strength will be made perfect. The idea men have had of God being male only, was but a one-sided perception of his nature, but as in the stereoscope, two views are necessary to bring forward perfect figures, so the two sexes are shewn to constitute a perfect being, and that this was what Christ meant when He said, in heaven was neither male nor female, but all would be as the angels, that is, a perfect whole. Regarding this interesting subject of the upholding of the feminine attributes of Deity, the spirit-power has given me much instruction, confirming the truth by passages in Holy Writ.

With regard to what may be termed the wonders of my experience, I would now say a few words. A young spendthrift was here forsaken by all his relations, and cast into prison for debt, and as our clergyman declined to visit him, I was moved by the power to do so myself. I was enabled to bring him to a belief in Christ, when he became penitent and began to pray in earnest. He had no hope of deliverance. (One day, the 1st, 6th and 7th verses of the 42nd chapter of Isaiah were shewn to me, and I was told by the spirits to appropriate them to myself, and to go and apply the 7th to the prisoner. The verses are— "Behold, my servant whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." I obeyed, and on reaching the prison I found him in the deepest despair, seeing no hope of his liberation for three years to come. I told him of the manifestations and begged him to take courage, for it was Christ who bade him hope. He said, "Oh, God, grant it may be true; but I see no earthly means of leaving this place!" He told me that he had a letter which he dared not open on account of fear. But I told him to pray for strength, as I was sure that that letter would bring him good news. He did so, and his first words were "Free! free! free!" A relative had promised to pay his debts. Two or three days later, on Christmas Day, I received a second command from the 1st and following verses of 61st chapter of Isaiah, "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound," &c., &c. I went with my child to pray with him, telling him that I was confident that deliverance would come that day, as indeed it had been promised. I felt during the prayer that it must come in some way, and the thought of a letter again presented itself, but the postman had already been. Still I thought that some other person might bring the letter. I was moved mentally to say, "O Lord, shew Thy hand!" Scarcely was the thought uttered when the key grated in the lock, and in walked the jailer together with a gentleman bearing a letter. I begged the prisoner to open it, when he exclaimed, "Oh, thank God, the money is sent, and I am free as soon as it arrives!" I went again to see whether he were liberated, first praying, however, for some text for him, when the 12th chapter of Acts was found, and the 7th verse was marked—"And behold the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison; and he smote Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands." Also the words further on in the same chapter were marked, "And he went out." On reaching the prison, I was told that *he was gone*.

These three stages in the affair, the Promise, the Payment and the Deliverance, were shewn me as the three Offices of Christ. The Saviour was promised when Adam sinned; He paid our debts on the Cross; and his deliverance from the grave is the token of our life after death. It is indeed wonderful to me the

revelation that all the prophecies concerning our blessed Saviour may be appropriated also to ourselves when united with Him through the spirit, and thus are through the faithful disciple being again and again fulfilled.

Marvellous as it may appear, even the power of Our Lord to still, through his word, the winds and waves has been shewn to me, and after the following manner:—In 1862 my husband went to visit his friends in England whilst I remained on the Continent. His return was in October: whilst preparing for his reception, I felt anxious about his crossing the sea so late in the season, and prayed that he might have a fair passage. The spirit replied, "Yes," and I became tranquil concerning him; when lo! upon the very day on which he was to have sailed for the Continent, those fearful winds which many persons will remember with sorrow, sprang up, terrifying us even upon land. There was a trial of my faith, since believing that my husband was upon the sea, I might naturally have doubted the Spirit's word. I would not, however, do this, or where would be my confidence in prayer? I continued, therefore, to believe the promise, although the storms raged fearfully during the whole week. On Saturday, however, came fine weather, and with it a letter stating that my husband had been detained in London until that day. This I considered sufficient answer to my prayer, but further knowledge shewed that indeed a real miracle had been wrought. From my husband's account of his journey, I found that the fine weather had only lasted during his passage across the sea. Arriving at Rotterdam the same fearful winds again sprang up with even greater violence, and the night passed by him at the hotel was spent in thanking God for his safety, and that he was no longer on the sea. A still more marvellous assurance of God's interposition, however, reached us after his return in the shape of a letter from a friend at Dover, stating that at the very time of my husband's crossing over to Rotterdam the sea at Dover was in an awful state of commotion. Truly, it was as though God's hand had been stretched out between London and Rotterdam only, saying "Peace, be still!" I could relate other wonderful examples of the weather's obedience to the Spirit-power, but this I trust will suffice to incline our hearts to believe that the same Jesus who said, "Peace, be still!" to the winds and waves, must be now working through the spirit to prepare the world for the second Advent.

I have the honour to be, &c.,

C—

P.S.—Since writing the above, a person to whom the power has been given through me, hears the psalm, which he reads each night, sung by invisible beings. Once falling asleep, however, he beheld David, crowned and holding his harp. He also heard him singing the psalms in most ravishing strains. This person is as yet undeveloped as a medium, but will now give his attention to the development of his gift.

THE GHOST CLUB.—We have heard nothing of the proceedings of the Clubs said to have been formed in Glasgow and in London. The Ghost Club which once existed amongst the members at Cambridge University has long since ceased. Only one or two of the original members still remain at Cambridge. It may be interesting to know, that among the more active members were Scott, Westcott (the secretary), and Elwyn, Fellows of Trinity: Scott is now head master of Westminster School, and Westcott one of the masters at Harrow, both of them first-rate scholars; and so was Elwyn, and all of them senior classics. Luard, now registrar of the University, Bradshaw and Wayte of King's, The Hon. A. H. Gordon, now lieutenant-governor of New Brunswick, and the Reverend Llewellyn Davies, now one of the clergy of Marylebone, were also members.

Notices of Books.

PECULIAR.*

WE cannot better introduce this story, which contains a bold avowal of Spiritualism, and which in the United States has run into eight editions in about as many days, than in the following remarks of the *Herald of Progress*.

“Here we have at last a novel by an avowed Spiritualist, which, both as a work of art and of pure literature, comes up to a standard certainly as high as has been ever set by any American author in its special department. Among the foes of the modern Spiritual belief, the cry has frequently been: ‘What men of distinction in polite literature can you number?’ The question will hardly be put, now that *Peculiar* has gone forth to the world. We would like to see the American novel that surpasses it, either in genuine literary power or in dramatic interest. In this effort Mr. Epes Sargent has placed himself at once by the side of foremost *belles-lettres* writers of the country; and when we say this, we do not forget Cooper, Irving, Hawthorne, Longfellow, and the authoress of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.

“When we heard that Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton was engaged on a novel of which the phenomena of Spiritualism were to be a feature, we had hopes that a desideratum was to be fulfilled, and that genius was to be employed in commending to the reason and the affections of a large class of readers the simple and beautiful faith, confirmatory of all that is vital and good in existing religions, based on modern and transpiring evidences of intercommunication with the invisible world. But Lytton’s *Strange Story* was a disappointment and a puzzle to all the earnest friends of Spiritualism. It has not even the merit of an interesting plot, and the incidents, with a few exceptions, are such as no Spiritualist ever dreamed of, unless it might be when suffering under a nightmare. The book left us in doubt whether the author was piling up his exaggerations and giving the reins to a reckless imagination merely to throw discredit on Spiritualism, or whether he had some little faith, which he was ventilating in his wanton and ungenial flights of fancy.

“In a far different spirit has Mr. Sargent dealt with the great facts which Spiritualism commends to us. With no blind reverence, and yet with a feeling that debars trifling and excludes all imaginative antics, he approaches the august subject. To

* *Peculiar; a Tale of the Great Transition*. By EPES SARGENT. New York, U.S.: CARLTON; English Edition, Edited by WILLIAM HOWITT. London: HURST AND BLACKETT, 3 vols.

him it has plainly been a matter of profound study and reflection, both in its ancient and in its modern bearings. His generalizations show this; brief and sweeping as they are, they evidently sum up the results of long experience and study. The reader must not suppose from these remarks that *Peculiar* is anything more or less than a novel. All that there is in it of a didactic character probably does not fill twelve pages out of the five hundred to which the book runs."

INSPIRATION OF THE OLD & NEW TESTAMENTS.*

THIS has long been one of the most important questions both in the Church and out of it, but now since the recent judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on the "Essays and Reviews," it is destined to assume gigantic proportions before the public. The effect of that decision is to unloose the tongues of both clergy and laity, and in the war of opinions a true philosophy on the subject may perhaps be approached. It will, however, be through the despised portal of Spiritualism that the truth must be sought, if it is to be attained. The pamphlet just published by a layman is a contribution towards this knowledge, and contains some general and bold truths, which are put forward in a scholarly and informed method. It contains a very considerable amount of information and matter for thought; and we sincerely trust that the subject, now fairly opened by the judgment of our highest tribunal, may not be allowed to rest. The author says in his preface that he had been misled in his youth into a disbelief in spiritual life by reading the works of Volney, Paine, and other infidel writers, and that fearing the Colenso party in the Church of England, by proving the non-inspiration of Scripture, must have at heart the throwing a veil over the actuality of such a state of existence, he considers that he would be doing good service by putting before the public such knowledge of the subject as he has acquired by experience. He shews how Spiritualism proves the miracles of old, and that a non-natural or spiritual meaning is to be looked for in the Scriptures, which should be read in their spirit and not in the letter. We wish he had gone more into a spiritual theory of inspiration: but his work is a useful one. From the price charged for it, it is evident that the author could have had no object in view but the advocacy of opinions which he thinks are conducive to the public welfare.

* *A Few Words of Exhortation to the Public on the Inspiration of the Old and New Testaments, on Spiritualism, and Animal Magnetism, and in regard to the Rights, Interests, and Duties of the Laity.* By a LAYMAN. London: J. BURNS, Progressive Library, Camberwell. 1864. Price 6d., free by post.

SPIRITUALISM—ITS FACTS AND PHASES.*

WITH no organization, and with little means and appliances, Spiritualism is nevertheless, after a fashion of its own, spreading over the land. You know not where to have it; nor where it may be to-morrow. It springs up among most unlikely people, and in most unexpected places. It is alike the inmate of rural cottages and Belgravian mansions. Now it takes possession of towns and villages in Yorkshire, then it marches boldly up to the metropolis; anon it travels to Manchester, and thence to "St. Mungo's City." Just now it is taking a tour at the sea-side—at the quiet fashionable little town of Eastbourne, where it seems Mr. Cooper, a respectable resident, and a few friends have been investigating and experimenting. Having satisfied himself of the reality and spiritual origin of facts under his own observation and in his own house, Mr Cooper, with praiseworthy courage, has boldly avowed his convictions to his astonished fellow-townsmen in a course of lectures, which he has since repeated at other places in the neighbourhood. The consequence is, that the local and county press are now all alive with the subject; their columns teem with reports of lectures, leaders, correspondence, ghostly narratives, and extracts anent the same from reviews and books. Deeming their views of the question not adequately represented in the local press—the *Eastbourne Gazette* having announced that it cannot be converted into a *Spiritual Magazine*—Mr. Cooper and his friends have projected the *Spiritual Times and Weekly News*, price Three halfpence, to appear March 5th, in order that the whole matter may be more freely ventilated.

Another outcome of the Eastbourne agitation is the book before us, in which Mr. Powell gives an evidently honest, straightforward relation of his experiences, showing how he became convinced, and sustaining his conclusions by scriptural and other argument; and relating many original facts of the supernatural kind. There is also, in his book, the *fac simile* of the handwriting of a relative of Mr. Cooper's who has been in the spirit-world more than thirty years; and the *fac simile* of her autograph when in the body, so that the reader can perceive at a glance the identity of the handwriting in both, though an interval of thirty-four years separates the two. The *fac simile* of the medium's (Mr. Cooper's daughter) usual handwriting is also given, and is entirely different from the others.

The work is published very cheap (only 2s.), and we hope it

* *Spiritualism—Its Facts and Phases.* Illustrated with Personal Experiences. By J. H. POWELL, Author of *Clippings from Manuscripts, Timon, and other Poems.* London; F. PITMAN, 20, Paternoster Row.

may have a wide circulation. From the chapter on *Dreams*, we transcribe the following anecdote, related to the author by the lady, living at Hastings, to whom it occurred. It is headed—

THE SEXTON AND THE STILL-BORN CHILD.

On one occasion she dreamed that she was walking by a church-yard, where she saw the sexton digging a grave—by his side stood a small box, which, he said, contained the remains of a still-born child. The dreamer desired to know if the clergymen were going to say a prayer over the grave. The man gruffly replied in the negative, and went on with his digging. "Then if he will not I will," she said, and she offered a few words of prayer to the Almighty over the grave of the still-born infant. Exactly six weeks from the time of her dream, which had passed from her mind, the lady was out walking, and without any premeditated intention, passed the very church-yard visible to her in her dream, and she saw the very sexton and box and every particular, as they appeared in her dream. Advancing irresistibly to the sexton, whom she had never before seen, except in her dream, she inquired whether the clergymen were coming to say a prayer over the grave; he replied, gruffly, "No," and went on digging exactly as he had done six weeks before, according to the dream. "Then if he will not I will," she said, and did so.

VICTOR; OR, LESSONS OF LIFE.*

THE progress of Spiritualism may be discovered by the fact that you can now scarcely take up a book in which you do not find traces of it. The most distinguished novelists, though denying or ignoring it in conversation, find it flowing as naturally from their pens as the ink itself; in fact, ink is becoming the most universal medium. The sermons of clergymen are more and more tinged by it, though the preachers are silent upon the subject all the rest of the week. The physical philosophers, though sworn against it, are continually publishing accounts of phenomena which puzzle them, though they are clear enough to their spiritual readers. It is thus moisture rises to the surface with a thaw, though there is no evidence of the vegetation that is sure to follow. We shall gradually find that the public mind has undergone a change unconsciously, and that the sea that Dame Partington swept out with an indignant besom has come in again by a quieter but equally diffusive tide.

Here is a little book of 161 pages of small print in which one would have suspected anything as soon as Spiritualism; yet it is full of it, and the author boldly puts his name on the title page. To ascertain whether the spiritual facts there recorded were actual or merely imaginary, we put ourselves in communication with the author, and are assured by him that not only are all these genuine expressions, but are by far the least remarkable

* *Victor; or Lessons of Life.* A Tale founded on Fact. By ROBERT H. F. EPPON, Author of *Lilliebright; or, Wisdom and Folly, &c., &c.* London: PETER and GALPIN.

which have occurred to him. All his life long the writer has been open to spirit influences, and has, as the Friends say, been "led and guided" by them. We intend, with the author's permission, to lay some of these before our readers on another occasion. In the meantime we may say that he combines in himself the scientific knowledge of music, the mission of a preacher, and the pursuits of natural history. In the last vocation he has visited tropical regions, and his descriptions of them are the most graphic, glowing, and eloquent ones that we have read. The little volume is a tale of English life, distinguished by its elevated and religious views; but its most living and fresh feature is its South American and Indian portraiture of nature in all its floral gorgeousness and elemental majesty. To the Spiritualist it is especially interesting. Though the name of the printing firm is on the title page, we have an idea that it is printed for the author, and that the most direct way to get the book will be to send eighteen pence or two shillings and two pence in stamps to the author, Mr. Robert H. F. Rippon, 42, High-street, Boston, Lincolnshire, which will bring a copy in paper or cloth, according to the price.

STRANGE RELATION BY A BAPTIST MISSIONARY'S WIFE.

The Baptist press are discussing with much warmth, as well they may, the novel views of Mrs. Mason, the Baptist Missionary in Burmah, wife of Dr. Mason, the linguist and translator. This lady professes to have discovered what she calls a "God language." This she discerns not only in works of nature but in works of man as well, such as carpets and figured cloths. Mrs. Mason thus recites her discovery:—

"Last September I was in Philadelphia, U. S. A. It was midnight, and I sat alone in an upper chamber. Something seemed to speak; there was no voice, but it came like a flash: 'Look down upon the floor.' I looked, and there was the fourth chapter of Revelations, as plain as light, woven on the carpet at my feet. It was an English or Dutch ingrain carpet, of a rich design, and that design and the colours all spoke out this chapter. I was so much overpowered by it I called up my son to see it, and neither of us dared afterwards to step on the carpet. I began to look into letters, studying the origin of forms. The result has been this: 1st. I am convinced that the alphabet was known to Adam and Eve, and that the alphabet is stereotyped in the heavens, and from this all nations have learned to count and to reckon time. It proves, 2nd. That the solar system is our own Bible, and represents God, and the history of man's redemption. It proves that God took upon himself the form of a world, and covered it with sacred letters, making every rock, mountain, and river, and country, a word or chapter. Then this world was made a book, lighted up with trees, flowers, grass, birds, fishes, and animals, which were created expressly for letters to this World-Bible. Consequently Adam gave names to all expressing, or expressive of the Word. Did you ever notice how like the first six verses of Genesis, and the first six verses of John were? One telling us of the natural—the World; the other of the spiritual—the Word. World is certainly Word with a light on it. God has in his infinite mercy given us the key to this great book, and to my inexpressible surprise and joy I read this same all over the Karen dresses. Their dresses, or sacks, are the true New Testament of our Bible. I have always told them that a deliverer would come, and that they would yet have a Canaan."—*The Crisis*.