

# Modern Messiahs

and

## Wonder Workers.

A HISTORY OF THE VARIOUS MESSIANIC CLAIMANTS TO  
SPECIAL DIVINE PREROGATIVES, AND OF THE SECTS  
THAT HAVE ARISEN THEREON IN RECENT TIMES.

BY

**WILLIAM OXLEY.**

*Author of*

*"The Philosophy of Spirit," "Egypt, and the Wonders of the Land of the Pharaohs,"*

---

London:

TRÜBNER & CO., LUDGATE HILL.

1889.

(All Rights Reserved.)

JAN 2 1890

*Divinity School.*

PRINTED BY

JAMES BURNS, 15, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON, W.C.



**EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.**

(In Old Age.)

## Preface.

I have undertaken the publication of this work, not as a mere curiosity of literature, but to present the public with a chronological record of actual historical events that have transpired in the religious world within little more than a century of time from the present date.

There is one key, and one only, that will solve the astounding record of the story which is stranger than fiction, and that is a psychological one. Every one of the heroes and heroines, who figure in this melo-dramatic history, at a certain period came under influences that developed uncommon and abnormal faculties, known as clairaudience and clairvoyance, which caused them to come into contact and communion with beings whom they, rightly or wrongly, thought were inhabitants of other spheres of life, and whom they in their ignorance endowed with a power and position nothing less than Divine. Knowing nothing of the law which operates in the production of psychological phenomena, they fell into the error of taking the apparitional appearances for realities, *i e.*, that the visional representations were actually what they took them to be ; and as a consequence they became inflated with the idea of their own personal position, and subordinating their intellectual faculty to their emotional feelings, they fell a prey to enthusiasm and fanaticism, which, in so many cases, were productive of disastrous results to their equally deluded and fanatical votaries.

Within my own knowledge there have been many more who essayed to become Messiahs, Madonnas, &c., but as these proved abortions I will consign them to oblivion. Nevertheless the wide-spread prevalence of a belief in the the Messianic Advent—covering a much larger area than the general public are aware of—is a subject worthy the attention of thoughtful minds, as to whether or not it has any basis of fact either in science, philosophy, or religion.

The incidents narrated, and gathered from reliable sources, will serve to point a moral, if not to adorn a (true) tale.

I may state that the Mahomedan religious world is being troubled in a similar manner by the appearance of two contending Mahdis, who are now engaged in settling their respective claims to be the long-expected "Great Prophet of God" by the sword; but the materials for writing their history are so scant that I content myself with the bare mention of the fact.

WILLIAM OXLEY.

Manchester, May 1st, 1889.

## Contents.

	Page
EMANUEL SWEDENBORG ... ..	4
ANN LEE ... ..	18
JOHANNA SOUTHCOTT ... ..	27
JOSEPH SMITH ... ..	35
EDWARD IRVING ... ..	51
THOMAS LAKE HARRIS ... ..	60
MARY ANN GIRLING ... ..	78
JAMES WHITE ... ..	97
THE MOTHER ... ..	120
HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY ... ..	143
KESHUB CHUNDER SEN ... ..	180

---



---

## Portraits.

✓ EMANUEL SWEDENBORG (in Old Age) ...	<i>Frontispiece</i>
✓ EMANUEL SWEDENBORG (in his 46th Year) ...	facing page 4
✓ ANN LEE, ... ..	18
✓ J. SOUTHCOTT ... ..	26
✓ J. SMITH ... ..	34
✓ T. L. HARRIS ... ..	60
✓ M. A. GIRLING ... ..	78
✓ ISRAEL'S SANCTUARY ... ..	108



# A CHAPTER OF MODERN SPIRITUAL HISTORY.



**I**N my late Chapter of Ancient History, I was chiefly concerned with the Land of Egypt, the undoubted parental source of the civilization and religion of Christendom. The present series will form an historical record of the great Spiritual Movement of modern times, which must eventuate in a revolution of human thought and sociology, more potent than any that has heretofore affected the destinies of the human race on this earth. *Nolens volens*, this Spiritualistic Movement is a factor that cannot and will not be ignored, and it marks an epoch in human history that the future historian will not be able to disregard; and thanks to the "Press," the effects of this remarkable influx of spiritual vitality can never become—as in times past—the subject of legendary tradition, manipulated to suit the claims and self-interests of privileged castes. Past history shows that the few and intermittent instances of the then great men with exceptional intellectual attainments were, after their decease, utilized by the Sacerdotalists for the mental enslavement of the mass. The chief characteristic of the now evolving state of human mentality is its universality. It is no longer exemplified by few and exceptional instances, but extends its influence world-wide; albeit it is most active in the most advanced portions of the race, dwelling on the European and American continents.

It were well to answer the queries: What is this Spiritual Movement? Whence comes it? and Why now?

Put into a few words as possible, it is the putting forth, or flow-ing out, of latent powers appertaining to the human being, by the removal of certain obstacles; and follows in order of sequence as regularly, if not as naturally, as adolescence succeeds youth and infancy.

Its chief purpose appears to be the demonstration of the continuity of individual human life after physical dissolution. Until our day and time none could answer with certitude the question, "If I die, shall I live again; if so, where and how?" It pertains to the scientific and philosophic historian to record the fact, that in this nineteenth century A.D., indubitable and self-evident proofs have been, and are being, given in vast numbers, of this conscious continuity of individual human life beyond the grave, and this by the actual manifestation, in a great variety of forms, of men, women, and children, who have passed from physical into other conditions of being. From the accumulated mass of information given by these returning ones, we shall soon be as conversant with the realities of the next step in life as we are with our present surroundings. It is called by us the "spiritual world"; but it appears to be a very natural world, the difference between that and this mundane one being determined by conditions and surroundings, and although these have nothing in common one with the other, yet the human being in both spheres can with equal certitude and consistency say, and feel, and know, "I am myself and not another." It does not come within the scope of this present Chapter to enter into details descriptive of the laws which govern these two states of being, and so I content myself with specifying the fact that *so it is*.

I do not purpose to write a history of Spiritualistic, or rather psychological, phenomena, such as the thousand and one methods by which the disembodied beings make their presence and power known to mortals, for this department has already been filled by abler pens than mine; but it is my intention to narrate and record what has resulted from the mental plane, in the attempted formation of communities, societies, religious systems, and the like, by certain persons, who, as sensitive recipients of the new influx, have vainly and erroneously mistaken the purport of the "Revelations"

of which they have been the recipients. Most of these are abortions and fungoid outworkings, lacking the beauty and grace and power of a gradual and orderly sequential intellectual development. Out of the present chaos, caused by competing and conflicting claimants for *personal* honour, &c., will arise a new and better order, as men and women become educated into the right use and understanding of what is at present a novel power. Like the heat and light from the central orb of our solar and planetary system, which is indispensable to universal living forms, and which is shared by all alike, even so the quickening of the human principle is not the monopoly of a favoured few, but is the right and property of the whole human race. So much as a prelude.

It is scarcely possible for us of this generation to realize the *state* and condition of human society in the earlier part of the last century: it was simply stagnant. Christianity and Mahomedanism had fought the duel, and both combatants were exhausted, the conflict ending in a drawn battle. The Protestant Reformation had stirred Christendom to the depths, but the mass were little benefited, and the net result was a schism, and to that extent a breaking-up of the solidarity of the Roman Catholic Church, so far as Western Europe was concerned.

Towards the close of the past, and from the commencement of the present century, a change has taken place; and what this means, we have only to contrast any populous centre, city or town of to-day with the appearance it presented 150 years ago. A fabulous magic wand could not have wrought so marked a change, and we are living witnesses of a transformation more stupendous than the history of the past ever recorded. In a sense other than that attributed to an old sentence of words, *we* can now utter in reality, "Old things are passing away, and all things are becoming new."

Material prosperity, or the acquisition of mundane wealth for the purposes of personal enjoyment, is the great effort on the part of the mass in civilized states and conditions, and the struggle in the attempt consumes the chief part of a lifetime, leaving little time for thought and reflection concerning the cause of this mighty change in human surroundings.

Inasmuch as there can be no effect without a cause, the discovery of the cause should be within the reach of the human intellect, and for this we are indebted to a seer, who claimed to be a witness of an astounding event; and gives us, on fair evidence, data from which the new era may be calculated in time. I refer to

### EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.

A few items concerning this remarkable man will not be out of place, which, when known, will neutralize the vague and absurd notions current amongst men regarding his works. He stands out unique amongst psychic sensitives, in that he was a thoroughly educated man, and as a scientist and philosopher he will most favourably compare with any of our modern *savants*. These for the most part are specialists, *i.e.*, each one has a certain field for the exercise of his talents, but Swedenborg was great in many departments of science, as will be seen by what follows. It will astonish many to hear that as a mechanician, he anticipated some of the most important changes which in modern times have revolutionised the manufacture and conversion of iron into steel, yet the actual process is defined and illustrated in his own published works. Before enlarging upon this topic I return to the question of the *cause* of the modern development of natural science and psychic or spiritual phenomena.

In the year 1758 A.D., Swedenborg published a work in Latin, entitled "An Account of the Last Judgment, showing that all the predictions in the Apocalypse are at this day fulfilled: being a relation of things heard and seen."

Without dwelling upon the details of this work, it is simply an account of the re-formation, by removal from the spheres contiguous to our earth, of vast numbers who had congregated therein, and who, by reason of their dense ignorance, were a formidable obstacle in the way of more advanced spiritual beings, who were and are desirous of aiding and instructing mankind. He was the first to propound the proposition that man—or human beings—are "recipients of life," and exist as such on the earth, by virtue of the continuous influx of life received after its passage through



**EMANUEL SWEDENBORG.**

(In his 46th Year.)



an indefinite series of spheres inhabited by beings of less and more intelligence and power. This is as plain as I can make it, and it supplies the key to solve the vast problem of human life on earth, and its interdependency and relationship with—first, the living forms inhabiting the various planets of our system, and then with other solar systems; all summed up in the simplest philosophic proposition: "There is only one Life, and one primordial substance, by which the one Life makes itself manifest in an infinite variety of forms, in an infinite number of worlds, spheres and systems."

The wondrous Drama, quaintly styled "The Last Judgment," was enacted in the year 1757 A.D., in "the world of spirits," according to Swedenborg's testimony.

If such a statement rested merely upon the unsupported statement of any man, it would be but of little value; but I venture to affirm that facts, which are patent to all, go far to support it, especially when we remember that the book containing the account was published in 1758, *i.e.*, a year after the occurrence.

Shortly after this period, the thoughtful and inventive genius of certain men's minds began to be active in an entirely new field of practical adaptation of scientific principles to mechanical purposes, and from this period, and this alone, began enterprises which have progressed with geometrical ratio, the ultimate tendency of which is to establish the Brotherhood of the Human Race, and to ameliorate its condition.

- |    |      |      |  |
|----|------|------|--|
| In | 1768 | A.D. | Arkwright started a cotton-spinning frame.                 |
| "  | 1769 | "    | Watt tried his first steam engine.                         |
| "  | 1770 | "    | A steam carriage ran in Paris.                             |
| "  | 1771 | "    | Water power used for driving cotton machines.              |
| "  | 1782 | "    | A vessel propelled by steam on the Seine.                  |
| "  | 1792 | "    | Murdoch lighted his house with coal gas.                   |
| "  | 1805 | "    | Cotton mill in Salford lighted with gas.                   |
| "  | 1807 | "    | Fulton commenced steam navigation in America.              |
| "  | 1810 | "    | The London Gas Company formed.                             |
| "  | 1818 | "    | Association of Civil Engineers started in London.          |
| "  | 1824 | "    | Steam carriages used on public roads.                      |
| "  | 1830 | "    | The first railway between Manchester and Liverpool opened. |

Now these beginnings of what has already metamorphosed human society the world over, are the resultants of *thoughts* ! The question comes, who originated them ? As Swedenborg tells us—and who can deny?—no man can create a thought ; and if thoughts are not self-generated, it is clear they were *received* from some source extraneous to this mundane sphere ; and as thought is inconceivable apart from intelligent beings, we may safely challenge disproof that it does emanate in and from the world of spirits. The above historical facts are tolerably good evidence in support of the truth of the Seer's statement, and involves many other questions arising out of it.

The most important problem to solve is the reliability of what comes through psychic sensitives. When the matter communicated through them touches on historical mundane facts, we can gauge their value ; but when the doings and manner of life treat of a different sphere of existence, of which in the nature of things we in physical conditions can form but the faintest possible conception, it must ever remain an unknown quantity unless, indeed, we are able to obtain some *knowledge* of the Law, or Laws, which obtain in the next stage of existence. Such a *knowledge* implies a *conscious relation with the world of matter and the world of spirit at the same time*. If Swedenborg had not this experience, he was so near it, and his relationship was of so advanced and extraordinary character, that it demands the most respectful and thoughtful consideration ; especially when we consider that running all through his later works there are principles that form a system of philosophy which becomes the more lucid the better we are acquainted with it. His constitution pre-eminently fitted him to become the recipient of spiritual communications, and the continual preservation of his own personal consciousness enabled him to draw his own deductions. He never wrote automatically, *i.e.*, he was in full possession of all his bodily senses and mental functions while writing ; and his calm, methodical style is singularly free from enthusiasm or fanaticism. His prior education, study and researches, had done their work—as will be seen—and being carried up to a certain point the next step, necessarily, was an intromission into spiritual states.

I have dwelt at some length upon his introductory experiences in order to show that such a mind as his was the least liable to aberration, for his intellect remained unclouded to the last of his mortal career, the end of which was actually prognosticated by himself. I now give a condensed account of his preparatory experiences. Without a knowledge of Swedenborg's antecedents, it is impossible to form a correct estimate of the versatility and mental qualities of this wonderfully gifted man.

Born in 1688 A.D., Emanuel Swedenborg was made a "Doctor of Philosophy" in 1709. In 1716, he published a work on "Experimental mathematics and physics." In 1718, ten books on Algebra, and also a work on Astronomy. In 1721 (being 33 years old) he published ten more works on Natural Philosophy, explanatory of the "Phenomena of Chemistry and Physics by Geometry." In 1738 he published his "Principia" in three folio vols., 500 pages each, at the expense of the Duke of Brunswick. I can do no more than give the title of this magnificent work, which had it not been for his later *role*, would be accepted by the *savants* of modern times, as the product of a master mind; but it is not too much to affirm that many of the discoveries of later times were antedated in this work. It had the honour of being placed, by the then reigning Pope, in the *Index Expurgatorius*, and every one knows what that means. In 1740, he published a not less important work than his "Principia," in three parts, entitled the "Economy of the Animal Kingdom; considered Anatomically, Physiologically, and Philosophically." In 1744, he published "The Animal Kingdom." He entered this department, as he tells us, for the purpose of discovering the *Soul*, and as stated by himself in the preface: "I hope to open the doors that lead to her, and at length, by divine permission, contemplate the *Soul Herself*."

Besides the works enumerated above, he published many others, reaching the climax of his works on natural philosophy, &c., in a volume entitled "Worship and Love of God," which formed a nexus between his philosophical and theological works, in 1745. In this year his first spiritual experiences commenced; and from that date he becomes the Seer, Theologian, and Spiritual Philosopher, resigning his

secular position under the Swedish government, in order to devote himself to the work to which he thought himself called by the opening of his "spiritual sight"

As a philosopher of nature, the works enumerated above prove that he occupied a position far in advance of his contemporaries. For nearly 30 years he had been delving down, as far as science could enable him, in order to discover the first principles of the Cosmos, and his next step was a transition from Nature to Spirit. Here he occupies new ground, where but few can follow, for he treats of laws and principles, &c., which the materialistic scientific methods of even our day are unable to investigate.

In 1743 A.D., Swedenborg was startled by the "appearance of a man," who appears to have been his revelator all through. This apparition he in later days thought to be the "Lord Himself," and it is yet an open question as to the real position of this spiritual being.

The determination of who, or what, was Swedenborg's "Lord" is now but of little consequence. It is quite possible, and not improbable, that a spiritual being did reveal himself and assumed to be the "Jesus" of the New Testament, who was literally believed by Swedenborg to have been born on this earth as recorded in the narratives. It was then, as now, an article of faith to accept with unquestioning obedience the churchianic dogma of the historic truth of the Gospels; and Swedenborg was a religionist who had seen no reason to call this dogma into question, and I suspect it was this that saved him and his works from the persecution which would inevitably have followed had he been suspected of such a "foul heresy," and in judging of his writings on the subject of "The Lord" we must not overlook the condition of society, both in the world and the Church at that time.

Now seeing that the doctrine of Deity itself—comprising the attributes of omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence—having been once incarnated in a special human organism under circumstances that admit of no verification, it is not only open to serious question, but is now being discarded as untenable, by those who can afford to throw off theological and ecclesiastical bonds, and investigate the churchianic claims. Had the monuments and papyri of

Ancient Egypt been unearthed, and as well known as they are now, Swedenborg was the last man to have committed himself to an implicit trust in what is historically untenable.

From one end of Egypt to the other, even at the present moment, the "Gospel history of the Incarnation" is portrayed with a vividness that nothing but downright prejudice and vulgar denial can ignore. The cardinal fact—or what was believed in as such—in the ancient Egyptian Religion, was the Incarnation of Deity in the person of Horus, begotten by the Father-God, Osiris, and born of the Mother-God, Isis, and if *that* was not an historic fact, what makes the copy and imitation of the older by the younger religious system, an historic fact?

A very serious and important question arises here: Was the Revelating Spiritual Being who appeared to Swedenborg an impostor? Did this Being assume to be what he was not?

Psychic experiences have long shown the great difficulty of establishing the—what is called—identity of communicating spirits. But, pray, what does identity consist in? The fact is, mortals want to apply *personal* evidence to the inhabitants of spheres, who, although they were once persons in earth-life, are no longer *persons*, but something quite different both in form and substance.

Swedenborg himself supplies the key to solve this, to us, difficult problem, who tells us that "for certain purposes a spirit, or rather an angel, may be so filled with afflatus from a more interior sphere, that for the time or state being, he does not know otherwise but that he is the Lord." This taken in conjunction with the now-known Law of Reception, or external conditions, exonerates both Swedenborg and his Lord from misrepresentation. The literal-mindedness of the Seer was the determining factor, and it is *his* rendering of the appearance, from a mundane or external point of view, which must not be charged to the Revelator, who was subject to *Law* as well as the mortal seer.

The above disposes of Swedenborg as a Seer and Theologian, but his most important characteristic as a Philosopher of Spirit, I shall dilate upon in the next part, to be followed by notices of others who cannot be put in the same category as the illustrious Swede.

I cannot in justice pass on to record the history of Emanuel Swedenborg as a Philosopher of Spirit, without a comment upon his Theology, which is inextricably mixed up with the enunciation of principles of philosophy which, to my view, are worthy of all acceptance.

That he truly recorded the "things seen and heard in the world of spirits" by himself, may be accepted without prejudice; but the deductions which he drew from his spiritual experiences must not in our day be received as the infallible exposition of Truth. If the principles he enunciated are capable of application and verification by rational method and intellectual experiment on the part of mortals, then they are ours, and common property; but spiritual experiences are alone the property of such who have them, with which another cannot interfere or take away.

As we are entering upon a new era in the character of Swedenborg, it were well to note what he claimed. He says: "It hath pleased the Lord to manifest himself to me, and to send me to teach those things which will belong to his New Church, which is meant by the New Jerusalem in the Revelation." Now it is clear from these words, that he made no pretensions to speak with authority as the "Messenger of God," but simply as a Teacher of truths adapted to the understanding of the enlightened men and women who would form what he calls the "New Church." He entirely disclaims any dogmatic assumptions, and places his own *ipse dixit* as of no value; but he appeals to the reason, to examine the principle of interpretation he unfolds. Infallibility and Finality can be no more ascribed to Swedenborg than to any other mortal, and both his works and experiences must be taken for what they are worth in the light of our increasing knowledge of history, science, and psychological facts. Tried by this standard and weighed by the Law of Conditions, or states of reception of the vital influx, we can afford to discard his system of theology, based upon the belief in a Personal God, and that God incarnated it *in* the historical, or rather non-historical, Jesus Christ.

I will try to prove this by his own principles. All his former scientific researches, left his religious beliefs untouched, and with all his immense attainment of learning, he was

simply a Protestant Christian, with convictions and beliefs pertaining to a good and upright man of the Lutheran sect, albeit a very liberal and advanced one in the sect itself. In this mental state and condition, he became subject to the new order of Influx, and being, naturally, a psychic sensitive, his spiritual experiences began at this point, and as a consequence he was intromitted into the spiritual world, and there witnessed his surroundings, or, in other words, the *reflex* of his own mental and spiritual state, embodied in spiritual forms, substances, and appearances. But, as the experiences of no two individuals are alike even in this world, neither are they exactly the same in the next, or any other world. It therefore follows, that his own experiences and theology form the record of a good and intelligent man of his day and times, and no more.

It is noteworthy that nearly the whole of the Spiritualistic platform oratory and propagandic action has been marked by the "religious" element. But surely the time has now arrived to discard the rituals, ceremonials, and creedistic formulas of a system, or systems, destined to pass away as the light of Truth dissipates the ignorance in which such systems can thrive.

Swedenborg was no exception to the rule adopted by those who followed him, *i.e.*, connecting the idea of Spiritual Truth with a Theology based upon the literal rendering of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures. If it were possible to penetrate the dense mystery surrounding these anonymous writings, both as to their composition and publication, it would be most valuable and interesting to know what were the opinions of the authors who wrote them.

Religion, in the true sense of the term, does not require the accessories with which it is associated in the ecclesiastical systems of the world; and I much mistake the mission of so-called Spiritualism, if it is not to take up the continuity of Law at the point where simple materialistic science is baffled and expresses its inability to proceed further. Then follows a philosophy founded upon the known scientific facts—psychical as well as physical; and afterwards a religion that will unfold the relationship existing between mortals and immortals, showing the unity, but not uniformity, of the

Life-principle in all worlds and spheres. The extension of such a programme to anything like a cosmopolitan area of mind, would effectually change the existing order of things. Men and nations would cease to quarrel and fight, and slaughter each other in order to gain supremacy. In short, the selfishness of the person—that is the root of the evils which infest human society—would yield to a policy that recognises the superior value of the whole in preference to the aggrandizement of the unit. Not one religious system on the face of the earth can by any possibility become universal, from the fact of diversity in the constitution of human minds, hence the need of some system that can harmonise the at present conflicting and competing religions of the race. Spiritualism, when it has outgrown the sectarian reliques introduced by its raw recruits, possesses the power to accomplish the mighty reform, and reformation of human society, as surely it must follow that already accomplished in the "world of spirits."

Without the preceding remarks, I could hardly, I think, do justice to the true value of Swedenborg's position. As a religionist and theologian he is much behind the advanced position now occupied by the emancipated minds of intellectual men who know the true character of the churchianic fables, images, and idols. As a seer his recorded experiences are valuable but not exhaustive. As a philosopher, in a new department, he stands out a "shining light" for present and many future generations; and the more I study and master the philosophic principles that he enunciated, the more I recognise him as the Euclid of Spiritual Sciences, and it is in this character that I proceed to speak of him.

No historian of Theology—the outcome of past and present religious systems—can fail to discover one great "belief," pertaining to all alike, or nearly so, and that is the re-appearance, on the mundane plane, of their founder or hero after his decease; and to the presence and activity of this traditionary "belief" can be traced the irrational, absurd, and, at times, grotesque outworkings which it is my task now to record and expose. Swedenborg himself was the subject of this belief, and claims that the long-expected second advent of Jesus Christ was fulfilled—not *in*, but *through*, himself. He

says (T. C. R., 115): "Now is the Lord's second advent, and a New Church is about to be established," &c.; and, that "the Lord had appeared to him, and unfolded truths for His New Church, which was to be established."

The "Swedenborgian" sect (of which I shall speak) endeavoured to "carry out into ultimates" this saying of the seer, but Swedenborg himself would have been about the last man to countenance such a parody, as he tells us, "the New Church means a new state, in which men will think and act in greater freedom," &c.

The introduction of Swedenborg's personality as the exponent of the "Lord's will," tantamount to being His Prophet, is fatal to its universal acceptance, and begins the modern Babel in the sphere of Spiritualism, in which not only confusion but conflict rages. If Swedenborg was right, it follows that all his successors claiming messianic honours are wrong; for each in turn begins by ignoring all others, and seeking to establish their own as paramount. The delusion—a veritable spirituo-mental madness—under which these messianic claimants suffer, is only equalled by their egotism and superficiality. But Swedenborg's claim is modesty itself when compared with the arrogant pretensions of the after claimants. *Theirs* is the afflation of an ignorant personality, *his* was tempered by refinement and culture; and his error in this respect was redeemed by the insemination of psychic truths and principles, that no student of spiritual law and life can afford to dispense with.

Shortly after his "illumination," in 1743, he began his new career, and continued to write and publish till the close of his life. The first of his new works was entitled "Arcana Cœlestia," composed and published in 12 octavo volumes, from 1749 to 1756 A.D.; and was followed in rapid succession by others, descriptive of the doctrines of the New Church, and also an account of the Heavens and Hells, &c., summed up in a large and elaborate work entitled "Universal Theology"; another was "The Apocalypse Explained," published in 1756. Many of these works are interspersed with "memorable relations," which are an account of his spiritual experiences.

I am not concerned either to advocate or defend Sweden-

borg's system of theology, which cannot be of universal acceptance, because based upon an alleged historical person which modern research and discovery have proved to be fallacious, and therefore it must be rejected as untenable. But, two of his works, entitled "Arcana Cœlestia" and "The Apocalypse Explained," form a most notable exception, inasmuch as they contain a system of philosophy, the principles of which have a vastly wider area of application than the mere interpretation of certain portions of the Old and New Testaments. This method of interpretation he styles "the spiritual sense of the Word." Leaving out of consideration the verbal interpretation of the writings referred to, and by applying the principles, or rules, to elucidate the phenomena of nature on the one hand, and the psychical constitution of mankind on the other, and the relationship existing between the two, I am bold to affirm that in this system of philosophy we possess a key to solve any problem involved in the complex organism of the human being. It seems passing strange that Swedenborg himself does not appear to apply his marvellous discoveries to the subject he was illustrating; for he distinctly tells us that when in contact with the "spiritual sense of the Word," the ideas of time, space and *person* disappear; and yet in the face of this he insists upon the One Personality of God in Jesus Christ, in whom there is a Trinity—not of persons, but of qualities. Now, in practice, by abstracting the personality, and time and space, which co-exist with personality, we are at once face to face with "occultism," the secrets of which become known and intelligible to him who masters the science and art of Swedenborg's Principia of Spirit; and which to my mind is immeasurably superior to the heavy and cumbrous, and undemonstrable Brahminical and Buddhistic systems, which the present Theosophical Society is vauntingly claiming as the possessors of absolute truth; a claim which I unhesitatingly declare to have no solid basis of fact. In comparison with these antiquated systems, Swedenborg's system is simplicity itself.

I now pass on to speak of the system, and as far as I can, make it plain to ordinary minds in as few words as possible; comprised in what is called the "Doctrines of Influx,

Degrees, and Correspondences, and the Grand Man." On these depend our *accurate* knowledge of all life and its manifested forms.

1st: Doctrine of Influx. Swedenborg's way of stating this is: "Man is a recipient of Life," which means that the living principle that builds up and sustains the physical organism, is the focal centre that receives vitality, and is the medium for communicating the same through every part of the organism; yet there is not a central spot in the body, in which resides this nucleus vaguely called the Soul, but it is everywhere present in the whole structure, until physical dissolution takes place, after which this living principle passes into another state or sphere called the "world of spirit," where it still maintains the human form but not the human shape, as we recognise it in the configuration of the human body. This "doctrine" involves the idea of some great Central Fount, from whence flows what we understand by the term Life. And yet this grand Central Fount is not subject to location; for it is omnipresent, and the Life-principle is the central force and power within every form that manifests its presence in all worlds and spheres of being.

2nd: Doctrine of Degrees, Continuous and Discreted. Continuous Degrees are the various gradations on the same plane of conscious being; such as from light to darkness, and in which the shading off is so gradual that it is impossible to draw the line that separates one from another. Not so with Discreted Degrees, which are divided into three: the lowest is the Natural, next the Spiritual, and then the Celestial; between each of which the division and distinction is clear and defined. For instance, while in the Natural Degree—or physical conditions on this earth—we are conversant with our phenomenal surroundings, which we call Nature: but at death we enter upon an entirely different character, in which the ideas of time and space are *non est*. This is called the Spiritual Degree.

3rd: Doctrine of Correspondences. The understanding of this follows the acceptance of the theory of Influx, and means that all living organisms, animal and vegetable, are phenomenal *re*-presentations of certain qualities in the human mind. Thus, in brief, the forms of the animal kingdom

answer to the indefinite variety of the emotions that characterise the human Will; and the vegetable kingdom does the same for the human Intellect. These two form the radicals, —*viz.*, the human Will and Intellect—from which all that is outside man take their form, and shape, and use. The co-ordination of these two produce a third, *viz.*, Power, or Use, and this is reflected by the mineral kingdom.

This doctrine makes the human life-principle the central fact, so far as this earth is concerned. This is as brief as I can put it in words, and included within it is a whole system of psychic philosophy, that explains the why and wherefore of things being as they are. This brings me to the next.

Doctrine of the Grand Man, which simply means that the human race—past, present, and future—is itself the expression of a still higher form of life, in the inner sphere of being; and that every human unit is necessary and essential to the perfect expression of the Infinite Mind on this mundane sphere. In short a human organism is a microcosm, the exact counterpart, in little, of the macrocosm, and as the various organs are mutually dependent upon each other, and each fulfil their specific functions; so each nation, tribe and unit likewise perform their part in the drama of human life as we know it. All this system of thought is clearly demonstrated in Swedenborg's writings, and which, divested of the theological element, reveals a system of fixed rules, flexible in their application, but eminently adapted to aid the student of psychology in his search after the *modus operandi* of what is understood by the Method of Creation! More than this hint as to the capabilities of Swedenborg's discoveries, would in this article be out of place.

The unfortunate blending of theology and philosophy by this eminent man bore its natural fruits; and what was intended by Swedenborg himself to be received as *correspondential*, was taken up by people and *literalised*, and forthwith they constituted themselves into the veritable "New Jerusalem, which John saw descending out of Heaven."

Swedenborg's writings were studied by several clergymen, and others of good standing, who formed themselves into a "Theosophical Society," and from this arose what is now claimed to be the New Jerusalem Church, which was consti-

tuted in London in the year 1788. The leaders of this movement were James Hindmarsh, and Robert Hindmarsh, his son, who was a printer in London of some note. At the opening meeting, 12 men were selected, and the ordaining minister, chosen by lot, was Robert Hindmarsh, and from this beginning, the title of "Reverend" is considered valid in the acknowledgment and ordination of the ministers of that religious body. Instead of proving a new departure, the liturgical services and rituals are taken from the Anglican Church model, and the result is one more Protestant sect, and *no more*. The sect has made but slow progress, for after nearly a hundred years existence, it has only some 60,000 members in the United Kingdom, which certainly is a parody on the presumptuous claims so arrogantly put forth by its priesthood. At the present time this "Church" has lost its expansive power, and is simply in a state of existence. Claiming to be in possession of the spiritual knowledge as revealed in "the Word"—as the Bible is called—they are intense literalists, and bibliolaters of the purest water. Swedenborg was no party to this Church formation, for he died about 15 years before this abortive attempt to "ultimate" his principles was made: and while the position of this great master—notwithstanding his defective theology—raises him in the scale of science and philosophy, we, as Spiritualists—and not literalists nor materialists—can utilise those spiritual ethics, which he propounded, as valuable additions to the store of human knowledge, utterly regardless of the churchianity which some misguided men have vainly tried to systematise.

We shall see in following records into what preposterous absurdities and follies, men and women have fallen who have mistaken spiritual—or psychical—communications, and permitted themselves to be inflated by their own vanity and personal ambition. The more ignorant they are the more egotistical and supremely foolish they become.

## ANN LEE.

THE FOUNDESS OF SHAKERISM, OR THE UNITED SOCIETY  
OF BELIEVERS IN CHRIST'S SECOND APPEARING.

The historian has here to notify a "new departure" from the old lines of theological thought, and for the first time we are presented with an advocate of Woman's Rights in a garb hitherto unanticipated. In all prior religious systems, the Christian not excepted, the masculine form held the pre-eminence, and the feminine was subordinate to the headship and lordship of the male; but since the time of the subject of this notice, many women have arisen to contest the pretensions of the first claimant for feminine honours in the messianic line. It was not enough that Deity should be worshipped in the male form; and if the alleged Jesus Christ of the Christians "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," so the followers of Ann Lee think and claim, that she was equal in all respects to the male form of God, as manifest in Jesus Christ. According to the tradition—for it rests on nothing surer—the first advent of God in human form was to be followed by a second one; and it is the competing and conflicting claims of so many persons, both men and women, for the possession of this coveted honour, that has resulted in the formation of numerous sects, societies, and communities, not only in the Christian, but also in the Mahomedan and Indian worlds. Swedenborg, as a Seer and subject of Revelation, had already taught that the second advent of Jesus Christ, or the Lord, was a spiritual, and *not* a personal coming, and that it had already taken place through *his* instrumentality. But Ann Lee became the subject of "Divine" Revelations, and the Revelator in this case made known that *she* was the person chosen to fulfil the messianic expectancy. Like all others who have sufficient faith in *their* "Revelators," she began by ignoring what had already been given by her predecessor, and, setting aside his statements, she started on her own account. But the prize—if it could be secured—was of too grand a character to be tacitly allowed to one mortal, and consequently the "world" has been, and



**ANN LEE.**

**The Foundress of Shakerism.**



is being, startled by the appearance of so many competitors for messianic honours. To such outrageous follies have human beings, in these "latter days," committed themselves, that now there are not one but many, who blasphemously arrogate to themselves, as mortal personalities, the co-equality with Deity, and thus as something different from and superior to their fellow mortals. It is this form of insanity that the present and following chapters will record, as the perversions and aberrations of human mentality in this so-called nineteenth century A.D. I now proceed to give some details as to the history of this *first* Woman-Messiah.

There could not be a greater contrast than is presented between the two personalities of Emanuel Swedenborg and Ann Lee. Opposite in sex, they were equally opposed in mental calibre and characteristic. The one was, as has been demonstrated, a thoroughly-educated man, calm, lucid, and methodical, whose published works are a standing testimony to the greatness of his intellectual power, marked by a modesty of bearing and claim, which is so conspicuously absent in the rival competitors for "Divine" revelations that followed him. The other, who immediately succeeded him, was an ignorant and uneducated woman; so ignorant that she could not sign her own name in the register of her marriage, but simply made a mark. That she was what is known as a strong-minded woman is conceded, and shown by the devotion of her followers, some of whom are not without a fair amount of intellectuality. Misguided as the "world" thinks them to be, yet they have attempted—we can hardly say realized—the solution of social problems that have perplexed the statesmen of all past and present times, and in this, most probably, the utility of Shakerism begins and ends.

Ann Lee (her maiden name) was born in Toad Lane, Manchester (the town in which I live), February 29th, 1736 A.D., of humble parentage. Of her early years but little is known, save that she "went to service," and was at one time employed as nurse in the Manchester Infirmary. In 1758 she joined a small sect styled "French Prophets." They appear to have been the descendants of some "revivalists," who arose in France and Germany about 1689, and a few of these came over to England, and established a society in

Manchester, under the leadership of James and Jane Wardley. Four years after, she married Abram Standerin, a blacksmith, not of much repute in character, by whom she had four children, all of whom died in infancy. In 1770, she with some others was arrested and imprisoned, and it was while in durance vile, that the Revelations were made to her. She claims that she saw Jesus Christ in open vision, who revealed to her "new and astonishing views of Divine manifestations of Truth." She repeated these to the society, who implicitly believed her statements, and they at once acknowledged her as the head and leader of "the faithful band." From this time forth, her followers say that "Ann knew herself to be the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, being baptized into the same spirit, and by implicit obedience to the light received from God, she became conjoined to the Bridegroom, and was a co-worker with him in the regeneration and redemption of the race,—He the Father, and She the Mother in Spiritual Israel."

No wonder that the public annunciation of such a claim aroused the popular ire. She, with some of her zealots, raised a cabal while service was going on in Christ Church, Manchester, in 1773, and each of them was fined £20 for disturbing the congregation. Not desisting from the work of her special call, she became subject to mob lawlessness, and in 1774, she with eight of her followers went to America, where she was imprisoned again, but soon released. She settled down at Waterlick, where she died, September 8th, 1780, aged 46 years. She was succeeded by James Whittaker, who died in 1788, and afterwards by James Meacham, who organised the Society on the basis of community of labour and property, which now forms its distinguishing feature. Religious revivals, so called, are the feeders of enthusiastic movements, and to the great Kentucky revival of 1801, the Society was indebted for a large addition to its numbers. If numbers are any criterion of success, they cannot boast much in this respect, and certainly, so far, they cannot pretend that they have, or are drawing "all men to their Zion": for in 1870, *i.e.*, about a hundred years after its formation, the United Societies only numbered 8,850 persons, among 18 distinct communities; and unless

converts are obtained by more "revivals," Shakerism seems destined to soon be a thing of the past. More recent and vigorous claimants are disputing their pretensions, and are outstripping them in missionary zeal, labour and success.

Such is a condensed history of the Woman-Messiah, Ann Lee, and of her votaries who arrogate to themselves the title of the "True Christian Church," and claim that "Salvation" can only be obtained by mankind falling down and worshipping the idol they have set up. Disguise it as they may, this is the sum and substance of the gospel of Shakerism; and an examination of its theology reveals the rottenness of its foundations. As I shall proceed to show, it is Roman Catholicism pure and simple.

Lacking any originality, it has all the essentials of Romanism, centred in a rival claimant at Mount Lebanon, in opposition to the one at the Vatican. Under the guise of liberty, it is, at bottom, a bondage as servile and intolerable as the ecclesiasticism born of Rome in its palmiest days, which demands obedience to its behest as the passport to Heaven and salvation from Hell, and damning all others to perdition, and worse, who refuse to acknowledge the voice of the Latin Pope, as the Voice and Vicar of God upon earth. This may appear harsh, but let the following speak and bear its own witness.

It is noteworthy that both Swedenborg and Ann Lee rest their claims upon revelations made to them by the supposed historical, gospel Jesus Christ, and yet we find "Jesus" teaching diametrically opposite "truths" to each. The first exalts marriage, and shows that it is the normal condition in every organised form of life, not only in this world but in all future states; in other words, that the sexual differentiation is, and will be, never lost; and so far as this earth is concerned the evidence is incontestable. But "Jesus" revealed to Ann Lee that the use of this function is incompatible with service in his earthly and heavenly kingdoms. It appears, and is officially taught, that celibacy is the "corner stone of Shakerism," and the Scriptures are distorted and altered so as to show that the "Fall of Man" originated in the use of the sexual function. Adopting the pernicious system of textology, *i.e.*, culling out verses to suit their purposes, they

simply repeat the tactics of every Protestant sect, for one and all rest upon the same basis.

But celibacy itself is a purely Romish device, which took centuries to develop; and it was started under the plea that it would be conducive to greater spiritual holiness, and bring the greater glory to God, which means, greater power to the Church. After constant struggles, it was decided, by a majority of voices at the Council of Trent, in 1563, "that God would not withhold the gift of chastity from those who prayed for it"; and the rule of celibacy—so far as the clergy are concerned—was thus finally and for ever imposed on the ministers of the Romish Sect of Christians. The Greek Christians have always allowed and honoured marriage in their clergy.

Tested by another principle: what is true and right for one must be the same for all, and if this practice was universal the human race would cease to exist. The practice of celibacy, on religious grounds, is a covert libel on the Infinite Wisdom, who has so ordained the wondrous Cosmos, for the infinite expansion of individual and self-centred forms of conscious life. Asceticism under this and other forms is founded on the erroneous notion that abstention from pleasureable enjoyment, mortification, beggary, and the like, renders the votary more acceptable to God. What this has done, and what has resulted therefrom, Church and Secular history only too faithfully records. Romish and Shaker celibacy are at bottom one and the same.

To make a plausible show for their pretentious claim to be the True Church of the Second Advent, they boldly deny the Divinity of Jesus Christ, adopting the older Unitarian dictum, and teach that he was born under the same conditions as other mortals, and that he had no prior existence. Without any knowledge as to the actuality of such a Person, they take it for granted, or at least so much as answers their purpose; and the reason for this is very apparent. Above all things it is necessary, in order to establish the quasi-divine position of their feminine hero, to show the co-equality in all things of the alleged founders of the "first" and "second" Christian Churches; and as the natural parentage of Ann Lee cannot be disputed, therefore, that of the first

Divine Anointed One is reduced to the same commonplace level.

Their theory of biblical interpretation is almost ludicrous. According to "Shaker Theology," the standard to be used, whereby to determine between the literal and metaphorical, is *common sense*! But upon "common sense," in religious and theological matters, hardly two minds agree; and it thus becomes a blatant assumption that Shaker common sense is superior to any other one's common sense. They adopt and endorse the doctrines, or rather dogmas, of the "first" Christian Church, as now formulated, but vitiate their application by a new rendering to suit their own claims. It is needless to dwell further on the Shaker theology; its inherent weakness and crudities are apparent on the surface, to all minds that have discarded "traditions," and demand proof in place of assumption.

The Shaker Sociology is not without interest, and must be impartially recorded. The community of labour and property is the revival and establishment of the rules which are said to have obtained in the first Christian Church at its birth, but which so signally broke down under its first strain; and that the "second" Church has stood so long is not without some argumentative force. The spectacle of human beings working together in apparent harmony—not for personal aggrandisement but for the benefit of the whole—gives a new value to the acquisition of wealth, and is an undoubted improvement upon the general ways of the "world." Peace, cleanliness, industry, sobriety, no self-seeking, comprise the elements of success, and so far are admirable and commendable. But if the veil is lifted the outward display covers, or rather smothers, much that is undesirable. It exists by virtue of inexorable rules, with authority vested in the hands of leaders, whose sway must not be questioned; and although the votaries live it out as expressive of their own views and feelings, and thus have no compunctions, yet let them once assert their own individuality in quest of truth in other departments, it then means withdrawal or expulsion from the "Kingdom of Zion." This again is only another rendering of the Romish Popish demand for unquestioning *obedience* to the mandates

of the Church; and as Rome offers a greater sway of usefulness—or power—in exchange for individual freedom of opinion and action, even so, Shakerism requires the surrender of the intellect and will to the behests of its leaders for *its* church. Provided the conditions were present, by the equal development of human mentalities, for a community of position the world over, the Shaker experiment is conceivable as practical; but the inexorable facts are patent, and prove the impossibility of its universal application in the present state of human life on this earth. It is impossible to construct a marble polished structure from sun-dried bricks. The clay must wait for ages to become marble, or else its very nature must be changed. It is the reproduction of Nebuchadnezzar's image, composed of the precious and hard metals; but having its feet of clay, the whole came tumbling down; the weight was at the wrong end.

A sect, so small in numbers, and in a state of simple existence, making a claim as follows, evidences at once its own vanity and self-assurance, and amounts to the competing trader's boast that *his* goods are the only genuine ones in the market. It is this: "Now with what propriety shall a system (Shakerism) composed of such universal principles and truths, be designated *sectarian*? If this—the most merciful and Catholic religion—constitutes those who live it *a sect*, why then it is, or will be, a sect just as Moses' rod was a serpent, and will remain so only until it has swallowed up *every* other sect." The audacity of this pretension is only equalled by the same and similar, as made by the thousand and one religious sects of the age.

It is suggestive to note the attitude of Shakerism, as expressed through their leaders, in reference to the great Spiritualistic Movement, out of which their own sect and system arose. Following again the Romish Church precedent, they accept as true, and from good spirits, what is in accord with their own teachings and tenets, but brand all others as false and evil spirits; and those who come and do not stand their tests, are quickly banished as emissaries of the evil one. One of their leaders had attended what is known as materialising seances, and at the time was convinced of the genuineness of the phenomena; but after deep thought,

he came to the conclusion "that the figures were not solid and tangible" (although he had had the experience of seeing, and perhaps touching them) "in themselves, but, that his own state was changed, and he saw them with his spiritual eyesight."

After such a statement, we can afford to leave such leaders to their own reflections. From statements they make, they claim that Spiritualistic phenomena occurred amongst them continuously and for many years prior to the commonly-accepted date of its origin with the Fox family. The ordinary form was that which we know as "control"; as, "while the brethren and sisters are under this influence, they seem unconscious of the fact that they are other than the spirit for whom they are acting." A book was published in America in 1843, entitled "A return of departed spirits of the highest character of distinction, into the bodies of the Shakers, &c.,"\* The historical value of the book is depreciated, if not destroyed, by its anonymous authorship, and it were well if the present leaders would either ratify or deny its revelations.

We are informed that many returning spirits came and manifested themselves through the members of their Society; many who had been dead for thousands of years, and from many nations. It may, or may not, be surprising to find that several of the Old Testament personalities came, and amongst them the redoubtable Samson, accompanied by some Philistines, who were seen by clairvoyants to be *ten feet high*. *Inter alia* came "many Jews, who were present and assisted at the crucifixion of Jesus Christ." These worthies expressed their deep contrition for the part they played in the drama.

These references are sufficient to show the unreliability of "Shaker spirits," and not less the class of mind that could take this, and much more, as veritable gospel truth. Coming down to modern times, we find it recorded that such persons as George Washington, the leaders of the American Revolution, and interspersed with these, Mahomet, Napoleon Bonaparte, British and French generals, &c., manifested through Shaker mediums, who one and all are told off,

---

\* This little work was reprinted in the MEDIUM in 1885.

and assigned to some special field of labour, to inculcate the gospel of Shakerism among the benighted denizens of the spirit-world, and who are brought into the Heavenly Zion, corresponding with the earthly Shaker Zion.

Shaker "common sense" may give unquestioning credence to these marvels, and accept all these statements by "controls" as literal truth, but the common sense of the psychological scientist will look further and search deeper, for the true meaning of mythological personalities assuming an apparent individuality in response to Shaker predilections and beliefs. The solution is easy enough, according to the rule: "Given certain mental states, as to beliefs and mental credulity, and responses will come in conformity thereto."

The Shaker claim is, that Modern Spiritualism (of course in its true form) originated with them, which they kept to themselves; but a higher Power has ordained its universality, in spite of creeds, sects and systems.

---

## JOHANNA SOUTHCOTT,

### AND THE CHRISTIAN ISRAELITES.

About twenty years after Swedenborg's death, and eight years after Ann Lee's, another female claimant for the honour of New Messiahship arose, to dispute that of her immediate predecessor, in the person of Johanna Southcott, who, as will be seen, adopted a course the very opposite to Ann Lee, who had made celibacy the corner stone of her edifice. Johanna, claiming to be the "Bride of the Revelation," very naturally concluded that the position of "bride" preceded that of "mother," and consequently she was to be the new and true Madonna, and bring forth, in personal form, the long expected advent of Messiah, or Shiloh, who was to "rule the nations with a rod of iron," and bring all the human race



**JOHANNA SOUTHCOTT.**

**The Foundress of the Christian Israelites.**



under his sway; and whose followers, or "Believers," were to form the 144,000 to greet his arrival. This revelation and glory did not come to her at the commencement of her career, but towards its close, and which culminated in her death.

Johanna Southcott was born of humble parentage near Exeter, in 1749 A.D., and in social position was a domestic servant. She was not so illiterate as Ann Lee, for she could read and write. She published a work in 1801, entitled "Strange effects of Faith," containing a short account of her life up to that time, followed by other writings—composed largely of doggerel verse—which she avers were "inspired by the same Spirit that inspired the Bible." Her first visitations were in 1792, by means of visions, and the "spirit of prophecy" came upon her. She claimed that these "prophecies" were the test of the genuineness of her mission, which was "to reveal the true meaning of the Bible, which had been closed up till her time, when God saw fit to reveal it through a woman" (i.e., herself).

Gradually the truth dawned upon her that she was "Jesus Christ, in a woman's form," and thus it was the "second advent." (It is very doubtful if she had heard of Swedenborg and Ann Lee.) This notion was soon after abandoned, when "Jesus Christ appeared to her, and announced that she was his chosen Bride"; and who afterwards became the alleged father of the "man-child" to whom, although a virgin, she was to give birth.

Her writings attracted a good deal of attention from some cultured men, clergymen among the rest, and soon she obtained a respectable following in her own neighbourhood and in London, as well as in the provinces. By persistent letter-writing and other means, she obtained a trial of the value of her writings, at a numerously attended meeting held in London, in 1804, lasting seven days, which resulted in the unanimous verdict by twenty-four chosen men that "her writings were of Divine origin"; and from this time may be reckoned the commencement of the societies styling themselves "Christian, or True Israelites."

After this, for some years, she seems to have been engaged in forming societies and adding to her followers, but did little

in the way of writing or publishing, her revelations being chiefly personal, and of no literary value. Her followers however appear to have been active as propagandists, and succeeded in forming numerous societies in the North. Her "revelations" culminated in her claim to an immaculate conception, similar to that of the Christian Madonna of old. Johanna was then nearly 65 years old. This special "creative power"—as she termed it—took place February 11th, 1814, and in due time she evinced what appeared as the usual signs of pregnancy. This astounding wonder was to be the sign and seal of her special divine mission, and set at rest any doubts as to her having been chosen of God to be the mother of the long-expected man-child spoken of in the Revelation. This new turn of affairs raised the expectations of her followers, who anxiously waited for its fulfilment on October 19th, 1814, according the word of the revelating spirit to Johanna. To prove their then belief in the coming event, they had a most elaborate cradle, with the usual concomitants, provided for the august stranger at his birth; which very cradle is now to be seen in the Museum at Pendleton. The specified date came and passed, but the birth did not take place, and was accounted for by the "want of faith" on the part of the faithful, and was permitted as a trial. This went on until December, when symptoms showed the near accomplishment; but, alas! there was no birth, and she died December 27th, 1814. A *post mortem* examination resulted in the discovery that what had been taken for pregnancy was dropsy.

According to published statements by Dr. Reece, her medical attendant, she had great misgivings on her death-bed, and spoke in affecting terms of her being the subject of delusion, as she was doubtful of the result; and she was only comforted by the assurance of some of her attendants, that they "knew she was divinely appointed by God for her special work."

This collapse was a staggering blow to the "saints," and no doubt led to the falling away of many; but events showed that even this failure of prophecy could be made to redound to the glory of God, and the spread of the work commenced by his servant Johanna Southcott, who was

privately interred in London. The situation demanded prompt and vigorous action to prevent the dissolution of the many societies, and in a very short time a man arose who was equal to the occasion.

Among the most devoted of her followers, and who was one of her judges at her trial, was one George Turner, who himself had been the subject of spiritual visitations and divine revelations. In 1817, he published a work entitled "A Book of Wonders, revealed to George Turner, the Servant of God." followed by pamphlets containing divine revelations to him for the guidance of God's true church. The date of the last, entitled "Marriage of the Lamb," is 1820. From these works we see that after Johanna's death, there were dissensions and several claimants for leadership, but eventually he succeeded in silencing his opponents, and became the acknowledged successor of Johanna, and "Messenger of God" in the direct line of succession.

It is not very clear how these revelations were given to Turner, as sometimes they are stated as coming from God; at others from the Lord; and Jesus Christ; and last, from Johanna, and her son Shiloh. They all are written by himself, and all point to his call and appointment by special divine command in one form or another. Thus his claims are reduced to self-assertions, which appear to have been sufficient for the purpose to the majority of disciples who placed implicit confidence in his messages, and accepted them as the voice of God.

The unexpected and untimely death of the Foundress was a perplexing event, and had to be accounted for in a way that would commend itself to the anxious and tried followers.

It appears, from Turner's work, that the Lord appointed him as the Protector of his Son Shiloh, who was to be born in July of that same year. The Revelator declared: "I am the Lord of heaven and earth, and my word must be fulfilled, for my Son is to be born this year (1814), and thy office and work must begin at my Son's birth." This message was given on the same day as Johanna's death occurred. In February, 1815, the Lord told him to send this message to his people: "Tell them that . . . (Johanna) is with me in glory, and the wicked one did not deceive her: but I

tried my people by her, and suspended my mercies to man; because of the rage, and mockery, and unbelief, which the enemy wrought in man." Shortly after this, he says that he saw Johanna and her son Shiloh visibly, and upon this unverified statement, the deluded disciples banished all their doubts, and waited for the fulfilment of the promise that Shiloh should appear.

For the next few years Turner busied himself in visiting the various societies, and proclaiming the tidings that Shiloh would come in person, and dwell among his people, on October 14th, 1820. In anticipation of this great event, a meeting was held at Westminster on August 30th, 1820, at which about 600 persons were present, to celebrate the "Marriage Supper of the Lamb." Amongst them was the "Prophet," George Turner, and various toasts were drunk, finishing with one for "Mr. George Turner, the Servant of God," who then proposed one "To the health of the Children of God."

Preparations were made on a large scale for the expected advent of Shiloh, and anticipations arose as to who were to be the favoured ones to receive him. The failure of the promise made to the Mother seems to have been of little consequence. But October 14th came and went, and Shiloh did *not* come. This second failure and blasting of their hopes left them bewildered; and it was then pretended that it was to be a spiritual and not a personal coming; but the disappointment told on Turner, who seems to have gone into obscurity, and died the next year. Thus ended the second scene of this drama, which to ordinary people would seem the closing one; but not so, for the mantle of George Turner fell on a man of greater power and calibre, who not only kept the work going, but gave it a status that it had not hitherto attained. This man was John Wroe, concerning whom a few details will not be out of place.

John Wroe was born near Bradford, in 1782, of respectable parentage. In 1819 he was taken ill with a fever, from which he recovered, but it left him in a state of great mental anguish, and caused him to wrestle with God for forgiveness of his sins. During one of these paroxysms, while engaged in prayer, he saw in vision a female figure, and "knew that

it was a spirit." On his return home, he was struck blind and dumb, and while in this state his spirit left his body, and he details what he saw in the world of spirits, and an angel guide caused him "to see the throne of God, with the Father and the Son in the midst of it." This gave a religious turn to his mind, and casting about what sect he should join, he tells us "that it was made known to me that the people who believed Johanna Southcott to be the woman spoken of in the Revelation were right, for I saw the woman transfigured before me with the child in her arms, in the open firmament in the daytime, as plainly as ever I saw anything in my life." He thought his mission was to the Jews, and made many but ineffectual attempts to join them, and expected to be their leader, to bring them over to the new messiah; but the Jews turned a deaf ear to all his overtures, and would not have this man to rule over them. In 1822, Shiloh the King appeared to him: and from this time forth he became an acknowledged member, and after some trouble, he became the "Messenger of God" in place of George Turner, who was deceased.

Wroe was circumcised, and introduced the rite among the societies, as well as public baptism as a seal to those who were to form the 144,000 redeemed from among men. Up to 1825, the committee in London had been the recognised authority in all matters connected with the "Church," but as they rejected his claims he broke with them, and from henceforth Ashton-under-Lyne became his head-quarters. A very handsome building, called the Sanctuary, was erected, and land purchased for extensions; which was to be the new Zion, to which all the called and chosen would from time to time repair. After this a still more sumptuous building was erected near Wakefield, which is now under a care-taker, who holds it for the still remaining few who expect that John Wroe will come again in person and resume his place and position as in the days of old. During his ministrations and career, the societies increased and flourished in this country, Australia, and America. But whether from jealousy, or what not, in 1830 there were current reports as to his immorality, and he was tried by the "Church" on certain specific charges, but acquitted. This scandal however resulted in the all but

break-up of the societies in Yorkshire and Lancashire, from which they never fully recovered. He nevertheless continued his ministrations and leadership till 1860, when he went to Australia on a mission tour, and died there shortly after at the age of 68 years.

A work was published in 1859, entitled "The Life and Journal of John Wroe, with Divine Communications revealed to him." These "revelations" are of similar character to those made to Johanna and Turner; many are personal, reiterating the promise to stand by and sustain him in his mission and work. "Thus saith the Lord" is the general preliminary, and it seems to have taken with the deluded and enthusiastic followers. The writings, messages, and communications are incoherent, and entirely destitute of general value; and if it is possible to formulate anything out of such jargon, the leading idea is, that God is about to deal out vengeance to a scoffing and unbelieving world, as all the woes which had been predicted would shortly come upon the nations for their wickedness; and this, spiced with "dreadfuls," was calculated to make the ears of the weak-minded ones tingle. But safety was to be found by entering the "Christian Israelite Church," with whom God had made an everlasting covenant, that *they* should be saved in the day of visitation, which was nigh at hand. The proof of the certitude of these continued divine revelations was furnished by "prophecies," by the various messengers from Johanna downward. Some of these are alleged to have been fulfilled, while others are admitted failures; but this was at last played out, and the non-appearance of "Shiloh," together with disappointed hopes and expectations, and internal discords, caused a large desertion, and at Wroe's death what few societies were left were in a languishing condition.

But, in 1875, a new self-appointed messenger appeared on the scene. A soldier named White, at that time in Chatham garrison, found the remnants of the Israelite Society in that town, and announced himself as a divinely-appointed messenger to succeed John Wroe. When asked for his credentials, he adopted the style and mandate of authority, which convinced that society that he was what he claimed to be; but when he appealed to the Ashton society, he was

rejected, and he does not seem to have been successful with what was left of other societies. This rejection determined him to found another and rival "church," which is known as the "Latter House of Israel." He took, or was given, the name of "Jezreel." He then left this country with his regiment, and was in India for about six years, and while there he is said to have been the subject of divine communications, and wrote out a series of paraphrases on scriptural texts and subjects. On his return, he left the army, and devoted himself to the work as God's messenger. He published a work entitled "Extracts from the Flying Roll," which was alleged to be God's last message to mankind, which, if rejected, would be followed by their inevitable destruction, &c. This work fell into the hands of some energetic people who gained some adherents, amongst whom was a lady of wealth, and perhaps others as well, who found money to purchase land, and erect buildings, which were to be the headquarters of the new sect. The "Sanctuaries" of the old House of Israel were to be superseded by one of more imposing proportions, and the new Sanctuary was designed, and actually commenced, at a cost of fifty thousand pounds. Some eighteen thousand pounds, I believe, has already been expended upon it, but for reasons that follow it seems now to be at a stand still, and probably will never be completed, and while it stands will remain a silent monument of enthusiastic but misplaced zeal.

Although Wroe had broached the doctrine of "putting on immortality" by the "faithful believers" in this new and last covenant, yet he never seems to have made it a cardinal point. It was for Jezreel to do this, and he openly proclaimed it as a privilege and right of the elect ones. This formed the chief attraction, and many joined the society and work under the impression that by so doing they would not taste of death. But this "promise," like so many others, was doomed to fail under test. The believers in the coming of the expected Shiloh—who to the number of 144,000 were to be gathered together to receive Him at his advent amongst them—were staggered by the illness and death of the "Messenger" himself in 1885. This blow resulted in the opening of the minds of many to the fallacy, and to the

fact if they had not been duped they had, at all events, been mistaken; and in consequence several of the most energetic and active members retired, and this short-lived new "Latter House of Israel" has all but collapsed. White's widow—Mrs. Jezreel—is still with the remnant at Chatham, and claims to be the "Woman" referred to in the Revelation, &c. : thus adding one more to contest and rival the pretensions of Ann Lee and Johanna Southcott, who were first on the list of Woman-Messiahs and Madonnas.

Such is a condensed history of what followed from the blasphemous, if not mad, claim of Johanna Southcott, to be the Lamb's Bride, and Mother of the New Messiah: a pitiable exhibition of human egotism and folly in herself, and of weak-mindedness on the part of those who placed credence in such pretensions.

Since the foregoing sheet was printed off, the Author has written the following paragraphs, which supersede the parenthetical sentence on page 27, as to Johanna Southcott's never having heard of Swedenborg:—

In a letter dated July 10th, 1802, she wrote to the Rev. Mr. M. —, a clergyman, and student of Swedenborg, "that they ought to be read as an Arabian Nights' Entertainment." "It appears to me like Satan coming as an Angel of Light, to wrest the true meaning of Scripture." Then follows the answer of the spirit, who says, "Right is thy judgment concerning Swedenborg. The writings which came from him are, as thou sayest, Satan coming as an Angel of Light, or as a crafty invention of some new plan of salvation. I permitted the book to go out, but I tell thee it is the doctrine of devils to say, 'that they were all created men upon earth before they were angels in heaven.'"

It is quite understandable that Johanna, and her revelating spirit, should thus characterise the exponent of the "True Christian Religion," and as both Swedenborg and Johanna claimed the historical "Jesus Christ" as their revelator, it is clear one or other was at fault, and which of the two revelators was "Satan as an Angel of Light" the reader must judge for himself. It is only history repeating itself—*my* beliefs are true, and from God; yours (if contrary to mine) are false and from the devil.





**JOSEPH SMITH.**

**The Founder of Mormonism.**

## JOSEPH SMITH.

## THE FOUNDER OF MORMONISM.

The record of the life and work, and what resulted therefrom, of the subject of this Chapter, forms one of the most striking phenomena in the whole range of religious history. We possess but few means—and those uncertain and unreliable—of estimating the rise and spread of the past Religions of the world: but in what is known as Mormonism we are presented with the origin, rise, and spread of a New Religion, with adherents to the number of half a million, and this within an ordinary human lifetime. This system combines secular power with religious teaching, and thus can fairly claim to have won a position that makes it a New Religion and a New State in the world.

The "Territory" of Utah, with some 120,000 square miles of surface, is Mormonland proper; and not being as yet one of the United States, it is under the governing power of the Federal Government, which refuses to give any sanction to Polygamy, as a recognised institution; which is thus illegal, and some attempts have been made to deal with it by the Government, but, as yet, without much success. Seeing, however, that the conflict has commenced, it remains to be seen what the issue will be; the probability is, either some system of concubinage to evade the law, or, not unlikely, another grand exodus to Central America, provided they can get the sanction of the State to which they may migrate. Time will show.

Based upon similar lines to its predecessors, Shakerism and Christian Israelism, it began by ignoring their pretensions, and established its own. The origin of each, and of later systems as well, is the same. Spiritual experiences and psychical phenomena are ignorantly, if not worse, magnified into divine revelations and manifestations, and the person—man or woman—becomes inflated with a sense of his or her own divine call to a special work in conveying the thought and will of God to mankind. One and all of these self-

claimants to this high privilege base their pretensions on biblical prophecies and statements, attaching a literal and personal application thereto, that find fulfilment in themselves. To the Bible, to which they accredit the Divine imprimatur, they add a supplemental one of their own, and which they put on equality with the older one, claiming for it an equal reverence and obedience. Such appears to be the history of the birth and extension of the religious systems of ancient and modern times, but the one under consideration stands out unique in the dimensions and solidity that it has attained in the short space of some sixty years. The great question arises: What is the secret of its success? After a careful and thoughtful review of the leading incidents in its career of fancy, fraud, and fact, the inevitable conclusion is, that it evinces the still infantile intellectuality of a large portion of the race, who are gulled with the blatant advertisements of theological tradesmen, who trade upon the lingering superstition and credulity of the spiritually-uneducated and unenlightened masses of Christian and other communities. Biologised themselves, and carried away by enthusiasm and fanaticism, they biologise others of less intellectual and will power than themselves, and these become the votaries and hero-worshippers of mortals as weak-minded, but possessing more will power than themselves. If Mormonism does not teach this lesson, then I must leave its solution as unscrutable and incomprehensible.

The founder of this remarkable sect and system was Joseph Smith, an American, born at Sharon, Vermont, in 1805 A.D., not of very reputable parentage; and when it is said that he could read and write, and knew a little of simple arithmetic, this expresses the sum total of his education at the time he entered upon his strange mission and adventures. When about 14 or 15 years of age, he became the subject of serious convictions, "which caused him great unhappiness on account of his sins." This so oppressed him that he was wont to retire to a secluded spot, and earnestly prayed to the Lord for forgiveness. During one of these exercises he had a vision of an intense and extensive luminosity, which appeared to descend, and overspread as far as he could see. Presently he saw two figures exactly alike, and he was

informed "that his sins were forgiven: and also that all religious denominations were believing in incorrect doctrines: and that, if faithful, the true doctrine should at a future time be revealed to him. With this he was comforted, and his mind was left in an indescribable state of peace." But he appears after this to have relapsed into his former worldly state; and after due repentance, "on the 21st December, 1823, a Presence stood before him, who declared himself to be an angel of God, sent forth to communicate to him that his sins were forgiven; and to bring the joyful tidings that the covenant which God made with ancient Israel concerning their posterity was at hand to be fulfilled; that the great preparatory work for the second coming of the Messiah was speedily to commence." The angel informed Smith "that he was called and chosen of God to bring about some of his marvellous purposes in this glorious dispensation." Amongst other revelations made by the angel was one to the effect, that the "North American Indians were the descendants of the tribal remnants of ancient Israel, who emigrated to America (about 400 A.D.), and on account of their great wickedness they had fallen into their present low condition. Prior to this great relapse a certain Prophet amongst them had written an account of their wanderings, together with many prophecies concerning the new kingdom which God, in future times, would establish on the earth; and that this Prophet, foreseeing what would befall his people, had deposited these writings for security in a place which was pointed out." Smith was taken, or guided to the place, where he saw a stone, but was not permitted to touch it at that time. The angel however was in frequent communication with him, and repeated the contents of the Sacred Records, giving him instructions concerning them; and this continued for four years, when, on the morning of September 22nd, 1827 A.D., the angel of the Lord delivered them into his hands.

These Records are the Book of Mormon—so called after the name of the prophet who wrote them—which now forms the second, or Mormon Bible, in all respects equal to the first, both being inspired by the same spirit. The Records and their discovery are thus described by Orson Pratt, who was one of the "twelve apostles" of the "New Christian Dispen-

sation." (There were no eye-witnesses to this event, and all rests upon Smith's own testimony.) He says:—

"These records were engraved on plates which had the appearance of gold. Each plate was not far from seven to eight inches in width and length, being not quite so thick as common tin. They were filled on both sides with engravings in Egyptian characters, and bound together in a volume as the leaves of a book, and fastened at one edge with three rings running through the whole. This volume was near six inches in thickness, a part of which was sealed. The whole book exhibited many marks of antiquity in its construction, as well as much skill in the art of engraving. With the records was found a curious instrument, called by the ancients the Urim and Thummim, which consisted of two transparent stones, clear as crystal, set in two rims of a bow. This was in use in ancient times, by persons called Seers. It was an instrument by the use of which they received revelation of things distant, or of things past or future."

"Having provided himself with a house, Mr. Smith commenced translating the Record, by the gift and power of God, through the means of the Urim and Thummim; and being a poor writer, he was under the necessity of employing a scribe (name not given) to write the translation as it came from his mouth. He continued the work of translation, as his pecuniary circumstances would permit, until he finished the unsealed part of the Records. The part translated is entitled the 'Book of Mormon,' which contains nearly as much reading as the Old Testament."

On the completion of the work, a manifesto—not dated—was issued by Oliver Cowdery, David Whitner, and Martin Harris, and another by eight persons, of the Whitner and Smith family, stating, "solemnly, that they had seen and handled the plates, which Joseph Smith, jun., had translated by the power of God." The means employed while translating are not very assuring, for "Smith sat behind a curtain which hid him from the view of the scribe who took down the words as uttered"; and the scribe was not permitted to see them.

Such is the official and alleged authentic Mormon account of this wonderful Book, as to its discovery and translation.

But Mormon authenticity, in reference to this matter, is more than questionable, for on good and substantial evidence this nefarious proceeding has been probed, and we may safely adjudicate it as an imposition and fraud of gigantic proportions, in so far as it has been the means of deluding such vast numbers of people who have been taken in by the bait. The after-life and work of Smith and his confederates will not, and cannot, condone for the original scandalous imposition: and while the multitude of "true believers" place implicit confidence—and apparently without any question or doubt—upon the self-made declarations of the "Prophet," the only conclusion that impartial minds can come to is, "that they are given over to strong delusions to believe a lie." If it had been a mere question of claiming to receive Divine revelations, the reception of this would be a matter of "faith," on the part of such as are weak enough to accept them as a means of "deliverance from sin and salvation from hell"; but the existence of the "golden plates," &c., is a matter of evidence, and to the present moment *they are not forthcoming*, and no one has ever seen them, and like the body of Moses, no man knoweth where they are to this day. Even the Mormon Leaders do not pretend to meet the difficulty by asserting that Smith saw them in vision; they are claimed to be actual plates, &c., as already described, and thus by their production before an impartial tribunal, their case must stand or fall.

The real origin and history of the Book of Mormon is as follows, mainly taken from the evidence of the wife of the writer, in reference to the original MSS.

In the year 1809, a Mr. Solomon Spaulding, who had been a clergyman, and afterwards engaged in business, in which he had failed, had retired to New Salem, Ohio, U. S. A., and possessing literary taste, he utilised the idea then somewhat prevalent, of the identity of the North American Indians with the ten lost tribes of Israel; and he wrote a religious tale, or novel, which occupied him three years, the gist of which gave a supposed history of their migrations, with sundry prophecies, &c., interspersed, said to be written by one of the Leaders, named Mormon. He entitled this work "The Manuscript Found." According to his then wife's

statement, he wrote it for his own amusement to beguile the weariness of his failing health, and during its composition read the various portions to his friends and neighbours, who came in the evenings to hear it read. In 1812, it was shown to a Mr. Patterson, of Pittsburg, a printer and bookseller, who recommended that it should be published; but before the terms could be settled, the author died, Mr. Patterson still keeping the MSS., but thought little more about it. Patterson died in 1816; but, before his death, he lent the MSS. to one Sydney Rigdon (concerning whom more to follow), who was a lay preacher; and being much interested he took a copy of it, after which it was returned to the author's wife, out of whose hands the MSS. had been some three or four years. In 1839, it was in the possession of Mrs. Davison, of Boston, U. S. A., the former wife of Mr. Spaulding, the author: and (if I mistake not) it is not many years ago that a lawsuit in the American Courts took place in which these very MSS. played an important part. Such is the origin of the "Book of Mormon," which substantially agrees with Joseph Smith's pretended translation of the "golden plates by means of the Urim and Thummim." Now for the sequel.

The Sydney Rigdon, who had copied the MSS., became acquainted with Smith, accepted his doctrines, and joined the sect he was forming, and in due time Rigdon was ordained as one of the twelve apostles, and in this connection it is easy enough to supply the missing links. Rigdon did not work very harmoniously with the "Prophet," for he had revelations on his own account not in accord with Smith's, but the secret was too important to both, and so Rigdon was permitted to retain his apostleship. The secret might never possibly have been unearthed, had it not been for the visit of some Mormon preachers to the town where several of the people resided who had heard the story from the author. They were so amazed at the similarity of the "Book of Mormon" to the "Lost Manuscript," that they wrote to Mrs. Davison, who, for the purpose of opening the eyes of so many good people to the "wicked imposture," published a long and circumstantial account of its production by the author, her first husband. It is only fair to state that Rigdon and Smith denied and confuted Mrs. Davison's account, but the denials

are so transparently coarse, evasive, and abusive, that they are quite worthless as evidence. So much for the Book of Mormon, or the New Bible of the Latter Day Saints. But Smith was a man of indomitable perseverance, unbounded assurance, and of resolute will, and was not to be diverted from his "divine mission" by trifles of this sort, and from about and before this time, we must view him as an able, energetic preacher, strategist, and organiser. If it were possible to exonerate him from such a transparent fraud as marked his beginnings, Joseph Smith might pass as an enthusiastic but mistaken man, with rare abilities, and whose amazing success redeems from common-place charlatanism: but it is impossible to think otherwise than that he allowed the edifice of his future greatness to be raised upon—a lie!

I now proceed to the history of the formation and extension of the system inaugurated under conditions already specified—not a romance of fiction, but the whole forming a veritable romance of facts.

In 1830, Smith was settled at Fayette; and here the first conference of the "Saints" was held, who at that time registered 30 members only.

In 1838, when their numbers had increased to between 2,000 and 3,000, a violent schism followed the exposure of the "plates" imposture, which resulted in the withdrawal of some of the most important apostles and elders, and of the "witnesses," who had solemnly sworn that they had actually seen the "golden plates." It required the strong hand of Smith to put down the treason in his own borders, and by the aid of "revelations," which were always at the needed time, he was equal to the occasion, and by stern measures repressed the rebellion and established his authority. Towards these apostates, his language and bearing were exemplified as follows:—"Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris were united with a gang of counterfeiters, thieves, liars and blacklegs of the deepest dye, to deceive, cheat, and defraud the Saints."

The use of such language applied to men, who still had sufficient conscience left to admit the value of evidence, and rather than be participants in the perpetration of a gross and shameless fraud withdrew from the sect, proves the

audacity of Smith and his confederates, and their recklessness in regard to honesty and truth, when the "Church of the Saints" was in question.

Soon after the first conference, the Smith family removed to Kirtland, Ohio, where by their industry and skill they soon acquired property, and started among other enterprises, a bank, which came to grief. This failure seems to have given a new turn to the ambition of Smith, who formed the design of going into the then Far West, away from the busy haunts of worldly Gentiles, where they could establish a city, temple, and earthly Zion, which should form the point of attraction, and be "the gathering place of the Saints until the Lord Jesus Christ should come in person, and rule in their midst, in power and great glory." This was to be the "New Jerusalem, and the earthly Zion." A pioneer was sent across the wilderness; and Smith, with a few of his trusty followers, went to view the promised land. It took them twenty-two days to make the journey, the last stage of 300 miles being performed on foot, as there were no means of conveyance to be had. This "Land of Promise" was in Jackson County, Missouri, then but sparsely peopled by Indians and white settlers. Smith was in raptures with the scenery, soil, and fertility, and speedily revelation came that this was the chosen spot for the establishment of the Lord's kingdom on earth. Having fixed on a site for the new city and temple, Smith proceeded to organize his followers, and after appointing faithful servants, returned to Kirtland, to look after his business, &c. He then entered upon missionary tours, preaching and proclaiming the new doctrine and gospel.

The doctrinal and practical stock in trade of the new Mormon Gospel consisted of—the proclaiming of the near advent of Jesus Christ in personal form, who had commissioned Joseph Smith, as his Prophet, to make the needful preparation by gathering his "Saints" together, who were to form the nucleus of his kingdom, which he was coming to establish on earth. The verification of the Prophet's call and appointment was furnished by the presentation of the New Bible, the Book of Mormon, by the angel of God, who endowed the chosen Instrument, Joseph Smith, jun., with special gifts to interpret the same. To give force to this

gospel proclamation, every incident or accident out of the common was exaggerated and utilized as proof of the great coming event. Like the Shakers before them, and many others of competing claimants after them, they included all outsiders and unbelievers under the curse of God, who would punish and destroy the mass of mankind for their wickedness.

To avoid this impending calamity, men and women were earnestly exhorted to repent of their sins; to be baptised; and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; and thus become the elect of God, and Saints of the Latter Days; and then to gather themselves to the Mormon Zion, and await the seal of their election.

All moral virtues and their practice were strictly inculcated and enforced, and any departure therefrom was visited by excommunication and expulsion. The organization exhibits the traits of consummate statesmanship. Based upon that of the "first Christian Church," twelve apostles, with bishops, elders, &c., were appointed, to discharge the spiritual functions, while others were appointed to the various secular departments; and thus the foundations of a new Church and State were laid, at once its strength and weakness; and it is the latter element which proved to be the source of all the troubles which the new sect had shortly to undergo. The religious element was an integral part of the larger scheme for comprising all America, in a vast nationality under Mormon law and government.

By indefatigable exertions, the new Mormon settlers soon reared a homestead and centre of imposing dimensions, which attracted the notice of the surrounding settlers, and to Mormon indiscretion and ambition is due the hostility which soon began to manifest itself against them. They made no secret of their claim—religio-political—to establish a system of government which was destined to change the established order of the Federal States, and that ultimately the governing power of North America would be on Mormon principles; in short, that Mormonism would be the State Church, and wield the real power of the United States. This arrogant claim and pretension aroused the ire of both politicians and religionists, who called a convention of the

leading men in the neighbouring counties, which resulted in an unanimous resolution to expel, by fair or foul means, the Mormons from the State of Missouri. This was followed by hostilities that were very disastrous to the Mormons, who appealed for protection to the Governor of the State. He sent some troops to keep order between the combatants, but they were untrustworthy, and openly sided with the enemies of the Mormons; for they burnt their homesteads, destroyed their farms, and in some instances massacred considerable numbers of unoffending victims. Seeing that nothing less than their extermination would satisfy their merciless opposers, the Mormons crossed over the river into the State of Illinois, leaving what was not portable in the hands of their malignant foes.

By the end of December, 1838, they had all left Missouri, and were settled in their new quarters in Illinois. The persecutions and sufferings to which they had been subject elicited much sympathy and notice from the populace in the other States, and they received many additions, so that by the time they found themselves in their new quarters their numbers were fifteen thousand. They were allowed to settle in Illinois without molestation, and in the course of eighteen months, they had actually built a city with 2,000 houses, besides public buildings. They established a municipality, and Joseph Smith was elected Mayor. They also raised a legion of soldiers, who had a good military training, and Smith was made the General, with an imposing staff of officers. Nauvoo—the beautiful—was the name of the new city, which soon rose in opulence and position; and for cleanliness, order, and sobriety, no city in the States could compare with it. For some years prosperity attended them, numbers flocked to them, bringing wealth, industry, and skilled labour in abundance. After settling and organising the Mormon Church and State, they commenced building a Temple, which was to be “the joy of the whole earth.” By applying the tithe principle to the members at home and abroad, they secured ample means to rear an ornate and imposing structure with great architectural skill at a cost of some £250,000.

Notwithstanding their exclusive claims, the Mormons

invariably prided themselves on their loyalty as American citizens, and expressed their willingness to acquiesce in what was required from them as subject to both State and Federal laws, and in proof of this they furnished a contingent of 500 fighting men who took part in the Mexican war. The military bearing and equipment of the Navou legion, which numbered 2,000 men, attracted the notice of one of the superior States officers, who had seen them reviewed by General Smith. He wrote a communication to the President of the United States, warning him and Congress of the results that were likely to follow if the Mormons were allowed to go on developing their own political and military power, and urging prompt steps to be taken by the appointment of a commission of inquiry, and action to follow the receipt of their report by the Legislature. From an outside politico-military point of view, the commanding officer was quite justified in so doing, as his clear eye detected the rising of a power within the Union, that threatened to equal the Federal power, and not improbably at some future time to alter the Constitution itself in Mormon interests.

The population and wealth of the new city increased at a ratio that is amazing, and the people that flocked to the Mormon standard were men and women of good character, sober, industrious, and well-skilled in all kinds of handycraft. This was in consequence of their active missionary enterprise. As illustrative of this, two of their leading elders, Hyde and Kimbal, were sent to England. They landed in Liverpool, in 1837, almost destitute and friendless, but being full of zeal, they began their preaching crusade, and so successful were they that in two years from their landing on our shores they had baptised and sealed two thousand converts. At a conference held in 1843, the members in England, Scotland, and Wales were returned as upwards of ten thousand; and in 1851, they numbered 30,747 exclusive of those who had emigrated. I know not if religious history records anything that can compare with this wonderful increase in so short a time. It was not the result of revivalistic efforts with which most are familiar, but followed the proclamation of doctrines diverse from the ordinary Christian sects, by men who had the ability to impress such multitudes,

and cause them to forsake home and country by virtue of their faith in the new evangel. The secret of Mormon success lies not in revivalism, which Shakerism depends upon for its increase—if not for its very existence,—but by a skilful adaptation of material benefits associated with spiritual experiences, which were promised to such as “repented and were baptized into the new faith,” and thus made eligible to be partakers of the glories of the Earthly Zion in America, and of the heavenly one after death. To secure this, the organization for the joint administration of material and spiritual law in the community, was effected by consummate skill, and proves that Smith, seconded by able officers in the various departments, was no ordinary man. He appeared to be equal to any emergency, for a bold front, supplemented by opportune “revelations” dealing with the matter in hand, was always taken by the “prophet,” and his utterance and decision were as absolute as those of the Pope of Rome, any important dissent therefrom being visited by expulsion from the church.

In the midst of all this seeming prosperity and expansion, “a little cloud no bigger than a man’s hand” appeared, which became charged with electrical elements that eventuated in disastrous consequences. It was about this time that Sydney Rigdon—the second man in power and position—began to broach the doctrine, if not practice, of “spiritual wifehood,” which eventuated in polygamy; but it is only fair to note that Smith himself and the leading members of the church at that time, discountenanced and opposed it. Rigdon would have been expelled, but such a course would have been extremely impolitic, as he knew too much about the origin of the Mormon Bible, and his pronounced defection and opposition would have proved fatal to the continuance of the church and community. Smith, from other causes, had long been jealous of Rigdon, who had shown a disposition to rival and compete with him for “prophetic office and divine revelations”; but beyond a rebuke, “in the name of the Lord,” Smith did not venture to go, and for the remainder of the prophet’s life the relationship between the two was much strained. Two prominent leaders, Messrs. Foster and Low, had, for some cause, been expelled, and in revenge they started a news-

paper, which they published and printed in the city itself. The tone of the press matter was very hostile to the church, and the "spiritual wife" doctrine introduced by Rigdon was used as a lever to excite hostility among the enemies of the Mormons. The editors did not hesitate to involve Smith himself in what they termed "the scandalous practice"; but the evidence they produced as to his participation in it, appears to be of questionable character. However, be that as it may, the virulent nature of the editorial articles was brought before the notice of the municipality of the city—who were nearly all Mormons—and they resolved that the paper should be suspended, and the editors and publishers expelled from the city. Acting on this, and probably with the connivance of the authorities, a Mormon mob invaded the premises, broke up the presses, scattered the types, and set fire to the buildings; and the two editors had to fly for their lives into Missouri, where they set the law in motion for redress and damages.

A warrant for the arrest of Joseph and Hiram Smith was issued, and upon its appearance in Nauvoo, a Council meeting was called, when it was resolved that the Smiths should not be given up, and to prevent the execution, the Mormon troops were placed under arms. This act of defiance to the State legal institutions, was felt to be a challenge, and in consequence the Governor of the State was appealed to, who called out the State troops to enforce the law. The temper of these soldiers was extremely hostile to the Mormons, and they were ready for the conflict. The Governor was the Commandant, and when he arrived with his army, he found the city placed in a state of defence. Before commencing the attack, he sent a message, to the effect that unless the Mormons yielded to the constituted laws of the State, he should be compelled to use force. He advised them not to cause him to proceed to such extremities as would involve bloodshed and destruction of property; and offered terms, that if the two Smiths and some others were surrendered to take their trial before proper legalized courts, he engaged that they should have a fair trial, and the Mormon citizens should be protected from injury. A meeting of the council was summoned to consider the proposal,

when it was resolved to accept the Governor's terms. The disarmament of the Mormon troops was also stipulated for. Accordingly the two Smiths and two others gave themselves up to their enemies—as they styled the non-Mormon citizens and soldiers,—and they were sent to Carthage, where they were imprisoned to await their trial.

The Governor seems to have acted in good faith, and would doubtless have carried out the stipulations, but the opposing party was too strong, and as they said that he was shielding Smith, they determined to take the law into their own hands, and vowed "that he should not escape this time, but suffer the righteous rewards of his misdeeds." Two hundred armed men attacked the prison, overpowered the weak and consenting guard, and entered the prison. Finding Joseph Smith, they shot him, when he fell mortally wounded, and they finished him off by more shots. His brother, Hiram, tried to escape through a window, but in doing so he also was shot dead. Two others, arrested with the Smiths, were in the same room; one was hit and wounded, but not fatally, while the other escaped unhurt. This tragedy was enacted, June 27, 1844. No steps were taken to arrest the perpetrators of this outrage, as the anti-Mormon party was resolute, and prepared to exterminate, if need be, the whole of the Mormons.

The tragic death of the two brothers Smith drew much attention to the Mormon question, and seemed to embitter the strong party feeling on both sides. The Mormons regarded their Prophet as a martyr, which they made the most of to elicit sympathy for their sufferings, which they cheerfully underwent for the sake of the true faith. The bodies were given up, and brought back to Navon, where they were interred with becoming honours and display.

Sydney Rigdon took this opportunity to advance his own claims as Smith's successor in the prophetic office, but he met with few supporters, and after several meetings the mantle fell upon the remarkable, or notorious, Brigham Young, who was chosen as the Leader, and successor of Joseph Smith, and vested with the office of High Priest and Prophet. He was a man of strong resolute will and unbounded resources, and as an organizer not second to Smith himself.

The opposition increased in virulence, and the State soldiery, instead of protecting the Mormons, became their persecutors, and for long it was nothing less than intestine warfare, in which the Mormons had to suffer cruel wrongs and outrages of all kinds. The opposition culminated in a large meeting of "Gentile" delegates from all the surrounding country, when it was unanimously "Resolved, that the Mormons should be expelled from the State of Illinois." This Resolution was conveyed to the Mormon leaders, with notice that they must take their departure within a fixed limit, and unless this was complied with, they must count on extermination, as they would brook no delay. This peremptory demand could not be trifled with, and negotiations were opened to gain time for them to realize their property, and ensure safety for their lives.

This second experience had shown the Mormon leaders the uselessness of attempting a third settlement among the busy haunts of men in the Eastern States, and they resolved upon finding a location far away from "civilized" society, where they could develop their system unmolested. For this purpose a scouting party was sent to survey the country beyond the Rocky Mountains, who after many months' absence returned with a report of the country near the great Salt Lake: and acting upon this, it was selected as their future home, to which they should repair as time and opportunity permitted.

The meeting of the opposing delegates took place in October, 1845. In February, 1846, the first van-guard of 1,600 men crossed the ice-bound Mississippi, and advanced as far as Council Bluff, in Iowa, where they established the main depôt for the route, and commenced to sow corn, for food for the various contingents as they should arrive. But the movements of the Mormons were far too tardy for their enemies, who gave them no quarter, and laid siege to the city. At the end of three days, the Mormons surrendered, and their lives were spared on the condition of their immediate departure. There was nothing for them but to comply with these savage terms; and forthwith commenced in September, 1846, the famous exodus, which occupied two years, and the main body arrived at Salt Lake in the autumn

of 1848. The sufferings and hardships they underwent in this "journey through the wilderness to the promised land," form material for one of the most wonderful episodes in human history, and manifest the Mormon spirit of endurance and strong reliance on the rectitude of their cause. Much has been said of Shaker industry, sobriety, and chastity, but these virtues—excepting polygamy, for which they adduce Bible warrant—are equalled by the Mormons, whose city and villages are models of cleanliness, and well-regulated order.

The Mormon theology—if such it can be called—is based upon their literal interpretation of the Bible, and forms an inchoate jumble of ideas which may be summed up in the terms—veritable nonsense! Their system of polity is a pure despotism, requiring obedience to the behests of the Church, as expressed through their chosen Leader and his Council; but the votaries of the system are happy and contented, like those of all other religions systems, until perchance the intellectual faculty comes into play, and then the result is either withdrawal or expulsion. It has been alleged that on some occasions there has been much worse than this, but I forbear to say more, until reliable evidence is produced in support of the charge.

But individuality will assert itself the world over, and the assertion of this by Joseph Smith—the son of the Prophet—has led to a division, and there are now two distinct and rival camps in Mormonism. Some years ago, this Joseph Smith laid claim to be the Lord's appointed successor to his father, but Brigham Young and his party rejected him and his claims, and in consequence he started the religious business on his own account. He repudiates polygamy, has obtained a considerable following, and is now settled at Kirtland, in Ohio, U. S. A., the scene of his father's first settlement. The temple originally built by his father, and other public buildings, have been restored, and are now utilised by the new Mormon sect.

Such is a condensed history of the rise and progress of a new civil and religious power, which viewed from any point presents a problem hard to solve, except on the hypothesis of a subtle psychical force which is wielded by enthusiastic fanatics, who discarding the sway of the rational and intel-

lectual faculty, are carried away by their emotions, upon which they trade for their own aggrandizement.

The latest out, in reference to the "golden plates," is that their leaders are now declaring that they were actually material, but that after Joseph Smith had interpreted and published them, they were *dematerialised*. A very convenient theory to silence all sceptics, but unfortunately it is rather too late in the day to be available as evidence.

NOTE.—A graphic, and apparently true, account of the celebrated exodus, and of Mormonism as it is at home, is, at the time of writing, appearing in weekly numbers, in the *Christian Herald and Signs of our Times*, entitled, "A Life Story. By Mrs. Stenhouse, for more than twenty-five years the wife of a Mormon missionary and elder."



## EDWARD IRVING,

### AND CATHOLIC APOSTOLICISM.

Like the preceding narratives, the outcome of the work of the subject of this chapter was based upon the belief of the Second Advent of the historical Jesus Christ; but unlike his predecessors, he advanced no personal claim as the recipient of divine revelations, or any special divine appointment to the prophetic office in connection with the proclamation of the nearness of the personal coming of the Messiah; but, as will be seen, the "church" that arose to concrete and propagate this "belief," was constituted by others, and in the formation of which he acted a somewhat negative if not doubtful part; nevertheless, without him it is scarcely thinkable that such a sect, known as the Catholic Apostolic Church, or, as they put it, the Church of the Lord's Restored Apostles, would have come into existence.

Apart from the theologico-religious aspect of Irving's work, it has a special interest in regard to the great Spiritualistic Movement of modern times. We can here present a historic record of its presence in this country; and although in the eyes of Irving and his followers, the "manifestations" were caused by the Holy Ghost, yet we can safely class them as common psychic phenomena, well known as "control"; healing; and the like; and they may be taken as the first indications in Britain, of what later on assumed a more general and varied form, throughout the length and breadth of the land. Irving himself was not a psychic sensitive, but an eloquent and gifted preacher, enforcing the doctrines and practice of a pure and holy life, according to the religious tenets of the Bible as held by the National Church of Scotland, with a power that had but very few equals. But although not a sensitive, as named above, he was predisposed most favourably to the supernatural, and when once the manifestations occurred he was deeply affected by them, and they at once became the study and charm of his life, and which ultimately led to his expulsion from the church of his fathers, and to his intimate connection with the founding of the New Sect bearing the title at the heading of this chapter, and commonly known as "Irvingite." The personal history is as follows.

Edward Irving was the son of a tanner in Annan, Scotland; and was born August 4, 1792. He had a good and religious training, and as is usual with so many Scotch families of social position just above the working classes, one of the sons was set apart for the much-coveted office of Minister (it is chiefly from this class that the ministerial ranks are supplied), and Edward was the chosen one. At the age of 13 he began his studies at Edinburgh University; and having finished his education, he spent seven years as a teacher in Kirkcaldy, after which he was engaged as assistant preacher to Dr. Chalmers, and entered on his ministerial work in Glasgow in 1819.

In 1822 he was appointed minister of the Caledonian Chapel (Scotch National Church) in Hatton Garden, London, which at that time was at an extremely low ebb, not mustering more than some 50 members. But Irving was a zealous

as well as an eloquent man, and the fame of the young new preacher soon spread beyond the precincts of the little known and out of the way old Scotch Chapel. He attracted the notice and friendship of men like Macauley and Carlyle, which gave him a status not enjoyed by the former ministry. His hearers began to increase, and he was soon known as a popular preacher, who drew crowds which were soon unable to find accommodation. In short, he became the idol of the fashionable world, of whom he was the pet preacher for a time. The circumstance which led to this is worth narrating.

Sir James Macintosh had heard Irving preach, and was so surprised and interested, that he made reference to it in conversation with Canning, who was induced to go and hear for himself, who in the course of a debate in the House of Commons upon the revenues of the Church, in which it was insisted that high talent and good pay should go together, made a speech, in which he said, "So far from universal was this rule, that he himself had lately heard a Scotch minister, trained in one of the most poorly-endowed of churches, and established in one of her outlying dependencies, possessed of no endowment at all, preach the most eloquent sermon that he ever listened to." This, coming from such a man, and uttered in such a strange place, was enough, and on the next, and a great many following Sundays, the Caledonian Chapel was crowded out with the votaries of London Society, who were taken with the novelty of what to them was real preaching. But like many other fashionable pastimes it had its day with them, and after-events caused them to be replaced by a different class of attendants, who became real converts after Irving's own heart. The excessive crowds attracted to the Caledonian Chapel rendered a larger one imperative, and a new and more commodious church was erected in Regent Square, which was opened in 1827. The fact that a thousand sittings were taken the first day of letting, shows the popularity of Irving.

Prior to this, in 1825, he had been brought into contact with a Mr. Henry Drummond, a wealthy London Banker, who was the moving spirit in a society established for the purpose of studying biblical prophecies, and their bearing upon the then political and religious condition of Christendom,

as interpreted by a new scheme propounded by a Mr. Hatley Frere. This was a subject that exactly suited Irving's temperament, and henceforward he became an ardent student, and attached friend of Drummond, whose influence was maintained over him to the time of his death. These studies at Albury Park, the residence of Mr. Drummond, soon brought to the fore the Second Advent of Jesus Christ, which formed the cardinal point round which clustered all the supposed accompanying signs, and which ultimately resulted in the setting up of another sect and system, closely allied to its immediate predecessor, the Mormon church. Another subject arose out of these studies, and that was a belief in the restoration of "gifts" which characterised the early Christian Church, and which are generally supposed to have ceased at the death of the Apostles. Irving was deeply moved, and made it a constant matter of earnest prayer, that such might come to pass in his day and time. This and the expected near advent of the Lord was the chief burden of his work.

*Apropos* to this, he met with a work in Spanish entitled "The Coming of the Messiah in Glory and Majesty," professedly written by a Hebrew convert to Christianity, but really by Lacunza, a Jesuit priest. This work Irving translated, and was beguiled by the more or less veiled Romish tenets of the wily priest which appeared in the work. This proves the ingenuousness of Irving's character, for in those days of political struggle which marked the "Catholic Emancipation," he had taken a most decided and outspoken stand against it.

In 1830, some strange and startling events took place in Scotland, which played a most important part in shaping the future current of Irving's life; and to his mind, and that of a few other ministers, these manifestations, as they were called, were an undoubted evidence that God was about to endow his Church with a restoration of the old miraculous gifts. These manifestations took two forms: the one was the gift of instantaneous healing of bodily diseases: and the other was the "gift of tongues," the parties so affected using words which did not pertain to any known language. The evidence of the genuineness of these phenomena seems to be indubitable and beyond question.

On the banks of the Clyde lived a family named Macdonald, who were good-living and God-fearing people. They had been moved by hearing of the strange and marvellous "gifts" which had been bestowed upon so many in the neighbourhood. The sister was an invalid supposed to be dying from consumption. One day going home for dinner, the two brothers found this sister in the throes of the new influx, and speaking in tongues. She spoke to her brothers, and concluded by an earnest prayer that James might be endowed then and there with the power of the Holy Ghost. Soon as she finished, James said, "I have got it!" and with a changed mien he walked to the bedside of his dying sister, and said, "Arise, and stand upright!" He then took her hand, and she arose, *cured*, which was effective. Finding himself possessed of the miraculous power, he wrote to Miss Mary Campbell, who was apparently near death's door from the same complaint, and who also had become an "ecstatic." He gave her the same command in writing. Immediately on receipt of the letter the apparently dying girl said, "I am healed!" and arose from her bed, and resumed the active work in her household. She afterwards became a prophetess, and addressed large audiences under the power of the Spirit.

These two well-authenticated cases are, I believe, a sample of what was alleged to be somewhat frequent. These facts, with reports sent to Irving, fired his warm heart, and with a strong belief that he was soon to see the descent of his Lord and Master, he prayed and waited for the promised "gifts," which were to herald the visible descent of the Lord, who was to come and sit upon his millennium throne. The "epidemic," as it was styled by the newspaper world, spread to London, and one of the first "manifestations" was the instant cure of a Miss Fancourt, who had been a cripple for years, who, at the bidding of an evangelist, arose from her couch and walked.

In July, 1831, Irving regarded his prayers as answered, by two of his flock receiving the gift of tongues and prophecy, which event was the prelude to "a mighty outpouring of the spirit" amongst many members of his congregation, from which by this time the fashionables had been weeded out, who did not care for this sort of thing.

London was stirred to the depths by this unusual display, which was commented upon by the newspapers at the time, and which to the press was a nine-days' wonder. These manifestations generally took place at meetings held in early morning, and were fostered by Irving, who allowed them full scope, and devoutly acknowledged them as the long-expected revival of the old apostolic gifts, and which to him bore an exact resemblance to the "Pentecostal tongues." Soon after, the "influence" came on the prophets and prophetesses during the public services in the Church, and Irving, to keep the thing in proper order, allowed the "tongues" to speak at a certain appointed time in the service. This public exhibition was too much for the trustees of the Church, who could not tolerate this—in their eyes—innovation on the usual sedate Presbyterian form of worship. Being strongly attached to their pastor, they were unwilling to oppose Irving, and offered as a compromise, that if he would agree to keep the manifestations to the morning and week-day services, not held in the church, and allow the Church Service to proceed in the regular established order, they would continue in office as heretofore. But Irving would not, or could not as he said, be a barrier in the way of the Lord, as he was convinced it was the action of the Holy Spirit. This refusal to listen to moderate counsel was a great grief to the trustees, who had been his staunch friends and supporters, and led to the withdrawal of the principal ones from his ministry and church.

Irving proving not amenable to these friendly remonstrances, the remaining trustees consulted counsel, Sir Edward Sugden, who gave it as his opinion that Irving was acting illegally in allowing the order and decorum of the Church Services to be violated by these unseemly interruptions. In consequence of this, a complaint was made, and five charges brought against him in and before the London Presbytery. Irving appeared, and defended himself and the work on Scriptural grounds alone, which were not allowed by the Presbytery, who maintained it was a question only of Church usage and order. The decision was given, May 2, 1832, that "Irving ought to be removed from the Pastorate of the Church." Acting upon this verdict, the trustees closed the

doors against him, and he was thus ejected from the ministry of Regent Square Church. The major part of the congregation went with their pastor, who settled down ultimately in a building, afterwards known as Newman Street Church.

An increasing hostility was shown to Irving by the Scotch Clergy, and the General Assembly issued an order, interdicting any minister within their jurisdiction from allowing him to preach in their churches, and should he do so, he was to be tried for heresy. This culminated in his summons to appear before the Presbytery of Annan, in Scotland, on a charge of heresy, which resulted in a verdict against him, and he was formally deposed, and no longer recognised as a minister of the Scotch National Church. This was in March, 1833.

While Irving was conducting the fight against Orthodoxy, he was still attending the Albury meetings, under the auspices of Mr. Drummond, whose influence began to tell upon the prophetic utterances, for soon indications appeared pointing to the establishment of a new order, which was to be developed and assume a form, that startled Irving; but still so convinced was he of the genuineness of the work, that he received these utterances with unquestioning faith in their divine origin, and accepted them as the voice of God.

In the midst of this marvellous work an unexpected trouble arose, by some of the "prophets" giving forth that which could not be attributed to the Holy Spirit. To meet this difficulty some officials were appointed to settle all disputed and questionable utterances, and what was judged to be contrary to scriptural truth was set down as the work of *evil spirits*, and to deal with these Irving instituted tests to try the spirits which caused the trouble and threatened to mar the work altogether. Among those who were subject to infesting spirits, there were two young children of an Anglican clergyman, a friend of Irving's, who spoke with tongues, but so outrageous were these, that they had to be exorcised, which was not done without much trouble.

But perhaps the greatest blow that Irving had to suffer arose from a most unexpected quarter, and this from one of his immediate surrounding friends, Mr. Robert Baxter, a solicitor and churchman, who resided in Doncaster, whom I

personally knew to be a gentleman of good position in the town. Being himself a student of prophecy, he made the acquaintance of Irving, and soon became a devoted adherent of the Albury Society. In January, 1832, Mr. Baxter went to London, and while attending the morning services became controlled; or, as he says, "was seized by the power"; and while in this state said, that he must go to the Court of Chancery, and bear his testimony before the Chancellor, which should make the nation tremble at what was coming to pass, &c., &c.

He went to the Court, but was unable to open his mouth, and after waiting four hours for the promised power, he came away, oppressed with doubts concerning the origin of the "power." A new turn was given by one of the prophets saying that "he had borne his testimony in spirit," which comforted him for the time being, and he returned to his home in full faith of the divine origin of the manifestations. But soon after arriving at home, he was made to say "that on the day after to-morrow he and wife should be baptised with fire." The appointed time came, and waiting, watching, and praying for some hours, the baptism did not come as promised. This disappointment, coming after his London experience, engendered doubts that resulted in his coming to the conclusion, that although the manifestations were genuine, yet, instead of coming by the the power of the Holy Ghost, they were one and all deluded and deceived by *lying spirits*, which, of course, resulted in his withdrawal from the work. This was a sore trial to Irving, but he heeded not Baxter's warning, who appeared as a witness against Irving in the trial before the London Presbytery.\*

After Irving's expulsion from the Scotch National Church, by the Annan Presbytery, he returned to London, expecting to find sympathy and rest in his own Church, but to his amazement he was forbidden to exercise any longer the priestly function, or to administer the sacraments, but become a deacon, the lowest office in the newly-formed Church. To

---

\* Mr. Baxter published a work entitled "Narrative of Facts," giving an account of his own experiences while connected with Irving and his work.

this, what would be judged by ordinary people an insolent message, Irving meekly submitted, because it was given under the "power," and therefore must be from God. Whether this outrage upon the man who had made the Church what it then was, was felt by the usurping elders and leaders to be a reflection on themselves, I know not, but after waiting some six months, Irving was re-ordained by command through a prophet, by Mr. Cardale, as Angel, or Chief Pastor, of the Church; and from this time his ministrations were confined to the little church, and practically his work in this department came to an end. In January, 1834, he was sent on a mission to a branch church in Edinburgh, which was troubled by the entrance of an evil spirit. But Irving, broken in health and spirit, fell ill, and after a painful journey he reached Glasgow, where he died, December 7, 1834, aged 42 years, and was buried in the crypt of Glasgow Cathedral.

The death of Irving removed the last remaining obstacle, and the Church, under the auspices of Drummond and Cardale, and by the command of the "power" expressed through the lips of the inspired ones, was gradually formed, and assumed the title of "The Catholic Apostolic Church," with an order of 12 Apostles, Elders, Angels, &c., &c., adopting the rituals, vestments, and formalities of the Romish Church, which were altered to suit the new order of things in the new Church of "Restored Apostles."

Excepting the pure and simple Romish element, the Catholic Apostolic Church adopted the polity of the Mormon Church, to which it bears more than a close resemblance. Both make the same claim, *viz.*, that they are specially chosen and appointed by God, to proclaim the near advent of Jesus Christ in person, who is to come and live amongst them. and the 144,000 sealed and baptised ones. The later church, the C. A., boldly declared and made it a leading article of their testimony, that "The Lord would visibly descend upon the earth before the last of the Apostles died." This hope and faith of the Church is now in extreme tension, for the very last of the Apostles still lives, an infirm old man, who in the natural course of things must very soon pass on to join the great majority. The result, of course, has yet to

be seen, but we may safely, I think, guess that the expected literal advent will follow the course of so many prior prophecies and revelations, through others to the same effect. If the "hope of the Church" should result in failure, it remains to be seen what course will be adopted; but in any case, this "church," commenced some 55 years ago, under such promising auspices, and sustained by the "tithing" practice, has long since lost its expansive power, and is now simply existing, except, perhaps, in one or two instances where it is supported by wealthy and influential men. Their numbers, so far as can be estimated, for nothing is permitted to go outside the Church, are dwindling down, and the probable result will be—a collapse.



### THOMAS LAKE HARRIS.

FOUNDER OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE NEW LIFE.

The first four notices of Messianic Claimants and Second Adventists, were the result of apparently indirect psychical or spiritual action; the one immediately preceding this occupies the transitional place, and this one along with the others that follow are the direct resultant of what is now generally received and acknowledged as the great Spiritual Movement of the present century, which will have a pro-founder bearing on succeeding centuries than the great majority of living people will incline to admit, but the future historian of the last decade of the 19th century will have to recognise this as one of, if not the most, important epochal periods in human history.

The Editress of "Modern American Spiritualism" singles out the action and career of the leading subject of this chapter, as a manifestation of the "dark side" of the Movement. While not prepared to fully accept such a



**THOMAS LAKE HARRIS.**

**The Founder of the Brotherhood of the New Life.**



severe dictum, yet the history of this outcome of the "Movement" presents to the student of psychology, as well as to the unprejudiced historian, many problems of varied and profound interest. Endowed with the gift of eloquence, possessing strong mediumistic (so-called) powers, of considerable poetic genius, which under ordinary circumstances, and in general society, would have made him a popular preacher and lecturer, we are compelled to notify at least two great weaknesses in his make-up, *viz.*, egotism and ambition, by which he became so inflated that he placed himself in the list of competitive Messianic Pretenders and claimants, accompanied with the usual ignoring of the claims of all others and the exaltation of his own; with what right or justice the reader of what follows must judge for him or herself.

Thomas Lake Harris was British born, in 1824, but went with his parents to America when three years old, in which country he has been domiciled ever since. Of his early life very little is known, but in 1845, then twenty-one years of age, he was a Rev., and settled as pastor of a Universalist Church in Elizabeth Street, New York. Being of an ardent disposition, he was much impressed with the phenomena, then transpiring through the mediumship of A. J. Davis, and threw himself enthusiastically into the Movement. Obtaining leave of absence from his congregation in 1848, he went on a lecturing tour through some of the United States, advocating Spiritualism in general, and the principles of Andrew Jackson Davis's "Nature's Divine Revelations" in particular.

In the early part of 1850, there were many "circles" formed in Auburn, New York State, where many powerful physical and other manifestations were developed. Among these was one which arrogated to itself the title of the "Apostolic Circle," so styled because its leading "controls" were supposed to be, and in fact they claimed to be, the spirits of the first Christian Apostles, whose object was the resuscitation of the Christian Church upon a new and enlarged basis, to be guided by these alleged ancient apostles. But this original design was altered by the entrance of a number of believers in the Second Advent,

whose influence was paramount, and forthwith the idea of forming a society to proclaim the speedy advent of Jesus Christ was entertained, which culminated in what is known as the Mountain Cove movement. Land was purchased, and a community formed at Mountain Cove, under the leadership of Rev. Jas. D. Scott, a Baptist minister, and the Rev. T. L. Harris, with the all-important proviso—to them—that the “faithful ones” must bring their money, &c., and give it into the general treasury for the furtherance of the “work of the Lord.” This was in the latter end of 1850. The infatuation and intolerant rule of the Leaders, who proclaimed themselves the “Two Witnesses” of the Revelation, bore fruit in the rejection and withdrawal of many of the members. Such was the state of affairs, that according to the testimony of an eye-witness, who was an influential member, the affair became a Pandemonium, and in about two years the movement collapsed. Harris then returned to New York, where he was engaged as speaker by one of the leading Spiritualistic Societies in that city. After occupying this position for a few years, he finally separated himself from the Spiritualist Society, and at the end of 1858 he managed to obtain a following who established themselves as the “Church of the Good Shepherd,” of which he was Pastor and Leader.

In 1858, he formed a “New Church” Publishing Association, and issued a monthly magazine or journal of “The Lord’s New Church,” which continued for three years, and then collapsed. This association printed and published the first volume of the “Arcana of Christianity,” which was dictated by Harris, in New York, in October and November, 1857, and published in 1858, in which he tells us that his “interiors were opened, and was enabled to be present with the Anglic Societies, whether of the ultimate, the spiritual, or the celestial degree.” He also says: “It was my privilege to behold the Lord, whom I saw in His Divine appearing, and who laid upon me the charge of receiving and unfolding such of those arcana of the celestial sense as are contained in this volume,” &c.

This work is claimed to be the revelation of the celestial sense of the first chapter of Genesis, much upon the same

lines as Swedenborg's "Arcana Cœlestia," interspersed with many of his own narrations of what he saw in the Heavens and Hells. In short, it may be characterised as a travesty of Swedenborg's work. Like Swedenborg he was a believer in the literal rendering of the Gospel narratives regarding the miraculous birth, history, and tragic death of Jesus Christ; and these form the basis on which all his pretensions and rhapsodic adumbrations rest. The reader must judge of the value of his revelations by the following. He tells us—p. 29, "A. C."—that an angel, an "Ancient of the Golden Age," informed him that, "The old Egyptians were a race of thorough worldlings, who reduced all things to a science, and sought to subjugate all truths to their corporeal advantage; and" (continued the angel) "were you to be informed of the diabolical arts which they practised in conjunction with spirits, your mind would be lost in astonishment" (as well it might be). "They ate in secret human flesh, and drank human blood, as a means of obtaining the favour of demons. When by necromantic arts, they were able to have communication with Infernus, they sacrificed infants. Afterwards they agreed, for a specified number of days in the year, to eat human flesh and drink human blood, in return for which these genii endowed them with miraculous gifts."

The above foul and calumnious libel upon the old Egyptians, accusing them of murder and cannibalism, has no other basis of fact than the alleged revelation of an unknown angel to Harris. There is nothing whatever in the whole History of Egypt—with which I am fairly acquainted—to give the slightest colour to such an outrageous statement; and I pity any one who yields credence to such unverifiable revelations, even though they come, professedly, from the mouth of an angel!

As an appendix to the "Arcana of Christianity," in separate book form, the New Church Publishing Association, in 1858, printed "The Song of Satan: a series of poems originating with a Society of Infernal Spirits, and received during temptation combats, by T. L. Harris." From what is stated therein it appears that the determination to issue "Herald of Light" was the cause of the "fiery trial," lasting over four months, to which Harris was subjected, which culmi-

nated on the evening of July 10, 1857; the "determination being apparently to close up all the avenues open to the Heavens." This work contains in poem and prose the sayings of a number of "Infernals" which in the judgment of a calm and dispassionate ordinary mind, contains as large a mass of literary filth as was ever compressed within the same limits. As a reflection of Harris's own mental state, it is a gross caricature of Spiritualistic doctrine and teachings, which he had then renounced, as he had proclaimed himself a "Christian Spiritualist." The animus is distinguishable from the beginning to the end of the book. But to show how the mind of a specialist and partisan can be warped and inflated by egotism, Harris says: "Into this book the Lord has poured, as from Himself, such irrefragable truths, as, when understood and lived, shall enable the spirit to comprehend, better than ever before, its Father. Whosoever taketh this, in a true sense, taketh Him; for He is in it. The spirit of human books is man, but the spirit of this book is Christ the God."

I give one specimen of the poetry, one of the *least objectionable* in the loathsome effusion:—

"Hurrah for progression! since nature began  
 There ne'er was a devil but sprouted from man.  
 Away with the Bible, that budget of lies!  
 Make Nature your guide, for it leads to the skies.  
 'Tis distance makes saints, they are devils in heart:  
 Their chariot of fire is a hangman's red cart:  
 Their souls by the mad-dog Religion are bit:  
 They call our grand temple 'the bottomless pit.'"

Here is what a female spirit, called "Melusina," says to Harris:—

"Now you know that a woman's weakness is to appear well to men. Were any woman ever damned, the first thing she would request from the devil would be a looking-glass. To repair her wasted appearance and bring back the colour, she would drink perdition itself. Were there no other way to a milliner's but to crawl on her bare hands and feet through a meadow, whose blades of grass were serpents, she'd do it."

According to Harris, the leader of the Infernal band was

no other than Joseph Balsamo; for he says: "I was now brought into personal contact with that demon who was called, during his earth-life, Joseph Balsamo, who, carrying his impiety to the extremest verge, assumed the likeness of our Lord, and endeavoured to impose himself upon me as the Redeemer."

Joseph Balsamo was the famous, or notorious, Count Cagliostro, who, after a checkered life, was imprisoned and starved to death in an Italian prison of Pope Pius VI., in 1795. His crime was heresy and Freemasonry, and it was on the specific charge of founding a lodge of Egyptian Freemasonry, that he was arrested, convicted, subjected to the torture of the rack, &c., and sentenced to death by the "Holy Inquisition"; but the sentence was commuted into imprisonment for life. Whatever else he was, he was a firm denouncer of kingly and priestly despotism, and one of the pioneers of human liberty and progress. The histories of this remarkable man as written by his chief enemies, the Christian Church party, and by his friends, and also by himself, are at direct variance, but the "Illuminati," and advocates of human liberty and progress, claim him as one of the most distinguished pioneers and martyrs; the latter he most undoubtedly was.

In 1859, Harris resigned the pastorate of the "Church of the Good Shepherd," in New York, and came to England on a preaching and lecturing tour, where by his eloquence he gained a few adherents. It may be of interest to note that Harris claimed *his* sect to be the "New Church," which was a direct defiance to the claim of the Swedenborgian sect, who say that theirs is the "New Church, which John saw descending out of Heaven," &c.

In a work entitled "The Wisdom of Angels," published by Harris in 1857, he details a conversation between himself and Swedenborg (in the spiritual world) and says (see 234): "The spirit of Swedenborg then turned to me and said: 'Dear Brother! have no fear concerning the New Church. Thou shalt thyself in an undaunted manner proclaim its truths, and no man shall be able to hinder thee; and thou shalt be one of the first of an innumerable multitude, unto whom shall be given to speak, in the natural, of the Omnipotent Power of the Lord, and to proclaim that He is God.

America shall become, in the progress of events, one cosmopolitan temple of the New Church, and the priests shall be hundreds of thousands, and of the believers scores, and finally hundreds of millions. They shall spread from Greenland to Patagonia, and there shall be no antagonism of opinion amongst them all." It were well to note here, that Harris's "Lord," like Swedenborg's, was supposed to be the historical Jesus Christ, and he always treats the gospel narratives as the record of actual events; for he seems to have no conception that they are otherwise. This Revelator is at direct variance with Joseph Smith's, who said the Mormon Church was to overspread America.

The psychologist, acquainted with the "Law of Control," will not have much difficulty in assigning the quota due to the alleged spirit of Swedenborg, who was not the one to indulge in prophetic rhapsodies of the above calibre, and none but the most credulous of believers will place any value on the alleged authorship of the above, which is a fair sample of Harris's other-world experiences.

After a sojourn in England, Harris returned to America, and in 1865 starts "The First National Bank of America," N. Y., of which he was President, which, after a short run, failed and came to grief. In 1866 he came again to England, and in 1867 printed and published three works, the most important entitled "Arcana of Christianity: an Unfolding of the Celestial Sense of the Divine Word. Part III.—The Apocalypse." These works were printed in England, but published by "The Brotherhood of the New Life," and from this time no more is heard of the "New Church Publishing Association," which had become extinct. He returned to America at the close of the year, after seeing the last pages of the above work through the press.

The next move, about this time, was the formation of a community styled "The Brotherhood of the New Life," on the principles of "co-operative industry and associated life," which was intended to be the nucleus to attract the wealthy, indicated, and even aristocratic elements of society, and from which would radiate the principles and power of "solidarity," what were to influence the whole world. Speaking of those "who have been brought up in kings' houses, who are clothed

in purple and fine linen, and who fare sumptuously every day :—the best among these, when enlightened, can receive the truth of conjugal chastity, and accept it as the very crown and complement of all their felicities. Their example, in time, as they become a resplendent solidarity, will affect mankind throughout Christendom, as if Christ bodily had again risen from the grave." All this, by the " Word of the Lord" through Harris.

The above grandiloquent sentence sprang from the fact that he had just converted to his views two members of the British aristocracy, in the persons of Lady Oliphant, and her son, Laurence Oliphant, who joined the community of 'The Brotherhood of the New Life, at Salem-on-Erie, New York, America, of which Harris was the Leader, and to whom all who joined were to be in subjection. So complete was his ascendancy, that his orders were obeyed with unquestioning obedience. In order to eliminate their aristocratic pride, Lady Oliphant and her maid were commanded to take their places at the wash-tub; and considering that her Ladyship was well-advanced in years, one would have thought that such a trial of her faith and docility might have been avoided. Her son, Laurence Oliphant, was made a teamster, which ordeal he went through for over a year. What this means will appear from the following.

Laurence Oliphant was the son of Sir Anthony Oliphant, who was Chief Justice of Ceylon, and nephew of the Earl of Elgin, to whom he was private secretary, in his capacity as Plenipotentiary during the Chinese campaign, in 1857. In 1860 he was appointed British Resident in Japan, where he was seriously wounded. At the time he met with Harris, or his writings, he was M.P. for Stirling Burghs, in Scotland; when he resigned his seat and went to join The Brotherhood, about 1867. He would then be about 37 years of age. His position, and restless mode of life, brought him into contact with many illustrious personages, the world over; and it is doubtless to his influence in the British Embassy, in Japan, that the presence of several influential Japanese gentlemen, who joined the Harris Community shortly after its formation, may be traced. Mr. Oliphant is well known and appreciated as a piquant and brilliant writer in the literary world. For

reasons that I am not at liberty to specify, Mr. and Lady Oliphant broke with Harris, and withdrew from the community. Mr. Oliphant is now settled on the slopes of Mount Carmel, in Syria, engaged in a mission of his own. His two latest works, entitled "Sympneumata," and "Scientific Religion"—which are non-understandable to ordinary readers—show that he still adheres to the dogmatic system of the Harrisite theology, &c.

The community commenced at Salem-on-Erie, under such promising auspices of prosperity and success, lost prestige by the withdrawal of the Oliphants, and was finally broken up and the aristocratic and wealthy element—so assiduously cultivated by Mr. Harris, and which was so essential to his material standing—ceased to exist, so that their example, which was to "affect mankind throughout Christendom," proved to be a very short-lived experiment: and the roseate colour which marked the early issue of the community began to assume other hues, and many things in reference to the internal workings leaked out which shook the confidence of many who were disposed to be ardent admirers of the principles on which the "solidarity" of the movement was said to be based. In 1867, when the settlement was formed, there were about thirty members, with ten or twelve Japanese amongst them, and in 1870, about sixty members, twenty men, and the rest women and children.

From causes not clear to outsiders, Harris, with the remains of the Salem community, removed to Santa Rosa, California, which forms its present headquarters, with its leading industry of fruit-growing and wine manufacture, which I am told finds its chief market in the saloons of New York. A lady, who visited Santa Rosa last year, pointed out the inconsistency of making wine, and thus tending to the increase of intemperance. His reply was: "My dear madam, we can so instil the wine that we produce with the Divine aura that it would be impossible to cause drunkenness by its use." From her account, as told to me, Harris's residence is sumptuously furnished, and the grounds beautifully laid out. The lady of the household was handsomely attired in flowing white garments, &c., and Harris she described as a pleasant elderly gentleman. (He is now about 64 years of age.) From

enquiries made it would appear that much, probably most, of the work on the ranche is now done by hired labourers, as very, very few of the "Brotherhood" were to be seen in the house, or about the grounds. Strange as it may appear, my lady informant said she had great difficulty in finding Harris's place—some three or four miles out—as no one in Santa Rosa seemed to know anything about Harris or his community, and I think she only found it by applying at the Post Office: a sad comment upon the vaporous prophecies of Harris's "Revelator," as to the rapid extension of the "Lord's New Church" in America and Christendom.

It may be of interest to readers in general, and to the Shakers in particular, to know what Harris has to say concerning their Foundress, Ann Lee, who died in 1788. He states, "that a certain woman, a spirit whose body had perished, and the *geist* of whose body was in the world of shadows," made herself manifest to Harris. (It would appear from this that Harris agrees with the Theosophists, who maintain that the spirits who manifest in Spiritualistic circles are not spirits, but the "wandering shells," "reliquæ," from deceased persons; which does not meet the difficulty as to how "shells" without a spirit can assume an individuality, and speak and act with an apparent consciousness of their own.) The woman said "many things too painful to narrate," and commenced whirling, which she could not stop. Harris and his wife took the spirit into their arms (was it the spirit, or the "geist"?) Then the Lord appeared; standing by the bed, and spake thus: "I am the resurrection and the life, who took out of his own bosom a sacred element, and wrapped it about the woman from head to foot." After further operations, "the Lord drew her unto Him, and in that embrace, united the spirit-body and the *geist*-body," and said: "I have given thee a gift, my daughter; one whom I have raised in the resurrection of the body." Then the woman said: "O Two-in-One! I know not anything, and I perceive that the woman knoweth nothing, except as in the man, but I am undeserving to receive a man." But the Lord said: "Be of good cheer; a man that is for thee cometh; thy counterpart: I will give thee to him, and bestow him on thee; and this shall be thy nuptial night."

The above extraordinary spiritual experience I leave to the consideration of her followers, who will doubtless be surprised to hear that their "Divine Mother Ann" has thus renounced celibacy for a "counterpartal" state. As the Shakers have had—as reputed—many visits from "Mother Ann," it would be interesting to compare above with the revelations she has made from the spirit-world to them.

It was about the time of the break-up of the Salem-on-Erie community, and the establishment of the Brotherhood at Santa Rosa, in California, that Harris, yielding to his ambitious and egotistical promptings, took new ground, and proclaimed himself nothing less than a new Saviour of Humanity; and, as will be seen from what follows, the Second Advent of Jesus Christ, according to him, was accomplished in a manner that puts into the shade the claims of Ann Lee and Johanna Southcott. Put into plain language, the outbirth that Johanna was to bring forth was supposed to be by the paternity of Jesus Christ, and would be Shiloh in the male form; but in the case of Harris, a new phase is given, and an actual birth is alleged to have taken place at Santa Rosa, not in physical, but psychological form, as objective to himself and a favoured few, as a materialised spirit form, so well known in Spiritualistic circles. This scarcely veiled stupendous alleged fact is given in all its details, and endorsed by his remaining infatuated followers, as proof of their divine work, in a work published by the "Brotherhood of the New Life," in 1876, entitled: "The Lord, the Two-in-One, Declared, Manifested and Glorified." The contents of this work are, in many places, as revolting and unfit for perusal as the "Song of Satan" before alluded to. The work may be taken as the manifesto of the "new departure," in which Harris lays aside all ambiguity, and claims that the hope of the Christian Church, in reference to the Second Advent of its alleged personal founder, has been fulfilled through his instrumentality; and in what manner will be seen by what follows. This claim is made with the usual accompaniments that characterise the blatant assumptions of one and all of the Messianic Pretenders, which is—that speaking as the mouthpiece of God, it is at the peril of readers and hearers if they are disobedient to the call, and

reject; and it is a matter of surprise that Harris could not see that this was played out.

Speaking of what he had pronounced as God's voice having revealed truth to him, Harris says: "Obviously, the man who tampers with these things does so at the extreme peril of his soul. For a man to read these things that follow, and not to shape his whole life in accordance with their ends, is simply, for him, destruction. The Living Word descends into the ultimate through that Two-in-One, by whose experience these things have been matured, and by whose labours they are now given."

Harris takes the name of Chrysanthus, and his bride, Chrysanthea, and "This Primate Pair of the Society, hold in their midst, as incarnation from their incarnation, the Lord Jesus and His Lady Yessa, God manifest through the flesh." It appears that this counterpart "was taken as a child by deace from the natural world, to be specially educated and become a pivotal woman or queen of our kingdom. She is one of the most ancient and illustrious of the reigning families of Europe. She is able to appear in the objective from the subjective through her husband (Harris), demonstrative and palpable to every sense; literally the first of God's returning angels in whom the resurrection of the body in ultimates is a fact demonstrated." Of that martyred man who is her counterpart (*i.e.*, Harris himself): "He has gone up into his discrete degree, and moves no longer on earth, save through a certain visual appearance, though his flesh has not seen corruption; no more of earth, yet substantially present; one with his counterpart he bears the burdens of the Society," &c. From this pair was born a child, as Harris tells us: "Now this child is the child born to Chrysanthus and Chrysanthea as the first fruit of their nuptial union in the Earth; and he inherited from his mother into the fixedness of the angels, and from his father into the loyal freedom of the divine natural man."

This, and much more concerning the (psychological) amours of Harris, is given out "for the first time without reserve," and according to human probability it is likely to be the last. Unfortunately Harris is the mouthpiece of the community, but it is fair to suppose that the members who

actually printed the book would not lend themselves to an untruth. Accepting the account as true, it would make Harris what is known as a materializing medium. He claims, —in a manner so entirely novel and unprecedented to Second Adventists—that the “Lord Jesus has come again. Lo! out of his side issues His counterpart, His Bride, the Lady Yessa. Was His Humanity made in the image of God? Then it was made Two-in-One, as we are made.”

In all the religious systems of the past which claim to be founded on the appearance and teachings of an Incarnate Son of God, as witness Horus, Buddha, Jesus, and others, the Incarnation was supposed to be effected in and through a mortal woman, a virgin; but in this case Harris—who scarcely veils his claims to be a Saviour and redeemer—exercises the paternal function with—an angel! and the result is said to be the phenomenal and really objective male child before alluded to. This is stating the case without any ambiguity, as plainly set forth in the work under notice. Mr. L. Oliphant, in his two latest works, “Sympneumata,” and “Scientific Religion,” advocates the doctrine of bi-sexuality as the normal and original intention of the structural form of the human. This evidently has its root in the Harrisite teachings. In the chapter on “Orthodox Objection to our Lord’s Present Teachings. His Reply,” Harris gives a dialogue between the Lord Jesus and himself, in which the Lord is made to say: “If I seem to teach a Gospel carried into a degree of redemption beyond that which the records of my former teachings might indicate, the reason is that as a son in my finitude and creaturehood, I have done measurably what you were asked of me if you were willing to do. I descended, involving my organism far below the condition of the worst man in the earth. I sank into the loathsome womb of a syren woman in the depths of hell; and she brought me forth as if I had been begotten between two devils. So I assumed infernal manhood for the entire body of the race, and took its everlasting punishments into myself, making so my incarnation complete.”

To an unsophisticated mind, the above vile abomination will appear as the ravings of a madman; but there is method in the undoubted madness, as it is all—and much more—

written for the purpose of establishing Harris's own claim to the Primacy of the human race. Under the pretentious claim of a direct revelation from the personal Jesus, the psychologist will at once detect the reaction, in subjective form, of a mentally-diseased organism, which takes shape in accord with such a perverted imagination as characterises the effusions of Harris's later years. Conversant with angelhood, according to his own statement, he is equally at home in the shocking and repulsive societies of devildom, and I dare not reproduce his alleged experiences while in contact with his diabolical societies. The gross familiarity in dealing with subjects and persons which well-disposed people treat with reverence—however misplaced—is revolting in the extreme, and reproduces in scandalous form the vilest vernacular of Billingsgate.

Spiritual wifehood, or counterpart unions, is, in the Brotherhood, more than a doctrine; it is alleged to be actual. The doctrine and *modus operandi* are given as follows: "The Word descended through the Two-in-One, first working changes in them, leading one of the counterparts down and out—*down from heaven and out into nature*. When she first came forth through her husband's side, as flesh of his flesh, and met the deadly elements that were impregnated with physical cold earth's moral atmosphere, she stepped forth as into a crucifixion. But every change through which her counterpart was taken, in becoming the Word-begotten Son of the Word eternal, was through torment unutterable and incredible. After our Lily-mother became fully incarnate, she led down to those of the society whose counterparts were in the heavens, and who were in states that permitted the beginning of their descent to them, bride to bridegroom, bridegroom to bride. She took from her own naturalised substance to clothe the brides; while her husband (Harris) took from his vitalized substance to clothe the bridegrooms."

Assuming the above to be true, it would appear that Harris is what is known as a "materialising medium." There is nothing extraordinary in this, except the accessories that he associates with the fact, for I myself have witnessed, on several occasions, a stream of vapour, apparently, issue from the medium's right side, and gradually form itself into a

veritable female human figure, as solid and tangible as my own, with exquisitely beautiful features, crowned and jewelled, with a robe and waist-bash of remarkable texture. So that the statement regarding the issuing forth from "her husband's side" is not in itself incredible. But that an actual child should be born as the result of commerce between Harris and this "materialized angel" must be taken for what it is worth; for independent and trustworthy evidence is required to substantiate such a fact, if fact it be.

The Society is made to say regarding Harris: "We have been from the outset a plain, practical folk, and the constant end of our Primate has been to enforce the truth that God incarnate saves men through making them, first, self-sacrificing and chaste, and then, prudent, exact, orderly, heroic, and in every sense, chivalrous and noble." Against this, no objections can be taken, but seeing that this manifesto was issued at the formation of the Society, the numerous desertions from the ranks which have taken place, in the case of those who had the opportunity of seeing the internal practical working, would seem to show that this high-flown programme has not been carried out as they then flattered themselves would follow.

As a specimen of the familiarity and loquaciousness of Harris with Jesus Christ and his Bride, in his Second Advent and appearing, he tells us, that "He (Jesus) would have met a different fate could He for a few years have preserved His Person, and put His hand out beyond Judea, touching the noblest minds among the Parsees, the Brahminical philosophers of Asia, and the hermetical sages of Greece. His misfortune was, humanly speaking, that he came where priestliness bore rule and fashioned the mind, instead of culture. Christ is not a priest, but a gentleman; the sagest of sages: more, too, than either,—Divine Man of affairs." "Our Lord, in his first coming, earned his bread even from childhood. He toiled through youth with saw and hammer. Mother Mary says he helped to nurse children — washed their clothes, assisted in cookery; always adaptive, cheerful, taking care of little things," &c.

An episode is given in the history of Jesus in this new and second advent, of which I can give but a hint; the details

are strikingly coarse, repulsive, and revolting. It is a manifestation of "Our Lord in Hell, among artisans." Having introduced Himself as a working smith, he is repul-ed in language which I dare not reproduce. After ingratiating himself into their confidence by "taking a pipe out of his pouch and smoking it," a repast was prepared, and finished off with "pipes and ale," &c., and while in a quiescent state presumably from the effects of tobacco and ale, the Lord said: "Chrysantheus, my Son, give them a song," and Chrysantheus (*i. e.*, Harris) began:—

" Pipes and ale, pipes and ale !  
 He who receives the Lord in them,  
 Though he were sick and sent to jail,  
 May journey to Jerusalem."

The work under notice is redolent with literary miasma, of which the above is a very tame specimen in comparison with the abominable details that defile and disgrace its pages. Would they could be regarded as the incoherent ravings of a maniac, but under the specious pretension of being a practical display of the Lord's condescension to bring about the redemption of the Hells, it resolves itself into a gross caricature of churchianic doctrines respecting the fall and salvation of mankind, and a blasphemous assumption of his (Harris) own "mediatorial" work to accomplish that end. A grosser fraud has never been attempted by any Messianic Pretender and charlatan that has sullied the annals of this Spiritualistic age.

It is well for Harris that America, and not this country, has been the home of his labours and publications—especially the "Song of Satan," and the "Two-in-One"—for undoubtedly here he would be actionable at law, and would have to pay the penalty.

Having said this much concerning the "dark side" of his personality, it is only just to say, that interspersed in his various writings and publications, there are some splendid specimens of rhetorical power. Lacking the calm, lucid, methodical and philosophical calibre of Swedenborg, they possess a certain charm of their own. In laying bare the under-currents that actuate modern civilised society, with its "organised hypocrisies," he does it with a weapon that never

misses the mark. For instance (from the "Wedding Guest"), he says: "Pious, Bible-reading, praying gentlemen, armed at every point with a legal precedent, given brain power and commercial facilities, can make artificial panic or scarcity at their will, from Lombard Street to Calcutta. A combination in grain, organised in the powers of the Greater Evil, if it proves successful, levies a tax on every kernel of corn, from the Hudson to the Sacramento."

What honest tradesman in this, and in all countries, has not felt the paralysing power of the above, in the scandalous "rings," formed by speculators and capitalists, utterly regardless of the havoc they make in commercial honest enterprises, provided they can net a large and fabulous amount of money, at the nation's expense. What to these gentry is the suffering and loss to the industrial worker and hard-toiling masses? The Trade Rings, and the Bulls and Bears of the Stock Exchange, are a foul blot upon the commercial morality of the age.

It must not be overlooked that Harris dealt with the evils of competitive industry, as based upon personal selfishness; and the failure of his schemes is not so much due to the principles involved—as see the Manifesto of the Society—as to other causes, chief of which was his own inordinate vanity, ambition, and egotism. His claim for authority, to be vested in certain persons, is Papal; and as rigorous and exacting as that of the Romish Church itself. In short, the spirit of Jesuitism is, or was, as paramount at Santa Rosa as at the Vatican.

Immeasurably superior to the rest of the Messianic Pretenders in intellectual and literary ability and oratory, Harris has sacrificed a rare opportunity of usefulness, on the altar of his own inflated personality; and the following, from his own mouth, may not inaptly be turned upon himself:—"Men are easily bamboozled. A few drums, trumpets, eagles, standards, and the like, lead the sense and the fancy captive. We have the romance of history; but the real history is yet almost unwritten. We have History in its surlout and small clothes. Who shall undress the events, and show them naked as they are?"

The question, of interest to the psychologist, is: Who, or what, was the apparitional appearance that Harris claims

to be the Lord Jesus Christ, in his Second Advent?" He, along with the numerous competitors for modern Messiahship in one form or another, evidently "believes" in the literal fact of the First Advent, as given in the Gospel narratives, and he comes forward in response to the wide-spread expectancy of the nearness of the Second Advent.

The delusion cherished and propagated by Harris is, that *he* is the special chosen one of God to embody and announce to a perishing world that it is to be "saved" by the Second Coming again of the historical Jesus, not in his own personal form, but through the organism of Thomas Lake Harris, who claims to be the Sin-bearer of the race. As witness: "The Lord again appeared, and His manner, now, was indicative of refined and cultured thought" (pity it had not always been the same), "and Chrysantheus (Harris) said: Father, I am so glad, for without your manifestation the burden of the world is almost more than I can bear. And the Lord said: I come that you may take more burdens." Again: "The Lord spake: When those who are terrified look to thee, as thou art Two-in-One, and through thee to me, the Two-in-One dwelling in thee, I will put forth the arm of strength through thee; and those weak ones shall not perish." The new Harrisite gospel is thus set forth: "And the Lord said: It is the gospel of my incarnation in my son. I am brought forth through thee to judgment," &c.

For audacity, the claims and pretensions of Harris outvie his competitors, and it is to be hoped that the farago of braggart, intellectual insanity, and inflated selfhood, which characterises the theological trade advertisements (for £ s. d. is a most important factor) of Thomas Lake Harris, will be avoided by others who are following in the same line. According to present appearances, this farce is well nigh played out, and none will be the worse except those who have been defrauded of their means and money, and have found the ways and means for Harris to "ultimate" his vagaries. As an episode in the *romantic* sphere of the Spiritual Movement, the career of this man, as historically given in the foregoing account, without fear or prejudice, is valuable and suggestive, in showing the dangers caused by the abuse, in unprincipled hands, of what on the whole must prove beneficial to humanity.

## MARY ANN GIRLING.

## FOUNDERESS OF THE ENGLISH SHAKER COMMUNITY.

Like all the preceding Messianic Claimants, this one commenced her strange career on the lines of the expected Second Advent of Jesus Christ, and in what manner this event was alleged to have been fulfilled, according to the teachings of this specific Divine "Messenger," will be seen in the following memoir and narrative.

Mary Ann Girling—maiden name, Cloughton—was the eldest of seven children. Her father was a farm labourer in a small village near Lowestoft, Suffolk, and according to his social position was a man of good repnte. She was born about 1830 A.D., and so uneducated and illiterate that when arrived at womanhood she could scarcely read or write. She was, in her youth, impetuous, strong-willed, and passionate, somewhat tall, and in figure well made. At the age of 20 she married George Girling, a sailor, by whom she had ten children, eight of whom died in infancy, and two, a son and daughter, still survive. During her husband's absence on the sea, she helped to support her household by millinery and dress-making. It was not until after several years of her marriage that she evinced any disposition for religious thought or conviction, and this was brought about by the death of her last child. Great mental perturbation and resentment ensued, as she could not understand her children should in succession be taken away, and this was succeeded by a settled melancholy; and while in this state of mind she went to a Wesleyan chapel, and there she "heard the first words of comfort to her soul." This led to serious conviction on account of her sins, especially from what she felt in reference to her violent temper. She passed through the process of conversion, joined the society, and by her exemplary conduct was appointed a class-leader in that body. She was, however, far from being satisfied with herself, and still yielded at times to her unsubdued temper. It was after one of these outbursts that the climax came. She could not rest in bed,



**MARY ANN GIRLING.**

**Foundress of the English Shaker Community.**



and, getting out, she engaged in most earnest prayer to be delivered from her besetting sin. The answer came in a most unexpected manner, which completely changed the tenor of her life.

While engaged in prayer, her room became filled with light, so clear that every object was plainly discernible. She heard a voice saying: "Daughter! thy sins are all forgiven thee; and immediately a form stood before her, which she knew to be the Saviour, Jesus Christ, because he showed her his hands and feet, with the marks of the nail-prints." She was then about 32 years of age. This Presence again spoke, and said: "I have called thee to declare my immediate coming, as it is now the close of this dispensation; a new era is opening on the world, and thou art to be the Messenger." This experience caused a thrill throughout her organism, and, as she said, "filled her with a love unutterable for the whole human race." She kept it to herself, and still continued to attend to her religious duties as usual, but insisting on the members that "holiness of life was required, as God would work with great power." A great change was perceptible, and from being stern she became gentle, urbane and sympathetic. Her husband, along with others, noticed the difference, and although he had no sympathy with her religious fervour and doings, yet he offered no opposition, and this attitude he maintained to the end, allowing her to take her own course in these matters.

After the lapse of a few weeks she had a second vision, when she was commanded to "go forth and declare the immediate Coming of the Lord." She shrunk from this, and thought that increased zeal and more earnest work in her classes would be sufficient, and save her from the odium and opposition which a public declaration would entail upon her.

A third, fourth, and fifth vision followed at intervals, when the message was repeated, "that the advent would take place in her day, and her disobedience would involve her in great spiritual loss; and that she was to declare an end of sin, and a judgment; and, further, that if she yielded and obeyed, *she should not see death.*" This personal appearance was, to her view, none other than the Lord Jesus him-

self ; and the further revelation he made to her was, " that he was coming to gather all things in one ; of which she was to be the Messenger ; and that as a witness to her call and work, the outpouring of the Holy Ghost should be to those who believed ; that they should speak with tongues, and do marvellous works ; which would be the seal of her messenger-ship. That to accomplish this work, she must leave husband, children, and home, and go forth into the streets, declaring the message ; and more, that all who believed must be prepared to do the same."

This, to her, terrific ordeal was more than she could bear, as she could not bring herself to acquiesce ; and the bitterness of her internal strife culminated in an attack of paralysis, which caused a twist in her mouth and reduced her to helplessness. She continued in this condition for six weeks, when she felt that she must make the choice, either to disobey and be confirmed in her helpless state, or be obedient to the Revelating One. She could bear it no longer, and " told the Lord, that she would go ; and that she was willing for him to do with her as he would." *She was immediately restored* to her wonted health and strength. Her husband objected at first to her entering upon a public ministration, but having witnessed her sudden restoration, he said she had better go, if she was to have a renewal of her illness as a consequence of not going.

Her course was now clear, and the opportunity was given on the following Sunday. Leaving the chapel she saw a crowd of people at a street corner listening to a man preaching, and she being asked to speak, commenced her address, which soon drew together a large concourse, as she was well known in the district. This was in the year 1868, from which date her mission commenced ; and after this first essay, public speaking was no trouble to her.

We have no knowledge as to her acquaintance with existing sects based upon the same immediate expectancy of the " Lord's Second Advent " ; the probability is that she had none, but that in the—to her—unexpected revelations made to her in the visions, she would naturally conclude that she was the only " chosen messenger," but when in later times she was confronted with the fact, she used the same epithets

to her rival claimants, as they, each in turn, applied to others.

She began by inaugurating meetings in the surrounding villages; and by the novelty of her teachings attracted many to her services. The excitement stirred up among these illiterate villagers soon produced fruit, and what were taken as spiritual manifestations followed. The first to receive the message and its accompanying gift of the Holy Ghost was a young woman, a Wesleyan and prominent member of the choir. While the meeting was engaged in prayer she suddenly fell back, and lay for two hours in an unconscious state, when she suddenly rose, and commenced dancing, speaking for an hour, and declaring "that Mrs. Girling was the chosen messenger to herald the Saviour's appearing." After coming out of the trance, she embraced Mrs. Girling, and said she would leave father and mother and go with her wherever she went, which promise she fulfilled, and was the faithful attendant to the last. The next convert was a rough, uncouth and illiterate farm-labourer, of pugilistic tendencies. These two were inseparable from Mrs. Girling, and were present with her in all her ministrations, and continued faithful and loyal up to the time of her death.

These meetings were kept up for eighteen months, at which time she numbered 50 followers and members.

Mrs. Girling, like Ann Lee before her, made it a *sine qua non* that all who were received into membership must receive "the Spirit, or the baptism of the New Life," and practise strict celibacy; for without living a celibate life there was no hope of their acceptance by the Saviour when he came again, which was expected to be sudden as the lightning's flash. The effect of this teaching was to loosen all worldly ties, and incite a determination to live a pure and holy life. The old ties of husband, wife and lover became lost in the fraternal bond, and all became brothers and sisters, even Mrs. Girling herself at this time having no other title or position than "sister."

The introduction of this celibate doctrine and life was a fruitful source of trouble and heart-burning dissensions in many households, in instances where one partner received and the other rejected it, and as a consequence their

meetings were frequently broken up, and the members subjected to hooting, pelting, and other barbarous treatment. Many of the males were discharged from their situations, and others suffered loss in a variety of ways. On several occasions Mrs. Girling's life was in danger, but she managed to escape. At one time a heavy bet was made by a man, that he would shoot her that night, but when the time came his heart failed, and soon after he became a convert, which told on the members, as they regarded her as a special object of God's protecting power; and seeing this, their devotion to her was intensified, and they adhered to her all the more for what she had to undergo in her divinely-appointed work. The usual course at these meetings was to select some Bible readings, then converse on them, and engage in prayer, during which the spiritual manifestations—dancing, speaking with tongues, and gifts—supervened, which proved a source of attraction to many from neighbouring towns. The sufferings of those who had been discharged from work and homes were borne with fortitude, and they were taught to accept them with all joy, as an indication of God's favour, and as a practical demonstration, on their part, that they "sought first the kingdom of God," counting all their losses and sufferings as not to be compared to the glory which was to follow at the Lord's appearing.

With such material to work on, no wonder that Mrs. Girling had such hold upon this literal, simple-minded people, and that she and her two constant attendants were supplied with homes and means wherever they went. Having pretty well exhausted her recruiting ground in the vicinity of her early home, an opportune "revelation" came that her sphere of operation was to be enlarged, and in consequence she went to London with her two inseparable attendants.

Her first attempt in London was with a party, or sect, of Bible Christians, to whom she had an introduction from one of their Suffolk friends. She commenced her usual Bible classes, maintaining her position as only the "Messenger" of the immediately expected advent. She was favourably received by the Bible Christians, who allowed her the use of their pulpit at a Sunday evening service. During her

discourse she declared that *she should not see death*. This was too much for the Church, and consequently she had to withdraw from their communion; nevertheless she drew away a few of their members, and in their houses continued her Bible class meetings, at which occasional "spiritual manifestations" took place. The news of these strange occurrences attracted many of the neighbours, and these, together with the sensational report that "there was a woman from Suffolk, preaching and announcing the immediate Coming of the Lord, and publicly declaring that she should not die." attracted crowds that could not gain admission; and as her followers increased in numbers, being about 100 at this time, a railway arch in Walworth Road was rented, and fitted up as a meeting place, and sometimes, inside and outside, there would be a muster of from 2,000 to 3,000 people attending her ministrations.

During the excitement caused by the dancings, prophesyings, and trance utterances, many were affected, and received the promised gift, which was considered as probationary, as the fulness of the gift would not be conferred until a strict celibate life was practised; and in consequence of this the same dissensions occurred in the homes as had occurred in Suffolk. To the credit of these devotees be it said, that their lives were more than ordinarily exemplary and pure, and no accusation could stand against them, except on the ground of their—to the outer world—eccentric habits of life.

A new turn was given to her movement about this time. Mrs. Girling was residing with some friends in Chelsea, whose daughter received the "gift of the Spirit," and she commenced to speak under inspiration, prophesying that great and terrible judgments from God would ensue to any who should turn back, or refuse to accept the "message as delivered by Mrs. Girling." This, together with the belief in the redemption of the body, or, in plain terms, the expected exemption from death, was a talisman that exerted great power amongst her simple-hearted and confiding followers, who considered themselves, by possession of the Spirit, as having passed from death unto life, and in consequence they lived without sin; and as death was the penalty of sin, therefore they would not die as sinners did. Such

was the doctrine taught, and we may cease to wonder that it was accepted in its literal sense by so many whose emotional nature was not balanced by rationality or intelligence. It is this vast quarry of human ignorance that is worked to the advantage of ecclesiastical institutions, with all their material and vested interests, and in which all the "crafts" thrive and prosper.

In 1871, Mrs. Girling visited her old friends in Suffolk, as more had been added and waited her arrival to establish them in the faith, and recognise them as members of the kingdom. It was in this year that Sister Girling—as she had hitherto been known—yielded to her—vanity, shall I say? However, from whatever prompting cause, she now discarded the humble titles of Sister and Messenger, and assumed that of Mother! and henceforward the disciples became to her—children! Her converts increased, and with them opposition and persecutions, but in spite of all she held her own; and there were added almost daily those who accepted her and her teachings, laying the flattering unction to their souls that they would form the "New Kingdom of Christ at His Coming"; and that they would be taken to heaven without the experience of physical death. Her only son, William, now joined his mother, and stayed with her till her death. It is well to notice here, that the mass of the people who joined her were exceedingly poor and illiterate; but now a few of the middle-class came in, and amongst them a lady of means and well-to-do, and their adhesion was the means of changing the aspect of things; for the railway arch was given up, and a commodious hall taken, and fitted up at a considerable cost. The meetings were conducted in a more decorous fashion, and among the attractions was a most excellent choir.

Indirectly, this lady was instrumental in developing a change which resulted in the establishment of a community. Being of a charitable disposition, she having heard of the deep poverty of some of the Suffolk members, thought it would be a good thing to provide a Home for them, and for this purpose a large house in Battersea was taken. She had visited the Shaker settlements in America, and as the manifestations were of a similar character to theirs, she thought the new community would be better to follow on the same

lines, hence the term "Shakers" was applied to, and accepted by, the new community (although the Shakers proper in America never allowed any affiliation, and later on characterised Mrs. Girling as an impostor, in round terms). Some of the poor Suffolk people came to the Home, and the inmates, numbering twelve, were called "the first twelve."

While residing here, a revelation was given to Mrs. Girling, that she was "to gather the family together, and that the children of the Spirit were to assemble for the immediate appearing of the Lord." It was also revealed to her that "God had given to her New Forest Lodge, at Hordle, Hants, for this purpose"; although she declared that she did not know of such a place, but "she knew that God would direct her." The place was discovered, and New Forest Lodge, with some 30 acres of land, was purchased by the aforesaid lady for £2,400, leaving a mortgage of £1,000 upon it. This was in January, 1873. The house was small, but furnished in good style, and taken possession of by the twelve, in addition to several who were "called" from London, who broke up their own homes, and bade adieu to their old friends and associates, never anticipating a return. Among others who were thus "called," was a well-to-do Suffolk farmer, who sold his superfluous stock, and took with him his wife and six children as well as some valuable horses, implements, and £100 in cash. Others also in good circumstances joined the family at New Forest Lodge; so that altogether there were the elements of a flourishing and prosperous community.

Had Mrs. Girling possessed any administrative ability, she might have developed this foundation into dimensions that would vie with the American settlements, but she lacked this, and would not permit any interference with her absolute rule of affairs, or allow any practical person to organise the Family on sound economic principles. This was the main cause of the disasters which soon overtook the concern, and of the sufferings which ensued. Her old imperious temper showed itself in another form, which proved her ruin and that of her cause, in a material sense. As "The Mother," she thought only of the increase of her "Family," and this was coupled with the conception of Queenship; for she would tolerate no rival in her government, or to share her prerogative. The

house proved too small for the numbers who flocked into the new kingdom, and additional buildings were erected for their accommodation, the brothers residing apart from the sisters, as the law and practice of celibacy was strictly enforced. She had not counted the cost of this influx, composed of very poor people, many of them with large families, being satisfied in her own mind that "God would amply provide for all their wants." One of the new members had been connected with a co-operative store, and one was started at, or near, the Home, and gave the promise of fair results; but it was stopped by Mrs. Girling, who declared "that buying and selling formed no part in the kingdom of God." Had she possessed a little less of the spirit, and a little more knowledge of the law of economics, that actuates human relationship in its provision for the actual necessities of physical life, she might have used the material in hand for consolidating on sound principles a prosperous industrial community; for among the inmates of the home were some good mechanics and agriculturists, as well as handycraftsmen and women. She missed her opportunity, which never returned again.

Clothing, as well as food, had to be supplied to the ever-increasing number who flocked to the Home, which was to them, if not heaven, at least the "gate of heaven." There being no outlet for so much surplus labour, and but little means of industrial labour on the small estate, an increasing difficulty was encountered in providing for the daily wants, and what capital had been at first accumulated was soon exhausted, which by ordinary foresight might have been avoided. In 1874 there were 164 members living on a 32 acreage estate, which was totally inadequate to support more than a tithe of them in anything like comfort; and any one, other than a fanatical zealot might have seen the consequences that too soon followed, and which resulted in a series of privations and sufferings, portrayed in the following thrilling narrative, before giving which I shall treat of the Constitution—such as it was—of the Family, in this its first and best Home.

The establishment having developed into a community, it was a matter of necessity to introduce some order of procedure. The principle adopted was communistic, based on

the Family system, and the "brothers" and "sisters" were considered, and actually treated, as children. Mrs. Girling was the Mother-Head, who was supposed "to rule in love," but actually she ruled with a rod of iron, and would tolerate no interference or independence on the part of her "children." As irregularity was caused by some who, being dissatisfied after a short sojourn, had returned to their homes, she drew up a code of rules, which every one who entered must sign and implicitly obey, upon pain of dismissal from the Home.

Rule 1st.—That all who were admitted must have received the spirit of the same faith, and give evidence of it in purity and holiness of life.

2nd.—That upon entering, each must give up all that they possessed in money, goods, clothing, or valuables to Mrs. Girling, who was to dispose of the same for the benefit of the whole family, according as she was directed by God so to do.

3rd.—That no parent shall in any way interfere with the management or education of their children, nor yet correct them or otherwise, as all government is to be left to Mrs. Girling; and the teachers are to submit to her decrees in all things.

4th.—That no brother or sister be allowed to go out of the grounds, on their own pleasure, without permission.

5th.—That no private correspondence be kept up with the friends or kindred of the Family, and that all correspondence to and fro be submitted to Mrs. Girling, whose decision is final.

6th.—That all gifts, of whatever kind, made to the members, must be given up to Mrs. Girling, so that they might be for the benefit of all without partiality.

7th.—That all letters received by the members be handed to Mrs. Girling for perusal, and all monies or remittances be taken by her for the mutual benefit.

8th.—That no undue intimacy, of whatever kind, must exist between brother and sister, and their daily life is to be such as becomes the Children of God.

I have it on the best authority that no case of violation of the last rule was known in the Family, and during the whole

time that it held together the conduct of one and all was most exemplary in this respect.

It is easy to trace the dominating spirit that is clearly manifested in these Rules, and the cheerful submission of the members to this arbitrary discipline shows *their* simplicity of mind, and their trust and confidence in the "Mother," who was considered by them to be infallible. At the expense of loss of individuality they were, in every sense, treated as children, whose wills, and even intelligence and reason, were to be in rigorous and abject (although they saw it not) obedience to the behests of their "Mother."

In 1874, the Family numbered 164; every place was full, and the barn had to be utilised for sleeping accommodation. The greater part of those who joined were very poor, and could furnish no means to assist the affair in a material sense. The effects of Mrs. Girling's policy were only too soon to be visible. Such a large number having to be clothed and fed exhausted the treasury; as there was nothing coming in to replenish it, Mrs. Girling having declared that the will and mind of God was, "that they should be perfectly free; that they were not to work for hire." This arose from the willingness of the neighbouring farmers to give employment to the inmates of the Home.

This foolish policy declared itself in the natural results. Nothing coming in, and all going out, soon exhausted the capital that had been invested by those who had something to pour into the treasury. The interest upon the remaining mortgage, amounting to £32, could not be met, and a distraint was made. The cattle were seized, and sold for £170, and after taking the amount of interest due and costs, a surplus of over £100 was left, which was brought to Mrs. Girling, who ordered the gates to be closed, and forbade any one from taking the money, saying it was an unlawful proceeding. The co-operative stores were closed for want of cash, which, according to the Mother's statement, was contrary to the mind of God, as "whatever was brought in, made, or produced belonged to God, and must not be bartered away from the children"; and that "all who bought and sold would receive the mark of the Beast, either in their hands or foreheads."

This arbitrary proceeding met with some resentment, as it was on them the consequences fell, in privation and want; and many left the Family, some openly and others surreptitiously. Even with this relief, food became scarce, and the dietary fare was reduced to vegetables, chiefly potatoes, and towards the close of the year the dole was so scanty that the adults were without food or warm drinks for three days at a time. And now commenced a series of troubles and trials that can only awaken feelings of sympathy for the too confiding "children" who passed through the ordeal.

The mortgage on the estate was foreclosed, and on the 17th of December, 1874, the Family were ejected from New Forest Lodge, with all the furniture and effects, having been in possession for two years. The effects lay on the roadside for some quarter of a mile, and to add to their misery, the cold was intense, which brought on a heavy fall of snow, and the members sheltered themselves as best they could under the trees and hedge-rows. Their pitiable condition attracted some good-hearted farmers, who offered to accommodate as many as they could, but as selection was invidious, it was ruled for all to share alike, excepting the children, who were sheltered by one of the outside members. A temporary shelter, near the gates, was improvised from the furniture, for the use of the Mother, round whom gathered the members, who sang their choicest hymns and anthems, some of whom were told off to patrol and watch the furniture, so that none of the Family could take anything away. But in spite of this, the next day some of the recalcitrant members came from London, and took away what they had previously brought, to the disgust and contempt of the faithful.

Towards the evening of the second day, a farmer offered them the temporary use of a barn, about a mile away, and Mrs. Girling accepting it, thither the Family removed, and there they were located for sixteen days. Several farmers kindly offered to store some of the furniture, which was then valued about one thousand pounds, and the bulky part was taken and stowed away in the barns by the brothers. There being no sleeping accommodation, the major part were not out of their clothing the whole time.

A gentleman in the neighbourhood, who had taken a compas-

sionate interest, offered them the use of a large barn with a small house, and here they were located till February 22nd, 1875. The gentleman owner made a proposition that the men should all go out to work as day labourers, and each one to do what he could, and thus make it a working community; and that on condition that they helped themselves, he would do his best to help them; and as to their meetings, he did not object to their meetings on Sundays, but the dances were to be given up. After a general consultation these terms were promptly but respectfully declined, and in consequence they were not allowed to remain any longer.

The Family had rented a field opposite the Home, and as the rent was not due for half a year they removed what they could, and rigged up the barn in the field, devoting the central part to the Mother for her use and comfort, the rest for dormitories, and meals, &c. But, even with the aid of a temporary hut, it was insufficient, and permission was given to the most delicate and weakly to go to the outside brethren's houses to sleep. Among these was the lady who had found the purchase money for the estate, then located in a small cottage; and while there, her nephew with two medical men came, and notwithstanding her protestations that she was happy and content, they carried her off to a lunatic asylum, where she was incarcerated for seven years.

At this time the Family numbered 86, and as the field was only  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres, it was impossible to supply them even with vegetables, and their privations, notwithstanding the gifts of visitors who flocked from all parts, were very acute and severe, yet, nevertheless, many came to join the Family, while as many left it. To try to get funds Mrs. Girling, with twelve of her attendants, chiefly females, went on a mission, but it resulted in failure, and they returned home in debt. In their extremity a friend arose, and through his means a large wooden building was erected, and the huts provided with flooring, so that for the first time since their ejection from the Home, they enjoyed a not uncomfortable shelter.

The doctrine of immortality, so strenuously upheld by Mrs. Girling as the reward of the faithful, now received its first shake, by the death of one of the Family, a young woman of about 23 years, whose death was accelerated, if not induced,

by cold, hunger, and exposure. This was a stumbling-block to some, but the assurance from the Mother that it was caused by unbelief, and proved the necessity of a more pure and holy life, had the effect with the majority, of allaying their rising doubts.

As the winter came on, their privations increased. A debt had been contracted for bread at a neighbouring shop, for £30; and as it could not be paid, after vainly trying to get payment, the baker distrained for the amount.

The non-dying theory again received a rude shock by the deaths of five or six members, who died chiefly from consumption, aggravated if not brought on by exposure, privation, and want; and as several of these were considered the most pious and exemplary of the Family, it gave rise to very serious doubts, for—thought the remaining ones—if the best amongst us are taken away by death, who will be saved from death? It required all the Mother's boldness and assurance to allay the rising disaffection. She declared, "that they would not have died, had they lived as she lived, for she certainly would not die."

About this time another and important change took place in Mrs. Girling's teachings. She had hitherto been content with her position as "Messenger" to proclaim the near advent of Jesus Christ in his own personal form, but she now declared that "the New Dispensation had commenced in her own person"; that as the embodiment of the "Spirit of Love, she must be accepted not only by her Family, but by all the world: that as the Bible was merely the dead letter, she was greater than it."

After possessing this field, with its appurtenances, as their Home for nearly four years, they were, once more, ejected for non-payment of rent, on August 20th, 1878, when the furniture, bedding, &c., were again deposited on the roadsides, and the members made temporary shelters as best they could. After being in this condition for four weeks, during which time the services were conducted as usual, attracting people from far and wide to see the "ejected Shakers," the authorities interfered, and gave notice that unless they removed within a given time they would be indicted for obstruction and a nuisance. This peremptory mandate could

not be trifled with, and they took and rented another field at Tiptoe, Hordle, on which tents were erected, and order and cleanliness prevailed again, making the best of the miserable and wretched tent-gear they possessed. As there appeared to be no prospect of obtaining better quarters, all the surplus furniture and effects that had been stowed away were sold by auction, and the proceeds found them in clothing and subsistence—such as it was—for a little while longer, especially as they had received many presents from strangers who had compassion on their pitiable condition.

But many of the members could not endure the privations, and left the Home, and this diminution of numbers was, to that extent, a relief on the funds, which were not sufficient to provide necessary clothing and food. In spite of this, the members managed to erect a shanty of fair dimensions used as a reception room for visitors, and for their services of music, dancing and song, they having kept the piano and harmonium, which only Mrs. Girling's son was allowed to play.

The aforementioned change in the Mother's position was only the prelude to still greater, and at this time she assumed the title of "Bride of Christ." The manifestations had hitherto been regarded as the operation of the Holy Spirit, but she now declared "that she was one with Christ, therefore she was greater than the Holy Ghost, who was the third of the Trinity; and henceforth her followers must regard her as their God-Mother, the Bride of Christ": and in consequence the spirit manifestations were discouraged. This step was a great stumbling-block to many, for they had shared in these, but now the Mother was taking all the honour and glory to herself. To assuage this discontent, Mrs. Girling adorned herself with a wreath of everlasting flowers, and a white robe, with blue ribbon, and lace shawl—a relic of other days. Thus attired, she perambulated the room with naked feet, pointing to them, on which were imprinted the "nail-prints" of the crucified Jesus, declaring at the same time: "I am both Mother and Saviour!"

These marks, or stigmata, on her feet and hands, have been questioned, but the evidence of their actuality has been attested over and over again by sceptical outsiders, as well as

the members of the Family. I have it on good authority that the marks on the feet were permanent, while those on the hands were variable, sometimes faint, and at others distinct and plain.

This episode had its effect, and in answer to the queries as to the non-exercise of power on her part to mitigate their sufferings and supply their wants, she said, "that could not be until she was accepted, as Jesus had come a second time in a woman's form." This caused some to leave, and three more deaths occurring, she said, "their deaths were due to their unbelief, and their rejection of her, as the Saviour in his Second Advent."

She now issued a small pamphlet, which is the only work printed by her. It is entitled: "The Close of the Dispensation. The Last Message to the Church and the World"; and signed: "Jesus First and Last (Mary Ann Girling)."

To give an idea of its contents, the following excerpts are taken:—"His (Jesus's) body remained in heaven from the time he ascended until about twenty-six years ago, when the fulness of his time had come for the same Jesus, the God-Father and the God-Mother (which had remained both in one until then) to give out of himself the mother part of that which was once a body of flesh and blood, and had been crucified. Now, when the God love came as a bride, she must have a terrestrial body of flesh and blood in woman's form, so that she might be complete as God-Mother in shape, as the male part was complete as God-Father.

"It pleased the Lord God, called Jesus, the Father Supreme, to take the body of the woman, called by name Mary Ann Girling, to be the terrestrial habitation for the celestial God-Mother love-life, to dwell in, and to make the terrestrial body of the woman the perfect form of his Bride.

"As soon as she is accepted, bodily as his Bride, then he himself will appear in his glory, and glorify her, or make her terrestrial body celestial, like his own.

"I am the second appearing and re-incarnation of Jesus, the Christ of God, the Bride, the Lamb's wife, the God-Mother and Saviour, and there will not be another.

"Now, may I ask the whole human family, as my children, if they have any pleasure in my suffering for them any

longer? This may reach the whole world, and as each one lays it before God in prayer, He will bear witness to it by giving each the divine evidence of its truth—even he, the God-Father and God-Mother, known by name as Jesus First and Last (Mary Ann Girling)."

This extraordinary document is the outcome of mental disease, and forms one of a number from others who have been, and are, afflicted by the same malady.

In December, 1881, I visited the Family, on a Sunday evening, where the meeting was held in the miserable shanty with a leaky canvas top. There were about some sixty people present, chiefly females, very thinly clad, and deep poverty was manifest everywhere, for a more wretched and miserable place of abode and surroundings can hardly be imagined. While engaged in the singing, Mrs. Girling came in, and three young females (one of them very pale and emaciated) rose up, in a semi-trance state, and commenced dancing, ever and anon bowing down to Mrs. Girling, and in a singing tone addressed her in these words: "Holy, holy, holy, art thou, O King, for thou, who wast dead, art alive again; and we worship thee as the Lord our God."

After the dancing and worship had ceased, I began to question Mrs. Girling, and held a converse for a good half hour. I asked if she was aware that several others were making the same claim, to which she replied: "It was prophesied that false Christs should come, and all others are false, for besides me there is none other." The conversation then turned upon celibacy, upon which her statements were incoherent, for I had taken her upon unexpected ground, and I saw that she was quite non-plussed. In looking round I only saw a few faces that were raised above the general expression of stolid, care-worn, and unintellectual countenances.

In 1884, Mrs. Girling went on a tour to London and Suffolk, to give her children the last call, and gather them to her fold. She met with many who had deserted her, but her presence aroused the old feelings of devotion and affection, and many were melted to tears. She was away a month, and returned to her Family at Tiptoe, where but for the kindness of neighbours, many must have died from

starvation ; as it was, the " children " had frequently to go without food for two days at a time, and but for the forbearance of shopkeepers, to whom she was deeply in debt, another ejection would have followed. The marvel is that Mrs. Girling did not seem to see wrong in contracting debts without fair prospect of discharging the same.

From the testimony of some, well able to judge from a long experience in the Home, and close contact with the Mother, it appears that in proportion as she assumed spiritual dignity, her power decreased, and there was no longer the " power " that followed her earlier ministrations. In short, her change in doctrine and teachings had paralysed her too-confiding followers, and left them dazed and doubtful as to the issue ; but it was a difficult matter for some of her oldest and faithful disciples to get away, as their means had been exhausted long, long ago ; hence, perforce, they must make the best of the circumstances in which they were placed ; but some, seeing how things were, went away destitute and penniless, and but most scantily clothed.

In the early part of 1885, Mrs. Girling, who had boasted she had not known ache or pain, and who certainly must have had an iron frame and constitution, was taken ill with sore throat, accompanied by great bodily prostration, which confined her to bed for three months. She rallied, but weakness ensuing, she had to take to her bed again. It was evident to some around her that there was something much more serious, which soon declared itself. Her malady was an internal cancer, and although at times she rallied and could take walks, yet her strength was gone, and she was a changed woman ; and from the early part of 1886 she was a confirmed invalid, and could take little or no part in the practical management of the household. This made it worse for the members, who had starvation before them. A consultation was held, when it was resolved that as many as could leave before the winter came on should do so, and in consequence many went away, and the numbers remaining dwindled down to a very few.

The agony and excruciating pains she endured were terrible, and while those surrounding and nursing her could see but one termination, she still persisted in declaring that

she should not die, and what she suffered was for the unbelief of her children. She had hitherto prescribed for herself, and it was only by the persistent pleading of her son and daughter that a medical man was called in, who pronounced it a hopeless case of internal cancer. She lingered on in tormenting pain, but ever strong in her assurance that she should not die; and on some of her attendants telling her she could not get better, she burst into tears and said: "Why do you not comfort me in my sufferings? I shall not die."

About this time the Family was reduced to some twenty-one members. Under the strong conviction that she would recover, she made no provision, nor left any directions as to the future of her work, and up to the last moment of consciousness, she remained unchanged; but the *finale* came, and after twelve hours of unconsciousness, she passed away peacefully on the early morning of September 18, 1886; and was buried in Hordle Churchyard, beside those who had preceded her. Her coffin bore the simple inscription:—

MARY ANN GIRLING,

*Who sleeps in Jesus,*

September 18th, 1886. Aged 58 years.

Thus closed the work and mission of this remarkable woman, which is not likely to be continued. Illiterate as she was, she undoubtedly possessed strong psychical power, which she could, and did, exercise upon a certain class of minds, who, in the main, loved her, not wisely but too well; and who accepted all that came from her as infallible, and as divinely inspired. Had she been supported by men of similar calibre to those who followed Ann Lee, and Johanna Southcott, there can be no doubt but that her work would have continued like the Shakers, and Christian Israelites. Her policy and action were such, that she would permit no rule but her own, and with her death the fabric she had reared fell to pieces, the ruins of which testify to the folly of those who are weak-minded enough to permit themselves to be deluded, by such as have deluded their own selves with the notion that they are different from others, and are specially chosen by God to proclaim an impossible event in its literal application.

## JAMES WHITE.

## FOUNDER OF THE NEW AND LATTER HOUSE OF ISRAEL.

The history of the subject of this notice, and the resultants therefrom, form one of the most extraordinary episodes that have occurred in this century; showing what can be accomplished by a religious adventurer, trading upon the weakness of human nature, as manifested by a too ready credulity, that takes assumption in place of evidence, and mystery—with faith in unverifiable legends—instead of demonstrable truth. The base on which this specific work rests is the same as all its predecessors, *viz.*, a literal rendering of the prophetic statements contained in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures; and adds one more instance of failure in the attempt to unravel and bring down to time and person, in actual and literal form, what is alleged to be the Voice of God, through the writings of inspired men, dating back nearly two thousand years ago. How far my judgment is correct in applying the term “religious adventurer” to the hero of this narrative, the reader must decide after pondering over this “strange story,” not relating to the world of fiction, but to the record of actual facts in our own day and time.

To enable the reader to possess the key to this specific history and movement, I must refer back to the prior chapter treating of Johanna Southcott and her work. The Christian Israelite Church assumed a concrete form under her ministrations, and those of her successors, who are regarded by the members of that body as Divine Messengers, in regular order and sequence; similar to the Papistical claim of Apostolic order and descent, from Saint Peter down to Leo XIII., the present reigning Pontiff.

John Wroe,\* counted the “greatest of the Prophets” by the C. I. Church, having held the office for some 44 years, was the *fifth* Messenger, or Prophet, and after his death, in

---

\* In a former chapter, an error appears as to Wroe's age at the time of his death, which occurred in Australia, Feb. 4th, 1863; he was in his 81st year. He died rather suddenly, soon after landing at Melbourne.

1863, the question arose as to succession, and two rival claimants appeared on the scene, the latest of whom was James White, the founder of the "New and Latter House of Israel," which title he assumed in consequence of his rejection by the authorities of the Church in Ashton-under-Lyne. Great as was Prophet Wroe, his greatness was marred by his covetous and selfish action at the close of his long career. By virtue of his office and position, he was regarded as Trustee for the Church at large, and to him was paid large sums of money, which were the tithings from the members, paid through the various society officers, into the general treasury, of which John Wroe was custodian. (It is currently reported that the accumulated Church funds represent a very large amount in value.) Scarcely a year before his death, he made a will—signed, Aug. 1st, 1862—bequeathing his Mansion House, and properties in houses and lands, to members of his own family,—making no reference whatever to the Church, but treated these as his own, which undoubtedly, had been purchased by moneys entrusted to him for the advancement and extension of the Church, and given with this object by the members. How the four Trustees, who were appointed under this will, could lend themselves to this proceeding is very strange. The probability is, that the whole of the Church, and perchance other property, may have to be thrown into the Court of Chancery.

On several occasions, during the course of his ministrations, Wroe said: "My mission will continue for 40 years, and at the expiry of that time Shiloh will come" This 40 years commenced with his "call" in 1819, and, consequently, the year 1859 ought to have marked the promised advent of Shiloh; but Shiloh did *not* come, according to the prophet's declaration. But, a claimant arose in the person of a Daniel Milton—an American shipwright—who came over to England, in 1860, and went to Melbourne House, near Wakefield, claiming possession of the Mansion, as God's appointed Messenger, and thus as the rightful successor of John Wroe in the Presidential office of the Christian Israelite Church. But Wroe was in possession, and he, along with the authorities of the Church, rejected his claims, and would have none of him. After this rejection Milton returned to America, but

hearing of the death of Wroe, he came again to England, and took possession of the Mansion as Wroe's successor; but he was forcibly ejected in March, 1864, by the Trustees under Wroe's will. He claims to be the veritable Shiloh in person, and thus comes to take possession of that which is his own; but as he has neither followers nor means, he is not likely to gain his coveted prize. He is still residing near the Mansion, and earns his living as a working joiner, annoying the trustees and the caretakers, from time to time, by defacing the walls with his placards reiterating his claim, to be not only the *sixth* Messenger in the succession of Presidents and Prophets, but—Shiloh in person.

The office of Prophet and Messenger in the C. I. Church is still vacant, as the Trustees, in whom Church authority appears to be vested, strange to say, refuse to believe in Wroe's death, and are keeping the Mansion, &c., awaiting and expecting his return; and this in spite of the testimony of one Eddows, who was with Wroe at the time of his death, and assisted at the funeral. This Eddows brought home the clothing of Wroe, which was construed into some underhand and inexplicable design on the part of Eddows—himself occupying a high position in the Church,—who was treated with indignity, by many who refuse to believe that the greatest of their prophets is dead. Such were the circumstances, at the time of the appearance of the leading figure in this historical notice, who tried to get hold of the reins of power, but being foiled in his attempt, he started a rival church on his own account, and entitled his "The New and Latter House of Israel," in contradistinction to—what he called—the "First and Older House." How he accomplished it will be shown in what follows.

In the year 1875, there was a small society of Christian Israelites at Chatham, among whom was a family of the name of Rogers, of whom more anon, and a Joseph Head, who had married a sister of these Rogers, who were all in a humble sphere of life, but, in their way, respectable, upright people. At one of their usual meetings, a private soldier, of the 16th foot regiment, then in garrison at Chatham, who gave his name as James White, presented himself (a perfect stranger to all present). He continued his visits, and took part in the

services, which attracted the notice of the members, for he showed by his manners, language and bearing—that to them bore the air of superiority—that he was something above them; and expressing his devotion and attachment to the doctrines and teachings of the Church, he was formally admitted to membership, October 13th, 1875.

It was during one of these meetings that Joseph Head put the question, in substance as here given:—"Art thou he for whom we have been waiting, and whom we are expecting to come?" This was White's opportunity and he seized it. His answer was: "I am he whose advent ye have waited for." This declaration was sufficient for the assembled Church, and forthwith he was duly received as the divinely-accredited sixth Messenger of the True Church, and successor to the Prophet Wroe. Such is the account of the commencement of this strange episode. From those who were closely connected with the man I am assured that he was gentlemanly in his manners and bearing, was a fluent speaker, and had a fascination about him that won the hearts of these simple-minded working people, and others with whom he came in contact.

From a letter in his own hand-writing, which I have perused, dating some years later, he says: "At the time of my first visit I was a perfect stranger to every word given through the mouth of John Wroe, and who up to the moment of my calling knew absolutely *nothing* about Israelites, never having heard that there was such a society in the world as the house of Israel. This, then, is the man whom God chose to call at the close of the second watch in 1875."

This ignorance was soon dissipated by perusal and study of the Church's writings, which were freely placed at his disposal. He was a diligent student, a good writer, possessed of much general information, and withal thoroughly well up in the Scriptures, which he seemed, according to my informant, to have at his finger-ends; and was a man of uncommon ability to utilise the favourable circumstances, which he moulded for his own purposes, whatever were the motives by which he was actuated.

To secure his position as the accredited and recognised Head of the Church, it was necessary to obtain the adhesion

of the four Trustees, the leading authorities at Ashton-under-Lyne. For this purpose a "divine message," endorsed by the Chatham Society, was sent to them; but instead of accepting White's credentials and "Message," they treated it with contempt, and committed it to the flames. This rejection was adroitly used by White as a confirmation of the validity of his "divine Call," seeing that such rejection was in exact accordance with certain "prophecies" given through their own prophet, John Wroe.

In 1876, White had to go to India with his regiment, where he stayed till the latter part of 1880, and returned to England in December of that year. During the interval of his joining the Church and going to India, he had the opportunity of making himself acquainted with John Wroe's writings, and others bearing on the doctrinal teachings, &c., of the Church; and then it was that he conceived the idea of writing out "The Flying Roll," which was to embody the prophetic parts of Wroe's utterances and published works; and which was given out as "God's Last Message to Mankind," with the usual threatenings of terrible woes that were to follow, if the Message was disregarded, and the Messenger set at naught.

While in India, White wrote out what he called "Extracts from The Flying Roll," in the form of sermons, which were sent home, and after being read out to the Church, were published in book form. Part I. (or Vol. I.) was published in January, 1879; Part II., in September, 1879; Part III., in January, 1881, with long preface by White himself. The fourth Part was to be The Flying Roll in its integrity, but it was never written, as he found other matters to occupy his time and attention. It is said that it was The Flying Roll itself that was sent to the authorities at Ashton-under-Lyne, who treated it so ignominiously. The contents of these volumes are a more or less ingenious attempt to literalise biblical prophecies, and especially the Apocalypse, and to prove that these are the latter or "last days," just prior to the consummation of all things; that but a short time remains for a scoffing and unbelieving world to put its house in order. But it was taken for granted that the mass of humanity would be found in the same, or similar, state of

carelessness and iniquity, as was mankind when the Deluge came and destroyed all flesh except a man named Noah and his family, and a pair of each kind of animals, birds, &c. So, in the present case, a refuge was to be found for the inevitable 144,000, who were elected to be saved from the coming universal catastrophe; and these were to be chosen, and called and gathered together at Chatham, under the leadership of the divinely chosen *sixth* Messenger, James White; or, as he was afterwards known, James Jershom Jezreel, which name he now took. The great attraction—or, perhaps, bait, I may say—was that all the chosen ones were to receive the gift of “immortality of the body,” *i.e.*, that they should not die; same as Mrs. Girling before him had proclaimed. This “great prize of their high calling,” taken in conjunction with a desire to escape the great impending calamity, was undoubtedly the chief cause that operated on the minds of those who joined his sect, and accepted his Messengership and leadership.

Before his departure to India, he was intimate with two young girls, Clarissa Rogers, and a younger sister, daughters of Edward Rogers, a sawyer in Chatham Dock Yard. Clarissa, at that time was 15 years of age. He spoke to them of the prominent position they were to occupy in the New House of Israel, and said that the younger of the two was to be the “Woman destined to bring in the redemption of the Body, and was the one in whom the Apocalyptic prophecy would find its fulfilment”: but unfortunately for his prescience, she died of small-pox, in London, before his return from India. White landed in England, December 1, 1881, and before the close of the year he was married to Clarissa Rogers, by the Registrar at Chatham. There were no children by the marriage, and from good authority the conjugal life—while it lasted—was not very felicitous.

He was married in the name of James White, but whether it was a real or assumed name is unknown, and even his wife said it was as likely to be fictitious as real. As to his antecedents prior to his sudden appearance at the C. I. Church in Chatham, absolutely nothing is known. He at times would regale his confiding followers with some of his “adventures” in foreign countries; but as to his

parentage, he said he never knew them, as he was brought up in a convent in Belgium, and arriving at man's estate he commenced to travel, and it was while acting as a clerk in a banking house in one of the Western States of America—name of the place was never given—he said that the Divine Call came to him; that he was not to confer with flesh and blood, but give all up and go immediately, without scrip and purse, and follow the divine instructions. Arrived at the seaport, he worked his passage to England, landed at Gravesend, and being destitute and penniless he joined the Army, from which time his history is only too well known. It is known that while in the Army his conduct was not such as became a good soldier, and his discharge described him as of more than questionable character.

The reason for this reticence as to his antecedents is known. The mystery attending his birth, childhood, and youth up to manhood, formed an essential part of the drama. So long as this was unknown he could impose on the credulity of his followers and dupes. "Without father, and without mother, and without descent," he could pose as "Shiloh," the long-expected and anxiously waited-for Ruler, who was to come and rule all nations. He knew that his credulous disciples had this impression in their minds, and by this method of secrecy and mystery he fostered it, while they were waiting for the full and clear announcement of the promised advent. His extraordinary conduct, which to ordinary people would have dispelled the charm and illusion, only served to increase the mystery as to his personality, and they construed it into a trial of their faith; for as he frequently said, "He carried dust in his pockets, which he used for the purpose of blinding such as were not the elect, and for testing the faith of those who had given up all to follow him." If they could see the promised Deliverer under the garb of the Stranger, and disguised as an apparent evil-doer, the purpose was accomplished for which he came as "a deceiver and yet true." This I have seen in his own handwriting, which is excellent in style.

Shortly after his marriage, White determined on extending the borders of the Church, and for this purpose he, with his wife—who had been in America as an evangelist of the New

House, and had gained some converts—went on a mission tour through some of the United States. On the first visit of Miss Rogers she had met with a substantial farmer in Michigan, named Noah Drew, who was commanded by White to sell his farm and stock, and cast in his lot with them, which he did, and thus the money was found for the expenses. This then well-to-do-farmer is now penniless, and subsisting along with his wife on the scanty dole of food—such as it is—in one of the small houses on the Church estate at Chatham. After being fleeced of all his possessions, which had been freely poured into the Treasury, he has to confront coldness, destitution, and all but starvation. This mission tour seems to have been fairly successful, notwithstanding occasional rough treatment which they encountered in some of the towns where they delivered “the message.” After his return to England, White made a few tours through the Midland counties, Lancashire, and Scotland, and gained some followers, many of whom had been attracted by the “Extracts from The Flying Roll.” He now set himself to frame a Constitution for the Church, which was assuming considerable proportions. Of course, as the divinely-appointed “sixth Messenger,” he was the Head and President, to whose behests, as the mouth-piece of the “Immortal Spirit,” all must bow and be in subjection. The all-important tithing system was adopted and enforced, and by this means the coffers were kept replenished by these cheerfully-given offerings. Various officers were appointed, whose duties were defined; and among these were some young virgins who were called “Purifiers,” but as to their real position and office, the members never could understand; but they were at the beck and call of the Messenger, to whom they would discourse music on harps for hours together, while he was supposed to be entranced, after which a “thus saith the Lord” might or might not follow. These young girls had to pass through a process of initiation, the details of which are too disgusting and revolting for me to mention.

A College of Instruction was instituted for the young people, to be trained under the auspices of the Messenger, who, like Mrs. Girling before him, appointed whom he chose as teachers, who were to be in subjection to him in all

things, and even the parents were not permitted to interfere in any way with the curriculum or discipline. During all this, he kept up correspondence with all parts of the world, whither "The Flying Roll" had gone and made an impression; and he was quite equal to it, for he had amazing energy and will-power.

About this period, White showed to his best, and had his conduct been equal to his supposed high position, he had the opportunity of concreting a church system that would have absorbed what was left of the "Old House," and extended his "New House" world-wide. He began to indulge his appetite for strong drink, which soon became his master, and under this influence he acted at times so wildly, that he was indeed a—maniac! It rapidly developed into an overpowering passion, which brought on delirium tremens, and hastened, if it was not the actual cause of, his premature death.

He instituted the "confessional" in a new form. Instead of it being the secret alone of the priest and penitent, as in the Romish Church, he caused all the members to write out their secret thoughts and acts, which were to be read out to the assembled Church on certain specified occasions. This vile and loathsome abomination was submitted to by the members, young and old, without a murmur or protest, so great was the spell by which they were infatuated; and out of pity and sympathy for them I draw a veil over this hideous and revolting practice.

The demon-side of his make-up was manifested in his overbearing and cruel treatment of his wife, whom he bound with chains, and immured in a veritable "black hole," which seems to have been constructed for the purpose; it is known that on one occasion she was confined in it for 36 hours, besides others of shorter duration. The boys, and even girls, were subjected to confinement in this den for the most trivial offences, and besides this, floggings of a brutal character were administered to the young.

The money came freely, and was poured into the Treasury, of which White was custodian, and like the "fifth Messenger" before him, he rendered no accounts, as he was supposed to be too immaculate to apply to his personal use what was intended for the extension of the "true" Church of God upon earth.

But "Nature will out," and the self-claimed divinely-appointed Messenger—if not something more—yielded to the promptings of personal expenditure and extravagance, which mark the actions of so many less-exalted mortals.

A house was taken in the neighbourhood, called "The Woodlands," a pretty spot with gardens, offices, &c., which was well, if not sumptuously, furnished, and this became his residence. He was a great admirer of dogs and horse-flesh, and he indulged his taste by purchasing a pair of high-class horses, which cost over £100, harness, carriage, &c., to match, and a pair of bloodhounds. He had these brutes chained at the entrance to his residence, to prevent intruders going into the grounds. On one occasion, his "servant" was passing on horseback, when he was attacked by one of these hounds (which had got loose); he only saved himself by leaping over a hedge, when the hound followed, and attacked the horse, mangling it most terribly. None of the officers of the Church, some of whom had helped to find the wherewithal, were permitted to enter his domicile without his orders, and they had to content themselves with such fare as he chose to permit.

The humble private soldier, of but a year or two past, was now often seen driving through the streets with a liveried coachman, in his splendid equipage, and at times accompanied by his—bottle! of which he would take copious draughts. He now began to have "drinking bouts," during which his credulous and confiding disciples thought he was going through trance experiences. Strange to say, when prostrated by these orgies, at times, he would suddenly rise from his bed, dress, come down, and appear none the worse for these outbreaks. All this and much more was put down to his warning of "dust throwing," which was supposed to disguise the true and genuine "Shiloh" within.

The somewhat rapid extension of his work, due more to the energetic action of the members in pushing the "Extracts from The Flying Roll," rather than from his own missionary exertions, afforded ground and means for ultimating schemes of an ambitious and extraordinary kind, suggested by his sanguine and impetuous temperament. Visionary and wild as they appeared to ordinary people, he nevertheless put

them into shape, and but for other circumstances and other causes, enumerated further on, his ideas and schemes would have assumed actual proportions, that throw the achievements of Mormonism and Shakerism into the shade.

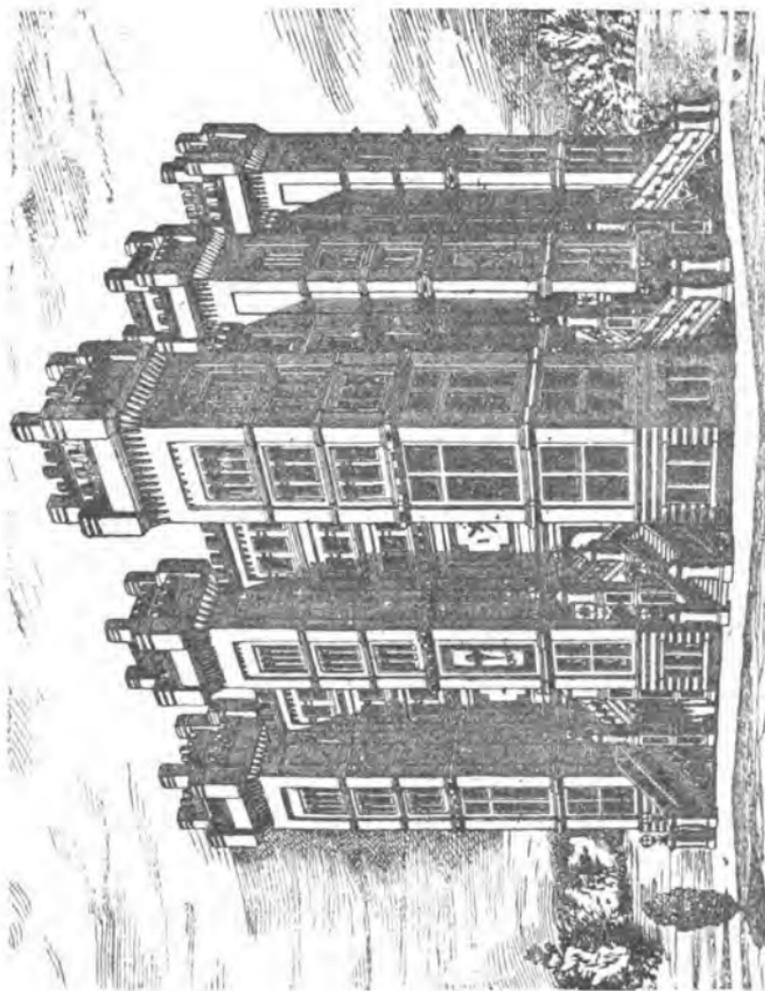
His intention was to found an Israelite Colony at Chatham, and to establish general stores, printing offices, boot and shoe factories, smithies, machine-making factories, and a shipyard, intended in time to rival the Dock Yard itself. In the centre was to be erected a magnificent temple, which was to be the "joy of the whole earth." The carrying out of these vast ideas involved an enormous expenditure, the ways and means for which were found by summoning the well-to-do to come to the New Jerusalem at Chatham, as soon as they received "a direct call from Heaven," and which when issued was a peremptory order to realize their effects, and "bring as much money as they could."

Like the originals, from whom the modern "true Israelites" are supposed to be descended, he commenced on his own account, as they did on theirs, by *borrowing* and *spoiling* his dupes. He understood the art of "borrowing" to perfection, but never practised the art of paying back, at least to those who had poured their all into the "Treasury of the Lord," and neither he nor his successor had any feelings of compassion, nor yet made the slightest effort to make restitution; as many of their too-confiding victims have proved to their cost. Cruel and heartless, they thought nothing of "cutting off" such as still preserved an iota of independent thought, and sending them adrift, penniless, to make their way in the world as best they could.

White was so far successful that he established a forge and several stores, some of which still exist though in a small way. His own, or "God's Chosen Israelites," were the main prop on which he depended for the sinews of war, but the larger undertaking was to be the fulfilment of the biblical prophecy: "Thou shalt suck the milk of the Gentiles," which, disrobed of its metaphor, means the parasitical fastening on Christian and other nationalities, and drawing sustenance therefrom for their own life and system, while utterly unsympathetic with the national life and system in

which they had obtained a location. It was the same with this pseudo-Israelism, or Jezreelite community.

Here is a specimen of the "divine call" to certain members, copied from a letter written to America, by White, in July, 1884, only eight months before his death:—"I am instructed by that one Immortal Spirit, that it is the will of Shiloh Emmanuel for ——— and ——— to come over to England as soon as they can settle up their affairs. Let no one come to head-quarters until they are sent for,—until they get a *direct call from Heaven*: and they must do all in their power to bring over with them as much money as they can, to enable us to put up the steam printing-press, and the large building 144 ft. square. Once this up, the work will spread all over the world like lightning. They must bring all they can with them in the way of cash, but no more luggage than is necessary. I want to commence the building, and put up the steam press by the 1st of September. The whole *must be completed* by the 1st of January, 1885, ready for the GRAND JUBILEE. *I must have ten thousand pounds* to accomplish all the Lord requires me to do. *He has given me the order* to commence the building by that time, and I am sure He will find the means. It must be ready to receive members for the Jubilee in January, 1885. Hence it is necessary now to send forth the great Proclamation through the length and breadth of the land. Israel must now be gathered. This GRAND JUBILEE in January (1885) must be held in our Temple—opened in the HOLY OF HOLIES; all must be ready by that time. The Roll will now be printed as John Wroe saw it: a large engine, working night and day, throwing off great pack sheets. I am securing all the best grass land, close to the river Thames, ready for shipping. I hope to have a large steamer ready by January next for Captain M—— to navigate, for the purpose of buying all provisions and necessary articles to feed thousands shortly to be assembled here *en masse*. The building alone will cost £50,000. It will be 144 ft. square. Its *subterraneous passage* will extend for miles. The holy of holies will form the topmast graft into the building, lit up by a revolving electric light. The lower story will contain twelve presses, worked by a steam engine. The second or middle story will



ISRAEL'S SANCTUARY.



be the great hall, seating many thousands. The upper story will be divided into dining, sleeping, and sitting rooms, kitchen, &c., for an habitation for the members who work on the grounds. The whole House of Israel is now shortly to be brought in; work will be found for all; and we shall all be one fold, one cup, one body, whose head is Christ."

The above extracts show the scheme floating in the brain of a visionary, but a small part of which was realized. How a building of the magnitude suggested in the above letter, could possibly be commenced in September and completed by the following January, *i.e.*, in *three months* only, shows his wildness and impracticability. He had not then consulted his architect, who when White laid before him the proposed dimensions of 144 ft. square, dissuaded him on the ground of its enormous cost; and it was reduced down to its present dimensions of some 100 ft. square, ground plan.

A somewhat powerful contingent from America, in means and numbers having arrived, the designs were prepared, and operations commenced by making the necessary excavations, &c. The land for this sumptuous building cost £2,700; the adjoining buildings another £2,000; the contract for digging the foundations £1,375; and the first contract for erecting the printing room, and going up some 17 ft. was £5,000; and altogether, according to my informant, who knows much about it, a sum near to £30,000 has been expended on it. Except for the purpose it was intended for, the building—which is of *concrete*—is all but useless, and from the manner of its construction, it would not pay for the cost of its demolition. White's idea was that it could be erected for some £5,000, which was dispelled after a consultation with the architects. The plans were made and the excavation commenced, but it was left to his wife, and successor, to carry out the work, as he was summoned to join the great majority, ere the building proper was commenced.

In the early part of 1884, White began to feel the pressure of the heavy liabilities he had incurred, but kept up the heart of himself and followers by reiterating that "the Lord would provide the means, as it was His own work, and carried out by His commands." As an organizer he was second to none of the founders of ecclesiastical systems, and,

like them, authority must be acknowledged as resident in the divinely-appointed messenger, *i.e.*, himself. He was not only Prophet and Messenger, supposed to be the mouth-piece of God, or, as he termed it, the "Immortal Spirit," but he was a Ruler, whose mandates were to be implicitly obeyed under pain of being "cut off." Any disobedience, or assertion of independence by officers or members, was visited by the sentence of expulsion; and with such as were under the ban, no member was allowed to have any dealing or communication. In one case, of a prominent official who had incurred his displeasure by declining to accede to the prophet's orders in reference to his handing over certain documents to a named Trustee, another official ventured to suggest a more merciful treatment, which brought down a scathing rebuke on *his* head, and he was plainly told that as such sentence was by "direct command of the Lord," he could not do otherwise, and a hint was conveyed that the intermeddler might find himself subject to the same sentence: for, said White, "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." He ruled with a rod of iron, and as "heresy" is the greatest crime in Christian and other Churches, so in this, any deviation from the prophet's behests, communications, or orders was instantly scented, and unless repented of and acknowledged, was visited by being cut off for a time, or for ever, according to the magnitude of the offence. This was a repetition of the Papal tactics, *i.e.*, the issuing of the "Bull of Excommunication," which at one time was such a terrible engine in the hands of the priesthood. In many cases it was submitted to patiently, until the expiry of the sentence, but not in all, and he had to cover his own defeat by a resort to the extreme sentence of "cutting off for ever," so as to preserve his status with the Church. A notable instance of this occurred to a society recently formed in Acton, London, composed of well-to-do and wealthy people. In the early part of 1882, he visited some friends there, by whom he was well received and entertained; and the meetings being supported by influential people, he was gathering a goodly number of converts, whose financial support was, and would be, of great value. So enamoured was he with his then prospects, and position and surroundings,

that—quoting from a letter dated therefrom—“From a communication which I received a month ago, it was clearly revealed to me that *Acton* is to be the head-quarters of the House of Israel in England; and just prior to my arrival here, I had a vision of the steam printing-press being put up here; and also a vision of the Temple situated between Hyde Park and Acton: and since I have *been here the whole matter has been revealed to me by the Lord*; and having received instructions it is my desire to carry them out. As Acton, then, will be the great centre to which all Israel will concentrate within the next few years, I thought it good to apprise you of *this fact*.” This “commandment from the Lord” was never carried out, and the “vision” proved a phantasmagoria. For some reason or other these wealthy and influential Actonians drew back and ceased their contributions; and in April, 1884, *i.e.*, about two years after giving the above flattering account of the Church in Acton, he wrote: “The Acton Body still remains cut off, Root and Branch; we have not one single member now in Acton.” I am not aware that he ever gave any explanation as to this untoward ending of his Acton projects, nor yet as to the dereliction of the “Lord’s command and instructions” on the part of his prophet and messenger; but he acted on the principle: “The less said the better.”

Up to 1884, he resided in a small house, Edina Villa, with an annual rental of £25: but on February 8, 1884 he removed to the Woodlands, with a rental of £90 per annum, and took a neighbouring house and grounds—Beacon Court—on a three years’ lease, at £50 per annum, on which grounds he commenced to erect buildings for the accommodation of a larger number of children and young people. He found himself crippled for want of means, and the burden being almost heavier than he could bear, he wrote out a circular to be sent to all the societies in all parts of the world, and which may be regarded as a Manifesto. In this document, after dealing with the then spiritual status of the House of Israel, he proceeds to deal with the question of finance, and earnestly calls upon “all Israel to put their shoulder to the wheel, and to come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” The state of the Treasury was in anything but a

plethoric condition, which caused him to be ground down to the dust, but yet he had an unflinching trust in the Lord, that He would find the means to complete the work he had undertaken by divine command. He enumerated instances of several who had made large sacrifices, and cast their all into the Treasury, and all these would "verily have their reward." He exhorted all who had means to emulate these noble sacrificers, and give instructions to the "Pillars," or heads of societies, to cease their remissness to the "command of the Lord," that "the *tithings* and *free-will offerings* must be collected after every Sunday morning service." At this date, May 7, 1884, he states that his revenue from the school children was £600 a year, and from the tithings and free-will offerings about £500 a year; total, £1,100; and his liabilities incurred by rents and taxes, £216; rates, £90; current expenses in keeping up the establishments, £1,008; summing up to a total of £1,400 per annum; showing a deficit of some £300 per annum. A fair increase resulted from this action on his part, which enabled him to keep the establishments going, and to commence operations in regard to the Temple building.

At this time he reports himself as in "the best of health," and this notwithstanding his free living in meat, drink, and other personal extravagances; and although it was known that he freely indulged in ardent liquors, yet he managed to keep in bounds, and attend to his usual avocations. But a change came over the scene towards the close of the year, and he began to show symptoms of failing health, brought on by his excessive use of stimulants. About the commencement of 1885, he took to his room and bed; but no thought of dissolution ever entered the minds of his followers, as he—the divine messenger—surely was to be immortal, and not taste of death. During his confinement in a sick-room, he committed some strange eccentricities, under the influence of liquor, which his confiding followers put down to "extraordinary visitations," so completely were they under his art of "dust throwing in their eyes." From this attack he never rallied, but died, a victim to intemperance, March 2, 1885, at the supposed age of forty-eight years, and was buried in Gillingham Churchyard.

The death of White, *alias* J. J. Jezreel, closed the first act of this drama ; and although the Prophet's decease belied the "hope of immortality," which caused some perturbation in the camp, yet it does not appear to have caused any serious amount of desertion from the ranks, and this was in consequence of his reiterated words that it was "the *woman* who was to bring redemption to Israel"; and by signs, symbols, and acts he gave it out, and allowed it to be so understood, that he considered his wife as the Woman alluded to in Revelation. That this was the general opinion of the Church was shown by its action immediately following the demise of Jezreel. The work had assumed such proportions, that it was a question of its continuance or break-up.

James Cumming, the head Trustee, was on a preaching tour in America, but was summoned to return, and take part in the deliberations on the question of successorship. He claimed to be the rightful successor of White, but for the reasons above-named, the heads of the Church, among whom the Roger family was largely represented, decided against him, and in favour of Mrs. Jezreel, who was duly installed as the Head and Ruler of the true Israelite Church, in place of her defunct husband. Cumming acknowledged her appointment with a bad grace, and again went to America with the hope of obtaining the suffrages of the societies there, and spoke much to her disparagement, which, of course, could not be tolerated by the "Woman," and she "cut him off," so that henceforth he had neither part nor lot in the matter. He returned to his home in Scotland, a broken-down old man ; his mind gave way, and in this sad condition he still remains.

Just prior to the Prophet's death, a few able and energetic men—some of them with means, and practical knowledge of work of various kinds—were summoned to come to headquarters in Chatham, some with and others without their families. These men were her confidential advisers in all secular matters, and they set to work with a will to carry out the building and other designs, and took the overcharge of the works in various departments. One of these was a practical engineer, in a fair way of business in Scotland ; but at the command of the "Immortal Spirit," speaking through

the Messenger, he broke up his business, realized it, and brought more than £1,000, which he freely poured into the Treasury. He, along with others, incurred the displeasure of Queen Esther, the name that she was recognised by, in her new and exalted position, and the usual penalty of "disobedience" and free-thought was enforced, and they were "cut off." He had to face the world again, with the loss of all his hard-earned means; and not one penny did the Woman Queen return to him, out of the large sum which he had given as "a free-will offering." In this respect, the "True Israelite Church" was only like all other churches, who take all but give nothing; or at least but the merest modicum in comparison to the stipends of their clergy and ministers.

When James Cumming returned from America, he was accompanied by a Miss Easton, who had been a very wealthy lady, and moved in the "best society" in New York. It was in her home and *salons* that Miss Clarissa Rogers—as she was then—was most hospitably entertained and fêted for some months. It was this lady who found the money for the printing and publishing of the "Extracts from The Flying Roll." She had been a zealous propagator of the New House of Israel in America, to which cause she lavishly contributed in money and labours. When she came over to Chatham, expecting to find and realize a heaven upon earth, she suffered a bitter disappointment; and as her means were all expended, she experienced a cold reception, which led to a rupture between her and her former *protégé*, but now no less than the "Woman," whose advent had been announced in the Scriptures, and even "before the foundation of the world"! When she first knew her, she was Miss Rogers, a missionary of the true faith, and as such received with open arms and heart; now she met her as Queen Esther! As my informant told me, when she saw the "goings on" of her divine majesty, her eyes were opened, and she became disgusted with the whole affair. She refused to have anything more to do with it, and by dint of some canvassing, sufficient money was raised to pay her passage back to what had been her home of comfort and even splendour in former years. But the shock was too much for her; her mind reeled and

gave way, and she is now the inmate of a Public Asylum in America. This is one of the saddest of the sad cases connected with this Jezreelite affair, and it by no means is an isolated or exceptional one.

In contradistinction to her husband, the antecedents of Mrs. White, *alias* Jezreel, and the Queen Esther of later days, are well known. She was born, Sept. 14, 1860, at Chatham, of poor but honest parentage; her father, Edward Rogers, then being, and till lately, a sawyer in the Dock Yard; but she was adopted and brought up by Joseph Head, who married a sister of Edward Rogers, as he had no children of his own. Her education seems to have been of limited extent, and she may be taken as a fair specimen of girls belonging to the well-conducted working class. Her acquaintance with White, when 15 years of age, gave a turn to her life's prospects, and seeing the position White was occupying in the church of her father and relatives, she applied herself to the study of the writings, &c., in which she must have been proficient; for before her marriage, when about 20 years of age, she went on a mission tour to America, where she seems to have met with tolerable success in gaining converts; but beyond this, she possessed no literary or other attainments; and it was only the fortuitous circumstance of being the wife of the "Messenger," who, while guilty of ill-treatment of her at times, yet ever pointed to her by look, gesture, and words as "The Woman," that caused her to be raised to the exalted position that she attained as the Successor of the Prophet and *sixth* Messenger. She was married to White in December, 1881, but bore him no children. After her elevation to the Pontificate, in 1885, she commenced to carry out the incompleated designs of her late husband, and in her reign the "Sanctuary" was built, as it now stands; but on account of the exhaustion of funds, and the stoppage of contributions caused by numerous desertions, the work came to a stand-still (the windows, doors, roof, and internal fittings have yet to be added) a few months before her death. At present, the interior of the great building is a mass of scaffolding, interspersed with iron pillars and girders, "sufficient to build a large iron bridge."

After finding herself in power, her first act was to proclaim

a month's fast, which was not very amiably received, as it caused an amount of murmuring from some of the members who were already very near that point by the scanty dole out of food; and especially as they had very strong ideas that she herself was living on the fat of the land and in luxurious style. White's death occurring so unexpectedly, no provision was made in regard to the Church property; and it was a question as to its real ownership. It is evident that she thought it belonged to the Church—or, perhaps, it might be to avoid the legacy duty—for she had declared on oath that all the effects of her late husband were only worth £45. She afterwards tried to follow the example of Prophet Wroe, in treating the Church buildings as her own, but it was too late; and after consulting with a solicitor, a Trust Deed was drawn up, and twelve Trustees were appointed, whose signatures were affixed to the document. It is presumed that these Trustees hold it for, and on behalf of, the Church, and so long as no liabilities are incurred beyond the income, the Deed may stand if the "Church" can manage to continue; but as some of these twelve Trustees are among the "cut off," it may become a question of law as to *their* liability, and this may prove a serious matter to them some day.

When Mrs. Jezreel was a poor girl, and it was the day of small things with her, she acted as other right-conducted young people do under similar circumstances; but, when firmly planted on the seat of power, she became touchy, jealous, and overbearing, and where her husband had scourged with whips, she used scorpions. She was proud and arrogant, and, *aping the manners of gentility*, she had nothing to support them but a vulgar show of ostentation in *dress and equipage*, and luxurious living at the expense of the faithful. Any deviation from her commands, or divergence from her dogmatic rule and policy, was summarily punished by the peremptory application of the "cut off." This action was applied, in 1887, to a rather large and influential number of members; and this arrogant proceeding was perhaps the most *serious blow* that the community has suffered from. From that date and occurrence, a decline set in which has continued to the present time. She, however,

never seems to have resuscitated the barbarities of the notorious "black hole"; she was cruel and heartless enough to the poor ejected sufferers, but this was the form that her selfishness and church polity took, under her regime. She, like Mrs. Girling before her, never anticipated dying, and when she was taken ill, she would have no medical aid, and it was only at the very last moment—in fact, she was then dead—that a doctor was called in, who, not having attended her, declined to give a certificate. A *post-mortem* examination was made, when it was discovered that her death was due to natural causes, *viz.*, from inflammation of the bowels. Her somewhat sudden demise was a shock, if anything, more powerful than that caused by the death of her husband; but many of the members were so reduced that perforce they had to remain and make the best of it, though others who had much to gain and nothing to lose are endeavouring to continue the work.

Thus ended the second act in this drama, and Queen Esther's remains were conveyed in a coffin which bore the simple inscription: "Esther Jezreel, died June 30th, 1888, aged 28 years," and were deposited in the same grave with her husband, in Gillingham Cemetery.

Under Mrs. White's auspices, a printing press was erected in one of the lower rooms of the "Sanctuary," covered over in a temporary fashion, and from this press a monthly paper is thrown off (started in January, 1887), which is the official organ of the body, and of which she was the reputed editress, but her own contributions to the "Messenger of Wisdom and Israel's Guide," as it is entitled, were exceedingly scanty.

One of the chief contributors to the Treasury, and whose money went towards the building of the Sanctuary, was a Mrs. Cave, of London, a widow, who inherited a large income in her own right. Her husband was a clerk, and her father, Mr. Nodes, was a well-known undertaker in a large way of business in Tottenham Court Road. She applied for admission to the Church in White's time, and was presumably accepted, and became a fervent believer in the immortality doctrine,—so strangely belied by the death of the two founders themselves, after short reigns of four and

three years each,—and active propagandist. She was “called” to join headquarters by Mrs. Jezreel, in 1886, and sent all her furniture to the Woodlands, where she was permitted to reside with Queen Esther, to whom she was companion. Whether her faith in the doctrines and stability of the Church and work is as robust as it was then is unknown to outsiders, but she still remains there, and so long as her means last, and she continues in the same mind, she will not be “cut off.”

After the death of the “Queen,” the question of succession again came up, and as it was still an article of faith in the remnant of the Church, that it must be a woman who is to bring in the “redemption of Israel,” there was some difficulty in finding a suitable candidate, as there were no females—perhaps excepting Mrs. Cave—who appeared to possess any qualifications for such a post: but the Roger family element was the most powerful, and the result of consultation among the remaining heads of the Church was the appointment and acceptance of Ann, the wife of John Rogers, and aunt to Mrs. Jezreel, as the recognised head of the “True Church of God upon Earth.” This sudden lift from the position of a shoemaker’s wife to the “throne of the kingdom” was too much for her, and she soon began to assume airs and style that were unbecoming and obnoxious, which resulted in her deposition, and a split in the camp. Edward Rogers, the father of Clarissa, or Mrs. Jezreel, now contested the palm for supremacy, and according to my latest information, he is now vested with, or has usurped the reins of power, and is ensconced at the Woodlands, and in possession there, having retired from his sawyer position at the Dock Yard. This coveted prize has been the ambition of his life, and he could scarcely keep from its avowal. He was known to have said to White, that “No power on earth should or could keep him from becoming Head of the Church.” This so exasperated Jezreel that he at once “cut him off,” and was not permitted to take any part in the Church offices or services in White’s life-time; and it was only after his death that Mrs. Jezreel removed the ban of silence, &c., and then not with the best of grace.

According to good authority and computation, the mem-

bership, which in White's time was something like fourteen hundred, has now dwindled down to 240, reckoning all parts. Some even put it down at a lower figure. The present "Heads" are endeavouring, by the employment of canvassers to push the sale of the "Extracts from The Flying Roll," and the monthly "Messenger of Wisdom," to obtain converts; and, if the reports in the "Messenger" are to be trusted, they are meeting with some success, if the sale of these is any criterion to judge by. They adopt the same policy as the Mormons, who make their emissaries live out of the commission on their sales; some of them find it hard work with but poor pay. The "reports" from the canvassers and propagandists are made to have as roseate a hue as possible, to keep up the flagging interests of the outlying members, and especially in the interests of such as have a material interest in the continuance of the affair.

The theology of this sect—the New and Latter House of Israel—is simply an attempt to make out a plausible case that the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures contain prophecies which relate to the formation of a church—then in the future—that is to embody all these, and thus become the True Church of God upon earth, to the exclusion of all others; and that *their* now struggling and diminishing little sect is the Church of the Last Dispensation, founded by the *sixth* Messenger of God—James White. The key-note in this system is the redemption of the body—*i.e.*, its immortality. They allow that other Christians may attain to the redemption of the soul, but to the House of Israel alone pertains the glorious privilege of attaining to the immortality of the body. A curious bit appears in the last issue of their organ, the "Messenger of Wisdom":—"Now, seeing that by the taking of *blood*, man received a soul (and had it not been for the evil he would never have received one), by the shedding of the *blood* of Jesus, which atoned for the first transgression, He became the Saviour of ALL SOULS."

It would appear that the "Church" has still much to learn in regard to physiology, with which its theology is at direct variance. Here we leave this self-sufficient and arrogant little sect—or what remains of it—with the hope that its members will attain the virtue of modesty, and abate their

pretensions to be the custodians of divine truths, which God has given to them but denied to others; and thereby entering the arena of conflict with those who have made, and are now making, precisely the same blatant, if not blasphemous, pretensions. Were it not that so many honest, well-meaning people have to suffer so terribly in being cajoled by these various Messianic Pretenders, it could only excite a smile on the countenance of the on-looker, who witnesses this "Comedy of Errors" on the so-called religious stage of thought and action.

---

## THE MOTHER.

### WOMAN CLOTHED WITH THE SUN.

Heretofore the various heroes of the preceding narratives—excepting the first of the series, Emanuel Swedenborg—may be designated as the *free-lances* of the great Spiritualistic movement of modern times. They were, one and all, the outcomes of various phases of the religious world of thought and action, engendered and protected by the tolerance and liberty of Protestantism, which allows, or is supposed to allow, the free use of individual rights of conscience, in the living out, and propagation of, any system which does not interfere with the liberty and actions of others. So, in consequence of this policy—a fair field and no favour—any new system must rise or fall, develop or collapse, by virtue of its own inherent vitality. The spread of education, and the circulation of literature, embracing all subjects that the human mind is capable of dealing with, amongst the leading Protestant Nations of the World, have had the effect of arousing the individual to the exercise of his or her own rational faculty, and, in consequence, the mass of educated and enlightened human beings—for the

first time in the history of the race—will do their own thinking for themselves; and thus will be brought about a gradual but sure emancipation from the thralldom of past systems, which, in many instances, cannot satisfy the enquiring mind that asks—*What is truth?* This is explanatory of the present state of human mentality, in the countries specified, and hence we have conditions at hand that can be, and are being utilised by such a variety of actors in the religious section of the drama of human life, in that portion with which we are connected.

The present historical notice is characterised by a “new departure” from the ordinary routine of the past, and the curtain lifts on a scene in the spirito-melo-dramatic exhibition, in which the actors are all *masked*. Not a single name of person or place is given in the whole of the scene (so far as it has gone) which I am about to notice. It is inspired by the Spirit of Rome, and bears the unmistakable marks that characterise the action of the Society of Jesus. The work \* from which this chapter is chiefly culled abounds with blandishments, is written with great literary ability, and withal such an insidious appeal to the emotional side of our religious nature, that many will be ensnared before they are aware of the results. Mystery—so fascinating to a certain class of mind—is the predominant feature, and in the shallow attempt to solve the mystery, the writer—or Recorder, as the author styles himself—leaves the reader in a ten-fold greater one at its close. Were it not that I am assured by one of the leading actors, that “no attempt has been made to form a sect, society, or community” by the followers or disciples of the “Sun-clothed Woman,” I should lift up a warning voice to put all lovers of the right of private and personal judgment on their guard, to resist this attempt to impose the yoke of ecclesiastical Rome on Protestant religionists.

The above reason, allied to other considerations which have weight, withhold me from *unmasking* the actors, but, my readers may rest assured that from the “Sun-clothed Woman” upward or downward, the figures are *real persons*.

---

\* The Mother. The Woman Clothed with the Sun. In two vols. Published by Field and Tuer, London, 1885, 1887.

Of this fact I have quite satisfied myself. As to alleged "incidents" abounding in the narrative, I decline to stand sponsor for them, which, I presume, are inserted in support of the Messianic claims of the heroine of the story, but regarding these "miracles," every attempt I have made to gather evidence as to their authenticity or veracity, has resulted in failure.

Anonymous authorship of a work professing to deal with such "stupendous truths" contained in the work in question is—to my view, and I opine to all lovers of pure truth—more than questionable. If they are truths—seeing that they affect, or are alleged to affect human destiny—they are the property of all, and the public has the right to demand verification and evidence. Withholding this, it will, and rightly so, be characterised as trifling, if not worse, with what all properly-constituted minds regard as sacred and inviolable.

But I have a two-fold object in view in embodying this narrative in my History of this Modern Messianic Drama. First, from a pure and simple historic standpoint; and, secondly, I give it especially for the use and benefit of the student of Psychology. As an example, illustrative of the action of the Law of Influx—from spiritual sources—upon the human organism, it is invaluable. Instead of the "gradual progression and development of the stupendous Divine Plan," as the author gives it, the psychologist will trace the action from the internal to the external, until it operates on the personality, and then notably in the Woman and in the Recorder, its effects are seen in the inflation, self-complacency, egotistical assumption of position, and monopoly of custody of Divine Truth, together with an arrogance and self-assurance, that may charitably be set down to a diseased intellect, or mental aberration. After giving the details, my readers must and will draw their own conclusions. It must be remembered that all through, the Recorder is the narrator, and occupies the position of the "first person singular." He tells us that "a double object runs through the books: the progressive manifestation of the Divine; and the spiritual advancement of the Human." The real object, by an adroit manipulation of Hebrew and Christian scriptural texts—such as suit his purpose—prophetical, mystical, and otherwise, is to prove that these are the times

in which all Messianic writings find their fulfilment in the person of a certain and actual woman now living in our midst ; and that this is a "stupendous" revelation, now made known by his instrumentality. How he became the revelator will be seen by what follows. He began, so he tells us, as an investigator of Spiritualistic phenomena, and through this means he was prepared for a higher, purer, truer manifestation of spiritual truth, which he found when he came in contact with "The Mother"; and like many of his class, after his pretended advancement to higher altitudes, he finds that what is not directly the outcome of "evil spirits," is at best but from human spirits of low degree ; and ever and anon indulges in a fling at Spiritualistic practices ; and according to Papistical axiom, "Whatever is contrary to the infallible teachings of the Church is of, and from, the Devil !"

The curtain lifts on the appearance of three ladies, who came to the house of the Recorder, (who let lodgings at a sea-coast town in the South of England), and took his apartments, in June, 1877 A.D. He was very poor in worldly means then, and I do not suppose even now is in a much better position pecuniarily. The central figure of the three was habited in the garb of a Roman Catholic nun, and the other two were her companions and attendants. On entering the room where she was located he says, "I found myself suddenly in a spiritual (not Spiritualistic) Presence, to which nothing in my past experience afforded any resemblance ; for the *inner*, which shone through the outer, struck me as wonderful!—a wonder of spiritual light and holiness ; conjoined with a royal dignity that was innate, unconscious, and wholly spiritual." Such was the debüt of the person who afterwards culminates as no less than the "Woman Clothed with the Sun," seen prophetically in the Apocalypse.

The key to this episode, as delineated by the author of the work under notice, is to be found in a Roman Catholic book entitled "The Lily of Israel, or, the Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God"; written by a French priest, the Abbe Gerbet. It is a pure romance, founded on the Gospel narratives, and pretends to give all the domestic details of the family of Jesus, which are *not* recorded in the Gospels. The idioms and style of both works are the same, but the

present work is written with the avowed object to prove that there is now living an actual woman, who is the re-incarnation of Jesus Christ; who was conceived and born without an earthly father; and who being Divine—precisely same as Jesus—is nothing more or less than—a Goddess! Had the work, anonymous as it is, been published as a religious novel or romance, the heroine of the story would *not* have come as one among the numerous Messianic rivals and competitors; but the work means business, and is undoubtedly intended to outstrip all rivals by a mendacious assumption that this “Sun-clothed Woman” is the true and genuine article, and that all others are impostors and false Christs; following the Papistical braggart, that the Roman Catholic Church is the only true Church of God upon earth, and that its Cardinal-elected Head is the Viceroy of God. Many good-hearted, simple-minded people will be liable to be carried away, unless warned of its true character and origin. The “mystery”—a masterpiece of authorship, which enshrouds the real actors, is a glamour that will be fascinating to many, and is of a piece with the policy of Papal, and some other, ecclesiastical systems. Once under its influence, the votaries become slaves of priestcraft, arrogant, overbearing, and opponents of all mental, if not physical, liberty and spiritual freedom. To lift the veils and pierce the visors, in part, of these masqueraders, is my object in placing the “Sun-clothed Woman” among the list of modern Woman Messiahs, &c.

The history of the “Lady”—no less than the Queen of Heaven—is given as follows:—She entered earth-life through Israel’s line of Royal descent (the author is a believer in the craze that the Anglo-Saxon race are the literal descendants of the ten lost Tribes), was born at a wayside inn, on December 25th, —, unexpected, unprovided for, unwelcome, and cradled in a basket of straw, narrowly escaping death from neglect. The husband disclaimed the paternity; and, in after years, the mother on her death-bed stated that the child had no earthly father, and was conceived out of the normal course of nature. So far, it is the story of the “Blessed Virgin” over again; but unlike the first virgin’s offspring, this offspring grew up surrounded by luxury, and in the midst

of the highest society. She appears to have been married at the age of eighteen years, to a man who proved false and unfaithful. "She was betrayed by a trusted friend into the hands of designing and ruthless people, who, it appears, discerned great and unusual powers in the lady, and being themselves 'occultists'! they wished to get possession of a certain ring which she was accustomed to wear, and which they supposed contained talismanic powers, assuring success in all undertakings to its fortunate possessor. By these fiend-inspired people, she was held close prisoner (presumably in an asylum) and systematically poisoned, for *eight whole years*; who, during intervals of partial recovery, managed to obtain her signature, conveying certain properties which were coming into her possession, to themselves, and along with this the coveted ring. Having secured these, they resolved to murder her by means of poisoned food, which she was warned by the invisible powers not to touch. She gave some of it to her dog, and shortly after beheld the faithful animal die at her feet." If there is any truth in these statements, we see good grounds for the "Recorder" maintaining a discreet silence as to names, dates, persons, &c., for such a serious charge against others might land him in trouble. It is quite within the range of possibility that such a thing might transpire in some foreign countries, but it is hardly credible that it could be so in this country. The element of uncertainty runs all through, and the reader of the work must accept the author's statement as to its veracity or otherwise, and none, I suspect, but the "very few elect and chosen ones" will ever be permitted to solve the mystery.

Having endured without a complaint or murmur for eight long years, she was told by the "Holy Ones" to hold herself in readiness, and means for her escape would be miraculously provided. "At a certain hour on a certain day, with a body swollen by poisons to three times its natural size, she who had been incapable of rising from her sick-bed, suddenly rose and dressed with whatever was at hand, opened the room door, and passed by those who watched her, who, taken by surprise, lost the use of their minds and could not act; she then entered an open carriage, provided by the unseen influence of the Holy Ones, and escaped."

After recovering from their surprise, her tormentors followed her, but "in vain, for her pursuers were smitten by the angels with blindness. Her chief enemy passed her in a cab, as she sat in the open carriage—close, yet saw her not." And here we are referred to Genesis, xix., 11; and 2 Kings, vi., 18, to show that what is said to have been done in ancient days, is by the same power now being enacted in favour of the divine, modern immaculately-conceived Woman. Foiled in their attempt to recapture her, her "enemies" tried to bring the Lunacy Laws into operation, and medical men were sent to examine and trap her, but in each case she was too much for them, and they retired from the attempt, being non-plussed by her brilliant conversation, &c., and her complete and final deliverance was effected.

"After the fiendish injuries to which she had been so long subjected, there remained to her but the wreck of a human body, the wreck of a human life. This she determined to consecrate to the service of God and man, in whatsoever sphere might be open to her."

"As one part of this duty, she considered the Christian virtues enumerated by the Church (R.C.), and set herself the object of obtaining to the perfection of each separate virtue as set forth in the life of the saint most distinguished for its exercise." As the Romish Church has a pretty large calendar of these "saints," she would not experience much difficulty in making her choice for subjects in various departments. This is the changing point in her history, and forthwith begins the ways and means by which she gradually ascended to the altitude where she, and her few followers, recognised herself as the "Wisdom made flesh," in the same manner as Jesus was the "Word made flesh," the twain being the masculine and feminine forms of "God made manifest in flesh, in the human mortal form, but both from the same divine origin." What follows in the work is written for the purpose of substantiating this outrageous, pretentious, and, I may add, blasphemous claim.

Such is so much of the history of this marvellous "Lady" as the Recorder—who claims to speak with authority, and not as other men—has chosen to give. Teeming with the miraculous and mysterious, my readers will judge the whole

affair to be nothing else than a religious novel or romance; and so did I at first, but I must remind them of my opening statement, that the actors in this melo-dramatic exhibition are real, but *masked* figures, but, for reasons specified, I do not, for the present at least, attempt the unmasking process. The history commences with 1877, and closes with 1879—precisely at which date circumstances occurred to change the programme, and caused a corresponding change in the *personel* of the troupe of actors, which I am careful not to specify further.

After introducing the leading figure in this "strange work," the Recorder is very careful to clear himself of any Spiritualistic implication. It appears that he entered into careful investigation of Spiritualism in all its "pretensions," and became conversant with its phenomena, even to "having received the benediction (their hands upon my head) of my departed, and returned, human parents. The final result: Of knowledge of certain secondary kinds I had obtained much: but in the higher realms of Truth I had found human spirits, even the most pretentious, in a condition of comparative ignorance. One set denied altogether those things which the angels desire to look into, and sought to substitute a specious philosophy of (as they supposed) their own, while the other could add nothing to what was already revealed." And yet, in spite of this, he recounts the fact of one of the attendants of "The Woman" being used to receive and write out messages. If this, and much of what follows, is not Spiritualistic, pray what is it? He, and "The Woman" as well, only follow others in the same line, who, having ascended to their pretended altitudes of knowledge by the ordinary Spiritualistic methods, turn round, condemn the system, and declare they are not Spiritualists! He says: "To prevent a possible misconception, it may be advisable to state d'stinctly that neither these messages, nor the hands through whom they and others were given, have any connection whatever with Spiritualism." This statement anyone conversant with psychic phenomena will estimate at its true value, and will at once detect the animus through this flimsy falsity.

These "wonderful messages" are signed by the "Seven

Watchers," and they were soon followed by some from the Lord Jesus, and signed with the Greek Alpha and Omega; who, in one of them, tells the Recorder that "You have to teach the *true* Gospel in the household of the Spiritualist"; and another reads, "Speak of these things to so-called Spiritualists. From their ranks will I raise up unto me prophets as of old; out of whose teachings will spring the religious faith of my new kingdom, when I come to reign visibly upon the earth." From this it seems that the "control" has a much better opinion of Spiritualists than the Recorder.

At the outset, this mysterious visitor, now styled "The Mother," seems to have made no claim to any power or position beyond ordinary mortals, but conditions being supplied by the wondering attitude of the Recorder, his family, and others, who were ready to receive all the phenomena as of divine origin, she saw that opportunity was present, which she utilised for perpetrating the grossest—fraud, shall I say? that marks the annals of these Messianic Pretenders. And hence follows messages from "The Mother," who at first *hinted*, and then assumed, Divine prerogatives in her own person. By this time the Recorder's "faith" was equal to any annunciation, and was quite prepared to accept anything that came either through writings, messages, or words from the "Holy Ones," and "The Mother," who sent word to him that "The Second Coming of our Lord is here," meaning herself.

Miraculous powers were said to be possessed by "The Mother," whose first exhibition was the casting out of an unclean spirit who had obsessed a servant maid. Another instance was that of a notorious, fallen young woman, once beautiful and seductive, whom "The Mother" received into her house, to the wondering astonishment and even horror of the whole neighbourhood. "The unclean spirits were cast out, and the young woman was restored whole in body and mind—the Magdalen of the latter days." She devoted herself to the poor, ailing, and wretched of the district where she was residing, and, "on several occasions, there was a miraculous increase of the food which her own hands prepared and distributed." It is part of the programme, that some credentials should be given to the Recorder of the most

"stupendous revelation," given to the world, since an alleged similar one near 1900 years ago, and they came first in the shape of an anointment. During a visit to his house, "The Mother was bidden by the Holy Ones to procure some oil for supper,—when presently taking up the bottle she handed it to me; immediately the bottle gently separated, and ere I was aware the whole of the oil poured over me to the floor. What could be the significance of this incident, evidently designed from above?" This was on July 5th, 1878, and on the 10th (five days after), "the doors of Heaven were suddenly thrown open, and the Lord Jesus Christ was revealed to me in his glory." This revelation—as precisely the same in the other rival claimants—solved all his doubts, dissipated his perplexities, and removed all his fears, for, "In an instant all was illuminated, and the testimony of God's faithful servants in every age confirmed."

It appears this "stupendous revelation" was given in response to the prayer of "The Mother," which elicited the questioning thought, "*Who* and *what* can this incarnate spirit be that has such power with the Almighty?" Marie—Mother in Christ—sends him a message from on High: "Faithful Follower, you now know Me! and you will speak as one having authority." Acting, apparently, upon this message, he sent a communication to one of the organs of the "Spiritualistic denomination," on the actuality and Godhead of Jesus Christ. The letter was refused insertion, and was returned with a letter from the Editor, who roundly told the Recorder that "he was awfully at sea in his church idea, and—that the spirit-world can dress up plenty of Christs to those who are fond of shows of this kind," &c.

Now here will be seen, by actual facts that can be verified—seeing that the Editor of a Spiritualistic paper is concerned,—a proof that my statement respecting the *masked* figures is correct. On page 70, reference is made to a certain lady, "the elder of two sisters of mature age, who made the acquaintance of the Mother at the sea-side." This is quite true as narrated, but the Recorder discreetly refrains from giving the after-experiences of this lady, as well as of others who were concerned, and as I have no permission to supply these details, I, like the Recorder, keep my own counsel.

But, as to the younger of the two sisters, he lifts the veil to this extent: "A post of spiritual use and distinction was offered to her by the Holy Ones! and accepted. Her spirit, however, was not ready for the work. Three warnings were given her in succession by the angels, and were reported by herself to the Mother, but to no effect. She disobeyed the directions of the Holy Ones. Divine grace was withheld: and her mission collapsed. Not long after, she was taken ill and died." The inference is obvious, *viz.*, that her death was a judgment for disobedience. "Through an old servant woman, entranced in the presence of the Mother, she (the younger of the two sisters) made confession of her true condition while yet in the body. Then throwing herself upon her knees, in the person of the servant, she crawled to the feet of the Mother, and humbly craved her forgiveness." And yet, in spite of this very common example of spiritual control,—accepting it as true—the Recorder persists in saying that neither he nor "The Mother" are Spiritualists in any sense of the term. Can self-complacency and assurance go further? The psychological student will note this, and other similar Spiritualistic, or psychological, phenomena that abound in the work.

The introduction of the two elderly sisters, referred to, led to that of others, *viz.*, a family who possessed strong mediumistic powers (*at that time*), and a series of visions are given as presented to them, chiefly to show the abnormal position of the lady described as "The Mother"! Among these was a young boy, who is called the Child-seer, and from *hints* given in the work this "Child-seer" was intended to fill another position among the *dramatis personæ*, but this part of the programme was not enacted in his person; and it fell through owing to circumstances which the Recorder does not specify, as in the case already referred to,—another proof of his discretion, at all events; nevertheless they are actual persons.

In the visions as recorded, one is of "our Lord, who appears in partial glory, standing beside the Mother, with St. John the Baptist, and John the Apostle a little in the rear"; at others, the Archangels, *Saint Michael* and *Saint Gabriel*, besides other "saints" of less note, pertaining to the Roman Catholic Church calendar.

The next step is the announcement by an "angel of the heavenly court," that "The Mother's" *number* is 5. The Lord's number is 9, and the Recorder's number is 4, "as all souls are classified and numbered in the Book of the Creator," and the "Holy Ones" give the name of Paul to the Recorder, who says: "Through the hand of the Mother, the Lord presents to me a pen—all sprinkled with drops of his own blood; indicative of important work through suffering."

Others, by vision and control, come on the scene, and amongst them a high-priest and priestess of ancient Egypt, who endeavoured to communicate through the Recorder's daughter, by forming symbols and hieratic writing, &c., but which turned out to be of no known language." I should have been surprised if they had. Here comes in a surprise to Egyptologists. The Recorder naively tells us that he "knew well that there was a time, under an earlier dynasty (before the rise of the king who knew not Joseph, and the fall of their kingdom into idolatry) when the worship of the true God prevailed in Egypt." Like his daughter's symbols and writings, this statement cannot be corroborated by any known history. These loose generalities, of such frequent occurrence in psychical examples, are utterly worthless, and of no value except to bolster up and flatter the persons to whom they are given. It is well known, that Osiris was the chief deity that was worshipped in the times of the earliest dynasties, and if the "knowledge" of the Recorder is such that he can verify his statement, then he must allow that Osiris was the True God. But what becomes of the Jewish deity—Jahveh?

Acting upon the "messages" received, as to the nature of the work to which he was appointed, the Recorder began what may be termed his mission. He wrote to prominent Spiritualists and others, expecting to gain converts, but his missionary enterprise was of very short duration, as most of those whom he addressed turned a deaf ear to his overtures, and his efforts resulted in a collapse. Among these were three who, appearing to be "much affected by the imperfect description he was able to give of the Revelation of the Lord," requested a personal interview. It was granted, and

he tells us, "under the influence of the Spirit, I declared to them that she was no other than *The Woman clothed with the Sun.*" They then desired to know, "If the *Mother* were indeed the Sun-clad Woman, where was the *Mau-child*? To this inquiry I was not then able to give an answer satisfactory even to myself, having looked in vain for the answer to the same question." This pertinent but staggering question is still unanswered, and so far as the parties concerned are involved, it is likely to remain so.

Like Mrs. Girling, the "Sun-clad Woman" had the stigmata of the marks of the cross nails on her hands, but they appear to have been fugitive, and not permanent like those of her contemporary rival.

About this time, a gentleman in affluent circumstances, who was suffering from blindness recently come upon him, and also from an internal tumour that all his medical advisers had pronounced incurable, was introduced to "The Mother," who, laying her hands upon his shoulders, said: "*You shall have relief!*" saying which, she departed. Some months after this, the Recorder met this same gentleman; "his incurable disease was gone! his physical agony was gone! his torment of mind had been removed. Yet did he not utter a word of gratitude to the Father in Heaven; nor did he once allude to Her through whom all this relief had been bestowed! Not long after, this man's daughter—the child in whom he delighted—was taken away; and her husband, a man of wealth and position, soon followed." In this, as in a former case, the inference is obvious.

The most trivial and commonplace things, such as a man calling at the house with "Moore's Almanack" for sale, with a hieroglyphic drawing on its cover; the pictures in shop windows; the presence and flight of a certain number of birds; even theatrical advertisements and bill posters; are one and all pressed into service as proof of the "Sun-clad Woman's" presence on the earth, by the Recorder, who says that he sees not as other men.

Towards the end of 1878, "The Mother" went to visit and nurse the landlady of a lodging house at the sea-side (name of place or person not given). The house was situated in an exposed position on the edge of the sea, and

nearly at the same level. While "The Mother" was there, a terrible storm arose, and "the sick woman lay tremblingly watching the successive advances of huge billows, each of a height and volume that threatened destruction to her dwelling and herself. The Mother, who was with her, was a power that commanded even the raging of the sea; at the very height of the tempest the huge waves advancing toward them, were stayed in their course. An invisible line seemed to be drawn, before which each wave subsided harmless; and the rolling masses of water, while completely deluging the land on either side, were powerless before the Presence in that house." This is given as an example of divine power exercised by the "Woman," as fulfilling the statement of Job, xxxviii., 11: "Hitherto shalt thou come and no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." Comment is unnecessary.

If the above, and many others of an equally astounding nature as recorded in the work, are true statements, little wonder that the "Woman," finding herself possessed of such powers that put the theosophical adepts into the shade, concluded that she was not an ordinary human being; and in a letter dated December 16th, 1878, she writes: "I have had most clear Revelations! and am being prepared to take up the Mission after Christmas day—as what I am. I am the Representative of the New Jerusalem, which is above and 'The Mother of us all. I was sent down to be this Personage." Three days after she writes: "I am the only person qualified to stand on earth as the Representative of the New Jerusalem, because I am not mortal; that is to say, I am from the Inner Circle of the Angelic Spheres. With reverence let me repeat the words of the Lord Christ Jesus: I that speak unto thee am He."

Thus it will be seen there is no ambiguity in the declaration of the "Woman" herself, and there is no lack of *anonymous* incidents given by the author of the work to support this self-made claim. On December 25th, in presence of three female followers, the Transfiguration of "The Mother" took place: "The *inner* body having the appearance of refined and living silver; *that* encased as in living amber; and the whole enveloped in spiritual flame of exceeding brilliancy.

Thus the Birth of the New Dispensation was signalized by a Transfiguration."

During a visit about this time to Recorder's house, "The Mother's" attention was called by the angels to the Jewish statesman Disraeli (whose spirit is thereupon summoned to her presence). What he said is not given, but the author tells us he is engaged in the political sphere in connection with God's people of Israel and Judah, in *that part of the East* which they once occupied, and which they will yet again possess." And this experience and practice, notwithstanding his protestations that they are not Spiritualists! "The prophecy in relation to the Jews will be literally fulfilled, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Time will show.

According to messages from the "Holy Ones," through "The Mother," the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus is two-fold—Two in One—and the manifestation dual; and his Second Coming is now Here, in the person of the lady who claims to be the "Sun-clothed Woman," *a la* Mother Girling. It is noteworthy that in the South of England, and not very distant from each other, there were *two* women, both claiming to be the manifestation of Jesus Christ in his Second Advent, in their own persons. The outside world—Jew and Gentile alike—may well wonder, and ask: Who is who? and, Which is which? Some may give the palm to the lady who, we are told, has no less a Being than "Saint" Michael the archangel for her guardian. Her rival, Mrs. Girling, seems to have been content with guardians of a lower degree.

The reader must not suppose *I* am romancing. I have given what any one so minded can read for himself or herself, given to the world by one who claims to be a divinely-appointed Recorder of the most "stupendous Revelation," made by God to himself and a *very few* others. 'Tis true, he hides his personality under a *nom de plume*, but *he* is there all the same. With a simplicity that is somewhat remarkable, he puts Madame Rachel into the shade, for he says the Seer! wrote to the "Reverend Mother: I am told by the angels that your health and beauty are to be restored to you while you are on earth; and that your youth will be renewed." By this it appears a lady, somewhat beyond the three F's, is to be made "beautiful for ever"!

The attention of the author was, during the season of Lent, called to the study of the Great Pyramid of Egypt, erected, according to the Recorder, by "Melchizedek, under divine command, and sealed unto the Time of the End." By an ingenious manipulation "The Mother's" number five is made to appear as the radical in the construction of this vast building. Here is a specimen of the way in which the events of "The Mother's life," were forshadowed by the finger of God 4,000 years ago. It refers to the chamber, generally known as the Queen's Chamber. He writes: "The four walls and the two inclined ceilings were all smooth and carefully polished; but the floor underneath was left purposely uneven, rough, and jagged, while there was no door of outlet beyond; symbolizing the mournful truth, that even in the beautiful state and stage now reached—within Herself—there was to The Queen upon the earth no rest for the sole of her foot." This "suffering" culminated in what he calls "the suffering of the cross," thus described: "The sister angels, endowed with the gifts of spiritual sight and hearing, beheld the piercing of the hands as She lay outstretched in crucifixion; beheld on her head the crown of thorns; beheld her long agony of body and spirit—until, at last, the verge of the end reached, She was giving up the ghost. A voice from Heaven was heard saying: *It is finished!* and the Mother emerged from death into life." The Recorder himself it appears had to undergo, in a lesser degree, "the suffering for his individual share of the sin of the whole human race."

All the above special pleading is founded on the theories as first propounded by Piazzi Smyth, Astronomer Royal for Scotland, who made the British *inch* (nearly) the main factor, and the sacred cubit of 25 of such inches; and that an inch of measure represented a year of time. It is startling—at first sight—how these two factors are worked so as to establish the literal accuracy of chronological biblical events, then prophetic and future. But these, and a great many other theories arising from the same base, are now dispelled by the more accurate and scientific measurements of Mr. Flinders Petrie, an engineer, who has conclusively demonstrated that no such measure as the *inch* was known to the

designer and builder of the Great Pyramid of Gizeh. The standard of measurement, actually, was a cubit of 20.62 inches, and not 25 inches as theorised by Professor Smyth. Whatever was included in the original design, it is now generally admitted by experts that it was intended for the tomb of *Khufu*, a king of the 4th dynasty, whose name—and *not* Melchizedek's—occurs on the walls of the chambers above the Central Hall, several times repeated. The Coffin, about which so much has been said, is undoubtedly a sarcophagus, made similar in design and size to others which have been discovered in neighbouring pyramids. Thus falls to the ground the many biblicist theories, dissipated by the calm, scientific, and inexorable logic of facts; and with these must go the Recorder's statement; that this vast stone structure was reared as a prophetic witness in relation to a certain woman now living in this country.

A series of miraculous incidents follow to prove that "The Mother" can be no less than divine, as he tells us, "The Divine was once more—personally—in our midst, this time in woman form, having gone through every legitimate experience of the life of woman; touched with the nature of woman's infirmities, yet without sin." The reader will remember the gospel narrative of the "curse on the barren fig-tree" by Jesus, but in the case of his present counterpart, the "Woman," the process is reversed. "A tree was condemned by a gardener as dead, and had begun the act of cutting it down, when the Mother, passing by, requests him to desist, assuring him that it will live. Within a few days the condemned tree puts forth buds." Drooping flowers and plants are revived and become fresh and vigorous by the mere fact of her walking amongst them. Another is, that "a woman, who with her family is in great temporal difficulty and trouble, asks the Mother for a pair of boots, who taking them from off her own feet (the only pair she had), gave them to the suppliant, with the result that her circumstances began to change for the better, and within six months she and her family had passed out of adversity into prosperity."

Unhappily my efforts to obtain corroborative testimony in regard to these alleged divine powers, and their exercise, as narrated, by the "Woman" in question have been utterly

unsuccessful, but, I am led to question their veracity in all points, and have some reason to think that many of them would admit of a different version.

The first volume of this extraordinary work closes with an attempt to exalt this "Woman" into an equality with God; and that she, as the Divine Mother, came down to share the sufferings of her human children, for, "If, in all their afflictions, He, the Divine Father, was afflicted—how much more the Divine Mother (the personal woman) in her yet more tender Love."

A hint is given, "that the redemption of the body may yet be effected, and this muddy vesture of decay be transmuted into the glorified robe of immortality." The Recorder again gives evidence of his discretion, in not propounding the doctrine so plainly as the "Woman's" competitors, hence he does not say that his "Sun-clad Woman" will not die, but leaves it open to such an inference. "For long ages a large portion of the human race have now in spirit cried: '*Show us the Mother!*' and at last the cry is answered; and the Mother is revealed, God again manifest in the flesh," *i.e.* in the "Woman," the heroine of this narrative.

The opening of the second volume is marked by the claim made by the Recorder himself. He tells us that, "the Recorder of the Gospel of the Second Advent has seen the Heavens opened; has beheld the unveiled Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; has heard the voice of the Lord, and has been furnished, like the prophets and messengers of old, with the Divine Credentials. In other words, God, the Most High, has stamped this Revelation as true; and through the stammering lips of a human messenger, He is now again speaking unto His people." Ordinary-minded people will think that such a flaming advertisement as this should be backed by "credentials" that can be witnessed, and thus prove their authenticity. I myself have asked for them, and been flatly refused; perchance others may be more successful. For successful advertising—even in the messianic line—the policy of a bold front, and novelty in puffing one's own wares as better than your neighbours', is here adopted; and it may take with a certain class, especially if they can per-

suade themselves, that by dealing in this market they will be recognised as "God's own people."

It appears that the proselytizing efforts were not very successful. "An offer was made to a certain centre in connection with the work by the Holy Ones! accompanied by suitable and gracious promises; and extraordinary spiritual experiences were vouchsafed in confirmation of the promises, including a conveyance in spirit to the third heaven; materialization of food; a baptism of fire; while to all was given the appearance of the Lord Jesus in Spirit." But they fell under antagonistic and confusing influences—"the instruments of Satan!" As a consequence they (this centre) lost their high privilege. The same thing occurred with an American centre. A "message" comes to the effect that ———'s present condition arises from material anxieties, or Spiritualistic pride and vanity, and earth passions are too much for his brain. The poor man's advisers are yclept "spirits of the dead." Such is the version as given by the Recorder, but we may suppose there were other reasons that weighed with the persons composing the centres (or circles) referred to, in rejecting the "offers from the Holy Ones," but these of course are withheld, and the readers may supply substantial reasons for themselves.

The "teachings" of "The Mother," are a compound of Papistical dogmas, on the necessity of obedience, humility, faith, and penance,—mixed with her personal claims to be recognised as the manifestation of Jesus Christ in his Second Advent, in the form of a woman. The culminating point of audacity on the part of the Recorder is where he claims that this "Revelation" is a continuance of the past, and of equal importance. He tells us that, "In pursuance of the Lord's assurance that He would speak intermittently through the Recorder, the narrative is occasionally interrupted in order to connect more clearly the present with the past Revelation, and thus throw more Divine Light on the actual spiritual situation."

After giving instances of "The Mother's" power in increasing the water supply to a certain place; causing a miraculous catch of fish; and that in whatever hotels she visited she was the centre of attraction on account of the graciousness of

the words that fell from her lips (no names of places are given by which the veracity of these astounding miracles can be verified), another case is given of a certain rich man who turned a deaf ear to the wants of a poor woman, as conveyed to him by the author. "He refused help, and not long afterward he fell under the dominion of evil spirits; attempted to kill himself; and soon after died." The inference here again is obvious.

Next follow prolix dissertations, and dogmatic assertions, respecting "the allied truth of Re-incarnation and Re-embodiment." If Jesus Christ is re-incarnated in the person of the Woman, it follows that Paul the apostle is re-embodied in the person of the Recorder, who is also called Paul; and we are gravely assured that many of the Old Testament worthies—Balaam not excepted—as well as the twelve apostles of the New Testament, are to be re-embodied; and what will be a surprise to many—Theosophists included—the Recorder *says* that there are, invisible to carnal eye, "the saints returned to meet their Lord; some again as men; some with change of form as women; passing again through the different stages of life in the flesh," &c.

The crucial question as to true and false Christs is thus dealt with by the anonymous author of "The Mother: the Woman clothed with the Sun"—who, of course, is quite aware of the difficulty to ordinary minds in distinguishing the genuine from the counterfeit among the many rival and competing messianic claimants. He tells us: "Another sign is the appearance of the false Christs and false prophets, foretold by the Lord Jesus Christ. The appearance of the false implies the appearance of the true, and it may be that to distinguish between the two is one of the tests in the trial designed in the divine wisdom for both churches and individuals. If so, this test will turn rather upon the heart than the head."

Just so—the latter sentence gives the key to the position. It means that the question is not to be decided by the faculty of human reason, which requires evidence—substantial and demonstrable—before credence is given to dogmatic assertions, but it must be assented to on faith. The weaker the intellect; the stronger emotions that can be made active by

appeals to faith ; the more likely to be caught by the bait and be ensnared. To my own knowledge, some have been very nearly taken unawares, but escaped in time ; while others who were entangled in this "yoke of bondage" for awhile, had their eyes opened and withdrew, as it fortunately happened, without any serious loss of material means ; but not without regret that they had been taken in "by one of the grossest frauds in the name of religion which has existed in this century."

The author singles two "out of the many that have already appeared in England, America, and elsewhere." One, like himself and his heroine, is anonymous, who addresses the clergy and laity of the Church of England, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen!" These are to "know, that Christ Messiah is She who is the Holy Mother of the world. And, know, that Christ Messiah cometh on February 1st, 1884, till February 1st, 1885, to gather the Wise Virgins to form Her Train."

The little tract, issued by Mrs. Girling, containing her manifesto, is printed in full, in which *she* claims precisely the same prerogatives as the "Woman clothed with the Sun," but who, unlike Mrs. Girling, hides her light under a bushel, *alias* a mask! In this respect—as the Recorder claims—she does stand out different from all the others ; and he has the folly, or the pretence, to think that this deceptive process is an advantage in his favour, while he "proclaims the gospel of Christ in the Mother."

Mrs. Girling died, September 18th, 1886 ; the volume containing the reference to the "false" Christs was published in 1887, and is enriched with the following note: "This unconscious imitator of the Truth has recently passed into the world beyond. Her spirit remained in trance after death two days, and on awaking she beheld the angel Gabriel standing at her side, who, bidding her arise, brought her into the presence of the Divine Mother-Queen, whom she had ignorantly personated." That is, Mother Girling—who at least was not ashamed of her name and her personal work and mission while proclaiming the same to the world—is made to be guided by no less than the Archangel Gabriel! to a woman whom nobody knows, except the "very few" to

whom she has revealed herself, and who is said to be living now upon the earth. Seeing that Mrs. Girling was first in the field, to make her an "imitator" of the later woman, is only in keeping with the rest of this "stupendous"—falsity!

Through the intervention of a foreign friend, one of the leading actors in this affair was brought into contact with James White, *alias* J. J. Jezreel, in 1882, and correspondence took place between the "Prophet" and the one referred to. The aim on both sides seems to have been to bring over the other to the views and claims of the respective advocates of the two systems. The result, as might be expected, was a failure, as each took the same high ground, and an implied offer—a sort of compromise—was rejected by Jezreel, which closed the correspondence. But the admission was made by the rival claimant, that "The Flying Roll" was from above; and that Jezreel was a "Prophet of the Lord." He is *now* described as a "false prophet." See how these messianic claimants love one another! False Christs: false prophets: personators: are specimens of the terms from their vocabulary that they apply to each other. But possibly this may not be brought under the notice of the "Sun-clad Woman," as we are told that "She had died to this world, and that although still tenanting the body, Her life was now on the other side of the veil. The crucifixion was the climax, and had set the Father's seal upon her earthly life,"—*à la* Thomas Lake Harris!

The future scepticism as to the reality of the manifestation of the Godhead in the person of the "Woman" in present times is thus met: "The argument against the past existence of Jesus from the almost total silence of contemporary profane history." Bearing upon this was the fact that in the present generation had been formed a chain of spiritual events (resting upon *alleged* miraculous powers exercised by the "Woman") of equal import, yet probably not a single link of the chain would be found in the profane records of the time.

As it is not improbable that my own efforts in this direction—to be published in book form—may continue to exist along with this "stupendous Revelation," the above "argument" loses its force. Mine may be, and no doubt

will be, characterised as "profane" history by the followers, *i.e.*, those that are left of them, of the "divine Mother"; but when the Recorder essays to drop the mask, I will do my part to solve the "mystery" of this pretentious "manifestation," and if the whole affair will not bear close scrutiny, investigation, and demand for authenticity, in the interest of pure truth, the author of the two volumes referred to must bear the brunt.

The "Revelation" closes with the usual anathema to those who reject it. "The divine Motherhood, tabernacled with men, *that* would shelter them under Its all-embracing Wing, even now, from the anger of The Divine Father, soon, alas! to burst upon the Children of Disobedience."

The speciality and peculiarity of this melodramatic farce, is the assumption of "sanctity" which pervades it, and which will fascinate many who cannot detect the counterfeit in this adroit manipulation of scriptural texts, and psychological phenomena—*true in part*—to puff the claims and pretensions of this messianic pretender; who will be thus judged by those who will not be cajoled by the ipse-dixits of a writer and author who shelters himself behind a pseudonym. I have said enough to show the aim and motive of the work, and will not dwell further upon the details of this extravaganza, having reason to think that it is pretty well played out; but I conclude with the remark, that should this dramatic exhibition be continued in pursuance of the "claims" of the lady (seeing that she is said to be of Israel's royal line, and whose actuality *I* do not deny) as the fulfilment of the wide-spread expectancy of the Second Advent of Jesus Christ in personal form of a woman, then, perchance, others may undertake the task of the un veiling, or unmasking; and possibly there may be discovered—instead of a Goddess, one of quite another characteristic!

## HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY.

## THE FOUNDESS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

The heroine of this Chapter must not be placed in the same category as the personalities noticed in preceding Chapters, who claimed in one form or other to be Messiahs, Prophets, Messengers, and even Jesus Christ in his Second Advent. Her claims are of a totally different order, and if not so outrageous to well-informed minds, they are nevertheless as astounding; inasmuch as she claims to be the Mouth-piece of, and Instrument used by, an Order of actual living men to whom all things of the past, present, and future of our Solar, or Planetary Universe are actually known. Stowed away in inaccessible (to ordinary travellers) fastnesses in the Himalayan mountains; or, it may be, in equally inaccessible retreats in Thibet, the individuals composing this Order are obscured in a vail of mystery as dense and unapproachable—to outsiders—as that which covers the figure of Isis, and so far as evidence of their actuality is concerned, it stands upon the same footing as that of Isis herself. These men, or demigods, are alleged to be the inspirers, guardians, and promoters of the Theosophical Society; and who are now, through their mouth-piece, giving out knowledge concerning physical science, universal philosophy and religion, to a benighted world. What the value of this knowledge—so called—as thus given is worth, will be estimated by some, who are not to be fascinated by glamour, as even more than questionable; and my own reasons for forming this unfavourable conclusion will be gathered from what follows.

A second figure appears in the person of Henry S. Olcott, an ex-colonel in the United States army, a man of most exemplary character, and against whom all shafts of ridicule, malice, or slander fall powerless. He is associated with our heroine, as the Co-Founder of the Society, of which he is the President; and although the Chief, in his administrative capacity, yet for the purpose of my historical notice, his

position is secondary and of little importance. He wrote shortly after making her acquaintance: "In the whole course of my experience, I never met with so interesting, and, if I may say it without offence, eccentric a character." Her eccentricity is undeniable; but this, along with other characteristics peculiarly her own, causes her to be one of the most remarkable psychic problems of the present time. She sets the conventionalities of "society" at defiance; but for brilliancy of brain power, marred by weakness, irritability of temper, and indulgence in coarse language and diatribes to those who question her assertions, she stands out unique, and presents a puzzle and perplexity even to those who are her firmest adherents. The incidents of her life are as romantic as the many fictions and stories that have emanated from her fertile brain store-house: and it is precisely on this point, *viz.*, the power to discriminate between the true and fictitious in all her works, that the overwhelming difficulty comes in; and this element of uncertainty is damaging, in the highest degree, to the cause that she advocates. So much for the Prologue.

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky—maiden name, Hahn—is a Russian by birth, daughter of Colonel Hahn, late of the Russian army; and on the mother's side connected with, and descended from, Russian aristocracy of high degree. She was born at Ekaterinoslow, in South Russia, in the year 1831, and is now the widow of Nicephore Blavatsky, late vice-governor of Erivan, in the Caucasus. From her childhood she has been, and is yet, subject to violent and apparently uncontrollable outbursts of temper and passion, marked by aversion to any kind of authority or control; and when contradicted or thwarted the result was a furor, and not unfrequently convulsions. From early years she seems to have been the subject of abnormal, or more correctly speaking, mediumistic powers; coupled with imaginative and rhetorical modes of expression, that marked her a genius of no common order. According to her biographer,\* "Amidst the strange double life she thus led from her earliest recollections, she would sometimes have visions of a mature protector, whose

---

\* See INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF MADAME BLAVATSKY, by A. P. Sinnett. George Redway, 1886.

imposing appearance dominated her imagination from a very early period. This protector was always the same, his features never changed; in after-life she met him as a living man, and knew him as though she had been brought up in his presence."

This strange story rests alone on the statement of Madame B. herself, and if it can be verified by other and impartial evidence, it would form a not unimportant factor in the settlement of the reality and actuality of those mysterious beings, who, if the half of what is claimed for them be true, are certainly not as other men. The extraneous evidence as to the actuality of these men, styled Masters, Adepts, and Mahatmas, being in mortal conditions, is much too questionable to be accepted on such grounds. There is without a doubt a huge hiatus to be filled up ere the men and their claims can be accepted as scientific and actual facts, and yet upon this substantiation depends in a large measure the value to be attached to the alleged marvellous scientific and philosophical (or otherwise) truths and ethics now given to the world through Madame Blavatsky; and which are said to emanate from these men who alone possess the secrets of the Cosmos. The full bearing of what is here implied will be seen further on.

In 1844, she was taken by her father to Paris and London; and in July, 1848, then only 17 years of age, she was married to N. Blavatsky, a man of about 60 years. As might be expected, the marriage was an unfortunate and unhappy one, and in some three months after the nuptial tie, she clandestinely left and abandoned her husband and country, and entered upon a wandering life on her own account. The next ten years were passed in romantic journeyings through Central Asia, India, South America, Africa, and Europe. But little is known, or given, of the strange adventures, escapes and vicissitudes she underwent, and none but a most unaccountable young girl could have passed such an ordeal unscathed. All that was known of her during these years by her family, was by occasional correspondence with her father, who seems to have provided her with funds for carrying out her eccentric mode of life. Her chief object appears to have been the study of psychology in its various

phases, by contact with its professors, from Indian fakirs, and out-of-the-way people and practices, to mesmeric practitioners, &c., &c., as well as of some abnormal phenomena said to have been witnessed in a Buddhist monastery. With some uncertainty as to dates (for she kept no diary or record) she appears to have been in Paris and London in 1851, and then went to South America, leaving Mexico in 1852, in company with an Englishman and a Hindu *chela*, for India, where she attempted to pass into Thibet through Nepaul, but failed. In 1853 she went from India to America again, and after a stay of some two years returned to Calcutta, from whence she—according to her own account—again attempted to visit Thibet, and this time succeeded, although not without some hairbreadth escapes, and met with her “occult guardian,” under whose direction she left India and returned to Europe in 1858, and shortly after joined her family and friends (but not her husband) at Pskoff, about 150 miles from St. Petersburg. She stayed with her aunt and her sister, who wrote and published in a Russian periodical a narrative under the title: “The truth about H. P. Blavatsky.”

It was while residing at this time in Russia that her mediumistic qualities showed with great power, and the usual manifestations occurred, *viz.*, of raps, sounds, removal of furniture without human contact; and the reading of thoughts unexpressed by her visitors, &c., &c. In all these phenomena she remained perfectly conscious, and she maintained that “spirits” had nothing whatever to do with their production, but they were the result of her own will and power, and by these she commanded them and rendered them subservient to her own purposes. She was nevertheless, according to her own confession, aided by “invisible helpers who were never found mistaken in any single instance.” This admission opens the question again as to the real character and position of those beings by whose aid she was able to produce phenomena.

In a foot-note attached to the narrative, she herself says: “Indeed not: for it was neither a ‘spirit,’ nor ‘spirits,’ but living men who can draw before their eyes the picture of any book or manuscript wherever existing, and in case of need even that of any long-forgotten and unrecorded event, who

helped 'Madame B.' The astral light is the store-house and the record-book of all things, and deeds have no secrets for such men; and the proof of it may be found in the production of 'Isis Unveiled.'"

It must be remembered that the above astounding and startling statement is made in 1886—*i.e.*, some 27 years *after* the occurrence of the recorded phenomena. It will at once be seen that there is a wide disparity between what was given at the time, *viz.* that they were the product of her own will power, aided by invisible helpers; and laterly, that the producers were living men. But the narrator, who at that time knew nothing of Theosophy with its adepts, gives in her simple, straightforward, and apparently trustworthy record of what transpired, an interesting account of the appearance of *post-mortem* visitors; among whom was one named A. Poushkine, who had been a poet of some eminence in his earth-life, and who is admitted to have been a "genuine spirit." Another foot-note, in dealing with this—to Theophists—ugly fact and admission, tries to minimise the admission by saying that, "In the recollection of Madame B., this was a genuine spirit-manifestation, *i.e.*, a clumsy personification of the great poet by passing shells and spooks, allowed to merge into the circle for a moment."

This dust-throwing may pass muster with Theosophists and so-called Occultists, but not so with the conscientious Psychologist, who cannot be cajoled by such plausibilities. All the phenomena, as faithfully recorded *at the time*, are nothing more nor less than the ordinary psychic manifestations that have been witnessed, and testified to, as occurring through sensitives, or mediums, of a nature equally as wonderful and astounding. The phenomena may be accepted as genuine beyond question, but the *after-explanations* are doubtful and suspicious, given and dictated as they are by an animus and purpose that cannot be mistaken by well-balanced minds.

In or about the year 1863, while living in Mingrelia, in a lone house of her own, she had an illness—she describes it as low fever—which resulted in "a change of powers." She experienced a double personality, and says: "Whenever I was called by name, I opened my eyes upon hearing it, and

was myself my own personality in every particular. As soon as I was left alone, however, I relapsed into my usual, half-dreamy condition, and became *somebody else*. When awake, and *myself*, I remembered well *who I was* in my second capacity. When *somebody else*, I had no idea of who was H. P. Blavatsky. I was a totally different individuality from myself, and had no connection with my actual life." This uncommon, but by no means singular, phenomenon affords a key whereby the psychological scientist may unlock many otherwise mysterious incidents and characteristics of her strange and eventful life.

With great difficulty she was taken to her friends at Tiflis, where she was nursed, and recovered her usual strength. The effects, according to her own letter written in 1866, are thus described: "Now I shall never be subjected to external influences." "It is not H. P. B. who was from that time forth victim to 'influences,' which would have without doubt triumphed over a less strong nature than was hers; but, on the contrary, it is she who subjugated these influences—whatever they may be—to her will." (This latter sentence is given presumably by the biographer.) She herself wrote shortly after: "The last vestiges of my psycho-physical weakness are gone, to return no more. I am cleansed and purified of that dreadful attraction to myself of stray spooks and ethereal *affinities*. I am free, free, thanks to *those* whom I now bless every moment of my life." With such an admission, her after passionate denial of ordinary mediumship must be heavily discounted.

"The years 1867 to 1870 were spent in the East, and were associated with great progress in the expansion of her occult knowledge." This is a meagre statement of what would indeed be of great interest, for it obviously infers that this was the period during which she formed the close relationship said to exist between herself and the mysterious Mahatmas. She returned from the East in 1870, and took a passage by a Greek vessel *en route* to Spezzia, laden with gunpowder, which exploded, and Madame B. was one of the very few passengers whose lives were saved. She then went to Alexandria, and while there formed the acquaintance of a Madame Coulomb, which in

after years proved so ill-starred for her. Here she tarried for a time, waiting for funds, and joined—if she did not actually start and promote—a Spiritualistic Society, which ended in a fiasco, and “was broken up through the imposture of the medium.” It is undeniable that at this time she wrote to the Editor of a Spiritualistic journal in London, to request his good offices in obtaining and sending out a good physical medium. This act upon her part, at that specific period, would seem to show that her own medial powers were non-effective, otherwise she could have taken the Cairo Society under her own management. In any case, she was then a “Spiritualist,” and as will be seen, she continued so for some years, nothing whatever being then known of her “occultist” proclivities.

In 1872 she left Egypt, after the above abortive attempt to form a Spiritualistic circle and society, in reference to which action her explanation, years after, must be taken for what it is worth. *En passant*, it would have been much more effectual had she given any inkling of her non-spiritualistic claims at the time. An incident is given as transpiring in Alexandria, in which the onlookers referred to her “spirits” as the producers of the phenomenon, and there is an absence of any reference on her part to place the origin in a different source. This negative evidence is not much in itself, but taken in conjunction with her silence on this point up to a certain time, hereinafter specified, it means much.

In 1873 she left Odessa for Paris, by which time—according to her biographer who wrote 13 years after—the psychic relationship between herself and her occult (?) teachers in the East was already established on that intimate footing which has rendered her whole subsequent life subject to its practical direction.” Her own actual position is not defined as to whether she was a *chela*, *novitiate*, or *initiate*, but we are informed that a *chela* who is seeking initiation into “occult orders” is watched over by a *guru* (an adept), “from his last birth.” Any way she always speaks of these beings as her “masters,” by which it would appear she does not claim to be on an equality with them. The dignity of her later enterprise appears—to outsiders at all events—to be gravely lowered by the fact that she condescends “to lose temper and time with assailants, and spends her psychic energy in

the wrong places, with wrong people, and at the wrong moments."

She left Paris, and landed at New York, July 7th, 1873; and after sojourning in America till 1879, she obtained her papers and became a naturalized American. It was during these six years of her life in the United States that the change came; and her "spiritualistic" antecedents were dropped, and she became an "occultist" *a la* Theosophy! This is proved by a printed correspondence in *Light*, for 1884. She had been confronted with the fact that for 14 years (1860 to 1874) she was an avowed Spiritualist. In reply she says emphatically: "*I say again, I NEVER was a Spiritualist. I have always known the reality of mediumistic phenomena, and defended that reality; that is all.*" Against this passionate denial of Spiritualistic tendencies and profession, I request attention to the following, from Professor Kiddle, of New York (see *Light*, 1884, p. 482), who requested, but never obtained, a reply and explanation. He states that Madame Blavatsky wrote a letter dated October 27th, 1875, which was printed in the New York *Daily Graphic*, in defence of Spiritualism, against an attack by a Dr. Geo. Beard; the closing paragraph of which reads thus: "People that know me, know that I am far from being credulous. *Though a Spiritualist of many years standing, I am more sceptical in receiving evidence from paid mediums than many unbelievers. But when I receive such evidences as I received at the Eddys, I feel bound on my honour, and under the penalty of confessing myself a moral coward, to defend the mediums, as well as the thousands of my brother and sister Spiritualists, against the conceit and slander of one man, who has nothing, and no one, to back him in his assertions.*" As the Professor naively remarks, "The juxtaposition of Madame B.'s statement of 1875 with that of 1884, renders all comment unnecessary."

But I will note and comment on the fact, that the letter of October 27th, 1875, in which Madame boldly avows herself a "Spiritualist," was written just *three weeks* before the Theosophical Society was formed—dating November 17th, 1875,—and the question is raised:—Is not Theosophy, with its society and what not, the direct outcome of the Spi-

tualistic movement itself, and not *vice versa*, as Theosophists claim it to be? On this a clear and true aspect of the whole position—Spiritualism *versus* Occultism—can only be obtained. We possess evidence by Col. Olcott himself, who published his "People from the Other World" in defence of the genuineness of the Spiritualistic manifestations at Chittenden, through the Eddy Brothers and Mrs. Compton. He was a witness of these marvels, from the latter part of August to the first week in December, 1874. It was at these seances that he met Madame Blavatsky, with whose *mediumship* he was much struck; although he tells us that it appeared to be different from any other that he had seen, in that "she seems to control them, *i.e.*, the spirits, to do her bidding." This work was published in January, 1875, and at that time he had no conception of "Occultism and Theosophy"; but the society was formed at the close of the year, *after* which Spiritualism becomes lost in Theosophy.

It was while spending these years in America that she wrote and published "Isis Unveiled," the preface to which is dated September, 1877, and in which she says that her "Instructors in the East have showed us that by combining science with religion, the existence of God and the immortality of man's spirit may be demonstrated like a problem of Euclid." In this the old Spiritualistic vein is not obliterated, and the work itself may fairly be claimed as an exponent of Spiritualistic rather than "Theosophical" practices and teachings; *vide*, vol. I., p. 67: "We are far from believing that all the spirits that communicate at circles are of the classes called "elemental" and "elementary." Many—especially among those who control the medium subjectively to speak, write, and otherwise act in various ways—are human disembodied spirits." This, at all events, is in flagrant opposition to the attitude she now assumes; and to the teachings of "occultism" by its professed expounders, of which more anon.

An effort was made to affiliate the Society with the Arya Somaj, a Brahminical church in India, which succeeded for a time, but afterwards collapsed, by the withdrawal of the Leader from association with the Theosophists; seeing that the Brahminical proclivities of the

former could not coalesce with the Buddhistical tendencies of the latter.

Three years after the formation of the Society, *i.e.*, in December, 1878, Madame Blavatsky left America for India, which was to be the future head-quarters and home of the Founders; and in 1879 the first society was formed in Bombay. Here the first great blunder was committed, according to her biographer, for, instead of first securing the amity of Anglo-Indian society, she went out of her way to show her animosity, by fulsome adulation of the natives, which aroused the suspicion of the Government Officials, by whom for awhile — by this foolish proceeding on her own part — she was subjected to an annoying espionage; but this was withdrawn as soon as it was seen that she had no ulterior political designs. Nevertheless, some letters of hers, and Col. Olcott's as well, would have been treated by any other government than the British as compromising, and not to be tolerated.

At the close of 1879, she made the acquaintance of Mr. A. P. Sinnett, at that time on the editorial staff of the *Pioneer*, published at Allahabad, who became her disciple and staunch supporter; and who became the advocate of, and writer on, "Occultism," as well as the biographer of the heroine of this notice. As a master of the English language, and well up in literary and scientific attainments, his adhesion was a splendid acquisition, and from his pen have issued numerous publications in the interests of the Society, which are very able expositions of the ethics pertaining to "Occultism" in general. In fact, he claims to be the mouth-piece of the adepts in the background, and as their exponent not even second to Madame B. herself. But in nothing is shown the "eccentricity" of the lady in question more strikingly than in her treatment of her faithful and staunch friend and ally, which has called forth a strong remonstrance from Mr. Sinnett, and which has left a sore that will take something to heal. (See *Lucifer*, for November, 1888.)

His own impressions of Madame B. are thus recorded, concerning his "memory portraits" of her as then presented:— "Some recall her flushed and voluble, too loudly declaiming against some person or other who had misjudged her or her

Society; some show her quiet and companionable, pouring out a flood of interesting talk about Mexican antiquities, or Egypt, or Peru, showing a knowledge of the most varied and far-reaching kind, and a memory for names and places and archæological theories she would be dealing with, that was fairly fascinating to her hearers." Speaking of her personal appearance, he had great difficulty in forming an estimate of her age, especially "as *chelas* under strict rules are forbidden to tell their ages, and the problem was somewhat complicated by the fact that she had, within the few years previous to my first knowledge of her, grown to somewhat unwieldy proportions."

On or about same time she met with Mr. A. O. Hume, a gentleman holding an important governmental position, who became much interested, and along with Mr. Sinnett formed a branch society, mainly intended to interest Anglo-Indian society. His then favourable opinion of Madame B. and Theosophy was evidenced by a small work he published, entitled, "Hints on Esoteric Theosophy"; but in consequence of his belief in the genuineness of the phenomena being shaken by certain discoveries on his part, he withdrew from the movement; and according to the statement of a not very favourable critic, Mr. Hume's present position is thus described, and he is made to say, that "despite all the frauds perpetrated, there have been genuine phenomena, and that, though of a low order, Madame really had and has Occultists of considerable though limited powers behind her; that K. H." (of whom more anon) "is a real entity, but by no means the powerful and godlike being he has been painted, and that he has had some share, directly or indirectly, in the production of the K. H. letters." This opinion from one who was so intimately connected with the Society in its phenomenal department, especially in its earlier stages, is entitled to much weight; but it leaves the actuality of the alleged "prime movers" as an unsolved problem.

Her biographer admits that, latterly, "her occult powers have become uncertain and capricious," which is good testimony as to her *mediumistic* powers; in this respect, like the generality of psychic sensitives; but in support of her *occult* powers, it is very doubtful, not to say damaging.

In October, 1879, was issued the first number of *The Theosophist*: "A Monthly Journal devoted to Oriental Philosophy, Art, Literature, and Occultism: embracing Mesmerism, Spiritual, and other Secret Sciences, published at Bombay; and conducted by H. P. Blavatsky under the auspices of the Theosophical Society." It is still in existence, and the editorship is in the hands of Col. Olcott *pro tem.*, but the latter part of the title in reference to Mesmerism *et sequitur* no longer appears.

It is uncertain as to the time when the change took place in her religious opinions. If anything, being brought up in the Greek Christian Church, outsiders would class her as such; but in 1880, she and Col. Olcott went on a mission to Ceylon, as professed *Buddhists*, and now make no secret of their rejection of Christianity, and avowal of Buddhism as their own religion.

In the beginning of 1882, the head-quarters of the Society were removed from Bombay, to more commodious premises in Adyar, a suburb of Madras. In the autumn of that year she became seriously ill, and was summoned to an interview with her occult superiors across the Sikkim frontier, near Darjeeling, who sent a *chela* to conduct her "somewhere in the Himalayas." She was only two or three days across the frontier with her occult superiors, but she returned "practically well again, and cured for the time of the formidable diseases by which her life had been menaced." Like many other cases of *mediumistic* apparent cures, which seem effective at the time, so in her case; for it proved to be only a patch up, and not long after, her ailments attacked her with renewed virulence. In this we again see an exact parallel between mediumism and "occultism." From the statement of her biographer it appears that "her occult gifts have not included the power of forecasting the vicissitudes of her own career," and thus "did not foresee the trying ordeal which she had" (like other psychic sensitives) "so soon to encounter." If her life is so precious, seeing what "powers" are claimed for her "occult superiors," it is quite natural to suppose that they would exercise them for her health and continued life; but in this they seem to be powerless.

In the beginning of 1884, her illness again assumed an

alarming crisis, and a voyage to Europe was undertaken by order of her physician, with the hope that the voyage and change would recuperate her exhausted energy. In the spring she arrived at Nice, thence went to Paris, where she was joined by some of her Russian friends and relatives. While here she was annoyed by the intrusion of many who came from Germany, and even America, to witness the marvels and phenomena associated with her name. She yielded, and there can be no question that the published accounts of what transpired are correct. The narrative says, "Every phenomenon produced *at her will* invariably costs her several days of sickness. I say, 'at her will,' for phenomena, independent of her, took place far more frequently than those produced by herself. She attributes them to that mysterious being whom they all call their 'Master.'" Possibly others may attribute them to other sources than those of the "Mahatmas," who presumably would have different work to do than manipulating forces for the production of phenomena for sight-seers and investigators!

Col. Olcott received "a curious Chinese envelope with a similar paper in it, a letter from one of the 'masters,' on April 5th, in a railway carriage, in the presence of witnesses, warning him of a grave treason that was being prepared for them all at Madras; every detail of which was corroborated two months after." This is certainly good evidence of the action of some invisible power, quite independent of Madame B., who was in London at the time and far removed from the Colonel.

The "grave treason" referred to forms one of perhaps *the* most trying and painful episodes in the romantic history of our heroine; the perusal of all the details, which are given at length *pro* and *con*, cannot do otherwise than leave an impression in which the element of more than doubt predominates. In short, Madame Blavatsky had to undergo precisely the same ordeal that has been the lot of so many Psychic Sensitives; and that which she had characterised as fraudulent mediumistic phenomena in others, was, by the irony of fate, charged upon herself, and in her person "occult" phenomena were put on their trial, and she had to undergo the process of "exposure." Would that the result

had been more satisfactory for the parties concerned, both visible and invisible!

The circumstances are briefly these. During the absence of both Founders in Europe, in 1884, a Madame Coulomb, who was housekeeper of the Head-Quarters in Madras, along with her husband who seems to have been a man of all work, and who had charge of Madame B.'s rooms, for reasons of their own made things very unpleasant for the officers of the Society in charge *pro tem.*; and as a result, they were both expelled from their position on the premises, as well as from their membership in the Society. In revenge—according to some, but from other and better motives according to themselves—they went over to the “enemies” of the Society, and gave, or sold, to the Editor and Proprietors of the *Madras Christian College Magazine*, a series of letters alleged to have been sent to her from time to time by Madame Blavatsky, chiefly with reference to the production of phenomena, in which they both roundly declare that they participated; in fact that they were her confederates. In defence of herself and allegations, Madame Coulomb published a pamphlet entitled, “Some Account of my Intercourse with Madame Blavatsky, from 1872 to 1884.” In the Preface, she says, “I have *not* forged her name, &c. I hope Madame Blavatsky will prosecute me—I shall not run away. But I do not think she will, for she knows how much would then be revealed, and how trumpery her professions would turn out to be.” This may, or may not, be the woman’s revenge, but it is certain that Madame B., when she was made aware of the charges against her, said that she would return to India and “prosecute” her slanderers in a Court of Justice: and what is equally certain, she did return to India, but did *not* prosecute the Coulombs. Had the prosecution been carried out, many facts could or would have been elicited that would settle many open questions. The letters—printed in full—are undoubtedly compromising in the highest degree; against which Madame B. says, that the incriminating portion are forgeries by Madame Coulomb.

One incident referred to is a certain letter from one of the “Masters,” written and sent to Mr. Sinnett by “occult” means. The full details of this phenomenon are reported at

length in the *Theosophist*, August, 1881. He there stated that it was "physically impossible" for the letter to have been written by Madame Blavatsky, yet Madame Coulomb says "that Madame Blavatsky wrote before me the latter part of the letter; I saw it addressed and given into the hands of Mr. Coulomb, telling him to put it in the *Astral Post Office*"; and she then describes how the letter was dropped through a slit in the ceiling. Of course, this rests on testimony that may be questionable, and it must be taken for what it is worth. Many letters from the "Mahatmas" were sent to Mr. Hume as well as to Mr. Sinnett. One of these refers to "a young man," to whose rapid spiritual development K. H. draws Mr. Hume's especial attention; it reads thus: "A Soul is being breathed into him, a new Spirit let in, and with every day he is advancing towards a state of higher development. One fine morning the 'soul' will find him; but, unlike your English mystics, it will be under the guidance of the true *living adept*." Mr. Hume states, "that, at the very time the above passage was written, the young man in question was systematically cheating and swindling me by false contracts, besides embezzling my money." Such a statement by an English gentleman of good standing cannot be gainsaid; and his after-withdrawal from the Society can well be understood.

Madame Blavatsky returned to India at the end of 1884, but took no legal steps against her traducers, and became ill again, being confined to her room for months. She had scarcely got over this troublesome affair before she was involved in another, from a most unexpected quarter, and which was, perhaps, the most serious of the two.

Most of my readers will be aware of the existence of "The Society for Psychical Research," established in London for the purpose of testing by "scientific" methods, or otherwise, all abnormal phenomena, *i.e.*, such as come within their reach. The alleged "occult" marvels came to their knowledge, and they instituted enquiries, being assisted by Col. Olcott and others connected with the Theosophical Society, who were then in London, and who cheerfully, and in good faith, gave their testimony and experience before a committee appointed for the purpose. The first Report of these pro-

ceedings was issued in December, 1884, which Report stated "that it seems undeniable that there is a *prima facie* case, for some part, at least, of the claims made, which cannot be ignored."

A resolution had been passed, in order to form a more definite judgment, that it was requisite for some "trusted observer" to proceed to India, and gather information there by examining on the spot, both natives and Europeans, who could give information and testimony regarding the phenomena. In pursuance of this, one Mr. R. Hodgson, a prominent, but by no means favourable, member of the committee, was sent out to India in November, 1884, who carried on his investigations for three months, and returned in April, 1885. The result of said investigations was published in a bulky volume in December, 1885.

A more unfit "observer" could hardly have been selected, and although he—like the generality of exposers of psychical phenomena—makes great pretensions that whatever he did was in the interest of truth, yet the animus of himself and leading members of said society, which runs on all fours with that of the *Seybert Commission*, are only too well known. The Report abounds with too many may be's, and might be's, as to *how* the phenomena were produced, to be of any practical value whatever to the true student of psychology. The summing up of the Report, on the rapid, and in many instances futile, testimony of the "observer," or commissioner, is this: "For our own part, we regard her (Madame B.) neither as the mouth-piece of hidden seers, nor as a mere vulgar adventuress; we think that she has achieved a title to permanent remembrance as one of the most accomplished, ingenious, and interesting impostors in history."

The above may be the verdict of an incompetent and irresponsible committee of a society that amuses itself with trifles, which the merest tyro in the study of abnormal phenomena considers it beneath his dignity and notice to dwell upon, but not so with many others whose testimony, as to their actuality, is far more worthy of attention and credence than that of a raw "investigator," whose self-sufficiency is equalled by his ignorance of psychic law and manifestation. This much in justice to Madame Blavatsky, who, whether at

certain times, and on specific occasions, did condescend to use artificial means, or did not, it must be admitted by all impartial minds that the general genuineness of her manifestations is unimpeachable. The "hidden and invisible" operators, through and by her instrumentality, is another and distinct problem, and *their* position and actuality is a question far from being definitely settled and demonstrated to the lovers of pure truth.

During Mr. Hodgson's residence in Madras, if he was not the guest of the Society, yet every facility was given to him in his investigations, and the chief officers gave him full credit for good faith. How this treatment was repaid will be seen by the animus which only too plainly runs through his Report. Notwithstanding this severe animadversion on my part, yet when dealing with certain specified facts, the evidence regarding these that he gathered is entitled to notice, and it were well for the reputation of the parties concerned if they were dealt with and explained.

As to the incriminating letters, alleged to be from Madame Blavatsky to the Coulobms, Mr. Hodgson got them and subjected them to the scrutiny of one or more London *experts*, who pronounced them to be in the handwriting of Madame Blavatsky; and this judgment must be taken at its worth, whatever that may be. It is worthy of note that Mr. Hume states that out of the great mass of the "Mahatma's" correspondence to him, much of it was mere "rubbish"; and what is more important, Mr. Sinnett, speaking in reference to the documents from the "Master," printed in *The Occult World*, says: "The reader must be careful to remember, however, as I now most unequivocally affirm, that I shall in no case alter one syllable of the passages actually quoted," and yet Mr. Hodgson says: "On comparing the original document with *The Occult World*, I find that there are more than sixty differences between the two." It is precisely these differences that are of great import to the psychologist, for the original has a number of sentences peculiarly *American*, which would be quite in keeping with Madame B.'s writing, seeing she had been in the United States so long, and had but then recently gone to India. Without the slightest imputation of fraud, the phenomena can be accounted for by the

now well-known Laws of Mediumship, without Theosophical explanations of "occult" laws.

It were well if the following can be satisfactorily explained. On May 26th, 1883, Col. Olcott writes: "Fine phenomenon. Got pair of tortoiseshell and lacquer vases, with flowers, in a cabinet a moment before empty." When Madame B. was confronted with the statement that Madame Coulomb had herself purchased these vases, and that the "Mahatmas" had nothing to do with sending them by "occult" agency, she replied: "that Madame Coulomb had tried to obtain vases like them but failed; and that she (Madame C.) had purchased one pair of vases *afterwards*, and that they differed in shape, &c., from those received by Col. Olcott." Mr. Hodgson went to the establishment where Madame C. said she had purchased them, and was shown the entries in the books of the firm, and writes: "Madame Coulomb therefore purchased the vases on May 25th, Col. Olcott received them on May 26th." Comment is unnecessary. This so-called phenomenon was produced by means of the "Shrine" about which so much has been written *pro* and *con*; and its construction—if Mr. Hodgson's statements are to be received—was not of the simple character that Theosophist devotees claim for it.

There is another episode in reference to the documents which Mr. Sinnett affirms were sent to him by "occult" means, from the "great Master," and which form the base of his "occult" teachings, that requires a much more satisfactory explanation than has yet been given. The facts are these. In *The Occult World* (p. 149), is printed a letter, or parts of one, from the "Mahatmas"; which letter is a rescript in a great measure of a lecture that had been delivered by Professor Kiddle, just *two months* before it was received by Mr. Sinnett, and which lecture was printed in full in an American newspaper. Whether Madame B. had seen the newspaper containing the lecture is unknown, but the gravamen consists in the fact of its being an undoubted plagiarism, while the author of the letter to Mr. Sinnett sent it as his own. The after-explanation of the alleged author makes matters worse, and leaves the confusion worse founded. An extensive correspondence on this matter is

published in *Light* for 1884, to which the reader is referred. As the case is now left, it does not redound to the honour of the party implicated, and leaves an unpleasant impression on the mind of an impartial outsider.

In 1885, Madame Blavatsky left India apparently for good, and came to Europe, after sending in her resignation as Corresponding Secretary to the Theosophical Society. She came to England, and settled in London, where she appears to be permanently located. At the same time she gave up the editorship of *The Theosophist*. In 1887, she started *Lucifer*, a Theosophical Monthly, edited by herself in conjunction with Mabel Collins, the novelist, a journal replete with romantic and weird stories, but of little permanent value as a repertory of scientific—to say nothing of religious—Theosophy. Her last and greatest work is “The Secret Doctrine: the Synthesis of Science, Religion, and Philosophy,” published at the end of 1888; in 2 vols., royal octavo, of about 650 pp. each. “The purpose of the work is to lay before the thinking world so much of this ‘Hidden Wisdom’ as it is thought expedient to make known at present to men in general.” It professes to make known the history of the creation and formation of the universe; as well as the chronological history of the different races of men that have inhabited this earth from the period when man first appeared upon its surface, down to the present inhabitants. Whether it is regarded as the wild flight of imagination, or as worthy or unworthy of any credence as to its chronological or historical value, it remains one of the most curious and boldest attempts to lift the veil of the long mysterious past.

One of her friendly critics—Col. Olcott—thus speaks of it: “When she (Madame B.) has passed from amongst us, all the idle dreams of those who have opposed (the T. S.) or misunderstood her will be blown away like the dust from a temple dome, and her works will remain as majestic monuments of her occult mission to our age.” To attempt any criticism of the work is foreign to my present purpose, but I give the opening paragraph from the Proem. “Pages from a pre-historic period. An Archaic Manuscript—a collection of palm-leaves—made impermeable to water, fire, and air, by some specific unknown process—is before the writer’s eye.”

This fire, water, and air-proof MS. is said to be written in language as archaic as itself, and which Madame B. obtained from her—to others—invisible preceptors, the power to interpret. It treats of "Cosmic Evolution," in seven stanzas from the "Book of Dzyan." The reader will see, from this, the kind of authority on which the book is based, and it may turn out to be about as *veritable* and archaic a production as Joseph Smith's "Book of Mormon."

Her Co-Founder of the T. S. in reviewing the work in the January number of *The Theosophist* for present year, sees the difficulty in regard to its alleged origin. He says: "There are some who say that the Book of Dzyan, upon whose majestic stanzas her work is based, has no existence; that it is a literary fraud. Whether it is so or not, it is at least one of the most striking compositions in literature. It is not of the least consequence *per se* whether there is or is not a Book of Dzyan, preserved in the hidden libraries of the Sages," &c. I opine that most of my readers will form the very opposite conclusion, and think with me, that it *is* of the very highest consequence, that the authenticity of the work be verified by substantial testimony and unquestionable evidence, otherwise it will be very justly relegated to the domain of—fiction! or at best be regarded as the outcome of a speculative and imaginative brain store, destitute of any actual scientific or historical value whatever.

An experience of my own causes me to view "occult" stories—given as though they were facts—and Theosophical doctrinal teachings said to be based upon knowledge, with great distrust as to their authenticity.

In *The Theosophist* for January, 1883, a very remarkable article was published by Madame B., headed: "Can the 'Double' murder?" It is intended to show "the enormous potentiality of the human will upon mesmeric subjects—so that the *double*, or *maya-rupa*, when projected transcorporeally, will carry out the mesmeriser's mandate with helpless subserviency. It is reprinted because the events actually occurred, and they possess a very deep interest for the student of psychological science." This was followed by a paper from a correspondent, printed in the March number, p. 150, and a foot-note by the Editor states: "We assure

our learned correspondent that every word of our narrative is true." Accepting these strong statements in good faith, I inserted them in a work I published on "Egypt," to prove that psychological powers were still exercised in modern times.

The facts, on which the story is founded, are thus condensed. The then reigning Prince of Servia, with his cousin and her young daughter, while walking in the park on June 10th, 1868, were assassinated. According to Madame B.'s account, "several persons, innocent of the act, were, as is usual in such cases, imprisoned, and the real murderers escaped justice." Then follows the sensational part, in which she represents herself as witnessing the flight of the *double* of the gipsy medium, which "double," by means of a dagger (also a *double*) inflicted wounds on two men in—, who died in great agony and in a mysterious manner; and the autopsy showed that the skin was not punctured, &c. My attention was called to the statements made in my book, and explanation requested. I consulted the "Annual Register" for that year, as well as some newspaper files, and to my astonishment found that the historical facts as given by Madame B. and the other documents referred to were at direct variance; in short, beyond the mere fact that the murders were committed, the rest of her "actual facts" are pure fictions. It now appears that it was "a newspaper story, written for the *New York Sun*, and formed one of a mystical series." And thus it comes to pass that "students of psychology" are presented with fictions, which they, in their simplicity, suppose are given them to study and work out as psychological problems; and at same time are assured that "every word of the narrative is true." Such "students," I opine, will be chary in future when dealing with "Occult and Theosophical" psychology. No greater problem can be presented for solution to such students than that of Madame Blavatsky herself. With this I conclude my notice of this interesting personality, and pass on to notice her "invisible helpers and guides."

These invisibles—according to Theosophic teachers—"constitute a Brotherhood, or Secret Association, which ramifies all over the East, but the principal seat of which is in

Thibet." They are variously alluded to under the terms, "Mahatmas," "Brothers," "Masters," and "Adepts," the latter being the most euphonious and expressive to Westerns. One adept is said to be "the efflorescence of an age; he (we hear nothing of females in connection with this majestic Order) is not made; he becomes; and the process of becoming is mainly in his own hands." The ordeals and training through which the would-be adept has to pass is something terrific, and even should he be successful in passing through these, he is haunted by the "appalling uncertainty" that he may not be admitted even to the stages of initiation; and his trials may be of the nature of awful perils. No wonder, if all this be true, that the rule is abandonment and failure, for it is the rarest of occurrences for any one to pass beyond the initial stages, and the "awful heights" of Adeptship can only be viewed—except to the very favoured few—from afar. This appears in strange contrast to Mr. Sinnett's statement: "There would be nothing to prevent a gentleman (why not include lady?) in London society from being in full training for occult candidature without anybody about him being the wiser." It is to be hoped that some such gentleman may be found, who instead of leaving wife and family—if he have any—and retiring to "inaccessible Himalayan fastnesses," may give to the truth-loving world some account of the mysteries of adeptship, and not tantalise truth-seekers with the bald assertion, "that there are such men in existence"; but who refuse to come out of their secret retreats; and when they do condescend to impart "knowledge," &c., it is second-hand, and affords no direct evidence of their actuality.

We are told that "the occultists (adepts) have been a race apart, from an earlier period than we can fathom,—a continuous association of men of the highest intelligence, linked together by a bond stronger than any other tie of which mankind has experience, and carrying on with a perfect continuity of purpose the studies, traditions, and mysteries of self-development, handed down to them by their predecessors. For ages they have devoted themselves to this study chiefly; and have accomplished results in connection with it which are absolutely bewildering in their magnificence," &c. It is alleged that "their clairvoyant faculties are so perfect and

complete, that they amount to a species of omniscience as regards mundane affairs." Again, "an adept of the highest order may live indefinitely, yet the body can rarely be kept alive beyond 200 to 240 years. The old garment is then worn out, and the Spiritual *Ego*, forced to leave it, selects for its habitation a new body (*i.e.*, the body of some one else), fresh and full of healthy vital principle." These and other powers spoken of in a variety of books, are claimed to be the exclusive possession of this mysterious order of mortal men, "whose existence is as certain as the Government Agent in any Indian Province." It is with this "great fraternity in the background, that inquirers who thirst for occult knowledge, can communicate, slight indeed though it be, through the link formed by the Theosophical Society, in the progress of which the adepts take an interest; and who are accessible to the founder," *i.e.*, Madame Blavatsky.

The veil is partially lifted, and two of the adepts are made known to outsiders. One is "Moirá" (apparently the specific guardian of Col. Olcott), and the other "Koot Hoomi Lal Sing," the familiar of Madame Blavatsky, whose name is a household word among occultists. The names are "Thibetan mystic," or it may be *nom-de-plumes*. It is said that the latter had a European University training, but no clue is given whereby this statement can be verified; and beyond saying, "that he is a native of the Punjab, and that there is one Englishman in the Brotherhood," nothing more is given in regard to the personalities who compose the "great fraternity."

In one of the earliest letters from "Koot Hoomi" to Mr. Sinnett, the "adept" claims the descent of his Order thus: "The *Vril* of the *Coming Race* (Bulwer Lytton) was the common property of races now extinct. And as the very existence of those gigantic ancestors of ours is now questioned—though in the Himavats, on the very territory belonging to you (British), we have a cave full of the skeletons of these giants, and their huge frames, when found, are invariably regarded as isolated freaks of nature—so the *vril* or *akas* as we call it, is looked upon as an impossibility—a myth. In common with many, you blame us for our great secrecy. Yet we know something of human nature, for the experience of long

centuries—ay, ages,—has taught us, that the only salvation of the genuine proficients in occult sciences lies in the scepticism of the public."

If the existence of these "gigantic skeletons" be a fact, it ought to be known and verified; and if so, the words of the adept may contain a clue of great ethnological importance, to the psychological scientist especially. Whatever the source of these letters, none can deny that their style and composition are of a very high order; they are phenomenal, view them as we will.

To these men—or, at least, to a few, for it appears there is quite a diversity of opinion amongst the "fraternity,"—and especially to the two whose mystic names are before the world, is due to the existence of the Theosophical Society, empowered to present to the outer world archaic knowledge and wisdom derivable, as they say, from no other source. Unable to find or produce any man, or men, of commanding genius in their own country, or say in Thibet, India, or China, they have selected two—one a European, and the other an American—to carry out their designs, which from their own standpoint are beneficent, and to whose general principles, applied to practical ends for the amelioration of the race, none can object. All can accept and agree with the postulate: There is but one Supreme Power, vaguely designated God, vested with attributes which we term omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence"; but it is when men claim to speak with authority vested in them specially by that Great Supreme, that the difficulty comes; and as continuous history has recorded, from that point commences contention and conflict; and, as will be shown, the alleged adepts with their claims form no exception to the rule. Disguise it as they may, the real issue is between the stagnant and decaying system of Buddhism—which they are attempting to galvanise into the semblance of life—and the Spirit of the Age, which asks for, and will be satisfied with nothing less than, Truth—in Science, Philosophy, and Religion; which Truth, when revealed, will be found to be in perfect harmony in all and every domain accessible to the human intellect.

To meet the home thrust—"Physician heal thyself!" when they are pointed to the position of nations that have

been under Buddhistic tutelage for near some thirty centuries of time—we are gravely told that *esoteric* Buddhism contains the sum of all true wisdom, &c., and that this is in the possession of the privileged few. The pretence is that all religious systems, including Brahminism, Osirianism, and even Christianity, have the same base, and fundamental principles; but when this claim comes to be analysed, like many other "occult" sayings and doings, much—possibly most—will be classed as—fiction! as will be seen in what follows.

It were well to speak here of the formation of the Theosophical Society; which title is the same assumed by a "number of gentlemen, clergymen, and others of good standing," in London, who formed themselves into a Theosophical Society, in 1785, for the purpose of studying the philosophical and theological works of Emanuel Swedenborg, and who published some of his works; so that the present Society, founded by Col. Olcott and Madame Blavatsky, is not the first Theosophical Society.

According to one of the New York daily journals, of November —, 1875, it was a sudden and unpremeditated affair, and it is given thus: "One movement of great importance has just been inaugurated in New York, under the lead of Colonel H. Olcott, in the organization of a society to be known as the Theosophical Society. The suggestion was entirely unpremeditated, and was made on the evening of the 7th inst., in the parlours of Madame H. P. Blavatsky, where a company of 17 ladies and gentlemen had assembled to meet Mr. George Henry Felt, whose discovery of the geometrical figures of the Egyptian Cabbala may be regarded as among the most surprising feats of the human intellect." The meeting had been called to hear an address from Mr. Felt, after the delivery of which an animated discussion arose. During a pause in the conversation, "Col. Olcott arose and proposed to form a nucleus around which might gather all the enlightened and brave souls who were willing to work together for the collection and diffusion of knowledge. It was unanimously voted to organise the proposed society forthwith, and a committee was appointed to draft a constitution." Mr. Felt stated, "that communion with the dead, and the reciprocal intervention of each in the affairs of

the other, was not a mere conjecture among the ancient Egyptians, but reduced to a positive science, and he himself had been able to cause the materialization of human forms in full daylight, by magical appliances."

In accordance with the Resolution, the Society was formed on the basis of a "secret" society, the members of which were known to each other by the formulæ of pass-words, grips, signs, &c. The meetings were continued and held for some time at the house of Mrs. Britten, but owing to changes that took place, she, along with some others who formed the original group, seceded, as the arrant failure of the flaming pretensions made by the society caused it to become a by-word and laughing stock in the *salons* of New York.

What these pretensions were, let Col. Olcott himself testify ; who in his presidential statements about this Mr. Felt, who had "promised to raise spirits by the use of odoriferous chemical substances," &c., says :—

"Here is where Mr. Felt's alleged discoveries will come into play. Without claiming to be a theurgist, a mesmerist, or a Spiritualist, our Vice-President (Mr. Felt) promises, by simple chemical appliances, to exhibit to us, as he has to others before, the races of beings which, invisible to our eyes, people the elements. Think for a moment of this astounding claim ! Fancy the consequences of the practical demonstration of its truth, for which Mr. Felt is now preparing the requisite apparatus ! What will the Church say ? What will the Academy say of this crushing proof of an unseen universe, given by the most unimaginative of its sciences ? What will the Positivist say ? What will the Spiritualists say, when through the column of saturated vapour flit the dreadful shapes of beings whom in their blindness they have revered and babbled to as the returning shades of their friends and relatives. Alas ! poor Spiritualists. Alas ! sleek Scientists. The day of reckoning is close at hand, and the name of the Theosophical Society will, if Mr. Felt's experiments result favourably, hold its place in history as that of the body which first exhibited the 'elementary spirits' in this the 19th century of conceit and infidelity, even if it be never mentioned for any other reason."

These big-swelling words from a man who had so recently and manfully upheld the genuineness of so-called Spiritualistic and mediumistic phenomena, proved to be—a wind-bag! The “experiments” of Felt were *never produced*, and neither the “poor Spiritualist nor the belated Scientist,” to this day, have ever either seen or heard of their “relatives and friends flitting through the column of vapour” produced by chemical substances, by a professor of magic!

This burlesque and farce was soon played out, and ended by the withdrawal of most, when they saw how they had been befooled by their Vice-President, Mr. Felt. Nothing is given in regard to the antecedents of this man—the pseudo-scientific magician, who himself claimed to sustain the doctrine of the immortality of the human spirit by chemico-mechanical means and apparatus. He seems to have gone into oblivion, and with his departure the society had to change its base of operations; and during the next two or three years, the figure of adept Felt was finally replaced by the “astral figure” of the Eastern Thibetan Adept, under whose instructions and auspices the Theosophical Society’s operations were removed to India, where the phenomenal productions were not by “chemical appliances,” but alleged to be by the powers of living men, who, not following the example of Mr. Felt, by showing themselves in public, keep themselves veiled in secrecy, at arm’s length from the scrutiny and examination of investigators; and by the collapse of the phenomena through Madame Blavatsky, this basic department of the Theosophical Society has again been changed, and no more adeptal phenomena are to be given to the outer and expectant world, in support of the “astounding” claims made for, and in behalf of, the “great fraternity of Himalayan adepts.” All this is consigned to the oblivion in which Mr. Felt and his claims have disappeared. Time will prove if the “new departure” of the society will substantiate the boast of one of its founders, as to the position in which it will be regarded in future. Its present status may be regarded as the third phase of its history down to to-day.

The above is a fair and impartial, but nevertheless true, account of the rise and progress of the Theosophical Society, by which it will be clearly seen that it was, in its origin,

purely and simply a development of the "Spiritualistic" movement, which *afterwards* assumed an "Occultist" nomenclature, and from which period dates the rancour of the leaders and votaries of Theosophism to Spiritualism and its adherents; and the continued attempts of the former to fasten the odium of virulence on the latter is a good exemplification of the old fable of "the wolf and the lamb."

The phenomenal powers claimed for the adepts drew great public attention to the society, and when it was made known that these "powers" could be developed by training, &c., in others; and that such as proved themselves worthy might become the pupils or *chelas* of an adept, there was, as might be expected, a rush to obtain the coveted prize, and some—if not many—to my own knowledge, with more or less mixed motives, excluding the "gentleman of London society," joined the Society with the expectancy of sooner or later attaining to the "awful heights of adeptship." *This was the bait* to catch people of high degree; and there can be but little doubt, the failure of these hopes and aspirations of so many would-be "chelas" was the cause of the later change of front; and this part of the theosophic and occult programme is laid aside.

The Rules of the *esoteric*, or inner, circle of Theosophy requires abstinence from all flesh food, fish excepted; and from alcoholic drinks; as well as chastity and continence: in short, whatever has the tendency to develop "animal" propensities and desires, must be rigorously combated until subjugated and vanquished. Tobacco smoking appears, however, to be allowed—seeing that both Founders indulge in this "lust of the flesh"—without stint. The practice of all the virtues—whatever they may be—is inculcated, and the shunning of all vices and selfishness, together with the universal Brotherhood of Man, to be established on the basic lines of theosophical doctrines and teachings. That a closer contact with the Society does *not* yield the satisfaction held out by its leaders is evidenced by the withdrawal from time to time of its members; and of these the Foundress thus writes in her journal, *Lucifer*, for November last: "Several (say many) prominent members have left the Society disappointed in theosophy, as they had been in other associations, which

does not dismay us in the least. For with a *very few* exceptions, in the early stage of the society's activities when some left because they did not find mysticism practised in the general body as *they* understood it, or because 'the leaders lacked spirituality,' the majority left because most of them were either half-hearted, or too self-opinionated—a church and infallible dogma in themselves. Thus, all those who have left have done well to leave, and have never been regretted." If the Theosophical Society—after this slur on the character of well-known good, as well as highly-developed intellectual people—can afford to endorse this spiteful thrust by its Foundress, none will be any the worse; and the seceders have the satisfaction of knowing—by actual contact—that the claims of the Society are not capable of substantiation, and thus unworthy of their future study or care.

In the same article Madame Blavatsky, referring to the unhappy episode in the late conduct of the "Fox girls," says: "It only makes us feel new pity for all mediums, and confirms, before the whole world, our constant declaration that no medium can be relied upon." Many outsiders—and perhaps the seceders included—will conclude that this sweeping statement applies with great force to the writer herself; and will remind her of the proverb: "They that live in glass houses should not throw stones."

The doctrinal teachings of the "great fraternity," given out, as Mr. Sinnett, their mouth-piece, tells us for the *first time*, was styled "Esoteric Buddhism"; but as this smacked too much of sectarianism, and was offensive to other religionists, it is now replaced by another title, *viz.*, "The Wisdom Religion, the genesis of which dates from the *primeval instructors* of primitive man, and his three earlier races (the *fifth* race is *now* on this globe, which commenced its course about a million years ago, and my readers must calculate for themselves, if they can, the date of the antiquity of the first three races). Esoteric Science has to be traced in its origin to those Beings who, led by karma, have incarnated in our humanity, and thus struck the key-note of that Secret Science which *countless generations of subsequent adepts* have expanded since then in every age. These esoteric doctrines, which our Society has been and is expound-

ing, are not *mental* or *spiritual* impressions from some unknown 'from above,' but the fruit of teachings given to us by living men."

Pity that these "living men" do not come out and endorse the big claim made for them by their amanuensis, and silence all sceptics by the exhibition of their wisdom, and their super-human powers. They need not fear in these days, but that they would have vast audiences to give them a respectful hearing; and should an ignorant mob resort to violence, they could protect themselves by their *vril* or *akas* power, against which—if what is said be true—a dozen London mobs would strive in vain.

Seeing that "conceited Westerns" cannot question the alleged living adepts themselves, all we can do is to examine their doctrines, &c., as given forth in their name, and see if they will bear scrutiny.

In reference to the human organism, we are told that man is a compound of *seven* principles. The 1st is the Physical body; 2nd, Vitality; 3rd, the Astral Body; 4th, Animal Soul; 5th Human Soul; 6th, Spiritual Soul; 7th, Spirit.

At death the man discards the three first, or lower principles, and has absolutely done with them. The *fourth* is liable to be, and generally is, disintegrated from the three higher principles, and then goes floating away in space, and is dubbed an "elementary," or "shell," &c., and this it is, according to the adepts' teachings, that performs the manifestations at seances. This theory will not bear the slightest critical examination by those whose experience has led to the attainment of knowledge concerning the laws that govern psychical manifestations. 'Twere just as rational to suppose that an actual corpse would speak, more, and act, as to think that a "floating cast-off shell," bereft of its own motive life-power, can display all the qualities that characterise the defunct personality. The continuous slur by Theosophy and its leaders on what they are pleased to call seances, come with a bad grace from one who, at the time he wrote, had had little or no experience, except what he had seen through the mediumship of Madame Blavatsky in India; and that not even comparable to what has been witnessed through sensitives in both this country and America.

The attempt to unify the tenets of Buddhism and Brahminism, in reference to this division of "principles" composing the human form, has signally failed. One of the staunchest supporters—an Indian gentleman of high literary attainments, and who until lately was a powerful advocate of Theosophy—well versed in Vedantic theology, and a Brahmin of high caste, contends that there are only four. He entered the lists against Madame B. on this point, and ultimately this divergence led to his withdrawal. In fact, and in practice, the Buddhist and the Brahminist work just as harmoniously as a Christian and Mahometan; or as a fervid Roman Catholic and zealous Protestant, in propounding their respective theologies. The Theosophic propaganda, under its present leaders, may succeed to some extent in establishing "Universal Brotherhood" among the different Buddhist sects, but not much beyond.

In 1883, Mr. Sinnett published *Esoteric Buddhism* as the exponent of "Esoteric Doctrines, in regard to Nature; Man; the Origin of the Universe; and the Destinies toward which its Inhabitants are tending." He gravely assures his readers that "Two years ago, neither I, nor any other European living, knew the alphabet of the science here for the first time put into a scientific shape—the science of Spiritual Causes and their effects, of Super-physical Consciousness, of Cosmical Evolution. It is given out to the world at last by the free grace of those in whose keeping it has hitherto lain," *i.e.*, the alleged Buddhist adepts. Assuming the correctness of Mr. Sinnett's conjecture as to the original authorship, it is all the more desirable that these custodians of "absolute truth" should be known; and, also, that proofs be forthcoming to establish the authenticity and veracity of their dogmatic teachings and assertions. Here is a specimen: "The proper home of the fourth race (of mankind) which directly preceded our own was—the lost Atlantis. In the Eocene age, even in its very first part, the great cycle of the fourth race men, the Atlanteans, had already reached its highest point, and the great continent showed the first symptoms of sinking—a process that occupied it down to 11,446 years ago, when its last island went down with a crash. Lemuria should be no more confounded with

the Atlantis continent than Europe with America. Both sank and were drowned with their high civilizations and 'gods,' yet between the two catastrophes was a period of 700,000 years. The sinking of Atlantis began in the Miocene period, and it culminated first in the final disappearance of the largest continent, an event coincident with the elevation of the Alps, and second, with that of the last of the fair islands mentioned by Plato."

Against this dogmatic assertion of the "Mahatma," Mr. Gerald Massey, in his "Natural Genesis," has conclusively shown that the whole story of the "Lost Atlantis," is an astronomical allegory, based on fact *when applied to sidereal and planetary phenomena*. He says: "In the course of precession the invasion and the deluge necessarily came from the south-west, *as certain constellations sank in that direction and were whelmed beneath the waters.*" As a literal geographical or geological event in history, the "Lost Atlantis," with its high civilization, &c., is a fable, but as an astronomical allegorical rendering, it is quite true; the whole story relates to the starry heavens above, and not to the earth beneath, and must be relegated to the domain of mythology, in which the learned ancients delighted to roam. But what sane mind will accept mythologico-allegorical traditional records, as true data for historic chronological events?

Again, "That history (Indian) catches but a few stray, hazy glimpses of Egypt some 12,000 years ago, when, having already reached the apex of its cycle thousands of years before, the latter (Egypt) had begun to go down." Such wild statements, especially to those conversant with the history of Egypt, sets sober criticism at defiance, and can only be regarded as beneath notice, and utterly destitute of any historic value whatever. If the pretentious delineation of the human races of antiquity rests on no surer basis than the above, its "scientific accuracy" may be relegated to the domain of the secrecy, from which 'twere better for the Theosophic Society, that it had never emerged. So much for the "Science" of "Esoteric Buddhism"; we will see if its Theology is more worthy of serious attention.

Like the alleged founder of Christianity, so the history of

the "Lord Buddha" is shrouded in the densest mystery. Even the date of his appearance is uncertain; for the divergent Buddhist chroniclers vary from the year 275 to 949 B.C.; and if Buddha is not a mythical, or ideal, personality, legend and tradition have so transformed him, that it is impossible to obtain any accurate or trustworthy account of his history.

Buddhism, now, is divided into as many sects as the Christian religion; but accepting, for general notice, its two great divisions known as North and South Churches, these two differ in form and expression as widely as the North and South of Ireland, both of which are Christian. In *exoteric* Buddhism we find it the exemplification of a hierarchy, composed of an arrogant, lazy, selfish, if not generally dissolute priesthood, holding their devotees in ignorance, abject servility, and gross idolatry. The countries under Buddhistic tutelage are overrun with monasteries, nunneries, and mendicants. Woman is still regarded as a slave, and occupies the same position as she did in all the old and prior Asiatic religious systems: "Her only hope of salvation is for her to be reborn as a man."

As a natural religion, it is the outcome of the characteristics of peoples inhabiting the torrid zone, to whom work and exertion are irksome; and the practice of religious fervour and rituals is enforced by the priesthood, who teach that this is the only means of escaping the continual round of rebirths into earth-life, entailing the necessity of further and distasteful exertion, so abhorrent to an Eastern, but as attractive to a Western. As in all other religious systems, heresy is the deadliest sin of Buddhism.

Amidst the jargon, confusion, and conflicting teachings of the various Buddhist sects, we can discern the fundamental basis on which the superstructure rests. This is the dual dogma, or doctrine, of Reincarnation and Karma; and this is fathered by the Theosophical Society, which is trying to impose these delusions on the Western World. Dress them up, as they may, in the garb of fiction and romance; or as "sober scientific facts, as demonstrable as a proposition in Euclid," they are nothing more nor less than purely speculative; and this is put forward with unblushing effrontery, as

the only key to solve the old problem of the inequality of human life upon this earth.

The Reincarnation theory rests on the assumption that man is the arbiter of his own destiny; and according to the exercise of his own will power, so he determines his own status in the life which is to come. If the man himself *is* the determinator of his own career, then it follows that the Great Supreme, the Central Life of all that is, is subject to the creature man, who is the highest expression of that Life Power on physical earths; and this is not in accordance with enlightened reason, or strict logic. As human society is at present constituted, who would be born into conditions such as form the surroundings of the vast mass and majority of the human race? This doctrine proves that the "Mahatmas," with all their boasted *knowledge*, have progressed no further than the plane of "appearances," and they invest these appearances with a reality that some *know* they do not possess.

The theory of *post-mortem* experiences, condensed in as few words as possible, and as propounded by these "custodians of absolute knowledge," is, "that the three lower principles, or constituents of the human organism, are finally abandoned at death, by that which really is the man himself, and the four higher principles escape into that world immediately above our own (in Buddhistic parlance called *Kama-loca*). Here a division takes place between the two duads, which the four higher principles contain. The lower remnant floats off in the earth's atmosphere (these are the "shells" that infest the seance rooms) and in course of time become disintegrated and *non est*.

The individual monad which survives (*i.e.* the sixth and seventh principles, *plus* a quantum of the fifth) is the man's own self-conscious personality (?) which goes away into a state or sphere called *Devuchan*, where the existence is a rosy sleep—a peaceful night, with dreams more vivid than day, and imperishable for many centuries. But re-birth in less than fifteen hundred years is spoken of as almost impossible. The average number of incarnations for each monad varies from 686 to 800; and considering that 1500 years are spent between each reincarnation, I leave my readers to make their own calculation as to how many "personalities" they

may become before their "weary round" of physical embodiments is completed, *after* which they may perchance—but not of a certitude—pass on to *Nirvana*, attaining which they no more descend into earth-life.

The doctrine of *Karma*, according to Theosophism, resolves itself into a question of profit and loss, or, in their parlance, "merit and demerit." The good and bad deeds of each incarnation are summed up, and according to the balance, *i. e.*, on which side of the *per contra* it is struck, so will be the corresponding quality of the next reincarnation. But, as there is no other judge than the man himself—or what is left of him—who, or what, is to determine between the good and the bad; for the standard of goodness varies the world over, according to the idiosyncrasies of nations and peoples? A more unsatisfactory system of "teaching" cannot well be imagined. As a speculative theory, it may be made the subject of thought, but, put forward as it is with the assurance of pretended "absolute knowledge," it is absolutely worthless unless sustained and demonstrated by actual proof.

Mr. Sinnett informs us that the adepts "may select definite child-bodies as their human tenements," and this conscious selection "is a phenomenon frequently reproduced by the higher adepts to this day." As no names are given it is impossible to test the value of the assertion. But he does give us examples which, fortunately or otherwise, can be dealt with. He says that "the reincarnations of the Dalai and Teshu Lamas in Tibet, at which travellers only laugh for want of the knowledge that might enable them to sift fact from fancy, is a sober scientific achievement."

These two personages are the highest pontiffs in the Buddhist Church, and are supposed, by the credulous votaries, to be the "living Buddhas," *i. e.*, reincarnations of the "Lord Buddha" himself, who "select," immediately after or before their death, child-bodies in which they are to reappear. Beginning with a theft, by displacing the owner and builder-up of the "child-body," it ends with—a lie! For a full and clear *expose* of this nefarious proceeding, see *Light*, for January 24, 1885. I can only sum up by pronouncing these alleged reincarnations of the Lamas as one of the grossest frauds ever attempted to be perpetrated by ecclesiastics for

the purpose of sustaining their own caste privileges, and imposing on the ignorance of their mentally-besotted devotees. With this strong—but not too strong—denunciation, I leave further reference to the Mahatma, or Theosophist, dogmatical “teachings.”

I cannot do better than give a few extracts from a speech delivered by Mr. Nogouchi, a Japanese gentleman, to the last assembly of the Theosophic delegates at Madras, in December of last year, which forms a practical comment upon “Buddhism at home.” It appears that there are many Buddhistic sects in Japan, and that he named nine of the principal ones. He drew a sad aspect of his religion as now portrayed, and attributes its degeneracy and decay to European influence, which is now paramount, and causing an almost universal abandonment of the old ideas, customs, and even religion, which were prevalent in Japan before its contact with Western peoples. Speaking of the religion he says: “All the Buddhist sects have the same object, that is, salvation from all sins, and escape from ignorance to enlightenment through Buddha”: substitute “Jesus Christ” for “Buddha,” and the parallel is complete between Buddhism and Christianity. What is considered as a mighty advance by Westerners, is in the eyes of this native gentleman a retrograde movement. He tells us that, “The Emperor has left his old palace, and rebuilt it in European style; has abandoned his artistic and beautiful Japanese dress for the European costume; has changed all the systems of Old Japan; and all Japanese are now beginning to mould their minds according to European models of thought. The Japanese Emperors have hitherto believed in Buddhism, and built many temples; but the present Emperor does not really believe in Buddhism.”

“The Buddhist priests of the present day spend much of their time in playing flute, chess, drawing, and occasionally repeat the Pitaka before the image of our Lord Buddha, though ignorant of religion. About *one hundred and seventy thousand* Buddhist priests are disturbed from their long sleep by the many opposing forces which are now in motion in the phenomenally-excited atmosphere of Japan. Old Japan is no more! The old grandeur and prosperity of Buddhism,

alas! is no more visible; and the work is now to reconvert the Japanese to Buddhism. Seventy-two thousand one hundred and sixty-four temples are going to decay, and many are already in ruins and cannot be rebuilt."

Such a statement coming from a native gentleman who evidently has the means of knowing, carries with it its own moral. It shows what a country and nation of remarkable astuteness becomes when over-religions; and no wonder, when the enormous number of priests and temples have kept the mass in such a state of ignorance and poverty. An attempt is now being made under Theosophic auspices to galvanise this dead carcass into life, and it remains to be seen what "Esoteric" or Theosophist Buddhism can bring about. The probabilities are that Japan thinks it has had enough of Buddhism, and will not be attracted by the voice of the charmer. Time will show.

The present status of the Theosophical Society, as taken from the latest published report, of December, 1888, shows that it has 173 branches, with a membership of about 35,000. Of these branches, or societies, 129 are Indian; 13 European; 25 American; 1 African; 2 Australasian; 2 West Indian; and 1 Japanese.

The total receipts, from 1878 to 1888, from donations are £3,620; and from entrance fees (20s. each) £2,300. Of the donations, some £2,700 has been contributed by Indian friends; £470 by Europeans, and £46 by American sympathisers. The President says: "The Society has drawn in donations from the benevolent public an average of £360 per annum—as much, perhaps, as many of our rich Fellows spend on their stables and coachmen!" According to the same authority the Indian populace and branches are exhibiting an indifference and lukewarmness that does not promise any further great extension, and perhaps, permanence of the Society's operation in that quarter. Col. Olcott says: "It is useless to deceive ourselves as to the main cause. This is the political upheaval in Indian society, which has produced the National Congress, and drawn all Indian thought into the vortex of politics. The first effect of the Theosophical movement was to arouse an intense interest in the ancient religions and philosophies, and a great curiosity to

learn if the claims of the school of ancient occultists would stand the test of scientific inquiry. Wherever we foreigners went we were met with benedictions, with fervent expressions of love and joy; and Theosophy became a household and dear word in every Hindu home. All this was natural, but it was unhealthy and feverish. A reaction was inevitable, but how or when it was to come was not clear. We now perceive it, for it is upon us. The wreaths once woven for us are now being hung around the necks of political leaders," &c. With this manly but pregnant statement from the Chief of the Society, I conclude my historical notice of Theosophy and its Founder, and can only regret that it could not be more satisfactory to those concerned.



## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

FOUNDER OF THE NEW DISPENSATION IN INDIA.

The series of historical notices of Messianic Claimants and Pretenders would be incomplete without recording the sayings and doings of others outside the Christian Church, who became the victims of mental disorder from the same cause that fostered and developed the delusion under which they one and all suffered, and which entailed so much suffering and loss on their deluded followers.

Many will doubtless remember the hero of this story, who visited England in 1870, to elicit sympathy, if not aid, from the Protestant Churches of this country, in his efforts to evangelise his native country on Christian lines. At that time he was a professed Theist, and although he coqueted with several of the sects, yet he was the most favourably received and entertained by the Unitarians, with whose doctrines he was most in accord. He preached in many of their pulpits, and being lionized by so many, he drew large congregations. I heard him preach in Manchester, and was surprised at the fluency and mastery of the English language

that distinguished his oratory. He was a well-built man, rather above middle height, with olive complexion, and possessed of a clear and melodious voice; and he might be styled an effective preacher, free from extravagance or sensationalism of any kind. This was in his palmiest days, before the declension set in which ultimated in his collapse. It was his position as the recognised head and leader of the *Brahmo Somaj*—a native Church in India, which advocated the universal brotherhood of man by the abolition of caste, and the many customs of Hindu society that tended to degrade and enslave the native mind by subserviency to the requirements of Brahminical orthodoxy—that gave *eclat* to the illustrious orator when visiting this country. A slight notice of this church will enable the reader to estimate its effect upon Keshub Chunder Sen, its then Leader and most prominent member.

It arose as the result of English education and contact with Anglo-Indians, by native gentlemen, who, impressed by the greater mental power of the governing race, became "Reformers," whose aims at first were rather political and moral than religious; and it was later on that the religious element came into play, as it was found that no great reformation of native society could eventuate unless the bigotry and conservatism of Brahminical intolerance could be shattered, and the power of the priesthood broken.

It was originated by Ram Mohun Roy, a Brahmin, of unquestionable ability and energy, in 1828, aided by several influential gentlemen. In 1830 he was accredited to this country in a semi-official position as the political agent of the King of Delhi. He died, and was buried in England in 1833. After his death, the *Somaj* was in a languishing condition, consequent upon the death of the principal adherents and leaders. But in 1843, under the leadership of Debendernath Tagore, new life was put into it, and a propaganda followed which resulted in the establishment of several important branches; the head-quarters being in Calcutta. In 1850 the *Somaj* was transformed into a church, with a special ritual and liturgy; and in 1859 it finally broke loose from Hinduism, by renouncing all the various rites and ceremonies, which the priesthood had

imposed upon the domestic life of its votaries, and by rejecting the authority of the Sacred Vedas.

In the following year (1860) Keshub Chunder Sen joined, and was ordained a minister of the *Somaj*, of which he soon became the leader. In consequence of changes, introduced mainly by Chunder Sen, a split resulted in 1867, and the old conservative element seceded, taking the title of the *Adi Brahma Somaj*. The one led by Chunder was called the *Sadharan Somaj* which advocated the rooting out of the caste system; the introduction of intermarriage; female emancipation; and the higher education of woman. In 1878, in consequence of the marriage of his daughter with a native prince, attended with Hindu rites which he took part in, he was formally expelled from his position as minister and leader, and with a somewhat numerous following he started a new *Somaj*; and thus the *Brahmo Somaj* was divided into three distinct sects, with organs, or publications, of their own. From this time dates the change in the programme, which rapidly developed into the scarcely-disguised claim of *Avaturship* (or Messiahship) by Keshub Chunder Sen, which was brought about, as will be seen, by precisely the same causes as affected his predecessors in the same line.

In January, 1879, Chunder Sen proclaimed the commencement of "The New Dispensation," of which he was the chief apostle, appointed by God to the office; and how it was revealed to him will be apparent from his own words, taken from an oration delivered in Calcutta, 1879. By this time he was engaging much public attention, and he was generally regarded as an "inspired prophet." He repudiated this, but claimed "when the Lord speaks through me, the words are pure wisdom and truth: and as the omnipresent Lord is everywhere: I have faith in that fact, and therefore I not only believe, but I use my God."

He said: "I am not as ordinary men are, and I say this deliberately. My singularity began when I was fourteen years of age; for I then abstained from animal food. I was debarred from the luxuries of the world, and destined for a life of asceticism and abstinence, and was constrained by the spirit of God." Some years after, he had visions that changed the course of his life, but he stoutly maintained

that they were more than visions, and were real personages who came and conversed with him. The first was John the Baptist, a wild-looking man, who said to him : "Repent! for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. God sent him to me, and I heard his words and profited greatly." He passed away, and was succeeded by the Prophet of Nazareth, who spoke thus to him : "Take no thought for the morrow." Then followed the strong, heroic, and valiant apostle Paul, who said : "Let them that have wives be as though they had none. Paul's words flashed like lightning across my whole heart and soul, and I began to realize my destiny more vividly from that hour."

On New Year's Day—January 1st, 1883—was issued, in Bengali and English, a startling announcement concerning the inauguration of the New Dispensation, commencing with the notification that a revelation had been given by God, to proclaim broadcast the new gospel. Here are a few extracts :—

"Keshub Chunder Sen, a servant of God, called to be an apostle of the Church of the New Dispensation, which is in the Holy City of Calcutta, the Metropolis of Aryavarta.

"To the Saints and Sages, bishops and elders, grace be unto you. It has pleased the Holy God to send unto the world a message of peace and love, of harmony and reconciliation. This New Dispensation hath He, in boundless mercy, vouchsafed to us in the East; and we have been commanded to bear witness unto it among the nations of the earth. Thus saith the Lord : Sectarianism is an abomination unto Me, and uncharitableness I will not tolerate.

"These blessed tidings the Loving Father hath charged me to declare unto all the nations of the world, that being of one blood they may be of one faith, and rejoice in one Lord. Let Asia, Europe, Africa and America praise the New Dispensation.

"The Editors of the leading journals in Europe and America, India, China and Japan, are requested to insert this epistle in their respective papers."

This new departure alienated many who had been his warm supporters, and who saw plainly that the next step was to be the claim of personal Avaturship, or Messiah, and

which covertly—if not openly avowed—followed in due course. He announced his intention of entering on a tour over the four continents, as he had been “commanded by God” to proclaim the glorious gospel of the New Dispensation, but it was never undertaken.

That Chunder Sen did not attempt to correct or dissipate the idea of his personal messiahship among his deluded votaries, is proved by the fact that in 1881, during one of the native festivals, he allowed himself to be bathed and decked with garlands, and put into a swing and swung as though he were a divine being. He also allowed himself to be addressed as “Saviour,” “Merciful Lord,” &c., which demonstrates the fanaticism of his disciples.

A new sensationalism was introduced by the dramatic exhibition of the “New Dispensation Mysteries,” in which performance Keshub Chunder Sen enacts the part of the Mother Goddess. The *Brahmo Public Opinion* speaks of it thus: “The inspired minister appears on the stage, clad in the traditional *sari*, with anklets, armbands, nose-rings, and jingling bangles; dancing as though for dear life, and surrounded by a cortege of disciples, one of whom had adorned his person—as a sign of devotion and humility—with a neck-lace of old shoes.”

These dramatic exhibitions were varied by the introduction of magical performances, but whether they were conjuring tricks or psychological phenomena, is unknown; but quoting from *The New Dispensation*, of April 1, 1883, it is probable they partook of both.

“The Juggler who appeared, on Tuesday last, in the last scene of the New Dispensation Drama, explained the deeper principles of the New Faith as they had never been explained before. There was deep spirituality in every word that was said, in every magical feat that was performed. It was not a juggler playing tricks, although that was on the boards; but it was a teacher who taught wisdom through allegories and metaphors. He knelt before a plaitain tree, and humbly entreated it to reveal the autograph of its Lord and Master; he then cut off a large leaf with a knife, and, lo! the name of *Hari* was found inscribed thereon. The trunk of the tree then yielded, under the Juggler’s bidding,

the nectar of God's love; through a small pipe he attached to it, first as rose-water, and then as *sherbet*. The Juggler (*i.e.*, Chunder Sen) showed a dead bird, and then to the astonishment of all present, and amid loud cheers, a living bird descended from above, with a piece of paper tied round its neck, on which were inscribed the words (translated into English): 'Victory to the New Dispensation; harmony of all religions.'"

The above is a narrative of part only of the wonderful feats produced by the magician, presumably in support of his teaching as a special messenger, appointed by God to introduce the New Dispensation into this world. The *Brahmo Public Opinion*—the organ of the original *Somaj* or Church—tried to minimise the effect of these "magical feats," by saying that "Chunder Sen was known in his schoolboy days to have successfully imitated some of the arts of celebrated jugglers," and puts them down as "jugglers' tricks"; but a careful reading of the published accounts leads me to conclude that they were genuine psychological phenomena.

The *Sunday Mirror* was the organ of the "New Dispensation," which was superseded by the *Mirror*, printed in English. Beyond these Chunder Sen does not seem to have issued any literary works, and as he advanced in his career the usual spirit of intolerance and egotism became more and more rampant. His craze undoubtedly was, that he had a specific mission, and direct revelation from God, to commence a new religion, which was ultimately to absorb all other religions, on the professed lines of the Fatherhood of God and the universal Brotherhood of Man. The inherent weakness of his dogmatic teachings, and the ritualistic system he attempted to found thereon, with all its sensational ceremonial worship, is betrayed by the requirement on the part of his followers to subordinate their reason to faith; *i.e.*, their obedience to what came from him as the voice of God. One of his editorials says: "We, the New Apostles, attach very little weight to the testimony of our reason, for reason is fallible. We did not care to consult our intellect when we accepted the New Dispensation," &c.

But the dreams of Keshub Chunder Sen, and his visions of a divinely-ordered New Dispensation, with its New Hier-

archy, and New Order of Apostles, were rudely shaken by that which is the common lot of mortals—adepts not excepted; for after a rather short illness he died, at the close of the year 1883, about 50 years of age, in his prime.

After his death, his cousin and chief apostle, Babu Protap Chunder Mozundar, succeeded to the leadership; but although an able man, he does not appear to draw much attention in India, and still less in other parts; so that for all propagandist purposes this Drama may be said to be closed, after adding one more dissolving view in the melodramo-messianic stage-displays of modern times.

It is noteworthy that Chunder Sen, in speaking of the Theosophic movement in India, with its alleged occult marvels, &c., characterised it as “an imposture and sham.”

It will be a surprise to many to learn that after some fifty years of this Indian native effort to reform the customs and religion of that vast country, the *three* societies into which the *Brahmo Somaj* has split, have less than fifteen hundred registered members. This startling result proves that the Reformation of Brahminism, if ever it does come, must be brought about by other means than those adopted by the subject of this notice. “Young India” is undoubtedly a factor that is making itself felt. I refer to those who, after passing through the curriculum of the Indian University, finish by a tacit, if not avowed, rejection of Vedic authority, and, so far as can be gathered by an outsider, they appear to slide into Agnosticism, the most difficult state and condition of mind that any and all religious systems have to contend against.

I conclude by quoting the following panegyric from one who, though somewhat of a rival, yet recognised human greatness and purity of character even in Indians:—“Keshub Chunder Sen was a speaker of the rarest gifts. His pure life and brotherly yearning towards his fellow men, together with that potent factor—personal magnetism—made him loved for himself after the charms of his oratory had died away.” The latter sentence, I opine, gives the key to the solution of the problem involved in the life-history of this remarkable man and his work.