

Modern Spiritism.



JAMES CAMPBELL.

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SOME THOUGHTS ON THE RELATIVE POSITIONS OF CHRISTIANITY
AND SPIRITISM.
"J. S." AND SPIRITUALISM DEFENDED.
VARIOUS NOTES.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

BALLARAT :

PRINTED AT "THE BALLARAT STAR" OFFICE, STURT STREET.

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P R E F A C E

THE curious fact has been noted by an eminent historian that great questions seem to come in cycles; that nations are agitated by momentous enquiries at one period of their histories which at other times are unthought of or regarded as of little importance. So in the lives of little communities such as ours, even in the smallest and remotest bush settlement, the same thing occurs—we have our periods of enquiry on particular subjects, our debates, our wranglings, our discussions and so on until we find some other subject to turn our attention to. So with the question of SPIRITISM, now being hotly discussed in our midst: if there were any likelihood of its becoming the faith of the future it would be momentous indeed.

In visiting America some eleven months ago I went with the full determination to learn what I could of Spiritism at its fountain-head. I had not given any very close attention to the subject previously, although I was tolerably familiar with the main facts and features of the system. I went under the impression that the phenomena of Spiritism had been very inadequately dealt with, that no explanations had been given sufficiently satisfactory, and that there was far more in it than English people had given it credit for. I enquired as well as I could, I visited several media, I read a great deal of Spiritist literature, I endeavored to weigh impartially Spiritist evidence, and, at last, came to the conclusion that although there was, or might be, a great deal in the mere facts of Spiritism as illustrations of a very curious form of psychological powers—as evidences of certain scientific truths we are, as yet, merely on the edge of—as far as communion with spirits was concerned it seemed to me to be but a poor mixture of

gross imposture on the one hand, and, where genuine, of a peculiar form of disease on the other.

I am fully conscious that I have but imperfectly dealt with the subject, and that much remains unsaid that might be said with profit, but I am desirous of keeping this little pamphlet within limits, and, at the same time, I feel that to deal with Spiritism fully requires an abler hand than mine. I can but express a hope that, imperfectly as the work is done, it may have its humble part in calling attention to some of the absurdities, the crudities, the contradictions and follies of this very weak and very foolish religion so-called. Should, however, any person feel that neither this nor any other anti-Spiritist writings are sufficiently conclusive, I strongly advise him to a course of Spiritist writings instead. The best cure for Spiritism, to any man of the slightest intellectual pretensions, is Spiritist literature; the best evidence against Spiritist claims as to the supernatural is to be found in Spiritist facts. The old fable of the mountain in labor is happily illustrated by the tremendous pretensions of spirit-communion and the infinitesimal results in any useful direction that flow from that communion.

JAMES CAMPBELL.

12 Seymour Crescent,

Ballarat, 10th January, 1872.

MODERN* SPIRITISM.



No. I.

A BRIEF GLANCE AT ITS HISTORY.

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF VICTORIA

IT is now over twenty-three years since the little town of Hydesville, in the State of New York, was thrown into a fever of excitement, owing to some extraordinary manifestations in a house inhabited by a Mr. Fox and his family. His two daughters had discovered that by making certain raps they received certain other raps, from (as they avouched) some unknown source. Questions were put, and soon answers indicating intelligence were received. It was as quickly elicited that the raps came from the spirit of some man who had been murdered in that same house some years before. The fame of the thing spread; great crowds flocked into the town to see and hear the wonders; visitors from far distances came upon the scene; meetings were held, at which excitement was a more marked feature than enquiry; committees investigated, but without much fruit; religious faction feeling was soon imported into the question, hot wranglings and bitter words quickly following; some ascribed it to diabolism, others to natural causes, whilst a third realised in it a new revelation—a dawning of a more glorious light on the world, the opening of a new era; in a word, modern Spiritualism was born.

Long prior, however, to the girl Fox's strange manifestations, some unknown power had made itself felt amongst that very peculiar people, the "Shakers." At times an invisible power had raised men and women from the ground, and hurled them along with a force irresistible; at others, strange visions had appeared which no mere dreaming would explain. Sights had been seen and sounds heard far above and beyond the range of physical phenomena; nay, more marvellous than all, seven years previous to the manifestations in Fox's house the birth of "Spiritualism" had been foretold, and the very year named. In 1848 (that year of startling events throughout the world) the "fullness of time"

* Note A.

had arrived—the millennial year had come at last; the world, tired of and disgusted with an old effete system of Christianity, longing after something nobler and higher, was at last ripe for the reception of “God’s best gift to man.” By the law of spiritual progression the nineteenth century had arrived at that glorious period when old faiths, rotten and lifeless, should sink into a just obscurity, and this best of all revelations should be vouchsafed to once erring and bewildered, but now spirit-guided and enlightened humanity.

Prior also to the formal introduction of Spiritualism, a precursor of it had gone before in the person of Andrew Jackson Davis, otherwise known as the “Seer of Poughkeepsie.” As a lad he was a dreamer of strange dreams; visions were his such as no other boy saw; he heard voices in the air; he had communications from the spirit world, advising, chiding, encouraging him. As time grew on, he discovered himself possessed of rare powers of clairvoyance, a marvellous faculty for seeing into the “interior condition” of persons diseased, and—how hateful the prosaic fact looks—prescribing for the patients at five dollars each. Soon he developed into a condition of clairscience, and from that point began to publish. His works were a strange compound of iconoclasm, as far as the old religions were concerned, and of building up, as far as his own ideas, or visions, or whatever one may call them, could carry construction out. He professed himself entirely ignorant of any science, or of any knowledge, beyond the slightest smattering of philosophy; yet, as his enthusiastic and loving admirers tell us, his works are filled with the profoundest thinking, and are characterised by the widest learning and research, all given, mark, inspirationally. I do not profess to have any very close acquaintance with his works, but such as I have read seem to me to be more the efforts of a mere word juggler—of one who substitutes verbal quibblings to cover barrenness of idea, rather than that of a profound thinker or well-read man. Certain it is, his works commanded a good deal of attention at the time of their publication, partially owing to their radical tendency, and partially to their mystical nature. In this latter he has almost universally been accused of being a faint and feeble imitator of Swedenborg. Hepworth Dixon says:—“Andrew Jackson Davis wrote a rhapsody in four stout volumes, which he called the ‘Great Harmonia,’ and which some of his ignorant dupes appear to have thought an original work. It was a mere parody of Swedenborg’s mystical dreams about the true heaven and the true earth, and though it has taken the minds of many who were bent on having a native creed, it must be rejected by the critic from a list of primary and seminal works. Swedenborg’s ‘Arcana Cœlestia,’ and not Davis’ ‘Great Harmonia,’ is the true source of American Spiritualism. The latter work may have had its part in nursing the fantasies of the Spirit circles; for while the Swedish seer must be credited with much of what is noble and poetic in those circles, the Poughkeepsie cobbler

may be credited with nearly all that is most grotesque and most profane." Farther on the same author says:—"Davis was a cross between the hard naturalism of Fourier and Owen and the dreaming spirituality of Swedenborg. In what is native—the form and method, not the substance of his system—the Poughkeepsie lad was racy of the soil, and consonant with his time. On all the large subjects of man's thoughts—on love and life, on good and evil, on body and spirit, on birth and death, on earth and heaven—he was little beyond the faint echo of his great original. What was new to him was the heat, the petulance, the ignorance, the irreverence of his books. Swedenborg was religious; Davis a stranger to religious life. The Swede was a reader of the Bible, a respecter of the past. Davis threw away his Bible as a Gull's horn-book, and spurned all records of our race as so much trash and falsehood. To him the past was nothing, the present much, the future more. His science was crude, but his arms were practical. If spirits came to him at will, he would make them work; if grace were given to him he would put it out for gain. Why was he a physician, if not to cure? Why was he a prophet, if not to preach? Why was he a searcher of hearts, if not to choose his own?" This last remark is somewhat of a hard hit. Davis has been called the Christ of the new gospel by some of his enthusiastic admirers and followers. When Dixon refers to his being a searcher of hearts, and therefore might choose his own, he refers to the fact that Davis had seduced two married ladies under the guise of affinity. Those who have read Goethe's "Elective Affinities" will readily understand the doctrine, and those in any way acquainted with American free love will appreciate the facts without further comment.

This, then, was the first great apostle of modern Spiritism, as the Shakers were the first prophets of the new dispensation. Since then the "New Evangel" has made rapid strides, until it musters now (according to Spiritists) from three to twenty millions of adherents; but of this more anon. In America it has State organisations, or conventions, and, within the last four or five years, a National Convention. It has a few followers in England, who are mainly Christian Spiritists; a few more in France who are re-incarnation* Spiritists; a few more in other parts of the world who are Spiritists of any term you please. They claim a number of eminent men in their lists, but, like the numbers, I will discuss that further on. Its history otherwise has been progressive. From rapping and tapping it rose to shifting chairs and tables, thence to ringing bells, thence to untying cords, thence to playing accordions and guitars, thence pinching female and male legs under a table, thence to lifting the medium bodily *à la* Mr Home and others, thence to telling what was inside sealed envelopes, thence to speaking through the mediums—and marvellous revelations they

* Note B.

have been : they have discovered a new heaven and nearly a new earth ; they have learnt how to heal diseases by the imposition of hands, or to prescribe by merely obtaining a lock of the patient's hair ; they have spoken in every language under the sun ; the medium, meanwhile, knowing nothing either of the language itself or of what he or she was speaking. They have brought back the spirits of the " dear departed," so that the bereaved and disconsolate relatives may sweetly commune with the spirits of those they loved ; they have held intercourse with all the mighty dead, and brought us the views of all the illustrious men and women of bygone years and ages. Once more has Socrates enlightened the multitude, but in Boston instead of Athens. Plato has revisited the earth, and given weighty words of wisdom to appreciative Yankees instead of Greeks. St. Paul has indited sundry epistles in New York ; Bacon has lectured in Washington ; Charlemagne has advised in Chicago ; Luther has pointed out his errors and repented in sundry places ; Milton has acknowledged the error he committed in strengthening the belief in a personal devil ; John Wesley has recanted in an innumerable host of circles ;* Shelley has warned all the world against his own foolish atheism. Are not these splendid results ? If with fear and trembling we dare to suggest that table-tapping, pinching legs, &c., are hardly edifying, dare we doubt the glorious evidence in, or the glorious results that must flow from, the fact of Plato instructing Messrs. Biglow, Slick, and others, somewhere in the United States of America, or of John Wesley recanting his errors in the august presence of, say, Mr. Nayler, in Melbourne ;† or of Sir Robert Peel giving testimony as to the part he has played in recent politics to Mr. Tyreman. We dare not cast the shadow of a doubt on these things. We are content to be instructed ourselves through the medium of the medium, and, with reverential hearts, accept the new Gospel and be thankful.

And so, amid much din and noise and strife, this blessed Harbinger of light has been slowly arising on the darkened soul of the world this last three and twenty years. Its converts have all the enthusiasm of a new faith. Their aims are noble ones—they would tear down old superstitions and old bigotries ; they would destroy every vestige of priestcraft ; they would uproot old and effete institutions

* It is very notable to observe how prominent a part John Wesley plays in spirit communications. The key to this peculiarity is in the fact that large numbers of the American Spiritists were either brought up or were members of the largest religious body in the States, namely, the Methodist Episcopal, which, as every one knows, was originally founded by John Wesley. This is another marked evidence of the subjective force of dominant ideas in the mind of the medium.

† Mr. Nayler was originally a Wesleyan, and if any one will take the trouble to read the " Glowworm," or the " Harbinger of Light" (both under Mr. N.'s supervision) they will find the spirits deal with Wesleyanism far above any other form of religion.

that have hung on the neck of the nations as a millstone, and in their places would substitute this glorious Revelation. Instead of superstition they would soon give the world enlightenment and knowledge; instead of priestcraft every man should minister to himself in things spiritual, binding and fettering creeds would be abolished, and freedom of thought established.

Old opinions, rags and tatters,
Get ya gone! Get ye gone!

When Spiritism is established the reign of all priestly domination, the time for all despotism, whether in religion or government, is past. Bygone creeds were fit doubtless for bygone ages—the world's childhood demanded a child's belief; but the world's manhood demands a man's faith, and that—glorious revelation—is Spiritism. Three and twenty years ago, the advent of modern Spiritism came through the girls Fox. In the words of a Spiritist writer, "From that humble home in Hydesville, as humble as Nazareth, the tidings spread with a joy and wonder akin to the angel tidings over Bethlehem, and the mediums were as credible as were the Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, who first heralded the news of a risen Christ." That Spiritism pronounced Christianity a failure. Some few years ago, Kate Fox, the favored medium, the one to whom came the first revelation of this noble religion, sought and found refuge in the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church. The grand old Church has had many victories, of which this was not the least significant.

No. II.

HAS IT A CREED?

TO the minds of many Spiritism is conceived of as being a defined and positive belief—as a sort of creed of Christianity, with a belief in spirits added. I confess after a very careful search into the subject, I am quite unable to say positively what Spiritism really is. I am perfectly aware if you go to Mr. Naylor, for instance, he will give his definition in a moment, but I am also aware that his definition would, and does vary from that of hosts of his fellow Spiritists. The main idea I gather from Spiritism is, that we have communion with the spirits of the dead. On that one point they all seem to agree, and at that their agreement ends. Let it be noted, however, that some six or eight months ago a great cry arose in the States that Andrew Jackson Davis had abandoned his belief in spirit communion. I never saw it fairly cleared up, and I do know that in a letter to the *Banner of Light*, Mr. Davis fenced the point and

spoke grandiloquently of toleration in creed, breadth of view, &c., &c. As this would strike a blow—the very heaviest blow possible—at Spiritism, I have no doubt by this time Mr. Davis has duly recanted and gone back to his original faith.’ This, however important, is not what I have to discuss at present. My object just now is to give you the faith of Spiritists; perhaps they had better speak for themselves: “In its modern and restricted sense Spiritualism may mean nothing more than the mere fact of spirit existence and intercourse. But the term is often applied to a system of philosophy, or religion based upon this cardinal fact. When thus applied we would define it as follows:—Spiritualism embraces all truths relative to man’s spiritual nature, capacities, relations, duties, welfare, and destiny; also all that is known relative to other spiritual beings, and to the occult forces and laws of the universe.”—(Plymouth Convention, 1859.) Note at this point, the last clause in this definition, namely, that it embraces all truths relative to man’s spiritual nature, and all that is known relative to other spiritual beings, and to the occult forces and laws of the universe. If this be true, then is Spiritism a splendid discovery. Hear, now, another definition: “The spirit world holds the same relations to the spirits that the material world holds to the physical man. The spirit there, as here, works out its own salvation. There is never any arbitrary decree or final judgment, and no atonement for wrong except through the suffering of the guilty. Salvation is only obtainable through growth. Heaven and hell are not localities, but conditions of mind. All spiritual beings are eliminated from physical bodies. They are often near those they love, and strive to warn, protect, and influence them. This influence is for evil as well as good. . . . Spiritualism frees man from the bondage of authority, book or creed. Its only authority is truth; its interpreter reason. . . . It can have no creed; every individual must be a law unto himself, and draught his own creed, and not seek to force it on others.”—(Ohio Fourth Convention.) Surely there is something very remarkable in the fact that Spiritualism “embraces all truths,” &c., and also, “all that can be known relative to other spiritual beings, and to the occult forces and laws of the universe,” as affirmed by the Plymouth Convention, and yet strange to say, “it can have no creed.” Hear another Spiritist on this subject: “The great offensive feature in Spiritualism to the creedist is, we have no fixed principles or creeds to guide us; that we are a mixed people of every color, shape, and size, differing in various points. This is the most truthful charge they have ever brought against us, and I feel proud of such a human principle. . . . Spiritualism knows no creeds, it bears no trammels, but is as free as air.”—(Mrs. Benjamin Todd: This lady is a great Pacific Coast luminary.) Hear, however, another: “Spiritualism has a defined and positive creed, which is this; the brotherhood of humanity and the fatherhood

of God ; that you are all of one family ; that you are led by one head. This does not differ from the Christianity taught by Christ, but Christianity has but a small foothold on the earth.”—(*Banner of Light*.) Another says:—“Our Spiritual creed is one God, one belief in immortality, and one common destiny in the great to come.”—(P. B. Randolph.) These creeds are expressive enough in all conscience, have astonishing elasticity, and can hardly claim a modern origin. Another insists on the necessity of a creed. “The good of a system of faith is lost to a people unless its principles are plainly declared.”—(Mrs. Maria M. King.) Another is yet more emphatic : “The sooner we take our stand as Spiritualists with the sects of the world, and acknowledge ourselves to be one of the many instrumentalities laboring for human good, the better.”—(Cephas B. Lynn.) Let it be understood, I am quoting from the best authorities on Spiritism. It is a remarkable fact also that in America at the present moment there is a great discussion going on amongst the Spiritists, as to the advisability of having a creed of some sort or not ; but so far, the non-credists are in the ascendancy. Here let me ask, what is a creed ? A simple definition would appear to me to be, that it is a definite statement of certain views which a number of persons believe to be truth. If any number of men from two to two millions agree in opinion on any question in theology, the moment they assert that opinion as truth to them, that moment they have established a creed. Do men value truth ? All men believe they do. Do men deprecate falsehood ? All men say they do. The moment, therefore, one man asserts a view that another man regards as false, that moment they are in intellectual antagonism, and it is merely a question of tolerance where that antagonism stops, or it may be a question of judgment as to where in one man’s opinion the other man’s view will tend to the harm of the former. Thus is a creed one of the first conditions of harmony, for likeness in opinion means mental approximation, and that means sympathy and mutual appreciation. Every man who disagrees from me impugns either my knowledge, wisdom, or judgment—a thing eminently distasteful to me. Every man who agrees with me endorses either my knowledge, wisdom, or judgment—a thing eminently pleasant. But the most important stand point is the view each holds as to the hurtfulness or good the other’s view may do to the other’s interest ; it may either be here or hereafter, or both. If a man holds it his duty to murder a heretic, as do the Thugs in India, how is the heretic likely to regard the Thugs’ creed ? If another regards it as his duty to seduce his neighbor’s wife under the guise of “affinities,” as do the Free Lovers of America (Hepworth Dixon remarks that all Spiritualists are not Free Lovers, but nearly all Free Lovers are Spiritualists), how is the neighbor likely to regard the Free Lovers ? The Shakers, who are also Spiritists, profess the entirest toleration, and state that they receive a man

without enquiring his opinions, and would keep him without questioning his creed. When amongst them I asked Elder Evans, who is their chief man, point blank, "If, say, a Roman Catholic were to join you, and spend every spare hour in promulgating his creed, and in pointing out that, in his opinion, your Shaker creed led to eternal destruction, would you allow it? Note the answer—" *We would not.*" Hence, therefore, when a religion comes forward purporting to be the saving faith for all nations, we are bound, as a first question, to ask "What do you teach?" The soul of man seeks to rest on sure and certain ground. He must know the foundations of his faith before he can lay down that all-important thing, a rule of life. The mind of man will not be driven hither and thither by every passing gust of opinion, for that is utter weariness; it must find rest. Whence comes that rest? From some authoritative standard which each man accepts, and one accepted, that standard is his creed. The error of the churches is that they too often lay stress on non-essentials. But that is as nothing compared to that error which declares there are no essentials at all; that every man is free to think and act as he pleases, and yet that all are on the road to Heaven; that neither truth nor falsehood are of any importance, for they both lead to the same result; that, in other words, men may hold views mutually contradictory and destructive, and yet both are safe in their issues, and both (amazing logic!) are true. When, therefore, Spiritism comes forward, boasting of its freedom from creeds, we may simply regard it as acknowledging its own impotency to solve the great problems around us, and as having, within itself, such contradictory elements that its own members cannot agree as to its reality or truth. How marvellous is this! They affirm they are in direct communication with the spirits of the great departed, the wisest, the noblest, the best of all mankind; that they dwell where "we shall know even as we are known. It shall be a land of truth, where deceit shall find no lurking place, and where the word 'falsehood' will designate no possible sin."—(Robert Dale Owen.) That these are holding councils as to how they may benefit mankind; that they impart wisdom through the mediums* (or media, as some prefer to call them), and yet there remains the astounding fact that these wisest of men, having solved the great question for themselves, having passed through the cold river, standing now on the glorified side, and, as some of them assert, having stood in the very presence of the Most High, are yet unable to solve one single problem in the vast puzzle of human life and human destiny. They affirm their own spirit existence, and there affirmation ends. On every other point confusion reigns supreme; one Spiritist describes heaven as one thing, another as another. One affirms the existence of a God, another of male and female God, another that there is no God at all.

* Note C.

One tells you God is everything and in everything (Pantheism in its most avowed form), another that God is a personal God in the strictest sense. One affirms that prayer is heard and answered, another that prayer is mere mockery, another that prayer is a delusion, but is good in its reflex action on the person praying. One tells you heaven and hell are not localities but states, another that they are positive localities, another that they are both. One affirms that heaven is on the earth, another that it is on the far bounds of space, and so on, and so on. All this I shall endeavor to prove as I proceed, let it be enough to point out these contradictions for the purpose of making but this comment—how marvellous, how astounding, how utterly inexplicable are the differences in opinion if it be true that the spirits of the wisest inspire these media to declare that which if one be true the other must be false; if one statement be wisdom the other must be folly, and that from the sphere where all darkness disappears, where all questionings, all doubting cease, come these contradictions, these enigmas that have puzzled and wearied men from the first day until this. Goethe's last words are said to have been "More light! more light." If he ascended to this realm whence all these contradictions emanate, his noble wish and noble aspiration remains, and will remain, unfulfilled.

No. III.

THE SPIRITIST HELL AND HEAVEN.

HAVING glanced at the Spiritist creed, and discovered that they cannot agree as to whether they have a creed or not, let us now pass on to some of their views put forward as true revelations by the media as to the condition of the departed in heaven, or the "great hereafter," or as the most favorite term is, the "Summerland." Here, if anywhere, we may expect to find agreement in statement and harmony in facts, for as each spirit speaks of that which it has realised and now knows, where is there room for doubt in any form? It may appear marvellous to our simple minds that there should be any difference of statement in matters of doctrine from spirits professing to have solved the great problem, and who are now in that land from whence error and falsehood are banished, but when they tell us of their own actual state, there cannot be room for supposing otherwise than that they speak of what they know, and therefore err in no way. Beginning, therefore, with the seer of Poughkeepsie, and father of Spiritism, hear his description of one of the primary

stages in the Summerland. "In the Summerland, whither children are constantly going from the earth, they are received into groups for improvement, growth, and education. . . . Here let me mention that in the Summerland these groups are arranged, classified, and designated in accordance with the immortal laws of music. A group at first simply means a note, afterwards an octave, and ultimately, when harmony is established, the whole assemblage constitutes, so to say, a musical instrument of twelve octaves instead of six and a half, as we are here taught in the popular piano or church organ. It is beyond the power of earthly language to describe the celestial melody, the fairy-like music of this human musical instrument," and so on. This is not bad for a beginning, but we have more vivid pictures to follow—let it be remembered that in every case these quotations are not the mere poetic fancies of the media as to what might be, but the plain, downright statement of fact as to the real and actual existence of what is. In the face of Mr Davis' unequivocal statement, it is somewhat confusing to come butt up against this assertion—"The spirit world is not essentially a fixed locality but rather a condition, though it may be difficult to divest mortals of all ideas of location. Heaven and hell are states and conditions rather than fixed places, and so are what are called spheres."—(A. E. Newton.) We are still further bewildered by finding this positive declaration, "Heaven and hell are not localities, but conditions of mind!"—(Ohio State Convention.) Our somewhat puzzled brain becomes almost hopelessly clouded when we are informed in reply to this question, "Is the Summerland a place or a state?" we are told "It is both."—(Mrs. J. H. Conant.) Mrs. Maria H. King gives, however, a flat denial to her fellow believers, for she roundly asserts "The Summerland is a *real* place." When, however, we find those who affirm it is a place, or that hell is a place, most extraordinary descriptions are given. One speaks of strange ruins, where singular pillars were, where the walls were frescoed, pavements of marble inlaid with jewels, windows not of glass but something soft and transparent, resembling *glue*; goblets and cups of gold and silver: there also were strange idols of stone with jewels for eyes, or the face of a man, but the body of a dog: rank grass grew up amid the ruins: the air was cold and oppressive; the grass is *white*, all plants look sickly: there is a fear of *serpents*, and so on.—(Edmonds and Dexter.) Then follow descriptions of some sort of a place, a kind of travestie of Dante's "*Inferno*"—a sort of hell in various circles, but with all the force of description of the great Florentine omitted. We are introduced to the dwelling-place of the sensual, but the worst fate that seems to have befallen them is that "their faces are coarse, with protruding lips, broad noses, and round-shaped faces." Then there are "deceivers and intriguers," but we are not told anything beyond that they live in "a terrible atmosphere." Then we come to those who used to sacrifice human beings, and who, true

to their vile instincts, still sacrifice, or *think* they sacrifice, animals in a copper cauldron! Of them their fearful doom is, that they are "sad and gloomy." Then we are told of secret dungeons, with "square trap-doors of stone, very hard," in which "are bones of animals, children, men, and women;" but the precise object these are for is not stated. Then we are introduced to various figures with "expressions and countenances denoting every passion in which man is capable of indulging." These turn out to be the "very vulgar." In another part we are shown a scene in which spirits are "cutting a female slave into quarters, and figures are dancing round and bathing their heads in the blood of the victim." "They had slain a child and were playing football with its body." I am still quoting from "Edmonds and Dexter's Spiritualism," vol. II, p. 385-424. These authorities, be it noted, are about the best in America, Judge Edmonds especially being one of the greatest Spiritist lights. Having had these enlightening glimpses of hell, or Hades, or whatever you may choose to call it (glimpses that on the whole, I am confident will reassure quite a number of my friends), we pass on to view the glories of the Summerland. One is somewhat startled to find that the first thing we are introduced to is a village! There is something very mundane to my carnal mind in this idea; but I am not forgetful of the fact that my spiritual nature is so far "undeveloped." To proceed—In this village there are "myriads of inhabitants"—rather an incongruous idea in connection with a village—who are "ministering to the wants and comforts of strangers." Spirit forms are filling goblets and carrying them to their homes to refresh those they have under their care. Another very mundane idea, and highly suggestive of the Travellers' Rest and Half-way House. This village, it seems, is called (in large letters) Benevolence. Then we come to another village, the inhabitants of which are "looking over books, as if they wished rather to recall or see the record of those who have gone before them." This village is called Charity. Fancy an eternity spent in looking over heavenly ledgers. Next we see the City of Love; Love, it seems, demanding a larger superficial area than either Benevolence or Charity. This city has "beautiful architecture," a gate of gold, "a glittering gold, light, and not so gross and material as our gold." At the time the medium entered the inhabitants were holding a meeting (an eminently Yankee notion), in which various spirits instructed the others. They "are not arranged as mortals, but seemingly float on the atmosphere, and combine together so closely that a very large number of spirit forms can be admitted within the building." The city, it seems, "is built upon ethereal clouds, surpassing in beauty anything that can be brought to the view of the material eye. Mortals can have no conception of it! for one sphere is built on another in an ethereal atmosphere, and is alive with spirit forms keeping together in perfect order." There is a

a slight confusion of idea in this notion of a city built on ethereal clouds, in a sphere which is built on another sphere in an ethereal atmosphere; but as we have other jewels to gather in this Spiritist paradise, we will hasten on. "The birds are of a golden hue; their plumage is very beautiful. They are not entirely useless, for each bears in its bill a bit of tissue or transparent paper, on which words are written, and they go to other spheres and let fall these scraps. The spirits there take them up and read thereon words of encouragement and hope, and thus the spirit friends in the spheres are cheered and progressed." Near by the City of Love is the "City of Happy Childhood," which is so beautiful that "a mother's heart must thrill with joy when she hears of this city." At its gate is a "fountain of jewels," where "the little cherubs run and pick up the jewels as they fall from the fount bubbling and sparkling, toss them in the air, and catch them again." With which entrancing view of heavenly felicity the enraptured medium seems to have desired to be left for a time, for this concludes this particular medium's celestial revelations. There is, however, another aspect of this heavenly life. They have a "legislative hall" in each sphere, and it seems a parliament and government as well. "The higher powers of its government are exercised by representatives chosen from and by the mass, but it (the community) is divided into smaller communities. . . . The whole community meet only by its representatives. The smaller communities often assemble together to receive instruction and deliberate upon matters connected with the general welfare. Each of these communities has its presiding and ministering spirit, its secretaries to record the proceedings, and its own place of meeting." If another prayer might be added to the litany, in all sincerity it is, that the Lord might deliver us from such a heaven as this! What! do you call this beatitude? Would you insult the common sense of a long-suffering Victorian public by telling them a part of their future felicity is the possibility of a celestial parliament? Think of a spirit Vale on protection, or a ghostly Langton on free-trade, a shadowy Dyte on the land office, and an anything Smith on any subject whatever—and all eternity before them to talk! Forbid it, Heaven! The thought is too appalling. I cannot pursue the subject further, in mere trembling apprehension lest Spiritism *may* be true.

So far I have been quoting Edmonds and Dexter, who, as I said before, are burning and shining lights in Spiritist circles in America. I now turn to another authority, a Mr. A. Gardner, author of "Clairvoyant Travels in Hades." Mr. G. thinks that, although the Summerland is all very well, there is another place nearer home—that has not been sufficiently attended to, and that place is Hades. "Hades," he says, "is on the earth, under the earth, in the sea, and, indeed, everywhere about the earth, including a great portion of the atmosphere." In this Hades hosts of things continue to live as well

as men, the latter as a whole being under the influence of the most extraordinary hallucinations. It seems the old story of the Flying Dutchman had its foundation on actual facts. Mr. Gardner saw phantom ships and their crews. The ships had been lost in some way, and all on board drowned, but "they had no idea they were dead." All things went on on board as usual. The ghostly crew hauled ghostly ropes about; the phantom passengers discussed and quarrelled as usual; observations were taken, but "as soon as these ships come within a certain distance of any land, the magnetic repulsion is so great they are driven back, and so they are kept traversing between two magnetic points. They had been six years on the Atlantic without being able to account for their strange adventures." Further, it seems "they are supplied with food from the magnetic essences of substances they are able to attract." Some of the phantom ships, however, got near enough to land "to trade with the native spirits in sheep, goats, &c., &c. They paid in magnetic coin, which was much solidified, and would pass a considerable time before it dissolved." In this Hades it appears "the soul is still thirsty, and rum is daily drank and used." Do not let it be supposed, however, that phantom ships are the main features of Hades. The medium visited an island in the Indian Ocean, where he found lots of spirits dressed in white garments, and laboring under a variety of delusions. One "said he was the Angel Gabriel." Another was personifying God. "He (God) was a stout old gentleman seated on a throne, and had on a golden crown." The next day the medium visited the jungles of India, and "examined a place of torment, where the wicked were being tormented with fire and brimstone by the devil and his angels. There was truly weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. . . . Of course, all the fire and brimstone was in the imagination of the wretches who were being thus tormented by the mesmeric delusions of the spirits that officiated as executioners." The following by way of contrast:—They "saw the hallucinated votaries of ecclesiastical superstition. There are many heavens in Hades, and many sects in religion. . . . They are uniformly governed by a God, Jesus is a necessity, and the Virgin is a *sine quâ non* in many. Music is prevalent on all occasions, and absolutely requisite to keep down contentions. The place was lighted with an artificial sun, so that there was no night there. The throne of God was magnificent. Jesus was seated on a chair, all adorned with gold, and he wore a crown of diamonds. The Virgin is a paragon of excellence, and demeans herself with modesty and grace. All heaven is redolent of her charms, and she speaks with charming eloquence when addressing the Father." In another place—"The theatres and oratorios and places of amusement were open. The play-bills were remarkably like the same sort of literature here below." Enough! Such are the statements put forward, not as mere visions—not as dreams of a grotesque fancy—but as

sober facts of what is passing around and about us at this very hour. Whether it be Davis, Edmonds, or Dexter; whether it be Gardner, King, or Conant—all would swear as to their accuracy, and tell you that all these things are actual verities, for they have seen them and know. If, say these media, we have seen London, cannot we describe its bustle? If we have visited Paris, may we not tell of its magnificence? If Switzerland, can we not in some measure picture its grandeur?—and our descriptions would be true. So may we speak of the Hereafter. We have seen, therefore we describe, and our descriptions are true. And, logically and reasonably, all Spiritists must accept this position; for if you admit the littlest grain of delusion or imposture, where do you stop? Such is the heaven, the hell, the hades, the summer and winter land of Spiritism. Is not the conception of such a heaven ennobling? Is not such a hell fearful? Beyond words!

No. IV.

THE SPIRITIST HELL AND HEAVEN.

LET us now hear a few more revelations from some other authorities concerning the Hereafter, for nothing, surely, can be of more interest to us as a race than to learn whither we are going and what our destiny is. Quoting first of all from Mrs. Maria M. King (another American luminary), in a book entitled “Real Life in the Spirit Land,” we are informed that “the dwelling place of the departed spirits is a *real place*.” We then begin to learn something of this place, given through Mrs. King, as she terms it, “*inspirationally*.” To begin with children, it seems they go through the

* I would urge home this point, as many Spiritists endeavor to get out of it by the poor subterfuge that there are evil spirits (“larrikin spirits,” Mr. Naylor calls them) round about us, and that these delight in misleading people. This is a singular theory from those who lay such stress on the “noble,” “refining,” “elevating” influences that come from Spirit communion. We are informed by “J. S.,” who seems to be the Victorian champion of Spiritism, that the spirits “inculcate the principles of true religion and morality, explain and enforce the laws of Almighty God, whose instruments they claim to be, and of whose omnipotence, omniscience, and infinite love they are perpetually speaking in terms of fervent adoration and rapturous eulogy.” Yet, strange that these instruments of Almighty God are often “larrikin,” according to Mr. Naylor; often mislead and deceive people, and sometimes do them harm. It is a peculiar feature that Spiritists laugh to scorn the idea of a Devil, and yet believe in these impish and deluding larrikin spirits. It looks like a modern realisation of that familiar instance where one devil was ejected only to return with seven more with him!

ordinary process of nursing, but in some spirit method. "Women who develop the motherly instincts and characteristics in the Spiritual state, are initiated into their work [of nursing] by degrees. When a little helpless infant—perchance one who has never seen the light in the physical state, but is sent half made up, as it were, to the care of the spirit nurses—it is first committed to the care of some tender mother who is yearning for a babe left behind. . . . Whoever adopts it must carefully bear it to its mother's breast, that it may imbibe a portion of her magnetism, that it may continue to develop and be like her, and retain its proper character as a child of its parents." This about the child "half made up" is in flat contradiction of a statement made by a spirit to the great apostle of the faith, Mr. Davis. In answer to the question, "Do children who die in conscious infancy live in the future state?" the spirit replied, "The moment an infant has been ushered into the world an individuality has been formed, which continues to exist, provided the physical constitution was perfected—not otherwise." This utterly falsifies the "half made up" theory, and yet these are both heavenly revelations. To proceed: Mrs. King confirms all about the councils, but adds a few interesting particulars. The councils are composed of male and female members, but in the lower circles the females are excluded, or (sweet touch of femininity!) admitted only as spectators. There is some little confusion of statement between Mrs. King's inspiration and Judge Edmonds' revelation as to the manner of government; but the former states that "each circle convenes a general council, and these general councils of the highest circle convene a grand council, which latter has the oversight of all matters pertaining to universal progress in the circles below them in the second sphere and on earth. The grand council is composed of the wisest sages of the four highest circles of the spheres." It is very cheering to find that mundane affairs come under the grand council's cognisance, for it seems "the Fathers of the Republic were there assembled, and deliberated upon the question of emancipating the slaves." (This was prior to the American War.) "Sitting as members of the body were the wives of those statesmen who, by their education in the spirit world, had fitted themselves to sit beside their husbands. . . . The president was supported, not by a score of vice-presidents, but by his wife." Need it be said, "the presiding officer was Benjamin Franklin." I apprehend it will be a long time before other than Americans preside over grand councils so long as Americans are the media. We are, however, startled beyond measure to find that there is courtship and marriage in the spirit world. With what mixed feelings this will be received by the readers of these lines I cannot guess, but with one portion I am prepared to sincerely sympathise. Let Mrs. King speak for herself. "No hasty marriages are allowed in the sphere, but individuals are required to understand each other before they take upon themselves

the sacred bonds of matrimony. (Bonds, alas! there as here.) Individuals entering the sphere already married sustain the same relation to each other as in earth life. (What think you of this, heaven, ye hen-pecked ones?) Although it is sometimes necessary to separate husband and wife for a season, until the nature of the one or the other, or both, is educated to the legitimate use of the marriage relation. Celibacy, or non-intercourse of an adult individual with one of the other sex, is only beneficial as it qualifies an individual for the proper use of the sexual faculties. Individuals do not change their natures on entering the spirit world, but continue to possess sexual organs, as they do all other organs of the body, which several organs are the expressions of the propensities of an individual." This from a lady! it must be confessed this is rather strong meat.

How charmingly these Spiritist seers, clairvoyants, &c., harmonise in their statements, will be at once apparent when I quote from Mr. Paschal Beverley Randolph, in his "After death, or Disbodied Man," "Marriage, either mono or polygamic, is, of course, unknown." Then follows another revelation which should be duly noted—"but an indiscriminate freedom in its functions is the universal rule. Of course, there can be no palpable result to this, for no children are born there, but they do not comprehend the fact. They imagine different results, and their females realise their wishes with reference to offspring, not as on earth, though of that fact, too, they are ignorant. When Quisbee wants a baby badly, she receives one of the proper grade for her, if such is to be had. . . . She finds a child by her side; don't know how it got there; thinks she bore it, but is mistaken; for, in fact, it is one just dead in Kaffirland, or from the slums of Canton." This is in portion of the first grand division, peopled by the spirits of the most imperfect of the human race. This writer gives us some minute details of the Summerland. It is divided into seven divisions, zones, or belts, or some such appellation; in this paradise are "phantom dogs and birds," "fauna and flora, too, transcendently beautiful and interesting." Mr. Warren Chase, however (another great Spiritist light), seems to be sceptical about his brothers' and sisters' visions on this point. "Many persons," he says, "who become attached to pet dogs, cats, &c., or even pigs, are not willing to lose them at death, and hence try to hold on to a belief that these, too, will go over to the spirit life, and be with them there; but, if so, the law must be general, and as we scald out the bedbugs and burn the fleas, we only send them on to torment our friends on the other side." This looks remarkably like a grain of common sense out of the bushels of rubbish Mr. Chase usually inflicts on a long-suffering American public; but then is he not contradicted by Judge Edmonds, Dr. Dexter, Mrs. King, and Seer Randolph? Continuing our quotations, however: "It (the spirit world) is a zone or belt, at right angles with the poles. It is composed, substantially, of the unused essences of matter, electric,

magnetic, odic, projected from the earth in its constant axial revolutions. . . . Each planet, sun, astral and stellar galaxy in universal space is similarly belted." "The sun himself is surrounded by spiritual belts just as is this earth. . . . The entire solar system is girdled with a belt of spiritual substance; and on its surface is finally collected all the spiritual offspring of all the planets, from whence they eventually take their flight to that vast zone which encircles our entire galaxy." In Aidenn, as Mr. Randolph calls it, "they have an aristocracy, for no one believes one man to be as good as another."* We are surprised to find that "the spirits are not altogether imponderable, but have sensible weight; the difference between them is about 2800 times less in weight there than here. You who weigh 180 lb on the planet will not balance even 1 lb there." But the seer is still more specific: "The size of an ethereal person is, but not invariably, such as, were they solid substance, would balance from eighty to one hundred and fifteen pounds; albeit there are in some of the spiritual zones very tiny people indeed, who, having been seen occasionally by earth dwellers, have been christened fairies, fays, and banshees. There are others ten feet and over in height." On other matters we have most interesting information. "Red and other colored hair here is of a general flaxen hue there; the inhabitants are generally beardless. Fat men lose their fatness; negroes lose their wool, and are no longer black." The language is "a universal phonetic system" among the upper grades. The females generally *choose to appear* about twenty-four years old; the men from thirty-five to forty. They have books, but they are on scrolls, and picture-written. There are libraries, to which all who wish have access. There are kings and rulers, who attain their position by "natural, spontaneous selection." Spirits make voyages and visit countries other than their own; but happily "there are no railway or steamer fares to pay." They have "feasts, fetes, parties, balls, operas, concerts, the drama, shows, schools, universities, libraries, museums, lectures, theatres, orations, congresses, elections, coronations, in fact, everything good that man here enjoys he has also there in the upper country, except genuine law courts, churches, baptisms and funerals; and some of the glorious scenes there exhibited immeasurably surpass the most ecstatic vision of poet, voluptuary, and dreamer." In the sixth grand division of Aidenn there are myriads of palaces exceeding everything yet conceived of in earth. "They, in material, resemble nothing so much as a soap-bubble inflated to the collapsing point, for they contain and reflect a thousand kaleidoscopic hues, shimmering gloriously in

* Mr Warren Chase emphatically contradicts all this about aristocracies, &c. "A monarchy in Heaven," he says, "or on earth is a false and falling system, and must perish. Nature has no titled aristocracy and no lineal descendants, if such acquire supremacy," and so forth. I was hugely amused at reading in a Spiritist paper an adjuration by some enthusiastic Spiritist and Republican, to "press forward to the *republic* of Heaven!"

the pearly light of Aidenn." With which admirable comparison as to the soap-bubble, a comparison that might be extended to the whole seven divisions, I leave Mr. Paschal Beverley Randolph, in order that I may leave the whole of this travestie as soon as possible; but in concluding this part of the subject, I cannot resist quoting one more "revelation" given through the famed and much-lauded Mrs. J. H. Conant, whilst speaking inspirationally:—

Question:—I heard it stated last night there were asylums—insane hospitals—in the spirit world?

Answer:—It is so.

Question:—Why do they have them there?

Answer:—Because there is necessity for them.

Whatever other contradictions there may be among media as to the character of the Spiritist heaven, this statement is so entirely inharmony with its general characteristics that I think it may be heartily believed.

It has ever seemed to me a testimony to the wisdom of God that heaven and hell are left hidden; that beyond the assertion that there is an eternity, an immortal destiny for immortal man, we are left to faith in the promises of that just God who will reveal all in his own good time. Were heaven and hell proven by demonstration or experience beyond question, would there be any merit in believing? Would not the motive for serving God be transferred from faith in his promises to the promised things themselves? There is a transcendental sort of philosophy abroad at present (and, most inconsistently, great numbers of Spiritists subscribe to it), that all actions done in which either future rewards or punishments are motives are wrong. This appears to me to be a half truth. You cannot dis sever the idea of reward or punishment from the human mind; but you may dis sever a gift from its giver so far as to make the selfish desire for the gift shut out all honor to the giver in motive or in faith. Wisely, therefore, does it seem to me God has drawn a veil over the future, giving us his promise of glory and that inward voice that speaks immortality from the lowest to the highest; that soul that attests its own deathlessness. Virtue is so clouded in our eyes that it needs a strong faith in first principles to make men do right: if it were proven to an unmistakable demonstration, men would be virtuous simply because it *paid* best. Heaven is veiled from our eyes that we need strong faith in God before we realise it, and that faith is God-honoring. But Spiritists have discovered a newer and better way. They want a heaven or a Summerland, or what you will, laid down according to plans and specifications. The Christian heaven they say is "tame and lifeless," it has mere "barbaric glories." They complain that they learn nothing definite about it, and they proceed to erect a superstructure of their own. A marvellous creation it is! "Zones," "spheres," "ethereal clouds," "ethereal atmospheres," "states," "localities," "circles." No two

of them can agree as to the character of this Summerland ; each has a different description from the other, unless a rhapsodic flux of words—an ecstasy, either real or imagined, expressed in hysterical adjectives—are signs of agreement. Those who are in felicity cannot describe what that felicity is. Those who have “gone home,” cannot agree with any other spirit as to what that home consists of : one must be false, for it is certain if there be but seven circles there cannot be twelve. And the occupations of the glorified—how despicable, how mean they seem ! Feasts, fetes, balls, operas, concerts, debating societies, nursing children, floating hither and thither in some aimless sort of way ; these are the sort of enjoyments in heaven. “Men,” says the *Cornhill Magazine*, “when they die, become it appears miserable beings, endowed with no one property worth having except the power of flying about like gnats ; they are so stupid that, though they can go where they please and in some respects do as they please, they never hit upon even the clumsy plan of the raps and the alphabet until a Yankee Quaker suggested it. This notable difficulty prevented them from communicating with the world for some centuries, and even now restrains their communications to a few people, most of whom are sick or enthusiastic. Having arrived at this great discovery they have nothing to say which is worth any human creature’s while to learn ; they have not even the poor ingenuity which would enable them to give *proofs* of their existence. When called upon to show themselves to sceptics, or stand forth in a tangible, permanent form, they have always an excuse. They have had the awful experience of passing from one world to another, and have grown, not wiser, but more foolish in the process.” Truly, they have nothing to say which is worth while learning, for their revelations, as a clever critic has said, show, if they show anything, that “Washington has forgotten how to speak, Shelley how to rhyme, and St. Paul how to reason.” It is pitiable to read the fustian palmed off under the signatures, or as the utterances, of the noblest intellects the world has ever seen. If anywhere (next to God) there should be reverence, if anywhere veneration, it is when we deal with names of the mighty departed : when we speak of those grand in intellect or life, who have raised our conceptions of our race and stamped with the stamp of the Divine our souls and minds. Ever do the minds of right-thinking and right-feeling men shrink from associating the names of the departed with things common-place and mean. But these men bring all the noblest, all the loftiest, all the best of mankind to petty seances in petty places, to what ? Mouth the most utter fustian, platitudinise the veriest rubbish, talk a poor vaporous philosophy in which one proposition is destructive of the other, sentimentalise a sickly sort of religion in which is neither definiteness nor consistency. All this from the names honored and revered among men. If there is one fact which condemns Spiritism more than another it is this.

No. V.

THE HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY.

IT is very difficult to say where theology ends and philosophy begins. Their lines blend so closely that in discussing theology one trenches on philosophy, or in discussing philosophy you find that its issues have a theological bearing. Still more difficult is it to discuss the "Harmonial Philosophy," as Spiritists dub it, for it is a compound of theology and metaphysics very difficult to separate from each other; but of the two I think theology has by far the larger share. It is amusing to note the term "harmonial" as applied to it, for it may be safely affirmed a more inharmonious system never was presented to man. A religion without a creed, and a philosophy without either school or master, is not likely to be very harmonious, and that it is not so will be seen by any one who will simply read two different issues of two different Spiritist journals. Do not let me, however, deal in generalities; in order to save space and time, let me, as before, quote from themselves. Hear number one—"It seems to me that the existence of an infinite intelligent God can no more be called in question than infinite space."—(George White.) Hear, however, number two—"We propose to prove that an infinite God is an impossibility."—(J. R. Francis.) And Mr. Francis proceeds to prove it to his own entire satisfaction. To proceed—"We know our career from the cradle to the grave, but the future is veiled from our vision."—(Mrs. Emma Hardinge.) This is positive, but here is something equally positive—"Spiritualists believe in the power of prevision inherent in the human mind; a power which takes cognisance equally of the atomic realm of the unlimited past, the boundless present, *or the infinite future.*"—(J. B. Loomis.) Again, "Spiritualism teaches negatively that there is no special Providence."—(W. H. Jamieson.) On the other hand—"God favors us by special Providence through angelic proxies, when we do right."—(P. B. Randolph.) On another point—"Try prayer and you realise God—you will see Him unveiled and know him to be the Dispenser of blessings to the needy—the God and Father of all."—(George White.) On the contrary—"I do not believe in prayer to God; there may be some value in prayer to men, in or out of the form—none to God."—(Prof. William Denton.) "The Deity is nowhere visible. We receive impressions from Him, but do not see Him."—(A. J. Davis.) Listen to this, "I believe that on several occasions I have seen Deity; beheld the centre of the boundless sea of universes, and gazed, appalled beyond utterance, upon the ineffable glory of the Lord of Lords."—(P. B. Randolph.) Note these two "harmonial" assertions—"God is love. In every

situation of life this evidence is conclusive, that God loves everything he has created. Aye! every object of his handiwork proclaims this truth, that love eternal, undying, is the very source of all his works.”—(Judge Edmonds.) “Of one thing we are at least sure, namely, that God is *not* love, and love is not God, in our world at least, as it now is.”—(Warren Chase.) Again—“As law rules supreme, in the spiritual as well as physical realm, there can be no miracle.”—(Ohio State Association.) Note this in reply—“The spirit manifestations have in the last three years produced MIRACLES; and many more will, ere long, astound the would-be considered philosophers, who may continue to deny* and sneer at the most obvious facts.”—(Dr. Ashburner.) “It is true that a portion of the God-principle or spirit is *in* every individual person or thing, as well as all matter.”—(W. H. Fahnestock.) “Magnetism is a quality outside of a magnet. So is God a spirit *outside* of matter.”—(W. H. Fahnestock again.) “No one will deny that God is infinite in His attributes, and that natural law is the perfection and divinity of those attributes, and that, consequently, all things have been arranged upon the wisest and best plan.”—(Thomas Gales Forster.) Observe—“An infinite intelligent being is a myth; perfection nowhere! absolute perfection an impossibility. The vast universe, like a scroll, is open before us. On all sides we see imperfection. Chance don’t cause it, none of us cause it, a personal God don’t cause it. When perfection is attained by man then progression will cease. There is imperfection in government, imperfection in religion, imperfection in all departments of life.”—(*Religio-Philosophical Journal*.) From another authority, and, let me remark, one of the most honorable on the Spiritist side—“Spiritualism, as generally understood, teaches the existence of a supreme spiritual intelligence, unfolding, pervading, and animating the universe; a God of infinite attributes and perfections, and the father of all spirits, whether in or out of the mortal form.”—(Uriah Clark.) How admirably this agrees with the following:—“Man on earth makes a God out of those causes whose effects he either dreads or admires. You look on the earth and the brilliant orbs that deck the firmament as the effects of some cause, and you blindly ascribe that to an infinite God.” “Our ideas of God are founded on these two essential attributes—power and wisdom. Man possesses both, hence he may be regarded as a God, for he possesses the qualities that are ascribed to the infinite. Now we have never seen the being who possesses *all power* or *infinite wisdom*, or who is omnipresent, but we have seen those who possessed considerable wisdom, great power, and who were present in a particular locality, and who resembles man; hence the only God we will ever find is man.” “All attempts to unveil an infinite God will be fruitless, since none exists.”—(*Religio-Philosophical*)

* “Witnesses to modern miracles or manifestations, in this day and hour, can be counted by hundreds of thousands.”—(A. J. Davis.)

Journal.) From the same source we are informed—"We may discover the great fact that it would not absolutely require an infinite being to project and set in motion a world like ours." On another point—"The necessity for a personality as a central point for man's worship arises from the inability of man to measure infinity. Man on the religious plane must have something that he can grasp; his object of worship must be visible, so to speak, to his comprehension; must be able to manifest himself in God-like love, wisdom, and action. . . . Hence there is a universal need which demands not alone attributes but a personality to whom they belong, and through whom they can be made manifest."—(Prof. Mapes.) How admirably consonant with the following:—"I do not believe in a personal God, or what is understood generally as a personal God. I believe the common idea of God is a fiction . . . the universe is God. I believe there is a soul to the universe as there is a soul to man, and the infinite soul includes the latter, and everthing else."—(Prof. William Denton.) I would say that this last assertion is a somewhat paradoxical bit of metaphysics were I not conscious, in all humility, that I am quoting from the "Harmonial Philosophy." Professor Denton, by the way, gives us some very cheering items of faith. He says:—"I do not believe God can forgive sin. I do not believe in such a thing as sin against God, but I believe in sin (the professor delights in paradoxes). I do not think it wicked to swear. It is coarse and vulgar, and, as vulgarity, should be avoided like chewing tobacco. I don't think swearing is displeasing to God; neither do I think it possible in any way ever to displease God. (Vulgarity, it seems, offends sensitive man, but is quite agreeable to God.) I do not think sinning or doing wrong is unholy, but unripe. I do not believe the Bible is any more the special word of God than to-day's newspaper. The sentiment on our coins (United States), that 'In God we trust,' is not true, neither does it mean anything. No man, no State, trusts in God; they trust in themselves and one another. In the late war, both North and South, this nation trusted in their men and in their leaders, in its money and credit—they did not trust in God."—(Examination before the Boston Committee on Parishes and Religious Societies.) The professor, be it noted, is another of the burning and shining lights of Spiritism, and his books are extensively advertised and quoted in Spiritists' papers. Continuing my quotations, however—for in this rich and rare field of investigation I feel it is far better to let these united apostles speak for themselves:—"Spiritualism gives manifestations and communications, not only in confirmation of all that is good and true in the past, but in positive proof of a living God, living Christ, and holy hosts, opening the heavens in communion with man."—(Uriah Clark.) In the spirit world, says Mr. P. B. Randolph, "Pythagorus, Luther, Plato, and others, including the great Moslem chief, are the centres

of great attention and attraction still ; but I never knew of such a person as Christ being seen." Mr. John Weatherbee, one of the more moderate and respectable Spiritists, says:—"In Spiritualism is the consolation that the world needs, for it has, and it only, the satisfactory proof that there is a continued life after this." In this Mr W. speaks the sentiments of nine-tenths of the Spiritist world. Not so, however, thinks another authority. In answer to the question, "Are we, by virtue of our organisation *alone*, destined to a life beyond the grave? Is that belief based upon your experience of modern Spiritualism?" He replies "*No ! emphatically No !* My knowledge of, not belief in, immortal life has not been derived from an experience of what purports to be intercourse with disembodied men and women, through any kind or phase of the so-called Spiritual manifestations."—(P. B. Randolph.) On another point:—"Spiritualism recognises the sacred histories and Scriptures of all nations."—(Uriah Clark.) This is spurned by another. "As a Spiritualist, I have yet to learn that we hold anything as sacred, and I am opposed to any resolution that has the word sacred in it."—(W. Perry—quoted by Hepworth Dickson in his "New America.") Spiritualism, says another eminent authority, confirms and proves "the existence of an only, omnipotent God, creator of all things, supremely just and good."—(Allan Fardec—quoted by Archdeacon Stretch.) The God of Mr. Andrew Jackson Davis, however, is not an "only" God in any sense of the term. God is an expression for a something embracing all things, and in which all things are embraced. "Father God and Mother Nature" is Mr. Davis' precise phrase. Its meaning is very difficult to comprehend by ordinary mortals. Another, however, goes a step further, and finds a male and a female God. "The two sexes are expressions of the dual nature of Deity. . . . It cannot be supposed that anything could, by any possibility, exist without the union of the two principles (or sexes), the positive and negative, as these two constitute God, or the creating principle in nature."—(Mrs. Maria M. King.) Finally, touching another important point:—"Modern thinkers, radical and spiritualistic, claim they have outgrown the Christ idea. They want to stand on their own feet, pay their own penalties, and earn their own salvation."—(Cephas B. Lynn.) "The faith, hope, and belief of the Christian are needed no longer. . . . Christianity, as a religion, has ever been a superstition, battling against science, philosophy, and reason ; perverting nature and trying to overturn it as totally depraved."—(Warren Chase.) But other Spiritists regard this in a very different light. "Against all sin and temptation," says Mr. William Howitt, one of the chief European lights in the Spiritist firmament, "there is a sure bulwark and talisman—it is the Cross, and an humble but firm faith in the Cross." Another testifies that the spirits "advised to prayer, to Bible reading, to repose in Christ. . . . In every instance the

finger (of the medium) rested on a verse in the Bible which contained the principle that Christ was the Son of God.”—(J. Jones.) Another eminent author and Spiritist, of whom Spiritist are constantly boasting about as being in their ranks, says :—“Spiritualism has made me a Christian. I can and do believe all the Bible teaches me—in the efficacy and indescribable happiness of prayer, in the power of faith to save, in the perpetual superintendence of Providence, in salvation by the sacrifice of the Saviour, in the mediation of the Redeemer—in a word, I am a *Christian*. . . . The time is come, I think, when Christian Spiritualists must make a stand against Spiritualists who are anti-Christian, their teachings, their meetings, their books.”—(S. C. Hall.) The editors of the “Year Book of Spiritualism,” in reply to this last shot, say in effect, “Don’t let us quarrel. We hold out the olive branch of peace to the Christian Spiritualist of London, the re-incarnation Spiritualist of Paris, the dervish Spiritualist of Constantinople. Are we not working in the same cause? Are we not brothers all?” One is irresistibly reminded by this latter query of old Sandy Mackay and Crossthwaite in Alton Locke. “Why,” explains Crossthwaite, “he has a plan for uniting all sects and parties on the one broad fundamental ground of the unity of God as revealed in science.” “Vera like uniting men,” says Sandy, “by pulling aff their claes and telling them, ‘There, ye’re a’ brithern noo, on the one broad fundamental principle of want o’ breeks.’”*

No. VI.

THE PHENOMENA OF SPIRITISM.

IT is a notable fact that the physical manifestations as a part of Spiritism have progressed to a far greater extent than either its creed or want of creed. Table-rapping or table-turning are so familiar to everybody that I do not stay to take up time in speaking of what everybody knows, but pass on to call attention to some phenomena perhaps not quite so familiar. Here let me remark,

* I cannot resist quoting, as another illustration of “harmonial” assertions, two little statements by our chief Victorian authority. In the *Glowworm* of 31st December, 1869, we are informed “there is a spirit-world, or state, with its substantial realities, objective as well as subjective.” In the *Harbinger of Light* of 1st January, 1872, we find this communication, in blank contradiction of the above :—“Errors have crept into the creeds of men—that Heaven is a location, a certain country with finite boundaries. . . . This is false. Heaven is all space. Heaven is the enjoyment of God as seen in His works;” and so on. Three years of Victorian Spiritism it seems can change even Heaven itself !

however, that in America a cry has arisen lately to abolish all such "crude stuff," as one Spiritist terms it. Some object to it altogether, whilst others state that such manifestations are "Hadean," and as such should be done away with. While in Boston I heard several Spiritists speak in strong terms in condemnation of what one called "this rubbish." This fact is well worthy of notice, for by raps many have been converted, and it was by raps "God's greatest gift to man" revealed itself. Passing over, therefore, the table-rapping, table-turning, bell-ringing, accordion-playing, cord-untying, and leg-pinching phenomena, I go on to several points that I think—perhaps mistakenly—are not so well known outside of those who have taken a special interest in this matter. Beginning with one class of facts, ponder over the following:—"I can solemnly affirm that I have heard him (the medium) correctly quote the Hebrew language in his lectures, and display a knowledge of geology which would have been astonishing in a person of his age, even if he had devoted years to the study. Yet to neither had he ever devoted a year's application in his life. He has discussed, with most signal ability, the profoundest questions of historical and Biblical archæology, of mythology, of the origin and affinity of language. . . . The results announced would do honor to any scholar of the age, even if in reaching them he had access to all the libraries in Christendom."—(Prof. Bush.) Media are not confined to time or place. "Yesterday I had a trans-Atlantic observation. Saw many places and persons of renown. I penetrated the the shadowy walls, and had a peep at William and Mary Howitt, &c."—(A. J. Davis.) It has ever seemed a difficulty that ghosts appeared in sheets, &c., or as one puts it—"I might believe in the ghost of my grandmother, but can I believe in the ghost of her night-shirt? or am I to believe in the immortality of my drowned uncle's pea-jacket?" To get over this difficulty some of the Spiritists have broached a theory of "vital photographs in the spirit world," but the theory is surrounded by a few difficulties. One thing, however, is certain—Spiritists believe in some sort of actual bodily clothing for the spirit; some sort of refined material body in which the spirit may come; and, although not Hibernians, they yet speak of the spirits as invisibles! Hear the theory of this bodily appearance:—"We have also been enabled in our experiments of late to establish the fact that our spirit friends, whose subtle forms are beyond the reach of our hands and eyes, are sometimes able momentarily to clothe themselves or part of their forms, such as hands, heads,* &c., with the grosser particles that abound in our air, disintegrated and disentangled from the forms they recently composed a part of, and, during this monetary recovery of their spirit bands or forms, to enable us to see and even to touch them, and sometimes even to hear them speak to us, though usually in a

* In other words, we have spirits floating about in fragments!

whisper. The recent great abundance of matter thrown out into the air by the rapid decay of the victims of the war (in America) has already supplied in greater abundance than before the necessary material, and such manifestations have accordingly increased, and will no doubt much more to come."—(Warren Chase.) In plainer words this means that the putrescent matter from the dead soldiers forms part of a body by which spirits may reveal themselves—that of which we are conscious only as stench becomes the spiritualised body of the departed. A noble theory, truly. The wonders of Spiritism, go on, however—they heap "Pelion upon Ossa." We have the extraordinary phenomena of substances being conveyed through solid matter without there being any trace of the operation! For instance, in one circle a lady wishes for her pet lap-dog, said dog being three miles off at the time, and in a few minutes she screamed with surprise at finding the dog by her side. The animal, it is added, was greatly excited all night afterwards, and no wonder. —(*Religio-Philosophical Journal*.) This fact is astonishing, but there is more astonishing to follow:—"A Mrs. Guppy (let us trust she will get another name in the Summerland) was carried four miles in the air, and suddenly let down from the ceiling into the midst of a Spiritist circle in London. She was quite unconscious, and when she recovered stated that she had been making some entries when she suddenly became insensible, and knew nothing till she found herself in the circle."—(*Medium and Daybreak*.) On another occasion this same lady "saw what appeared to be a large black bundle descending from the ceiling." This turned out to be a Mr. Herne, who "had been carried by spirit-power a distance of two miles." They then "at once made a thorough search to see if by any means Mr. Herne could have gained access. They found, however, three doors shut, and securely fastened, through which any person would have had to pass to gain the inside of the house."—(*Medium and Daybreak*.) One is now prepared to believe anything, and to listen without a smile to the following:—"One cannot avoid speculating upon how a solid object is made to pass through a solid surface. It seems that the spirit *en rapport* with the medium brings the solid surface or wall under the influence of the negative magnetism of the medium, and envelops the object to be moved through it with its own positive magnetism, and then by will brings into the medium's sphere, the particles of the wall reinstating themselves like the particles of water do on rapidly drawing a stick through it."—(*Religio-Philosophical Journal*.) Let us, however, go on. "At a circle recently held in London some remarkable manifestations were given. At the mental request of different parties, twelve different kinds of fruit were brought and given to them. Among them was a water-melon weighing four pounds. This was afterwards cut in pieces by the invisibles, and the pieces taken to the different parties in the room.

What they cut the melon with remains a mystery." I should say it did! Note the extraordinary fact that this was done at the "mental" request of the parties. The spirits, it seems, know our thoughts as well as our actions. There are, however, some more marvels still left. "Some years ago a lady in St. Louis, a female medium, was struck dumb, and remained dumb two weeks, owing to certain manifestations that had been given forth against her becoming a medium by her husband. At another time a lawyer in the audience was struck dumb and remained so for some hours."—(Thomas Gales Forster.) This shows that the spirits have power over the bodies of those who displease them, and a notable point it is to establish. We have, however, other marvels still, and so press on to learn the astonishing fact that the spirits draw and paint through the media, producing works of "consummate ability" on the one hand, done in an "incredibly short space of time" on the other. Paintings, it seems, that would take "days and often weeks," can be done under spirit guidance in two or three hours. These paintings, &c., are lauded to the skies in the Spiritist journals as marvels of art, but, having had the privilege of seeing a great number of them in Boston and Chicago, I may simply say that nine-tenths are the veriest daubs, whilst the remainder do not rise above mediocrity. To assert, as some have done, that these pictures equal the productions of the old masters, is to prove the assertor totally ignorant of what he speaks of. Wonderful, however, as it would be if spirits used to the media to produce paintings in exceeding quick time, it is as nothing compared to the assertion that the spirits give portraits of themselves as they exist in the spirit world! It is indeed a comment on the depths to which human credulity will descend, to find that quite a business is being established in some of the Northern States in "spirit photography." They profess to give you the exact appearance of your departed parent, wife, child, or friend, but of course they appear "shadowy" in comparison to the photographs of ordinary terrestrial operators. In some, however, features are said to be "just as they were" when the "darling children" left the earth. This, however, is totally in contradiction of what we are told at other times, namely, that the spiritual body of the child develops exactly as if it had been living here, and attains its manhood or womanhood physically in the same manner as on earth. I have no doubt, however, but that spirit photography will be an article of faith with many media so long as credulous people will pay for the photographs. Passing on to other matters, I find a high authority vouches for the following phenomena:—1st. Smelling—Being sick, he "perceived an odor of a peculiar kind, pungent, but not ungrateful. . . . In a short time it operated both as a cathartic and emetic, and I was speedily relieved of my illness." The spirits have done marvellous things in the way of cures. They have cured every form of disease (so say the Spiritists)

by the mere imposition of hands. Cases given up by the old school doctors are treated by the media with the greatest success and in the shortest space of time. (It is an eminently American feature in this system that whether it be painting a picture or healing disease, they always lay stress on the short *time* it took.) 2nd. Tasting—Being again unwell, the same authority tells us that the spirits took a bottle of water and medicated it for him, giving it “a peculiar taste as of gas or vapor.” 3rd. Feeling—He has felt “a hand gently laid on my head and then two or three touches on my side;” at other times he heard “the sound of a slap distinctly;” at other times he “was held fast with a force superior to any that mortal hand could exert. . . . Twice I have felt a human hand on my skin. On one of these occasions the touch was cold but not clammy, and on the other it was warm, soft, and flesh-like.” 4th. Hearing—“I heard them (the spirits) on a railroad car; on the floor in an eating-house; on a door high above our reach, &c., &c. Sometimes they spoke a sentence.” 5th. Seeing—“Seeing media have described the spirits present, so that they have been recognised. I have myself occasionally that power, and I mention, as an illustration, that a young man unknown to me was once at my house, and I saw the spirits present, and from my description he recognised one whom I had never seen or heard of before.” This emphatically implies some sort of body. 6th, and, perhaps, more marvellous than all, speaking in various tongues—“I am informed of a medium, by the name of H. Davis, who speaks almost (and I do not know but) all languages that are spoken in this age of the world.” “Through J. B. Mansfield, of Boston, communications have been given in the Chinese, Greek, Latin, Italian, German, Gaelic, Hebrew, French, and Spanish languages.” A whole host more are given who perform this feat, but there is one contradiction (as usual) very puzzling, namely, some assert the spirits take possession of them so that they have no consciousness of what they are saying, others, it appears, are quite conscious. In other cases languages are spoken that are perfectly unknown to anyone.*—(Judge Edmond’s *Philosophy of Spiritualism*.) Another authority tells us that the spirits described a robbery, the thief, his dress and appearance, and where he lived. Perhaps, however, the most notable of the Spiritist assumptions (one can hardly say phenomena) is that of prophecy. I do not quote here, for the quotations might be endless, suffice it, therefore,

* I have observed one peculiarity in this language-speaking phenomenon, which, I think, is worthy of notice, namely, that in the Free Circles of the *Banner of Light* and elsewhere, the spirits speak (so say Spiritists) in exactly the same tones and in the same language as when on earth. They lay great stress on this as a proof of the identity of the spirit. Let, however, some revelation come from Demosthenes, or Swedenborg, or Cavour, or any illustrious foreigner dead a thousand years or one year ago, and you find they speak the most perfect English, and that *exactly in the tones of the medium*. I haven’t as yet seen any explanation of this little fact.

to say that Spiritism assumes to know the future, and to foretell coming events. But, as in almost all else, some Spiritists are found denying this, and thus inferentially classing their coadjutors either as impostors or deluded. The great majority, however, hold to the belief in prophecy, and affirm they have foretold certain great events, the most notable of which was the American war. Indeed, there is a large class of Spiritists who advertise in their journals that they will—in consideration of a certain number of dollars—foretell the leading events of the future, as well as describe the incidents of the past. I cannot, however, dwell on this, as I find I have taken up all my allotted space. I could name many other “phenomena” remarkably startling, such as paper being found *wet with a spirit's tears*, or immense arms being seen bigger than a man's body, but I think I have quoted enough. The gift of the profoundest knowledge of the sciences, of speaking many languages, of explaining the deepest problems in history, philology, and literature by those who are unlearned; the ability to pass over the Atlantic, or visit any quarter of the globe at any hour; to raise immense weights; to cure diseases of the most deep-rooted kind effectually and at once; to see the forms of the departed and photograph them accurately; to bring animals or men and women from a distance through the air; to take a solid material body through a wall and leave no mark; to have fruit served out ready cut at a mere mental request; to strike dumb because of want of faith in Spiritism; to paint splendid pictures in the shortest space of time; to be held by an irresistible force; but, above all, to prophesy and foretell the future:—such are some of the chief claims of Spiritists—such are some of the facts they relate. The greatest discovery in science fades into insignificance compared to Spiritism if only half these things be true.

No. VII.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND SUNDRY.

AS I said before, I was perhaps unfortunate whilst in America in my experiences of Spiritism. It is quite certain I took every precaution to prevent getting into the hands of impostors. I went to the office of the principal Spiritist paper in the world, the *Banner of Light*, and enquired of the head proprietor as to where I could find a good, reliable medium. I was given the address of “one of the best mediums in the States, sir,” and accordingly hied me off to have an interview with the spirits. I was introduced to a pale-faced lady

and, after some few preliminaries, the séance began. The lady closed her eyes, dropped her head on one side, started, gasped, fell over again, again gasped, rolled her eyes, and then to my unutterable surprise addressed me in a voice, the like of which I think I never heard, either in the heavens above, or the earth beneath, or the waters under the earth. This turned out to be the lady's familiar spirit. I was informed the spirit of my grandfather wished to speak to me. Somewhat surprised, I asked how long he had been dead, and was informed "many, many years." The guess was unfortunate, for I had bade *both* my grandfathers good-bye only six weeks before, and the old men are alive still. I need hardly go over all that "rich and rare" scene. I was informed my father was anxiously waiting to hear from me in England—my father being dead these last six years. I was warned against my evil habit of smoking—I had never smoked either pipe or cigar in my life. I was told of "William," "John," and "Mary," but I couldn't get these shadowy individuals to fix or state a single definite thing, and so the farce went on. After a little the lady went through the gasping business once more, opened her eyes, and—smiled! and I smiled too. My next visit was in Chicago, where I attended a light circle, and witnessed some manifestations in a lighted room, but these were simply ludicrous, and would take too long to relate; yet I had taken the precaution again to go to the editor of the chief Spiritist paper in that city in order to be recommended to the best medium, and at his invitation I attended this exhibition. My next was in San Francisco, and I declare of all the trash ever put before human credulity this was about the greatest—here let me remark parenthetically, one of the spirits was a German, but when a German lady addressed the spirit in his own language, the medium refused to proceed. Perhaps the most satisfactory test to me, however, was a séance held at the house of a friend. There was not the slightest reason to suppose imposture, as no object was to be gained beyond the very dubious one of a new convert. Of course, the very fact of its being at a friend's house precludes my criticising or saying anything very pointed about it, but no test confirmed me more in my scepticism or left me more decidedly with the impression of the large amount of disease there is in this system. From the lady of the house I gathered this valuable fact—one of the great points the Spiritists make is that their inspirational speakers will go on the platform, and, at a moment's notice, deliver the profoundest or most eloquent or some other superlatively good sort of discourse, without a moment's preparation; this, it seems, is false, for one of the most famous of whom this was boasted about, takes three or four hours immediately prior to the delivery of a lecture to study over her subject. I am afraid nine-tenths of the wonderful phenomena have as prosaic and as common-sense an explanation. I attended one of the Banner of Light Free Circles, and heard the far-famed Mrs. Conant. Instead of a "delicate, shrinking woman," as I had

read her described by Spiritist journals, I found an intellectual-looking female whose whole appearance betokened a courage I would say almost approaching audacity. Intellectual she undoubtedly was, but it was pitiful to listen to the vaporous stuff she poured forth under the name of philosophy, or to hear the varied tones she assumed as each spirit spoke. I say assumed, for it was a mere piece of acting: the voice was the voice of Conant throughout. In Philadelphia I heard the noted Mr. Thomas Gales Forster, and in New York the more noted Professor William Denton. This latter gentleman believes in an extraordinary faith, or rather he says he has demonstration of it. His theory is that all substances take photographs of every object that comes within their range; in other words, that everything that occurred, or occurs, near the Burke and Wills monument is depicted in the iron and stone of that graceful structure, and it requires only competent media to put themselves *en rapport* with the iron or stone to tell you every event that has occurred or every person that has passed since they were erected; not only that, but that a stone exposed on the surface a million years ago bears within itself an exact picture of the sort of scenery around it at that period. "Give me a brick from Rome," he cried enthusiastically the morning I was present, "and I will tell you Rome's history since that brick was made." "There's not a beggar who walks the streets but carries in his head a nobler picture gallery than could be found in all Europe." "We cannot walk the streets without our history oozing out on to the pavement." These were a few of the flowers of rhetoric I selected from the professor's bouquet. At this point let me discuss for a moment the number of Spiritists in the States. In the first place I may observe that Americans are enormously given to exaggeration wherever figures are concerned. If they can add to, or enlarge, or heighten the picture in any way, surely enough it is done. To the American mind size seems to be the greatest recommendation, hence they swell figures in the most marvellous manner. I declare positively, and in so saying I do not wish to be understood as conveying any slur on the Yankees, that I would not believe nine-tenths of American statements wherever figures are concerned. Take the City of Chicago, for instance; for years they have been boasting of its enormous size—over 300,000 inhabitants—but when they are burnt out we are told there are "nine-tenths of the inhabitants homeless," which number turns out to be 100,000. In a dispute between a Chicago and a St. Louis man I heard the explanation of the 300,000—they had included the district for forty miles round! This is the characteristic feature of Americans. I do not say they willingly lie, I merely say they are constitutionally unable to speak the truth, owing to this habit of exaggeration and fondness for swollen figures. The Spiritists being about the most inferior class of Americans, are given to this habit in the most marked degree; when they claim

from ten to thirteen millions one may simply laugh. For my own part, I greatly question if there are more than half a million Spiritists in the States, all told. My reasons are these—1st. The main authority for the large numbers is a Roman Catholic conference held in Baltimore, at which some alarmist and foolish ecclesiastics stated their belief that there were eleven millions of Spiritists in the States. These were supposed to be their own statistics, but it is obvious that it was a mere cry out of “Wolf, wolf,” as against Protestantism. 2nd. In Philadelphia, the second largest city in the Union (600,000 inhabitants), the Spiritists have but one hall, and that only half filled, their ordinary attendance every Sunday being about 300. In New York, with 900,000 inhabitants, they are obliged to hire a hall, and in that there are not more than 500 or 600 persons, a great number of whom are mere visitors. In San Francisco (170,000 inhabitants) they cannot raise a place of their own, and on the anniversary of Spiritism, when they made a special effort to turn out, they could not muster more than 500 or 600. 3rd. In numbers of the other largest towns they cannot raise a single meeting or get even a lecturer; thus in Pittsburg, with a population of 300,000, “we doubt if ever its inhabitants were blessed with a spiritual lecture.”—(*R. P. Journal*.) In the vast mass of population in the South, Spiritism is totally at a discount. 5th. The fact that, according to their own reports, their lecturers are poorly paid, their lectures badly attended in the great majority of places they visit. 6th. That in every American town you visit there are outward signs of life in the churches, splendid buildings, &c., but a Spiritist hall is not to be met with. 7th. By comparison: The Methodist Episcopal is the largest religious body in the States. Its statistical returns for 1870 show a total number of preachers (I quote from their almanac for 1871) of 21,234; of churches, 13,373; of Sunday-schools, 16,912; of Sunday-school scholars, 1,221,393; for all these figures they claim a total number of adherents somewhere about eight millions. Mark the comparison: I quote from the Year-book of Spiritualism for 1871:—Number of societies in the United States, 109; number of lecturers (corresponding to the preachers), 272; number of lyceums or Sunday-schools, 71; number of public media, 280. One has but to compare 109 with 13,373, 272 with 21,234, 71 with 16,912 (and these are real tests), to be profoundly impressed by the exceeding modesty which claims eleven million of adherents for the smaller figures as against eight millions for the larger.*

I was impressed, too, by observing another feature in American

* I know some Spiritists endeavor to explain that thousands believe in Spiritism, but dare not avow themselves, or are afraid to. This is but a poor compliment to the God-given religion, and a poorer as to the character of its believers. One, however, may safely aver this, that a more unlikely theory could hardly be broached, for a noisier or more demonstrative class of people than Spiritists, generally, could hardly be found anywhere.

Spiritism that I am inclined to think such as Dr. Richardson are but slightly acquainted with, and that is the violent hostility shown towards the members of the medical profession by the more pronounced Spiritists. Everywhere are remarkable advertisements professing to cure, under spirit guidance, either by receiving a lock of the patient's hair or by imposition of hands. I observed the other day a letter in one of the papers from some man at Ararat, professing to have been cured by some Melbourne Spiritist medium. That kind of thing is common enough in America; and perhaps one of the best testimonies possible as to what is thought of it by those who have a much larger experience of its results than we have here, is to be found in the fact that about eight months ago the Legislature of Illinois had a bill before it to put down what they plainly termed "empiricism and imposition in the practice of medicine." What became of the bill I don't know, as I left America before it was settled; but no more emphatic evidence could have been given as to the character of this sort of thing than is afforded in this one little fact. The language used by Spiritists against the members of the profession is most violent. They are "licensed assassins," "old fogies," "diplomatized humbugs," "poisoners by drugging," &c., &c. On the other hand, the Spiritist "healing medium" has received his diploma "direct from the court of Heaven," and so forth. Here are a few of the Spiritist advertisements taken from their own papers:—"Mrs. Robinson, Healing, Psychometric, and Business Medium. Mrs. R., while under spirit control, on receiving a lock of hair of a sick patient, will diagnose the nature of the disease most perfectly, and prescribe the proper remedy. . . . Of herself, she claims no knowledge of the healing art; but when her spirit guides are brought *en rapport* with a sick person through her mediumship, they never fail to give immediate and permanent relief, in curable cases, through the positive and negative forces latent in the system and in nature."* "Mrs A. Morton.—Medical business, test and prophetic medium. Letters answered, 2 dols. Clairvoyant remedies sent by mail. Analysis of ores." Mr. Morton ought to thank Heaven for a wife with such diversified gifts as these. "Mrs A. W. Breeding, clairvoyant and healing medium, relieves pain without medicine. Address," &c. Another, who obviously is not a philanthropist, advertises thus:—"Drunkard, stop! C. C. Beers, M.D., 12 East street, N.Y., has cured over ten thousand with a remedy given him through spirit aid. Send stamp for evidence." Another—"F. Hatch, for several years a sea captain, has been aided by God and the angels to heal the sick and develop mediums. Treats chronic diseases," &c. Here, however, is another class of advertisement:—"Dr. T. Lister, astrologer, 25 Lowell street,

* I called on Mrs. Robinson, in Chicago, and came away with the impression that a more pronounced impostor, or impostress, I had never seen in my life before. My chief feeling was one of profound sympathy for her patients!

Boston, where he has been located for 26 years. A written nativity. All events two years to come, 1 dol., and so on in proportion. The date of birth must be given," &c. Here again is another, and judging from the number of advertisements of this class, it must be rather a popular sort of thing:—"Soul reading, or psychometrical delineation of character.—Mrs. A. B. Severance would respectfully announce to the public that those who wish and will visit her in person, or send their autograph or lock of hair, she will give an accurate description of their leading traits of character and peculiarities of disposition, marked changes in past or future life, physical disease, with prescription therefor; what businesses they are best adapted to pursue in order to be successful, the physical and mental adaptation of those intending marriage, and hints to the inharmoniously married. Full delineation, 2 dol.," &c. Be it noted I am quoting from the *R. P. Journal* and the *Banner of Light*—the latter the great organ of Spiritism in the States, and supposed to be thoroughly respectable. In these journals, too, and in their books, pamphlets, &c., one finds a new development of the English language—"curse-bane," "seed-thought," "churchianity," "authoritarian," "soul-growth," "christ-plane," "god-plane," "christ-principle," "soul-principle," &c., &c. Such are some of the elegancies introduced into our language—elegancies, too, that bear emphatic testimony as to the shallow and mere word-catching character of this truly "futile philosophy," as Henry Ward Beecher calls it.

Whoever associates America with, or judges Americans by the Spiritists will do our cousins violent injustice. I am fully convinced, from what little I saw, that thinking, intellectual, and respectable Americans reject Spiritism altogether. Their papers rarely refer to it, and when they do, it is principally to laugh at its pretensions. I would, however, lay stress on these facts: When visiting the Oneida community (who are Spiritists themselves), I was informed that the ordinary Spiritism was, as a rule, a mere sham, and that their manifestations were but "Hadean manifestations." Above all, however, when visiting the Shakers, who, as I said before, were the first Spiritists, and claim to have prophesied the coming of modern Spiritism, I was informed that this development of the faith, such as is presented by the ordinary American Spiritists and their feeble following in England and elsewhere, was but a "spurious Spiritualism," and would soon pass away. In a Sunday morning address to one of the Mount Lebanon families of Shakers, I heard Elder Evans denounce it in unmistakable terms. "The main part of it," said the elder, "is rotten and false, and will in God's own time give place to the true Spiritualism such as you, Shakers, know to be real." It is indeed a most significant commentary on Spiritism that its own prophets and forerunners denounce and disclaim it. For such heretics and ungodly disbelievers as ourselves, we may be content to allow these conflicting apostles and others to settle their own little-

differences, presenting the extraordinary spectacle of a school of philosophers who are in harmony about nothing save calling their system the "Harmonial Philosophy."

NO. VIII.

SUMMARY.

HAVING waded through the dreary swamps and morasses of Spiritist contradictions in fact, and inference from those facts; having pondered over its "futile philosophy and maudlin religiousness;" having examined its caricature of hell and heaven, and listened to its marvels in the way of manifestations here—marvels so wondrously provocative of laughter, and so impotently feeble for any good or common-sense purpose, shall we reject the whole thing as a delusion, and contemptuously spurn it as beneath our notice? By no means.

Croire tout découvert est une erreur profonde,
C'est prendre l'horizon pour les bornes du monde.

This has ever been the tendency of the human mind from the earliest times until now, and I question if it was ever more marked than at present. We do well occasionally to remember so weighty a saying as that of Abercrombie, "An unlimited scepticism is part of a contracted mind, which reasons upon imperfect data, or makes its own knowledge and extent of observation the standard and test of probability."* Let us pause, therefore, before we dismiss the whole subject of Spiritism as an idle tale or a vain delusion. Let us hold for a moment before we either denounce it altogether as a fraud, or ridicule it as an hysterical self-deception. There is truly room enough for both denunciation and ridicule, but let us see if there is not also room for serious and attentive consideration.

I despair of being able to condense the enormous field here opened before me, and shall therefore content myself with presenting in the briefest form a few general thoughts on the subject, and I would begin by observing that it has been justly said that "the world is governed by forces, but forces of which we really know nothing; we only hide our ignorance under the high-sounding names of attraction, repulsion, chemical, electrical, vital, and so forth."

* Sir Walter Scott also has said a very excellent thing in almost the same words:—"We talk of a credulous vulgar, without always recollecting that there is a vulgar incredulity which, in historical matters as well as those of religion, finds it easier to doubt than to examine, and, endeavors to assume the credit of an *esprit fort* by denying whatever happens to be beyond its very limited comprehension."

If this may be truly said with reference to the physical world, how much more truly may it be said with reference to the mental. Who has yet lifted that mysterious veil which seems to hang over our natures wherever sympathy, will, affections, repulsions, and such like facts and features of character are concerned. We know our passions in their developments; we may hate or may love, may be conscious of shrinking from or drawing near some one. Of these mere facts we are in some rough, crude way conscious; but of the subtle attractions or subtle repellencies, what do we know of their essence; of what they are *themselves*? Mind acts on mind, soul sways soul, yet how or by what operation we are yet in almost darkest ignorance. Shall we, therefore, cease to enquire, or give up the problem as insoluble? Surely not; the very difficulties of the question should spur us on to further enquiry.

In our common walks of everyday life are we not constantly met by those whom we either like or dislike from some cause unknown and inexplicable to ourselves? Do we not find minds commanding and imperative, to whose wishes we seem to yield unquestioning assent, or others whom we in turn can sway or bend? These are the most ordinary facts of every-day life, and most important they are; but when we pass from ordinary to the *extraordinary*—from the normal to the abnormal—how mysterious become the operations of the faculties. Here the phenomena of Spiritism are at once rivalled, for the simple reason that Spiritism is but the development of these phenomena with its own superstitions added. Take the mere facts of the simplest form of somnambulism—how marvellous are its results. In it you have all the powers of sight without seeing, of memory that in waking moments is forgetfulness, of powers (such as swimming, untying knots, &c.) which in ordinary life have no existence, and, most astonishing fact, of the acutest reasoning without consciousness. Ascend but a step higher and take the phenomena of trance, and you have there a development of powers which might almost be termed supernatural did we not know that our knowledge of the laws of the natural is so limited that we require to understand the ordinary before we can pass beyond that. Ascend but a step higher still and in mesmerism you find phenomena the most marvellous of all. Observe the process of mesmerism; by merely natural means the mind is concentrated on one single object until a sort of unnatural sleep supervenes, and the mind is left vacant as far as *personal will-power* is concerned. In this, in my judgment, we have the key to the whole phenomena. It is the will which sways and commands the whole of the faculties, it is the will which directs the whole machine, in a word the will is the *personality*, and, once surrendered, the whole fabric of the mind is, as a personality, gone, and is but a plastic material in the hands of the operator. Observe but the commonest manifestation by the most ordinary mesmerist, whether public or private: does he say it is cold, his subject shivers;

does he say it is hot, his subject pants; let him cry out that he will be drowned, the wildest struggles for life are enacted: in a word, the mere imaginings of the mesmerist are the direst realities to the mesmerised: his faculties are there truly, but the governing power is gone. Observe that in all this there requires to be a certain attraction towards the mesmerist, a certain community of sensation, otherwise his or her power is gone. Who has not seen those on whom the most noted public performers could make no impression, and to whom therefore the phenomena of mesmerism were as a dead letter so far as their own personal experience was concerned. Further, as another development of very remarkable but still natural powers, who has not been astonished beyond measure at the singular phenomena as exhibited by the Hellers, or by Mr. Farlow and his son. Let me put this question—Suppose that either Mr. Heller or Mr. Farlow were to affirm that these things were done by spirit communication would they not convert thousands to their faith? * There are phenomena done before the eyes of the acutest and, in some instances, scientific men, and yet the explanation is in no way forthcoming as to how and by what means they are done. Have we not remarkable instances on record where persons in a peculiar trance state have read letters which were in an adjoining room when a chain of persons was formed, the nearest touching the tranced one, and the farthest off touching the letter? Have we not had the phenomena of ordinary sleepwalkers or somnambulists describing events at a distance who spurned in their waking moments any theory of spirit influence? Whilst under mesmeric influence, have we not witnessed dancing, speaking, singing, attitudinising such as we knew those same persons were incapable of in their ordinary moments? The history of the world is filled with illustrations of times of exaltation and ecstatic frenzy when men did acts surpassing their ordinary acts utterly †. We have records of singular delusions which at their times were marvellous beyond measure, and seemingly inexplicable, yet explanations have been found. Not wholly satisfactory in all cases I admit, nor can we expect that as we are as yet but on the outskirts of this subject, the whole explanation can be at once given. Enough, however, seems to me to be known to justify some theory such as this—In the ordinary facts of nature we

* The best of all Spiritist writers, Robert Dale Owen, has seen this difficulty (in a somewhat different form), and candidly admits its force. The point I would urge is this—had the marvels of the telegraph, the steam ship, the railways, or many of the scientific tricks done now, had they been shown to our forefathers say one hundred years ago as the proofs of supernatural gifts, multitudes would have believed that the claim was a just one, and as supernatural regarded these things that we all now know are but the well-directed and understood forces of nature. So will it be with all that is worthy of notice in Spiritism.

† The history of the Convulsionnaires, Trembleurs, and so on, as cases in point.

have phenomena in somnambulism marvellous enough in themselves to show us that we know almost nothing of certain merely natural operations. I refer, as I mentioned before, to seeing without sight, to intelligence without consciousness, to developed faculties, increased powers of perception, and above all to consciousness of objects or occurrences without the range of ordinary physical powers. In electricity we have now as usual occurrences that which would have been regarded as miraculous a century or two ago, but in mesmerism we have the culminating point. I reason thus :—If there be a power within one man so strong that he may influence the faculties of another to a belief in what he asserts ; if I see that this is in an extreme form, what I am aware is in lesser degree in operation in all humanity ; if I know that the mind of man is some curious storehouse in which bygone events seem to be pictured and removed away only again to be seen by that mental effort we call memory, may I not, therefore, believe that as some men may influence the minds of other men so as to throw the stronger *in* to the weaker and make the impressions of the former that of the latter, may I not also believe it possible that by some mysterious bond of sympathy, some identity or community of mind (not more inexplicable than ordinary mesmerism) it may be also possible for the mind of the stronger to take possession of that of the weaker, so that the thoughts of the latter are in the actual possession of the former ; in other words I can believe it possible that there are certain constitutions or constitutional affinities, if I may so term it, which so approach each other that under certain conditions the mind of the medium may be conscious of the very thoughts of the person with whom he or she may be brought *en rapport*, and so it may come to pass that an investigator asking some medium for information upon a certain event, at the moment of asking thinks of certain facts in connection with that event, the mind of the medium being fully in affinity with the mind of the enquirer is conscious of the thought, and at once *reads and speaks out to the enquirer the very facts he was then thinking of*. This is a great admission, I grant, but it is a strictly natural one, and eliminates every element of spirit influence, of whatever sort : it would be still a scientific fact of the most refined order.

But, perhaps, some may say—This is no explanation of the vaster marvels of Spiritism ; you give no key to the phenomena of the extraordinary philological, scientific, and historical discourses pronounced by various media, themselves unlearned ; you do not tell us how men may visit every part of the globe, may tell what is occurring ten thousand miles off, may paint pictures in a miraculously short time, may foretell or prophesy about the future ; you do not enlighten us as to the cure of diseases, the raising of immense weights, the carrying of bodies through solid walls, and so on ; your explanation may cover certain mysterious

ground, but it leaves uncovered certain still more mysterious. I confess at once it does not. For all these marvels I readily concede a supernatural origin is the most feasible explanation. Shall we, however, discuss them seriously? Shall we consider these marvels as worthy of investigation? I hardly think we need. Here is a system which for over twenty years has professed to have powers the most transcendent and astounding, yet so far has been utterly impotent for any good or useful end. When I see this system, which professes to have at its command the profoundest scientific knowledge, add something to science such as men knew nothing of before; when I learn it has solved some of the disputed questions of history by the aid of those historical personages with whom it is said to be in constant communication; when I hear of lives saved from danger by the same power which can move immense weights or transport heavy bodies for miles; when I find those spirits, who are so filled with benevolence that they give medical advice to media so as to gain a living, enter into our hospitals and there cure disease; when I find pictures painted by the old masters of merit enough to rival their former productions; when day by day media will tell us of events transpiring elsewhere of national and perhaps world-wide importance; when, turning from the despicable occupation of giving "straight tips" of racing events, the powers of prophesying claimed by Spiritists are turned to great events of the future worthy of our attention; when I find crime detected and assistance given against the vampires of society by the spirits who are so anxious to help us in all good works; in a word, when I find the powers claimed by a few fanatical and diseased people turned to some worthy and good account, when I see some such demonstrations of power done before the world, then and then only will I believe in spirit influence and spirit power—then will I become a Spiritist.

But for the present it is enough to know that we have in this system pretensions to powers the most marvellous, coupled with performances the most feeble and despicable; we have a system of theology as its outcome, in which we find mingled the blankest Atheism with the most credulous and deplorable superstition; we have a philosophy so-called in which not one single proposition is agreed upon by its founders, but rather an eclecticism, which has chosen the worse instead of the better features of those older faiths it affects to look down on with contempt; we have for its hereafter a heaven we despise, and a hell we can but laugh at; in a word, we have a mass of contradictions, a maze of word-puzzling propositions in its theory, and for its credentials we have manifestations so low intellectually, so utterly despicable in our time, and we are assured that all the old ghost stories, all the old legends of midnight horrors, sheeted ghosts, and such like, all these old nursery tales which have disappeared before the enlightenment of the present age as a miasma before the rising sun, that these are its credentials in the past.

It is enough to know these things to reject Spiritism totally as a supernatural revelation, or to believe it to be aught else than some at present occult force of nature which, being but partially understood in its manifestations, has given rise to this revived belief in high dead superstitions, and in the wildest and most unreasoning credulity.

It is, however, but a phase of belief, and, as a phase, will pass away. There is a paralysis of unbelief when men lose sight of the nobler part of themselves, and in unreasoning incredulity reject the intuitions of that part of their nature which transcends and is beyond reason; so also is there a paralysis of credulity which in weak and feeble natures becomes debased into gross and miserable superstition. Spiritism is one phase of the latter, and partly of the former as well; it is a curious compound of faith and unbelief. Many Spiritists cry out against the folly of those who believe in immortality, yet reject Spiritism, which, as they say, is the demonstration of that immortality. When our immortality requires the aid of table-turning, table-tapping, accordion-playing, leg-pinching, and so on for its physical manifestations; when it presents an hysterical and unreal sentimentality, a vapid and wordy philosophy, a contradictory and self-destructive theology as its intellectual side, we may justly reject this immortality as a poor delusion, as but one form of dementia, as a spurious thing to be rejected and spurned. Doubtless it will have its day, but ultimately it will fall and perish—it will die before the brighter light of knowledge, the juster apprehension of the truths of nature and of God. When that time will come who can tell? but that it will come is sure and certain, for as falsehood will die, so will Spiritism die, as superstition will pass away, so will Spiritism pass away; for Spiritism in the main is both. It has its grains of truth truly, but they are grains indeed in comparison to its bulk of disease, imposture, and self-delusion. But they will pass away, and to the future historian of our times will be left this curious reflexion: that side by side in one generation were found a highly scientific enlightenment, an utter incredulity as to all ghosts and phantom stories, a perfect disbelief in all supernatural powers whatever, alongside of the most unscientific explanations of natural phenomena, together with the most superstitious belief in phantoms, spirits, and supernatural communications. Very curious have been the phases of man's belief since the world began, but few have been more curious than this.

I now conclude, painfully conscious of having taxed your own and your readers' patience to an extraordinary extent. My subject grew on me as I proceeded, and this can be my only apology. If, however, I have added anything to the general stock of information on the subject, if I have written anything to show the true character of this system in opposition to the false and unreal pictures drawn by Spiritists amongst us, I shall have been fully repaid and my trouble amply recompensed.

J.C.

APPENDIX.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE RELATIVE POSITIONS OF CHRISTIANITY AND SPIRITISM.

It is one of the most remarkable features of Spiritism that it takes up and defends as actual truths and verities those very parts of the Bible that to the greater part of those who doubt are the chief causes of their doubtings, whilst it rejects the main doctrines of Christianity *in toto*. In the course of a very temperate and thoughtful leader of the 2nd January, the *Star* made reference to this singular fact. "We have Spiritism," it said "coming before us in support of the Bible miracles, while it wars *à outrance* against the orthodox theology in its vital parts as a theology. . . . It says to the orthodox churches, we believe in your miracles, but reject your chief theological dogmas; we believe in psycho-physical mysteries as much as you do, but your theology is a blasphemy in some of its main articles of faith; your devil, your Trinity, your hell, your atonement we abhor, but we are with you upon the miracles." And furthermore, as a sign of difficulty with which Christian believers have to grapple, stands "the fact that Mrs. Guppy's translation and certain corporal conveyances recorded in the Bible are as like as two peas. If the churches deny the one translation the Spiritists may deny the other, and who is to decide with faith on the one hand and hardy contemporary assertion on the other." A correspondent of the *Argus* also, signing himself "M. C.," puts the same difficulty in a more pointed form * "If a man chooses to believe that Peter raised the dead or healed the sick, that a human body outrages the law of gravitation by walking on the water, or that iron swam in it, why does he reject as absurd the statements that tables move without the intervention of human hands, that accordions play, or that spirits return from the grave." I confess myself unable to appreciate the full force of the difficulty. If in both cases the ends and aims were alike, I should then see at once the justice of the observations I have quoted, but I see, or think I see, a very notable difference. I remember being greatly impressed by that very admirable essay of Dr. Temple's, in the *Essays and Reviews*, called "The Fullness of Time," in which he compares the life of the world to the life of man. He points out that with nations, as with individuals, there is an infantile beginning, a gradual ripening, a fuller development, until the manhood of the nation is attained. So also with the world, it had passed through its infancy, had strengthened its powers, until it attained one period of manhood—a manhood that might go on ripening and strengthening without decay or old age. The figure may not be a perfect one, and may but crudely express the idea to be conveyed, but the idea itself is profoundly philosophic, and one which the whole course of nature and of history seems marvellously to bear out. Some good people seem to regard

* It is to be regretted that a letter, otherwise excellent, should be disfigured by that poor vanity that finds its expression in an affectation of intellectual superiority which so many persons of "M. C.'s" stamp endeavor to assume. "An earnest Spiritualist, like an earnest Christian or Jew, must necessarily be a good if somewhat a weak-minded man," and so on for much of the same sort of thing. One cannot help smiling at the presumptuous folly of anyone who can write this of the Christian and Jewish religions, which have held, and still hold with but few exceptions the vast mass of the noblest and profoundest intellects the world has given birth to.

it as an argument almost destructive of Biblical narrations that men have done things seemingly under Divine guidance which were utterly repugnant to our ideas of right and justice !* Dean Milman has well and justly said : " Had the avowed design of the intercourse of God with the patriarchs been their own unimpeachable perfection ; had that of the Jewish polity been the establishment of a divine Utopia, advanced to premature civilisation and over-leaping at once those centuries of slow improvement, through which the rest of mankind were to pass, then it might have been difficult to give a reasonable account of the manifest failure. So far from this being the case, an ulterior purpose is evident throughout. The one thing certain is, that Divine Providence designed the slow, gradual, and progressive development of the highest religious truth." If, therefore, I can believe in the existence of a wise God (to believe in materialistic theories, or in matter having somehow evolved itself from itself, or such like explanations requires a stretch of faith I confess I am not capable of) I can easily believe that this progression, this development in things religious, is as wise as it is in things physical. Trace the geological record : we find the farther back we go forms lower and yet lower still, until we arrive at the period when all forms of life cease. Beginning at that point again we retrace our steps and find from low to high, from high to higher still, until in the wonderfully varied forms of life, the species, the genus, the classes, the individuals, we find the most amazing and exquisite diversities, and yet in these diversities a harmony the most splendid. Can I say to the Creator, these things are unwise, why were not all animals, all plants, in short all forms of life, created as perfect as they now are ? as this point is the best point, why create anything lower ? why these countless ages of inferior types ? why these extinct species ? why this seeming waste of power ? If the best be best, surely Thou canst create it so, and it *should* be done. I ask, dare I say this without raising in the minds of earnest and thinking men, whether scientific or unscientific, a feeling of revulsion from such vain and impious questionings. Why ? Because men (a few vain and blasphemous fanatics excepted) recognise in the vast facts of the universe, in the wonderful adaptations of nature on our own little sphere, the power of a wise ruler, an omnipotent God, transcending all their conceptions of wisdom, and utterly beyond the reach of their poor and limited faculties as the heavens are beyond the earth. So, therefore, if I find this difficulty in calling into question God's method of dealing with the facts of nature may I not find the same difficulty in calling in question His method of dealing with the facts of man's life and man's history. That nations are civilised and that nations are barbarous needs no proof—does it prove God unwise that the latter exist ? Does God manifest Himself in exactly the same way at all periods of the world's history ? Then would all periods of savagery and civilisation become impossible for God's works are God's manifestations, and utter uniformity would necessarily reign. So it may be that God's manifestations of Himself at one period may be different to that of another, and thus it may come to pass that His dealings with the world's childhood may be suited to that childhood, and so be unsuited to more advanced periods and to more enlightened times. When, therefore, I read of miracles in olden times I ask myself, were not these suited for the times they occurred in, and for the objects then in view ? If an initial objection be taken that a miracle is in itself an impossibility, I say that I cannot regard it as such, for the conception that a lawgiver is rigidly bound by his own laws is to me a proposition wholly illogical and without force ; the counter proposition, that a lawgiver may in another and perhaps higher interest set aside or vary his law, seems to me a proposition unanswerable. At this point we arrive at the main difference between the Biblical narratives of supernatural wonders and Spiritism. As I

* I have been greatly struck by observing the fact, that the majority of those who take exception to the " monstrous crimes attributed to Divinity " are in the main those who are unable to define what evil is, who refine it away, who see in it " but a lower form of good," who deny the existence of sin, and so on. A singular commentary on man's consistency.

have endeavored to show (I do not dogmatically assert) the world's history being in nature progressive, so may it be in man's moral history also; the Biblical narrative comes to us as a revelation of God's direct dealings with man for a specific end and aim that runs throughout the whole book, and that was, that the Jews were a peculiar people because to them was entrusted the highest truth, and from them ultimately would come the world's Saviour; in a word, Christ Himself. In this Jewish history one finds continually certain men coming forward as God's vicegerents, claiming certain powers far above and beyond their fellow men, as being, in short, *inspired*. The most natural question men would ask would be; how do we know these men are what they profess to be, where are their credentials, how shall we test whether their assumptions be true? and in reply, those servants of God professing these truths did these wonderful works as their credentials, and as in proof that all the powers they assumed were justly assumed as being from God, and so in God's name they taught and worked and exhorted. Do not think that I claim miracles as a necessity of Christianity, I only say they were necessities of their times, and further, I point out that the miracles as recorded in the Bible were wrought for ends of the highest importance;* that those who wrought these miracles were characters the most exalted, characters that have come down as models even for these days, and as I said before were the credentials of these men for high and noble work; that as a whole these supernatural powers were used for national ends, not for the gratification of personal ambition or power, but for the welfare of the State. Compare the degraded, bestial, and utterly corrupted religion of the surrounding tribes, their sacrifices to Moloch, their licentious groves and debasing debauchery in worship with the "splendid Monotheism," the service of the one God, the purity of the moral code, the spiritual types of the ritual, in a word the lofty conceptions of the Deity among the Jewish people, to be convinced that *some* power directed them far more specially than were the idolaters around. If we gain this view, can we greatly wonder that this singular elevation of this one nation was accompanied by powers and manifestations at once unique and incomparable—that as God's presence was with them in spiritual matters in a way unmistakable, so might it be accompanied by visible demonstrations of His power, when circumstances arose of such importance as to call for the display and using of that power.†

What, however, are the phenomena of Spiritism that are attempted to be compared to the Biblical miracles? What useful end have they served? What have they demonstrated? What are their purpose and aim? Are not nine-tenths of Spiritist manifestations of the lowest and most paltry character? the translation of Mrs. Guppy, or the levitation of Mr. Home, are the great wonders of the Spiritist faith—the modern miracles that rival Ezekiel or the Transfiguration on the Mount, and, as we are triumphantly asked, if you believe the one can you deny the other? Prior to the belief in the facts of the Biblical narrative, I believe that there was an exaltation of character and a divine vicegerency on the one hand, together with a positive divinity on the other. To a man who denies Christ's mission I grant the difficulty is great; but to a man who believes in the lofty, the solemn, the awfully important character of that

* I am quite aware that a few extreme instances are to be met with which may be regarded with some degree of suspicion, but as I do not hold myself bound to every incident and circumstance from Genesis to Revelation, I do not feel any degree of embarrassment in dealing with these. I take the Bible as a whole. I find in it a unity, a consistency throughout, a harmony in its grand fundamental truths and facts, that I am content to take the mass as truth, leaving these few cases to those who trouble themselves so greatly over what seem to me straws. Some people seem to regard the finding of a petty flaw in the historical record of the Old Testament as plainly upsetting all revelation and as effectually disposing of religion and Christianity. With such reasoners one need hardly waste time in arguing.

† I have not referred to the New Testament, for the simple reason that I think it will hardly be denied that if there be any feasibility in this line of argument it will apply to the miracles of the New Testament with even more force than the Old.

mission, the difficulty disappears at once, for it may be superhuman gifts require as their attestation superhuman manifestations. When, therefore, I read—"While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him'"—I feel the solemn harmony between that scene and the character and mission of Him of whom it was said, "Never-man spake like this man;" but when I read, as being attempted to be compared to this scene, the translation of "a big black bundle" which, *on lights being procured*, turns out to be Mrs. Guppy; when I read that in a darkened room the figure of Mr Home was seen floating about, but in an indistinct and partial light; when I reflect that these persons are mere scrapers together of so many dollars, or so much £ s. d., by their seances; that they are "professional media" who invoke the aid of the spirits, who disturb the sacredness of that mystic region beyond the grave, in order that they may fill their bellies and earn a living out of these solemn things; when I see that the greater part of the manifestations are but for the delectation of petty circles, the gratification of a gaping crowd of silly and it may be giggling spectators, to satisfy mere prying inquisitiveness, in which is neither earnestness nor love of truth; when I see that even the loftiest revelations the spirits can make are poor compared to what man has had revealed before, that all in all they serve no useful, no important, no national, no world-helping end—I scout them as unworthy of notice, and confess myself amazed at the logic, or want of logic, that can compare these things to the Biblical narrative; that can place these petty trivialities by petty people alongside of those works wrought by the most dignified, the most exalted, the loftiest characters, for ends as noble and as exalted as men could conceive of. Trace the whole narrative from end to end, and in it as you find an underlying harmony, a fitness and aptitude from first to last; break that line, and I grant you all its harmoniousness disappears; but even then, assume Moses to have been deceived, the prophets to have been deluded by their own ecstasies, Christ to have been but a radical, deceiving himself and so misleading others—grant all this, and you have still left the magnificent conception of God when those around were debased idolaters; you have still the most splendid poetry, the loftiest ideas, the most glowing imagery, the noblest language, but above and beyond all, you have a purity of moral code which man has not yet improved upon—a height of spiritual elevation which utterly surpassed all the previous ethical standards, and which has the stamp of Divinity upon it because it is perfect and cannot be improved on. Were men to live according to the New Testament standard, nothing could be added to their virtue, because that virtue would be complete. Deprive Spiritism of those parts it has manifestly borrowed from Christianity, and what would be left?—Home, Guppy, Nayler, Tyreman, Denton, Conant, and such like, for its apostles; and table-rapping, planchettes, accordion-playing, "levitation," hysteria, trance states, and so on for the weary round of solemn folly, as its miracles, phenomena, or such despicable attestations of the immortality of the soul.

I ask, in view of all these considerations, can reasonable men—believers or non-believers in Christianity—consent, as a matter of fairness, to place Christianity and Spiritism on the same level? I think not. For the rest, it may be simply said that those Christians who lean on Spiritism as a proof of the immortality of the soul, lean on a broken reed. Indeed, as a whole, Spiritism is but the constructive side of American infidelity. The American mind, and especially the New England portion of it, has been trained in a deeply religious method; the influence of early Puritanism has been and is most marked. As there has ever been, and I doubt not ever will be, a spirit of questioning and unbelief abroad among them as among others, so it has led them to surrender the old faiths, and depart from the paths of their fathers. But the influence of their training was upon them, and they wished for an immortality—a wish nowhere authoritatively gratified

outside of the Bible they rejected. As this revelation did not exist, they created one, and in this Spiritism they found that which gave them the promise of the immortality they wished for, and at the same time enabled them to cast aside all faiths, all creeds, all binding ties beyond the laws of nature—laws that may bear very different interpretations, as witness the Shakers on the one hand, and the Oneida Community on the other (both Spiritists); the one proclaiming celibacy, the other, complex marriage as the law of nature. With European sceptics, to depart from Christianity means to abandon faiths altogether, and to regard all worship as mere fetichism and folly.* American scepticism will not give up its hold (save such as the *Boston Investigator* represents) on the Hereafter, and so sinks into this spurious sentimentalism of religion. In European scepticism, as a whole, religion is scouted, and it sinks into a gross materialism, in which all that is noble or elevated in the human mind or soul is resolved into the mere mental outcome of certain physical antecedents. Of the two, I hardly know which is the more repulsive, but certainly the European view is the more logical, and I confess, for my own part, were I necessitated to abandon Christianity, I would hardly know whether to prefer the blankest Atheism to the mere tinsel and hysterical religion Spiritism offers; for I should feel that at least I was consistent, no matter however repulsive otherwise one's faith or want of faith might seem. As I have said before, I have the fullest confidence that Spiritism will pass away; that it will die out before a more enlightened reason and deeper research into the psychological nature of man. Christianity cannot die, for it is founded on Truth as eternal as God Himself, and in its fundamental doctrines, its moral ethics, it is a finality; for they are the mandates of God in Revelation, as His laws are His mandates in nature. We need fear nothing for Truth, for in God's dispensations it often seems as if a higher good were evolved from the storm and strife of men's minds, as a purer atmosphere comes from the storms and tempests of the elements. Truth may be final, but its developments and combinations are infinite, and so we may find that human progress consists in varied applications of the Truth known in long centuries back. And I believe in that progress—a progress that shall be the realisation of the longing desires and aspirations of noble-hearted men and women since ever the world began—a progress freed from superstitions, not debased by a gross and sensuous materialism, not drunk with the petty victories of a science "falsely so called" so as to madly deny all that is ennobling in man's soul or life, or to cast an All-wise Creator aside as a myth and a delusion. Slowly are clearer views of good being evolved; the glamor is passing away from our eyes, and there is revealed to us, not a new truth, but the same ever-lovely form of truth, unchangeable as from the first, but of whom we had lost sight, to whose beauties we had blinded ourselves by our own passions and our own evil thoughts. There may be seeming retrogression for a time, but we find ourselves still progressing towards that time when, as Whittier sings, we shall find realised—

A dream of man and woman,
Diviner but still human,
Solving the riddle old,
Shaping the Age of Gold.

The love of God and neighbor—
An equal-handed labor;
The richer life, where beauty
Walks hand in hand with duty.

When we have learned our duty in all firmness toward man, and all humility toward God—to cast aside all specious theorising for the practical work of life; when honor rules our lives, and our religion becomes "our rule of life and not a mere unmeaning expression of intellectual belief;" when we learn not only to profess Christianity, but to *live* it—our longings, our aspirations will be near realisation, our Age of Gold will be not far off.

* With a few exceptions. The nonsensical burlesque of religious worship as practised by some of the Positive Philosophers is one of the most curious illustrations of the innate tendency of man to worship *something*, no matter what, ever witnessed by humanity.

THE "QUARTERLY REVIEW" ON SPIRITISM.

In the *Quarterly Review* of October, 1871, there appears a most admirable article on Spiritism. Calm and temperate in its tone, logical in the highest degree, and evidently written by one who stands in a familiar relation toward science and scientific men, it ought to command every attention and respect. The *Argus* deserves infinite credit for having given its readers an excellent abstract of this article. Following a long way after I would simply call attention to some one or two points which I think deserve special notice.

The reviewer makes an admirable point by calling attention to the first weak place in the system, namely, the mediums. He regards the mediums as "the explanation of the whole mystery." His view is that "so-called spiritual communications come from *within*, not from *without*, the individuals who suppose themselves to be the recipients of them; that such individuals belong to the class termed *subjective* by physiologists and psychologists, and that the movements by which they are expressed, whether the tilting of tables or the writing of planchettes, are really produced by their own muscular action, quite independently of their own wills, and quite unconsciously to themselves." There is another point I would refer to, namely, why should there be any necessity for mediums at all? Is it not strange that those beings who are ever near to bless and aid us, who wish to promote our welfare, who are watching over our destinies, and above and beyond all who have such marvellous powers otherwise are yet unable to make themselves known to us except through the agency of some one *who must have some peculiar physical property*? No matter how near, how much loved the person to be addressed may be, the spirits, it seems, have not the power to make themselves known even, much less do good, unless they have certain "affinities," "positive," or "negative" qualities, certain "magnetic attractions," and so forth. Why should the spirits, mark the important point, having the same mentalities they had on earth, be unable to do that which in life they could easily do, namely, hold converse with those of temperaments and natures entirely different from their own? Surely, their expanded powers contract most mysteriously at this point—but the truth is, the whole medium phase of the question is one eminently suspicious.

The reviewer goes on to show that some of the phenomena can be accounted for on the "unconscious muscular action" theory, more especially in those cases where "expectant attention" plays an emphatic part. In other words, as people do hosts of things, and are at the moment unconscious of the act, so when a high state of nervousness is attained the very object may be brought about without the person being aware of it. Of course, this would cover but a small part of the ground of Spiritism, but nearly the same theory is expanded to that which covers a very great deal of Spiritist ground, and that expansion is—that as there may be, and is, unconscious *muscular* action, so also is there unconscious *mental* action. The reviewer almost loses too much time in proving that which scarcely needs proof, namely, that we do much mental work without being aware of our doing it, and that often we have stored up in our memories facts and events which only require some unusual quickening to have them brought back to life, if I may so phrase it, and thus it may come to pass on the theory I broached in my summary, that facts long forgotten may be read by the medium even when the person to whom the medium speaks is unconscious of them: this would be an extension of the view I put forward in the summary.

An admirable point is then made against that class of medium I referred to in No. VII., namely, the healing medium. This is so good that I quote the chief part of it without comment. "It should not be lost sight of in considering the *curative* influence attributable to faith that a most potent *injurious* influence may be exerted through the same influence. The 'spells' of witchcraft were by no means destitute of power over even princes and nobles in past times; whilst they still often seriously damage the health of persons who are ignorant and credulous enough to believe themselves to be the subjects of them. . . . Those who believe in the curative virtues of Spiritualism, therefore, are equally

bound to believe in the malign influence of 'evil spirits,' and should consider it their peculiar mission to neutralise the spells of witches by invoking the assistance of the more benignant familiars, whom the 'healing mediums' have at their call." A point almost as good is made in another part of the review, where, speaking of the testimony of Spiritists as to sundry marvels, he points out that evidence, positive and strong, was given to prove the transportation of witches through the air, and it was proven in courts of justice by multitudes of witnesses, and in some cases even admitted by the culprits themselves.

The reviewer then proceeds to criticise the famous report produced by Messrs Huggins, Crookes, and Cox some time ago, but before doing this he first of all reviews the gentlemen themselves. It is satisfactory to find from one who is obviously so very familiar with what he speaks of that these three gentlemen have by no means the attainments or the position that certain of the Spiritist journals would have one believe they had. They are, so it turns out, but men of mediocrity after all, and by no means the best men to have instituted the enquiry. Of the experiments a good deal is said, but one part I must quote. Referring to the performances of the accordion in the cage he says: "It will be quite time for us to consider how this performance is to be explained when it shall have been repeated in open daylight (without any cage) *above* instead of *under* the table, and in the presence of trustworthy witnesses, who should carefully record all the particulars in which Mr Crookes' narrative is deficient. In the meanwhile, it is worthy of remark that it is the accordion which is usually selected as the favorite instrument of spirit mediums; and that the performance on this instrument with one hand is a juggling trick often exhibited at country fairs." This remark about the accordion is one that has been made long, long ago, and is as forcible now as the first day it was made.

After making some remarks on the character of the mediums, the variability of tests, the unsatisfactory nature of the manifestations, some performances of one noted medium, and finally some of the marvels of Spiritism recently brought to light, the reviewer says: "None can be more ready than ourselves to admit that 'ridicule is not the test of truth,' but there are some subjects—and we believe this is one of them—as to which ridicule has a whole-some power of checking pernicious error. We have gravely discussed many of the phenomena which are adduced as evidences of 'spiritual' agency, for the purpose of showing that, like others which had previously presented themselves under different names, they are really produced by the unconscious agency of the individuals through whose 'mediumship' they are exhibited; and that their occurrence affords new and interesting exemplifications of physiological and psychological principles previously known and accepted. But when we are called on to believe in the 'levitation' of the human body, and in the power of incorporeal spirits to move heavy masses of matter without any ostensible agency, to make an accordion play tunes without the aid of its bellows or its keys, and to evolve fruits and flowers, snow and ice, live lobsters and the hands of departed friends out of the depths of their own consciousness, the question is one to be decided, not by an elaborate discussion, but by a direct appeal to educated common-sense. Is it more likely that these marvels actually occurred as narrated, or that the witnesses to them were deceived by their own imaginings?"

Such (in the words of the *Argus*, to which, not having the whole article at hand, * I am indebted for these quotations) is the necessarily rough outline of an article, remarkable no less for the scientific acumen of the writer than for the mingled temperance, tenderness, and vigor with which he deals with the most remarkable delusions of modern times. It is, indeed, an article to be studied and thought over, for it is also remarkable not only for the sweeping force of its criticisms, but also for its suggestiveness. It is valuable also as an iconoclastic attack on that absurd sort of hero-worship which has arisen lately, namely, the bowing down to a few men of science, for a more trenchant or excellent piece of criticism could hardly be found than that on Messrs Huggins,

* The Mechanics' Institute authorities do not permit (and justly) the magazines to be removed or borrowed.

Crookes, and Cox. One can scarcely doubt but that this article will do a marked good in checking the spread of this Spiritist mania, and at the same time help to place those portions of Spiritism that are worthy of attention in a truer light before the world.

"J.S." AND "SPIRITUALISM DEFENDED" IN THE *ARGUS*.

I had thought of going very fully into this controversy, but really the case has been so admirably argued out by "Apemantus," "J.E.N.," "H.G.T.," "A.G.," and others, that but little is left to say. I am bound to say that "J.S." has battled for Spiritism with an ability far beyond the ordinary run of Spiritist controversialists, but the crushing replies and unanswerable objections put forward by the correspondents above named have completely beaten "J.S."—a more signal defeat has rarely been seen.

Notwithstanding the ability of "J.S." one cannot but be unfavorably impressed by observing the somewhat inflated and certainly very egotistical style he uniformly adopts. "J.S." is one of that class of persons who cry out against dogmatism, and yet are the most positive and dogmatic in the assertion of opinions they think they have reasoned out and believe to be true.* He seems also to have the faculty of reasoning in a circle in a high degree, and to be skilled in the art of ignoring a difficulty when well put forward by an opponent. On the other hand one must give "J.S." great credit for, on the whole, the very calm and dispassionate manner he has conducted the controversy, in view of the fact that he received a good deal of provocation; indeed, in several instances, one could hardly have wondered if he had lost his temper. I think the controversy all in all is one that speaks well for the literary talent of Victoria, for I doubt if anywhere a number of merely newspaper letters would have been found in which such excellent reasoning, familiarity with the subject, and vigorous style, would be so admirably mingled. "J.S.," however, shows a wonderful knack of ignoring the difficulties of his position—"Why do you give the physical phenomena of Spiritism the go-by?" asks "Apemantus," "for that is as much a part of the system as your higher manifestations, and is the very part that needs explanation and defence;" but "J.S." is dumb as to any explanation beyond the amazing one that he has never seen these phenomena! "If messages are fallible," asks "H.G.T.," "and are to be tested by human reason only, what is the need for spirits at all?" A most important point this is, but "J.S." quietly passes it without a word. "How do you produce rain at will, and by what trees?" "J.S." can only say that the spirits who guide us, inform us, and generally speaking bless us altogether, now refuse to inform him. "Show me a truth" challenges "H.G.T.," "not already in my library, or show me where the spirits have given any new revelation." "J.S." replies by some utterly unprovable theories as to the origin of species which are but second-rate copies of Mr Darwin's theory, and some theories about the origin of language which are but diluted editions of that which any one may find in Professor Max Müller's lectures on Language. "Has it ever occurred to 'J.S.,'" asks "T.H.," "that the assertion that Christ was a medium has one remarkable difficulty with it. If Christ were a medium and afterwards became a spirit, how comes it that he did not correct the errors into which Paul and the other Apostles fell as to what he was? Why has he permitted all this error and falsehood

* One cannot read such things as the lay sermon delivered by Mr. Charles Bright, and published by the *Argus* under the heading of "Extraordinary Unitarian Services," without being filled with disgust at the offensively dogmatic tone adopted by this class of men. To Mr Bright the whole of the mysteries of the universe are capable of explanation in a few propositions. The vast puzzle of God's dealings with man may be reduced to a sentence or two, by which the whole thing may be as easily understood as a sum of simple addition. Such men have no doubts, no difficulties; they understand all about God's workings; can clearly see His intentions, and will explain all about it in the course of a sermon of say three-quarters of an hour.

regarding himself to exist?" A most notable difficulty, but "J.S." hasn't a word to say in explanation. "Are the future blessings of the world only to be realised through Spiritism," asks "Apemantus," but "J.S." gives no reply, and so on for a host of other points and queries. There is one point, however, that I would lay stress on and ask "J.S." for an explanation. In his first letter he informs us that, "the human mind has now reached that stage of development in which it becomes practicable for the higher intelligences, acting under Divine Providence, and fulfilling the Almighty will, to reveal in its integrity and purity, through tens of thousands of channels, that religion which Christ taught, freed from the corruptions and perversions of succeeding ages, in order that the whole human race may eventually 'dwell with God in endless love.'" This is a very favorite theory of Spiritists, but is somewhat puzzling in view of the fact that they claim spirit manifestations as having taken place in all ages of the world's history; the Biblical record of Jacob wrestling with the angel, the Witch of Endor, the Transfiguration, and so on were, as they explain, but spirit manifestations (see also Note A.) Their main point, however, they stick to tenaciously, namely, that the world has morally progressed to that extent that spirits now are brought into communication with man. Observe, however, "J.S." on the other tack when required to defend the necessity of spirit intervention, "'H.G.T.' declares," he says "that the interposition of the spirits is unnecessary. We know everything they can tell us and a great deal more. Have we not Moses and the prophets, Comte and Buchner, universal intelligence and the half-penny postage card? What would you have—I reply in the language of the spirits, '*Your world is a human wilderness. Mankind is sinking into the grossest materialism and sensualism.*' We are striving to counteract this—to convince man of his immortality"—and so forth. If language can express two opposite and distinct things, I fancy these two paragraphs express them. How does "J.S." reconcile them—I confess I should like to hear.† In one letter he informs us that the spirits are only allowed "to give hints, clues, suggestions, and keys to knowledge. This, they explain, is in obedience to the laws of the Most High, who has decreed that man's happiness and progress shall be the product and reward of his own mental activity; adding that to reveal the secrets of science would be to encourage intellectual indolence, and to repress that effort which is man's instrument of advancement." Marvellous to relate, however, it seems that without any "effort" on "J.S.'s" part, one spirit gives him an outline of the origin of man, another a sketch of the formation of the German language and some other valuable matter he unfortunately has forgotten; but, most marvellous of all, he informs us that "I have never been able to propound a moral, political, or scientific problem to the spirits which they have failed to solve; no matter whether it related to the compatibility of free will and necessity, the science of government, or the existence of so-called evil." Good heavens! what have we done in Victoria to merit such a treasure as this? What are our University authorities about that they haven't rushed the *Argus* office to demand "J.S.'s" name, so as to get him to fill *all* the chairs at once? What need for studying Mill, M'Culloch, or Adam Smith, when we have a man at hand who can explain every problem in the science of government? Let us kick Duffy out, discard our M'Culloch, and send our three hundred pounder

* When in Boston, at one of the Banner of Light Free Circles, I put this question to Mrs. J. H. Conant—"Has Christ ever spoken through a medium—and if not, do you know any reason why?" receiving this very satisfactory reply. "He has spoken through many; indeed, through numberless—more so than the sands on your shores; for every truth that has ever been uttered since the days of Christ, and prior to his existence here, has been uttered through this same principle, this divine power of truth—truth which found expression through him—which was the man." Could the force of "hedging" any further go?

† In another of his letters he tells us that an angelic visitor from another planet told his spirit guide that he was astonished at earthly folk's goings on, "surely" he said, "they must be mad people." This by no means tallies with quotation No. 1. By the way couldn't we get some of these angelic visitors to give us some information about the other planets?

legislators to the right about. Let us burn our libraries and do away with that studying which Solomon declared was a weariness to the flesh, for haven't we got a man who has only to turn on the influence after the manner of the Yan Yean on some medium, and straightway all about Predestination, Free Trade and Protection, and the Origin of Evil become as easily understood as the grand total of two and two! Whoever dares to say, after this, that this isn't an age of progress, I shall savagely assert is a fool!

Alas for "J.S.!" I am sadly afraid that his letters—able and excellent as many of them are—prove that he is writing, but what "Apemantus" calls a miserable satire on himself. With evidence that he says would satisfy any court of justice, he yet fails to give us even a single fact that would help his position; with proofs that compelled him to succumb (so he says), he yet turns round when hard pressed, and says he does not see he is compelled to give any proofs to sceptics and unbelievers; with the power to solve the deepest problems of our existence, he yet leaves us groping in the dark as before; he is ignorant of the physical phenomena, he knows nothing of the table-turning and table-tapping manifestations, yet champions the cause that has these for one of its main evidences. "Who would not weep if Atticus were he" quotes "Apemantus," and being Atticus, we may weep indeed to see a man of so much intelligence, so well cultivated, so gentlemanly in controversy, the weak and foolish dupe of this weak and foolish superstition.

The *Argus* has well hit the mark when it says: "We see in it (Spiritism) nothing more than that inevitable reaction against those rationalistic views which led to that uncompromising materialism which can never satisfy the dual nature of man. . . . The soul recoiling in consternation at the blank prospect of annihilation is ready to catch at any straw which will give it assurance of a life beyond the grave. This we believe to be the key to the mystery attending the rapid increase in the number of converts to Spiritualism." Well, and justly said; and "J.S." bears it out. An unsettled and wavering thinker, he abandons sure and certain ground to find himself at last stranded on the barren shores of Spiritism. No man should fail in sympathy for those wandering souls who are ever seeking rest and finding none, but still more should we sympathise with one who deludes himself into the belief that he has found rest in this most miserable delusion and solemn farce—the Spiritism as expounded by "J.S."

NOTE A.

It will be observed I have used the term "modern" in speaking of the Spiritism we now know. There is a remarkable contradiction of statement about this matter among Spiritists themselves. When called on to explain why the spirits select these latter times to show themselves, they say it is because man has progressed so far in moral and mental strength that he is now capable of being brought into contact with the spirit world. On the other hand they claim that there have been evidences of spirit communion at all periods of the world's history. I confess myself unable to reconcile these two views, but as Spiritist logic is as marvellous as Spiritist facts I have no doubt this or any other difficulty will trouble Spiritists themselves very little. I will merely quote a passage or two as illustrative of the antiquity claimed for Spiritism: "Egyptian, Chinese, Grecian, Chaldean, Roman, as well as Jewish and Christian history, abound with evidences of ultra-mundane agencies which find no explanation without admitting the existence of a spirit realm opened in communication with mortals, and peopled by intelligences, who under certain conditions are able to manifest themselves. . . . The bibles or sacred writings of all ages and nations are largely composed of phenomena and teachings more or less in harmony with those of Modern Spiritualism. Wherever a living God or gods, demons, angels, spirits, so-called miracles, oracles, inspirations, or anything like super-mundane revelations have been recognised, there we find traces of the same spiritual philosophy

now exciting the joy and wonder of the world."—"Plain Guide to Spiritualism," p. 20.)—Mr Thomas Gales Forster, speaking of ancient manifestations refers to one notable case thus: "She is called the woman of Endor. She gave them a sitting, as it is called in modern times, with a striking manifestation. She proved herself a good woman, and a noble, true-hearted, God-gifted medium. All throughout the land you have just such to-day."—"What is Spiritualism?" p. 16.)—Another authority says: "The student of history readily traces close existing relations between the Aryan gymnosophist, the Brahminical seer, the Egyptian hierophant, the Buddhistic lama, the Grecian thaumaturgist, the Judæan baptist, the Syrian prophet, the Arabian dervish, the Roman sibyl, the British arch-druid, and the modern medium."—"Year Book of Spiritualism.")—One need hardly comment on these quotations: out of its mouth Spiritism stands identified with all the old superstitions, all the delusions mankind has been afflicted with: all the old forms of benighted savage and semi-savage credulity.

NOTE B.

RE-INCARNATION SPIRITISTS.

The extraordinary and mystical theory of re-incarnation may be explained in a few words; it is that the souls or mental parts of men have existed in bygone times, and that the birth of a child is but the re-incarnation in the flesh of a spirit that existed before. The soul, it seems, according to its conduct here, prepares itself for entering into either a higher or lower body the next time it is born. The period the soul may be floating about without any body may be from two years to many thousand centuries; but the usual period is from two to three hundred years. Finally, it seems, "In proportion as a spirit advances in science and virtue, it assumes bodies of a nature less and less gross, and is thus able to live in planets of progressively higher order, until it has reached the grade of advancement which enables it to assume the glorified body of the celestial degree, when—being freed from the necessity of planetary incorporations, and therefore exempted from any further undergoing of the corporeal crisis we call 'death,' it passes upwards into spheres of celestial existence of which we can now form no adequate conception." I apprehend this will be something new to most readers. As a theory it is ingenious, as a positive revelation one need hardly discuss it.

NOTE C.

SPIRITIST ESTIMATES OF MEDIUMS.

One has only to go among the Spiritists to observe the great number of impostors there are in connection with the system. Spiritists themselves bear testimony to this. One says:—"Spiritualism, like a flood, gathered all the floating rubbish on its tide, and by many is judged rather by this accident than by the force of its torrent. . . . The divine philosophy of Spiritualism is no exception. Its pure garments have been dabbled by the slime of selfishness, and polluted by the vampires of passion."—(Hudson Tuttle.) Another is very explicit:—"The spiritual public has been exceedingly long-suffering and tolerant with a class of individuals who have been wandering through the country, filled with vague ideas of some lofty 'mission' which the very loftiest spirits had to perform through them. . . . Their 'mission' turns out to be a fizzle, and common-sense people are prone to regard them as not far from fools. They are proverbially improvident; don't care about money; the spirits will provide for them, *providing* they can find good easy friends on whom to sponge, and fork over a ten or twenty dollar bill with which to close."—(Uriah Clark.) This is excellent, except the not caring about money part. When one finds a Spiritist medium who doesn't care about money the world may be considered as near its end! Another draws a blacker picture still:—"Let no person suppose I claim each medium as a Spiritualist. By no means; many of our best test mediums know little or nothing of Spiritualism, and some are members of churches, and say prayers in their places."—(Warren Chase.) Isn't that horrible to contemplate? Could

anything be more emphatic in its condemnation than this accusation of Mr. Chase's—that some are even so abandoned as to say prayers in their places. I could quote any number of passages to show the estimation many of the mediums are held in by their co-religionists, but as the above are fair samples of the manner they are spoken of, I think they will suffice.

Whilst these articles were appearing in the *Star*, the following little passage of arms between Mr Nayler and myself took place. I can never express gratitude enough for the mercy shown by Mr. N. in the fact that, yielding to the softer impulses of his nature, he did not "put the writer down." Such kindly consideration makes one think better of humanity:—

MR. B. S. NAYLER AND OUR CORRESPONDENT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE STAR.

SIR,—Several of your readers wish me to reply in your columns to the carefully-penned articles headed "Modern Spiritism;" some, under the impression that it is my duty to expose the false inferences" drawn by the writer, unfavorable to Spiritism; others, under the impression that they are unanswerable. But, so far am I from wishing "to put the writer down," I would rather encourage him to pen more articles of a like nature (two of which I have read, Nos. 1 and 2), as he shows his judgment in not accepting the spirit-philosophy on the mere representations of other men, but judiciously examines it for himself; and he has done the cause good service by holding up to ridicule the preposterous notions and foolish writings of those so-called Spiritists, who have published many things repulsive to common sense. I regret the time he has devoted to the perusal of so much trumpery; but let him go on investigating; he is on the high road towards Spiritism, and despite all the rubbish he wades through, he will yet discover that it has God for its author, disembodied spirits for its heralds, and the welfare of the whole human race for its object; truth its only authority, reason its grand interpreter. And as to differences of opinion respecting its being a fact or a fiction, I say with Milton—"Let truth and falsehood grapple; who ever knew truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter?"—Yours, &c., B. S. NAYLER.

35 Stephen street, Melbourne, 9th December.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE STAR.

SIR,—I thank Mr. Nayler exceedingly for the vigorous English he employs to characterise the literature of Spiritism. "Preposterous notions," "foolish writings," "trumpery," and "rubbish" "of those so-called Spiritists." Such is the language Mr. N. employs towards his co-believers in this new dispensation—"God's greatest gift to man." Unfortunately for Mr. Nayler, my quotations are taken, in the great majority of cases, from the very best authorities on Spiritism in America and Britain—authorities, it deeply pains me to say, compared to whom Mr. Nayler is as a very feeble light. It is still more unfortunate for Mr. Nayler that very many of my quotations are taken from books obtained from Mr. Terry, to whom Mr. Nayler personally recommended me, gave me the address, and with whom Mr. N., if rumor be correct, is said to be in partnership. Whether or no this last be correct is not much matter, but I leave Mr. Nayler to give his apostolic explanation of the fact, that, in promulgating this "noblest religion ever vouchsafed to poor humanity," he gives to anxious enquirers the address of one who, it seems, sells books on the spirit-philosophy which turn out to be "preposterous," "foolish," "trumpery," &c., even though they are the best on that religion which has "God for its author, spirits for its heralds," and some other sonorous periods for its something else. I cease to wonder at Mr. Nayler believing in Spiritism or anything else when he discovers I am on "the high road to Spiritism." Such abundant faith is refreshing in these days of doubt and incredulity.—I am, &c.,

11th December.

YOUR CORRESPONDENT.

Printed at "The Ballarat Star" Office, Sturt Street.