

CONTRADICTIONS OF THE BIBLE,

AN OUTLINE OF TWO LECTURES ON THE BIBLE,
DELIVERED IN THE QUEEN'S THEATRE, SYDNEY,
ON OCTOBER 17 AND 31, 1875.

BY

J. TYERMAN.

Reprinted from the "Stockwhip."

PRICE, THREE-PENCE.

PREFACE.

I HAVE received many inquiries from persons in Sydney, Melbourne, and other parts, as to whether I purposed publishing the course of lectures—some twelve or thirteen—that I am delivering at short intervals, on the Bible. I am thankful for the interest thus manifested in the subject dealt with, and have replied, that I trust I shall be able to comply with such a general wish after a while. In the meantime, I have thought it well to issue this little Tract, in the hope that it may do some good, in opening the eyes of the people to see one of the greatest and most mischievous delusions that ever misled mankind—namely, that the book called the Bible is the inspired and infallible word of God. It is not against the Bible as a book that I am contending, but against what I regard as erroneous views of its origin, character, and authority, which have so long been palmed upon the world as Divine truths.

When I state that the two lectures on the Contradictions of the Bible occupied over an hour each in delivery, it will be seen that the following reports only give an outline of what I said on the subject; but condensed, and imperfect, as the sketches are, I trust they will be the means of convincing some of the Bibliolaters of our time, that the book they prize so highly is one of the most contradictory, and consequently unreliable, productions in the English language. I have only produced a few of the many irreconcilable discrepancies that mar the harmony of the Bible; and yet quite sufficient to satisfy any impartial reader that, apart from the number of other objections that can be urged against it, this one feature completely destroys its claim to be acknowledged as a Divine and unerring guide for mankind.

I appeal to our Spiritualistic and Freethought friends in these colonies, to help to give this little Tract as wide a circulation as possible, especially among professing Christians. When such *sham* defenders of the popular faith as the Revs. Dr. Barry and James Greenwood, yield so much, on behalf of the Bible, that Freethinkers of different schools have so long been fighting for, and yet pretend to believe that Christianity remains unaffected by their admissions, and refuse to credit our side with the concessions they are compelled to make, it surely becomes all *true* Liberals to bestir themselves to expose the sophistical and dishonest course of such men; and to show that if the inspiration, and consequent Divine authority, of some parts of the Scriptures is given up, the whole system of orthodoxy is virtually surrendered; seeing that no tribunal is acknowledged that can determine which parts of those records are of God, and which are of man. It is a melancholy prostitution of talent and of the ministerial office, to try to lull the people into the delusion that the superstructure of Christianity is perfectly safe, while you make admissions which tend as directly to sap its very foundations as the efforts of avowed opponents. And yet, inconsistent and reprehensible as such conduct is, it shews how difficult it has become to defend the orthodox views of the Bible against the assaults of modern criticism; and strengthens our belief that the time will come when that book will be compelled to take its place on the plane of purely human productions, and when the doctrines and institutions that rest on the assumption of its Divine authority, will be swept away. And with these will pass away that unctuous cant, pharisaical exclusiveness, and sectarian intolerance, of which the popular belief in the Bible is such a prolific source. Let all our friends do their best to bring about that desired result.

In closing these remarks, I would direct the reader's attention to a common orthodox trick which I exposed in the second of the following lectures. I refer to the practice of charging most of those who reject the Bible, with doing so in order to get rid of its moral restraints, and thus exciting an unjust prejudice against them. Of the four lecturers who have lately appeared in the Masonic Hall, under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Association, three of them—the Revs. Dr. Barry, W. Curnow, and J. Greenwood—indulged in that dignified game of clerical dirt throwing. The honourable exception was the Rev. Principal Kinross. My remarks on that contemptible dodge were made before the first lecture on the other side was given, and the conduct of those three Rev. gentlemen proves that they were much needed.

J. TYERMAN.

147 Woolloomooloo-street, Woolloomooloo,
Sydney, November 27, 1875.



CONTRADICTIONS OF THE BIBLE.

MR. TYERMAN delivered the fifth of his course of lectures on the question, "Is the Bible the Word of God?" in the Queen's Theatre, on Sunday, Oct. 17. There was a very large attendance. He wished, before entering on the subject announced, to make a remark or two on the conduct of two or three persons in the dress circle—apparently professing Christians—on the occasion of his last lecture on the Bible, to which his attention had been called. They annoyed those around them who wished to attend to the whole lecture, by such expressions as that he (Mr. Tyerman) "ought to be kicked out of the place," "horsewhipped," and "burnt." He was not surprised at such an evidence of orthodox piety, but he decidedly took exception to the manner and place of its manifestation. Any one who chose, as he did, to reject the creeds of Christendom, to expose the hollowness of most of the religion of modern society, and to inculcate unpopular truths, must expect to have his character assailed, his motives impugned, and, if circumstances allowed, his liberty, if not his life, endangered. Kicking, horsewhipping, and burning were formerly favourite pursuits of believers in the Bible; and, no doubt, many modern Christians deeply regretted the loss of those good old times, and often sighed for their return. They proved their divine charity by harshly condemning all who could not pronounce their Shibboleth, and illustrated the noble precept of their Master to love their enemies, by cordially hating him and others who dared to think for themselves. Now, if the religion of those persons had not taught them good manners, and made them gentlemen, education and social intercourse ought to have done so. When he attended an orthodox church, he invariably heard a great deal from the pulpit that he could not accept as truth, but he did not distract the attention of the faithful by interjecting unseemly remarks. He then only mentally condemned what appeared to him as error, and afterwards took what course he deemed necessary for its refutation. And, in deference to those who had come to hear what he had to say against the Bible, he requested those who could not hear their views questioned, without interruption, to leave the theatre. The Church was their proper place.

In his last lecture he had proved that the Bible taught the most false and blasphemous views of God, and hence could not be his word. On the present occasion he would show that it gave glaringly contradictory descriptions of God, and therefore could not have been inspired by infallible wisdom. He would not attempt to make good his position by mere dogmatic assertions, still less by drawing upon his imagination for his facts and arguments; but would simply rely upon the clear and pointed statements of the book itself. If it could be proved that the Bible contradicted itself, its authority would be destroyed. A single positive contradiction would be fatal to the orthodox doctrine of its infallibility. But he would show that it literally abounded in contradictions. He was quite aware of the stereotyped answer of Christians, that its alleged contradictions were only *apparent*, and not real; but in the application of that principle to certain passages they furnished another example of that reprehensible, shuffling, and arbitrary twisting of words to support a foregone conclusion, which he had so often condemned. Take the case of the numbering of Israel, mentioned in the last lecture.

One passage, 2 Samuel, xxiv., 1, distinctly stated that it was the "Lord" who moved David to number them, while another passage, 1 Chron., xxi., 1, as distinctly stated that "Satan" caused him to do it. Could there be a more clear and positive contradiction than that? Who could make it to be only apparent, and not real, without being guilty of unworthy quibbling, and a gross abuse of terms? If a modern historian asserted in one part of his work that a certain man performed a given act; and in another part that a totally different person did it, he would not be able to clear himself from the charge of error by maintaining that the contradiction was only apparent, and not real. Nor could the credibility of the Bible be vindicated by such an elastic and questionable principle of interpretation. In support of the proposition laid down as to the contradictory character of Scripture teaching about God, it was shown that in such passages as Gen xvii., 1, and Matt., xix., 26, he was declared to be "*Almighty*," and that "all things were possible" with him; but in Judges, i., 19, it was stated that he could not drive out the inhabitants of a certain valley "because they had chariots of iron." Hence words declared his omnipotence, while events proved his impotence. And so it had often been since. Christian armies, in their work of pious butchery, believed that their God was all-powerful, and could easily scatter their foes; but it was generally found that if he had anything to do with those wholesale murders, he gave the victory to the largest, best equipped, and most skilfully officered armies. In Acts, i., 24, and Psalm cxxxix, 1-4, he was said to be omniscient; but in Gen., xxii., 12, Deut., viii., 2, and Deut., xiii., 3, it was clearly implied that he was ignorant as to whether his people loved and feared him; and it was said that he adopted certain means to test the point, just as man did to solve so doubtful matter. The experiment elicited the desired information, and he declared—"Now I know that thou fearest God." In Job, xxxiv., 21, Psalm cxxxix., 7-10, and Prov., xv., 3, he was credited with *omnipresence*; but in Gen., xi., 5, and Gen., xviii., 21, it was taught that he was a limited and local being, whose residence was above the clouds. A report had reached him that in the first case some people were building a tower whose summit would reach heaven, and in the other that a certain city was so wicked as to be ripe for destruction. He did not know whether the report was true or false; and hence, in the last case, he said—"I will go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it which is come unto me; and if not I will know." But what need had a God, said to be everywhere present, to come down from heaven to satisfy himself by a special local inspection, whether certain reported things on earth were true? If the text did not mean what it said, who had sufficient authority to decide what it did mean? If these terms were not to bear their ordinary interpretation, seeing that no qualifying clause was inserted, there was surely no occasion to use them in a misleading sense, in accommodation to human weakness, as was often alleged. If the Bible was God's word, and he had taken human weakness and ignorance into account in inditing it, as Christians believed, was not that an additional reason why he should have guided mankind by the most unequivocal statements, instead of tantalising them by using language that was capable of such various and conflicting constructions?

Again, Numbers xxiii. 19, Mal. iii. 6, and James i. 17, ascribed *immutability* to God; while Genesis vi. 6, Exodus xxxii. 14, and Jonah iii. 10, contradicted that by stating that he repeatedly changed his purposes. If one passage declared that God was not "the son of man that he should repent," and another passage asserted that "God repented of

the evil that he had said he would do unto them," and if that was not admitted to be a positive contradiction, he would ask in the name of common sense, what did language mean? God was said to have created man, and yet, when the creature did not turn out according to the Creator's expectations, it is said that "it *repented* the Lord that he had made man on earth, and it *grieved* him at his heart." But if he was omniscient, as supposed, he must have foreseen that his creature would go astray; why, therefore, repent and grieve over it? Would it not have been more God-like to have prevented the cause of his repentance and sorrow, rather than have to remove it by destroying all the inhabitants of the earth, save eight persons? Those passages, then, impugned the omniscience and omnipotence, as well as the immutability of God. In Isaiah xl. 28, it was taught that God "fainteth not, neither is weary;" but Exodus xxxi. 17, stated that he "rested" after his week's work of creation, and "was refreshed" by his rest, just as man was by his Sunday rest after his six day's labour. Exodus xxxiii. 20, and John i. 18, taught that God was *invisible* to human sight; and yet Genesis xxxii. 20, Exodus xxiv. 9-11, and Exodus xxxiii. 11, as positively stated that he had been seen by man. Could anything be plainer than the words—"No man hath *seen* God at any time?" And yet Jacob affirmed—"For I have *seen* God face to face." That was another instance of its beautiful agreement with itself throughout, which was said to be such a distinguishing glory of the Bible. It was a curious logic that proved that an object both had and had not been seen; but then the logic of theology rose triumphantly above the ordinary laws of reasoning. In 1 Tim., vi., 16, it was stated that God dwelt in *light*; but in 1 Kings, viii., 12, Psalm xviii., 11, and Psalm xcvi., 2, it was said that he dwelt in "*darkness*." Of course, on the principle that there was no difference between light and darkness, that day and night meant the same thing, there was no contradiction in these passages. Again, in James, i., 13, it was declared that the Lord never "*tempted* any man;" but Genesis, xxii., 1, flatly contradicted that by stating "that God did *tempt* Abraham." It might be accepted as a general rule of conduct with the God of the Bible, that if he declared he would not do a certain thing, he would sooner or later do that very thing. Further, in Deut. xxxii., 4, and Heb. vi., 18, it was asserted that he was "*a God of truth*," and that "it was impossible for God to *lie*;" but in 1 Kings, xxii., 23, and Ezek., xiv., 9, they were told that he had "put a *lying spirit* into the mouth" of certain prophets, and had "*deceived*" them. Was not deception lying? and was not lying by proxy as bad as lying in person? In the next place, such passages as Deut., xxxii., 4, and Rom., ii., 11, attributed *justice* and *impartiality* to God; but Ex., xx., 5, and Rom., ix., 11-13, represented him as one of the most *unjust* and *partial* beings imaginable. His "*justice*" was shewn by punishing innocent children, even to the fourth generation, for the misconduct of their fathers; not by the operation of natural laws and causes, but by arbitrary and direct inflictions. His "*no respect for persons*" was illustrated by his making a distinction between two children before they had "done any good or evil," and by "*hating*" the one, and "*loving*" the other, when they arrived at maturity. And what made his conduct the more reprehensible, was the fact that he loved the worst man, Jacob, and hated the best, Esau. Language was inadequate to express his (the lecturer's) abhorrence of Jacob's meanness in taking advantage of his brother's hunger to get possession of his birthright. Again, such passages as James, v., 11, and 1 John, iv., 16, exhibited God as a Being full of *love, mercy, and goodness*;" but Deut., vii., 16,

1 Sam., xv., 2, 3. and scores of other passages, described him as a most *cruel, vindictive, pitiless monster*. His people were commanded to show "no pity;" they were to "slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." But Saul was a little more merciful than his God, and spared the life of King Agag, and the best of the cattle of the Amalekites; and because of that humane act—because he had not "performed" the ferocious "command" literally and fully, God "repented" that he had "set up Saul to be king;" while Samuel, so often held up by Christians as a fine example of a pious God-fearing man, "hewed Agag to pieces before the Lord in Gilgal." Finally, in 2 Peter, iii., 9, he was said to have willed the salvation of men; and yet, in Prov., xvi., 4, it was declared that he had made "even the wicked for the day of evil." When a person said he willed a certain thing, and yet did not give effect to his will, it was reasonable to conclude either that he had did not mean what he said, or that he lacked the power to accomplish his purpose. So they must reason in regard to God. If he was "not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance," then those who have perished must have done so against the will of an alleged all-mighty and an all-loving God. Which were they to believe—that God really willed the salvation of all men, and yet could not carry out his will; or that though he said he willed their salvation, he did not mean it: but, on the contrary, created "the wicked for the day of evil"—"predestinated" them before they were born, to eternal damnation? Such were a few of the unmistakably contradictory teachings respecting God, of their so-called infallible and harmonious Bible. He could easily have multiplied them; and would give a number on other subjects quite as plain and startling, in another lecture. He had furnished chapter and verse for all he had said. Language could not well be more definite and clear than that of the passages he had quoted. No one could deny that they contradicted each other in the most positive and persistent manner, unless he were either pitifully imbecile, wilfully dishonest, or lamentably perverted and warped by the influence of a false theology. He repeated once more, that he had nothing to do with the far-fetched and arbitrary interpretations of Christians, by which it was sought to force a reconciliation of those opposing passages. Such glaring contradictions as the Bible abounded in would for ever destroy the credibility of any other book; and no one would attempt to preserve its credibility by adopting such methods of reconciling its positive discrepancies as were applied to the Bible. Tried by the same rules of criticism and interpretation as were applied to other books, the Bible was found to be hopelessly at variance with itself on very many points, and therefore could not be the word of an omniscient and infallible God.

MORE CONTRADICTIONS.

MR. TYERMAN delivered the sixth of his course of lectures on the Bible, in the Queen's Theatre, on Sunday evening 31 ult., to a large and appreciative audience. In the early part of his lecture, he animadverted on certain unworthy tricks which many orthodox teachers resorted to in their defence of the Bible against the attacks of Freethought, for the purpose of throwing dust in the eyes of their hearers, and rousing an unjust and mischievous prejudice against Freethinkers. He did not say that all who did this were deliberately dishonest and untruthful, but he

believed that some were. Such was the effect of a certain kind of training, of believing a given set of dogmas, of viewing an object from a single and narrow point of view, of individual and denominational interests, and other circumstances, on some persons that they got into a habit of unconscious lying, and practised a species of unintentional deception in connection with religious and theological matters, which they would be among the first to detect and reprobate if practised by others in dealing with any scientific, political, or social question. But while that might be admitted on behalf of a good many of the orthodox, he had every reason to believe that some of them were knowingly and deliberately unjust and misleading, when speaking of their opponents. One common trick was to assert that there was nothing new in the objections of modern Infidelity to the Bible—that they had all been urged by unbelievers of former generations, and triumphantly answered thousands of times. The simple-minded believer was satisfied with such dust-throwing. His minister was supposed to know all about such things; and as he assured him that the Bible was not in danger, that it had survived even fiercer attacks in the past than those of the present, he was not alarmed for its safety. No doubt many of those objections had been raised in former times. The principal contradictions, and other questionable features of the Bible, were patent to any careful reader of the book; and those who traversed the same field of controversy must necessarily use many of the same materials, and might differ but little from some of their predecessors, except in their mode of treating the subject, their deduction of inferences, and their application of principles. All the sceptics, from Spinoza to Bradlaugh, were inevitably led to use many weapons pretty much alike in their battles with a popular and powerful foe; though some of the most fatal evidences against the Bible were solely the result of modern criticism. But it must be remembered that every generation produced hosts of fresh believers in the Bible, and to them even the old objections were new. The most important question, however, was not whether the objections to the Scriptures were new, but whether they were true? Had they been, or could they be, fairly met? Some few might have been removed or weakened, but he maintained that all the principal ones, whether drawn from the contents of the Bible, or furnished by science, had not been, and could not be, successfully answered. Besides, the taunt of want of freshness and originality in the weapons used by modern scepticism, and its modes of attack, came with bad grace from the Christian side. What new truths or original arguments had they advanced? Orthodox teachers had gone on from generation to generation repeating substantially the same things—grinding out the same doleful gospel tunes, with only the variation of an odd note now and then. They had kept on talking about the same original fall, which had never taken place; lamenting the same scepticism, which they were powerless to crush; pointing out the same internal evidences in support of the Bible, which many honest truthseekers utterly failed to discover; insisting on the same external proofs, which needed proving themselves; indulging in the same sickening scenes of blood, with which most right-minded persons were becoming disgusted; expatiating on the same stereotyped moral influences, which were chiefly conspicuous for their absence; exhibiting the same satanic scarecrow, which children were frightened with and sensible people laughed at; and threatening the same blazing hell to intimidate the unbelieving, and promising the same psalm-singing heaven to encourage the drooping spirits of the faithful. He did not

blame them for their monotonous repetition of the same things. They only had a limited sphere to move in. They were bound to one book as an authority, and could not preach a sermon without basing it upon, and supporting it by, that book. But seeing that they kept harping on the same strings from year to year, they should be the last to twit the other side with repeating the objections and arguments of former times. Another reprehensible trick was to assert that those who denied the divine authority of the Bible, did so that they might get rid of its moral restraints, and be able to indulge in all manner of sin without compunction of conscience. "Behold those Infidels!" exclaimed many religious teachers.—"They have rejected the laws of God, and would trample upon the laws of man if they could. Having no belief in future punishment, they give full play to their evil passions. They are dangerous members of the community. If their principles prevailed, they would stamp out liberty, morality, and religion; and would turn our Christian society into a state of hopeless chaos and reeking corruption. And their abominations are the natural fruit of their Infidelity; therefore touch not the loathsome thing." Of course the trick answered its purpose with many who were still in theological leading strings. They shuddered at the very mention of Infidelity, were prejudiced against unbelievers, pressed their Bible more closely to their hearts, and stood firmly within the pale of the Church, where they were told they were safe. But he had no hesitation in characterising that trick as one of the most gratuitous and foul of the many slanders which the orthodox were guilty of. A belief of the Bible was no more a necessary preventive of immorality, than a disbelief of it was a necessary incentive to it. The obligations of morality did not rest on the authority of any book or Church, but were planted by God in the natural constitution of things. He did not say there were no bad men in the Liberal ranks; but he did affirm that there was nothing in their principles to make them bad, but everything that was necessary to make them good. Nay, he went further and maintained that, judging the tree by its fruit, what was called Infidelity would compare most favourably with Christianity, in its moral influence on its professors. He had found the average Freethinker every whit as truthful, honest, and moral, as the average Christian, and a deal more charitable and humane. A number of believers in the Bible—some of them pillars of the Church, who gave liberally (of other people's money) for its support—had figured conspicuously in the insolvent and other courts since he came to Sydney; how many avowed Spiritualists and Freethinkers had appeared there during that period? It was surely time that Christians, and especially the clergy, ceased from resorting to such petty-fogging tricks and vile slanders in dealing with their opponents, whose disbelief of the Bible was at least as honest and well-grounded as their belief in it, and whose general conduct was quite as honourable as their own, though not gilded with the same professions of sanctity.

Having made these remarks, which circumstances called for, he would proceed to point out other contradictions in the Bible. Of course, Christians denied that any real discrepancies existed; and as for the apparent ones, they could easily be reconciled. The stump orators of Hyde Park could quickly remove all the difficulties he had raised, or might raise, and could make the profoundest mysteries of the Bible as clear as mud. Those learned and eloquent illuminators of little mobs could prove, by the soundest logic, that black was white that green was blue, and that yellow was no colour at all. Even greater men than they attempted to do that, when treating of the contradictions and absurd-

ities of the Bible. No doubt many of the opposing statements of the Bible could be harmonised, by the forcing principle of interpretation ; but what would be the result ? The attempt to straighten a piece of crooked iron often broke it ; and to harmonise the Bible by forcing unwarrantable constructions on difficult passages, was to destroy its boasted inspiration ; for that which could only be made believable by such means was manifestly the production of finite and erring man. A few of the authorities on the orthodox side, however, were honest enough to admit that some of those contradictions were absolutely irreconcilable. Mr. Tyerman here read an extract from the Rev. Dr. Adam Clarke, the learned commentator, in which he admitted that "to attempt to reconcile them in every part is lost labour." But he was surprised that the Doctor did not see that to claim infallible inspiration for the original writers of the Bible, and deny it to copiers, translators, and interpreters was to virtually deny inspiration altogether, or at all events to render it practically worthless. The idea of an infallible revelation, left to be transmitted through fallible and corrupt channels, was an absurdity. If the original books were infallible, there could be no guarantee that the different copies were infallible, nor that any given interpretation was correct. The Catholic Church, with all its errors and abominations, took up the most intelligible and logical position on that point. Given an infallible book, and an infallible custodian and interpreter, was an absolute necessity ; or the so-called infallible authority would be made by different parties to teach the most contradictory things : as the Bible was made to do by the various Protestant sects. The following were among the Biblical contradictions that Mr. Tyerman pointed out and commented upon. When Israel and Judah were numbered, in obedience either to a Divine or Satanic command, he did not know which, for one passage stated the former and another the latter, it was found, according to 1 Chronicles, xxi., 5, that "they of Israel were a thousand thousand and an hundred thousand men that drew the sword ; and Judah was four hundred three score and ten thousand men that drew sword ;" but 2 Samuel, xxiv., 9, stated that "there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword ; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men." That made a difference of three hundred thousand in Israel, and thirty thousand in Judah—total, three hundred and thirty thousand. Could anyone make those figures square ? The price which David gave to Ornan, king of the Jebusites, for a threshing floor, was stated differently in the two accounts. 1 Chron., xxi., 25, said the price was "six hundred shekels of gold," while 2 Samuel, xxiv., 24, said it was only "fifty shekels of silver." The latter price was only about a hundred and twentieth part of the value of the former, and was silver instead of gold. Was that, or was it not, a real contradiction ? He had nothing to do at present with the purposes for which David wanted the threshing floor, or he would point out that building an altar, and offering sacrifice, "that the plague might be stayed," was about as sensible as modern Christians relying on prayer to check the ravages of cholera, instead of attending to sanitary regulations and the laws of physical health. That truthful book also contradicted itself in reporting the number of "horsemen" that David took from Hadadezer, king of Zobab. In 2 Samuel, viii., 4, "seven hundred" were said to have been captured ; but 1 Chron., xviii. 4, made it only "seven thousand"—a difference of six thousand three hundred. A Christian might not think much of a little discrepancy like that ; but he would find it have considerable weight if he fancied he only owed seven hundred

pounds, and found out that it was seven thousand ; or was expecting a legacy of the latter amount, and it turned out to be only the former. 2 Kings, xxiv., 8, made "Jehoiachin" to be "eighteen years old when he began to reign ;" but 2 Chron., xxxvi., 9, made him only "eight years old" when he ascended the throne—a difference of ten years. That was only a slight error, some would say ; but an infallible record would contain no errors, large or small. A single error, however small, destroyed the claim of infallibility. In 2 Chron., xxii., 2, "Ahaziah" was said to be "forty and two years old" when he began to reign ; but 2 Kings, viii., 26—written under the same unerring inspiration—declared that he was only "two and twenty" when he donned the purple ; which made him twenty years younger than the other passage did. 2 Chron., xxi., 20, stated that "Jehoram" was "thirty and two years old" when he began to reign, and that "he reigned in Jerusalem eight years ;" which would make him forty years old at the time of his death. He was immediately succeeded to the throne by his son, Ahaziah, who, in 2 Chron., xxii., 2, just quoted, was said to be "forty and two years old when he began to reign ;" which actually made the son two years older than his father ! Christians often praised the Bible as a wonderful book ; and truly it was a wonderful book to accomplish such a feat as that. Such were only a few of the contradictions found in the Old Testament. The number could have been much increased, but he must pass on to the New Testament.

It was exceedingly fortunate for the interests of truth that they had a good many of what professed to be independent accounts of the same things in the Bible, for that enabled them to check one narrative by another. And as those supposed independent and infallible reports so frequently flatly contradicted each other, it might reasonably be inferred that those accounts which there were no duplicates of, and hence no means of checking, were equally unreliable. Matthew ii, 14, 15, stated that the parents of Jesus took him into Egypt, to remain there till the death of Herod ; while Luke ii, 22, 39, recorded that they took him "to their own city Nazareth ;" which was about as correct as to say that a man had gone to Brisbane, who had gone to Melbourne. John x, 30, and Philippians ii, 6, taught that Christ was one with and equal to God ; but John, xiv. 28, and Matthew, xxiv. 36, assigned him a subordinate position, and denied him omniscience, which was one of the attributes of Deity. Matthew, xxviii. 18, and John, iii. 35, credited Christ with almighty power ; whereas Matthew, xiii. 58, and Mark, vi. 5, proved that he did not possess it, and that the unbelief of the people baffled his purposes. Matthew, xxvii. 44, and Mark, xv. 32, related that both the thieves who were crucified with Jesus reviled him on the cross ; while Luke, xxiii. 39, 40, said that only one of them did that, and was rebuked by the other for so-doing. Which statement were they to believe ? They could not both be correct. The Gospels also contradicted each other in speaking of the women who first visited Christ's sepulchre. John, xx. 1, said that only one went ; Matthew, xxviii. 1, said that two went ; and Mark, xvi. 1, said that three went. Did the Holy Ghost inspire those three different statements ? Mark, xvi. 5, said that one angel was seen in the sepulchre ; but John, xx. 11, 12, said that two were seen. In relating Paul's conversion, Acts ix. 7, declared that those who were with him heard the supernatural voice that spoke to him ; while Acts xxii. 9, as positively affirmed that "they heard not the voice"—another beautiful instance of unbroken harmony. Romans iii. 20, iv. 4 ; and Ephesians ii. 8, 9, taught that man was justified by faith and not by works ; but James, ii. 21, 24, contradicted

his brother Paul, and inculcated the more rational doctrine that man can be justified by works. John, x. 28, taught the final perseverance of the Saints ; but Hebrews vi. 4-6, as distinctly taught that it was possible for them not only to fall from grace, but to everlastingly perish. 1 Corinthians, xv. 52, declared that "the dead shall be raised" at some future time ; while Job, vii., 9, positively asserted that those who "go down to the grave shall come up no more." Was Job or Paul inspired ? or had an omniscient Deity, who inspired both, forgotten what he had made one say when he moved the other to write ? Psalm, civ., 5, and Ecclesiastes, i., 4, assured us that the earth would abide for ever ; but 2 Peter, iii., 10, and Revelation, xx., 11, dispelled the pleasing belief by predicting its utter annihilation. Those were a few of the contradictions in which a so-called infallible book abounded. He would ask the Christians before him to say candidly whether they could still maintain, in the face of those glaring discrepancies, that the Bible was in every respect a trustworthy guide ? Could they harmonise those differences by any fair means ? He wanted no shuffling evasion, no arbitrary twisting and stretching ; no perhaps this or probably that ; no human improvement upon a supposed Divine and perfect work. If they could not reconcile those contradictions in a clear and satisfactory manner, as he was convinced they could not, let them abandon at once and forever the groundless belief respecting the character and claims of the Bible, by which they had so long been misled. He knew they would have a hard mental struggle to conquer religious habits, to eradicate early impressions, and to bring their minds to believe that what had given them so much comfort, and upon which they had built so many cherished hopes, was only a mixture of truth and error, of good and evil ; and was no more the word of God than thousands of other books. But let them be honest to themselves, to their highest sense of truth and right, and fear not the consequences. The object to be obtained was well worth the effort required. The overthrow, in their minds, of the orthodox belief in the Bible would, involve the ruin of many other equally false and pernicious doctrines ; and they would be able to hail with joy the New Dispensation that had dawned upon the world, and to accept truth wherever it might be found, and whithersoever it might lead.



WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

- 1.—A GUIDE TO SPIRITUALISM. Price 3s., by post, 3s. 4d.

A GUIDE TO SPIRITUALISM is the title of a very candid, forcible, and, as we think, exhaustive book, by J. Tyerman. . . . its ground is well taken, and its reasoning straightforward and irresistible.—*The Banner of Light*, Boston.

This is a valuable work, designed more especially for inquirers, or those just commencing to investigate the claims of the Harmonial Philosophy. . . . It will certainly exercise a commanding influence. . . . Mr. Tyerman is also the author of several spicy and able pamphlets.—*The Religio-Philosophical Journal*, Chicago

- 2.—SHALL WE LIVE ON EARTH AGAIN? or, the *Doctrine of Reincarnation Examined*. Price 1s.; by post, 1s. 1d.

Mr. Tyerman is a skilled and effective writer, and nothing we have met with in the range of Spiritualistic literature at all equals his literary efforts.—*The Daily Telegraph*, Melbourne.

- 3.—SPIRITUALISM VINDICATED: being a reply to the Revs. J. Graham, A. W. Webb, and D. Allen, and the "Christian Advocate," of Sydney. Price 1s., by post 1s. 2d.

SPIRITUALISM VINDICATED is a cleverly written and a highly argumentative work. . . . The writer keeps close to his subject, and holds his victim with a strong hand, until he gives him the final blow which places him *hors de combat*. His application of the three tests of a miracle, which tests were said by the Rev. John Graham, of Pitt-street fame, to be infallible safeguards against error, is a fine illustration of the *tu quoque* in reasoning. Having carefully read Mr. Tyerman's pamphlet, and also some of the sermons and articles to which it is a reply, we have come to the conclusion that the clergy generally acted with a wise discretion in not accepting his offer to discuss the claims of that particular system of facts and doctrines which he so boldly and cleverly advocates.—*The Stockwhip*, Sydney.

- 4.—IS THERE A DEVIL? or, the Scarecrow OF CHRISTENDOM UNMASKED. Second Edition. Price 6d; by post 7d.

- 5.—IS THERE A HELL? or, THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT EXAMINED IN THE LIGHT OF REASON, JUSTICE, AND BENEVOLENCE. Price 6d; by post 7d. (First Edition sold out; Second Edition Shortly.)

- 6.—CREEDS AND DOGMAS.—A PLEA FOR THEOLOGICAL REVISION: ADDRESSED TO THE CLERGY AND CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS. Price 3d; by post 4d.

- 7.—SPIRITUALISM IN ITS RELATION TO ORTHODOXY; OR, RATIONALISTIC V. CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALISM. Price 1d; 9d per dozen; 5s. per 100.

- 8.—HYMN BOOK: Containing 70 excellent hymns, compiled for the use of Spiritualistic and Free-thought Societies. Third Edition, Price 6d; by post 7d.

To be had of the Author, 147 Woolloomooloo St., Woolloomooloo, Sydney; J. E. Kelly, 426 George St., Sydney; W. H. Terry, 84 Russel St., Melbourne; and all booksellers.