

A RATIONAL FAITH

OR

A SCIENTIFIC BASIS FOR BELIEF IN A FUTURE PROGRESSIVE
STATE VERSUS FAITH IN TRADITIONS AND DOGMAS
IRRECONCILABLE WITH REASON

BEING

A REPRINT OF "REASONS FOR THE HOPE THAT IS IN ME"
AND OTHER PAMPHLETS, &c.

BY

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Grand Reality," &c.*

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PREFACE.

“Oh! for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still.”

How frequently does the above familiar quotation suggest itself to the minds of those grieving over a loved one who has been called away by the hand of death, yet how very few, were they to feel the touch of a spirit-hand, but would shrink from it with dread, if not with horror; and were they to hear the voice of the loved departed, would they not tremble with fear at the sound? I may here, in corroboration of this, mention a case related to me by a friend, who, with his wife and only child, a schoolmate of one of my daughters, used to sit in the same church with my family and self many years ago. He told me that, having heard of the wonderful results obtained by us at our family circle, he got his wife and daughter to sit with him one evening to see if they could get any spirit manifestations. They had only sat for a few minutes when his daughter excitedly exclaimed, “Oh! I see a spirit sitting on the sofa;” upon which they all jumped up from their seats and rushed out of the room in terror. I said to him, “What you have related to me reminds me of the story of a boy who went fishing one morning, and who, at the first pull on his line by a fish, threw his rod into the water, and ran home to tell his mother that a nasty big fish had taken his rod and line from him.”

What is the cause, let us consider, of this prevailing superstitious dread of the manifestations of the presence of spirit friends? Does it not arise from the false teachings of those who profess to be the people's spiritual

advisers, but who, from not having investigated the subject, in reality know no more about it than savages do of differential calculus? The fact is, these reverend spiritual deceivers of the masses have, from interested motives, impugned the character of God by representing that for many centuries past the Almighty has closed up the avenue of communication between the visible and invisible worlds against the return to earth of His ministering spirits to comfort the sorrowing and the downcast, and that now only evil spirits are permitted by Him to return to tempt and deceive mankind. Yet these priests and parsons have the effrontery to declare the truth—namely, that “God is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” At what date, let me ask these blind leaders of the blind, did the Almighty bring in an amending act to prevent the pure, the true, and the good from returning to earth to influence and guide their loved ones still in the flesh?

In the same way as the printing press, at the time of its introduction, was denounced by the priesthood as an invention of the devil, since through its influence in spreading intelligence broadcast the world would, in time, become too enlightened to be longer duped by priestcraft, so in our day have these pious deceivers of the people had the audacity to denounce communion between the two worlds, and those who avail themselves of this grand avenue of knowledge, because they well know that their irrational dogmas and God-dishonouring creeds, through which the simple religion inculcated by the worthy Jesus has been travestied, cannot stand the light of truth let in through modern Spiritual investigation and research.

Let me ask those who are afraid to hold communion with their “loved and lost,” were the early followers of Jesus afraid when Moses and Elias appeared to them on the Mount? or when the materialized spirit-form of Jesus stood in their midst, the doors of the room in which they were assembled being at the time closed? or when Jesus again materialized and walked with two of them on the road to Emmaus? Was John, let me ask,

afraid when the bright spirit appeared to him on the Island of Patmos and declared that he was the spirit of one of his brethren the prophets? Then why should anyone be afraid to hold communion with the spirits of their friends when they, in our day, endeavour to manifest their presence when the necessary conditions are present?

If it be true that only evil spirits can return, why, let me ask, are we enjoined to "try the spirits," to "believe not every spirit," to "beware of deceiving spirits?" "By their fruits shall ye know them;" "for I would not have you ignorant, brethren, of spiritual things." Without Spiritual manifestations we possess no rational evidence of a life to come; all is mere conjecture, based on credulity and superstition. Through these manifestations we have a scientific basis for belief in a progressive future state for man, and through spirit-communion we learn of God's infinite wisdom, unerring justice, and everlasting mercy for all mankind, and of that glorious destiny which eventually awaits every human soul, be they saint or sinner, exalted or debased; for, as God sends the rain on the just and the unjust, and His sun shines on the good and bad alike, so His love, being infinite, is, both here and hereafter, over all His children.

THE AUTHOR.

MELBOURNE, 1st May, 1892.

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REASONS FOR THE HOPE THAT IS IN ME

OR,

EVIDENCES OF A FUTURE LIFE.

[*Reprinted from "The Two Worlds."*]

PREFATORY NOTE BY EDITOR OF "THE TWO WORLDS."

THE great interest awakened by Mr. H. J. Browne's striking experiences in Spiritualism, as given at the recent Bradford Conference, has induced in many of the listeners present the wish that his exciting narrative, together with such other of his wonderful experiences as constitute marked events in his life, should be presented to the public in the form of a series of articles. In view of the Editor's acquaintance with this estimable gentleman and his family during her visit to the Australian colonies, she ventured to urge upon him compliance with the above-named very general request. As Mr. Browne and his family were only tourists through England and the Continent prior to their return to Australia, Mr. Browne felt some difficulty in complying with his numerous friends and admirers' request, but at the solicitation of Dr. and Mrs. Britten, during a brief visit paid to them, the promise to do his best—as far as travel and change of scene permitted—was most kindly made. As a series of irrefutable arguments to which no answer could by any possibility be given in disproof, this pamphlet is amply worthy the attention of every thoughtful reader.

MANCHESTER, 31st July, 1891.

PART I.

INTRODUCTION.

BEFORE relating some of the many wonderful experiences I have had in the investigation of Spiritual science I shall make a few preliminary remarks.

Without, I hope, being deemed egotistic, I may state I was reared in the strictest of "orthodox" schools, my father having been a clergyman of the Established

Church of Scotland. Until I was about forty years of age I adhered to the "orthodox" faith, notwithstanding that frequently during that period I had felt that the reason with which God had endowed me was at variance with many of the doctrines which I had been taught to revere as divine verities. About this time the green spectacles of superstition seemed suddenly to drop from my eyes, and the irrationality and God-dishonouring character of many of the orthodox doctrines became at once apparent to me. I could then look back at the many struggles between truth and error my mind had gone through during the years alluded to, in my earnest endeavours to dispel doubts, which would involuntarily spring up through my moral consciousness revolting against doctrines which, even then, seemed to me derogatory to the character of God. When, however, these doubts arose, such passages as "He that doubteth is damned," "He that believeth not is condemned already," would rise up in my mind, and for the time silence these doubts. I was at that time unconscious of the fact that doubt was the great lever by which the world had been raised from savagery to civilization, and that it was not only the right but also the duty of every one to doubt whenever anything clashed with his divine gift of reason. Blind faith, however, at length, as I have stated, gave way to reason, and I then, and have ever since, felt a deep sense of gratitude to God for my emancipation from mental bondage.

As one would feel who had been a slave all his life and suddenly set free, so on my emancipation from the thralldom of superstition I felt much like a ship at sea without a compass to steer by.

For the purpose of satisfying the craving of my mind for some sure foundation on which to rest, I commenced to read all the books I could lay my hands upon relating to the various religions of the world, but although I found each of these contained some sublime truths, none of them appeared to me to be soul-satisfying. About this time I was induced by a friend to read a work on the Spiritual philosophy, and though, like all others who

are ignorant of the subject, I was then much opposed to anything connected with Modern Spiritualism, I was truly delighted with the theories set forth therein. I must confess that I wished they were true, but I thought they were too good to be true. Modern Spiritualism I looked upon as only suitable for people of a credulous disposition and of an imaginative turn of mind. The fact that such men as Professors Crookes, Wallace, Varley, and other almost equally eminent men, had publicly acknowledged the reality of Spiritual phenomena seemed to have had no effect on my mind, as it should have done were it not for the obstinacy which prejudice engenders. I had no idea then that Spiritual manifestations were capable of proof by the positive evidence of demonstrable facts, as I afterwards found them to be. I was, however, so fascinated with the Spiritualistic theory, as I then termed it, that I read with eagerness all books on the subject that I could procure, and the more I read, the more rational, beautiful, and soul-elevating did the Spiritual philosophy appear to me to be. During what I now term my transition period—that is, from darkness to light, or from blind belief in ancient superstition to knowledge resting on facts capable of demonstration—I still paid my pew rents and sent my family to church, not having anything of a definite character to give them in place of the old priestly superstition. So soon, however, as I obtained what I never expected to do—namely, scientific demonstration of the truth of Spiritual manifestations—I at once discouraged my family in continuing to believe what I now term and am prepared to prove is popular blasphemy. It was not long, however, before they all adopted similar views to mine, having, like myself, obtained irrefutable proofs of the truth of Spiritual phenomena.

In looking back at my past life I am truly astounded to think how I, as a rational being, could have so long believed in doctrines which are as God-dishonouring as they are false and absurd. I maintain that when once rationally analyzed many of the doctrines of the popular

faith prove themselves to be absurd, and that belief in them is a disgrace to the intelligence of the age in which we live.

I may here observe that everyone who believes in a future spiritual state for man is a Spiritualist. The only difference between the manifestations recorded in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures and those of our own day is that the former occurred in ignorant and superstitious times, while the latter have occurred, and are taking place, in all parts of the world, in an age of inductive reasoning, when astronomy has taken the place of astrology and chemistry that of alchemy. I am aware, however, from personal experience, how difficult it is for those who are ignorant of the subject, and who are biased against it through life-long misrepresentation thereof, to realize that Spiritual manifestations are capable of demonstration in our own day. I can therefore sympathize with those who now occupy a similar position to that which I did twenty years back. Let me remind them, however, that it is popularly but erroneously taught that God, who is unchangeable, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, has, within the last two thousand years, altered His laws regarding the ministry of angels and communion between the unseen and the visible worlds. In other words, it is popularly taught that formerly those who had passed through the change called death did, at times, manifest themselves in various ways to men, but that for many centuries past God has closed up the thoroughfare between the two worlds to all except an imaginary evil spirit called Satan, whom He allows to go to and fro like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. In corroboration of this, I need only refer to the appearance of Samuel to Saul; to that of Moses and Elias on the Mount; and to that of the bright Spirit on the Island of Patmos, who declared to John that he was the Spirit of one of his brethren the prophets; coupled with the popular teachings regarding a personal devil, who is represented as the ubiquitous tempter of mankind. The fallacy and God-dishonouring character of such teachings would be

palpable at once to every rational being were it not that the judgment of the great majority of the people has been warped on this subject in their childhood, before they were capable of using their reason. They have been taught *what* to think, not *how* to think; that to use the reason with which God hath endowed them, in that which is the most important matter of life, is sinful; that he that doubteth what cunning priests, from interested motives, have branded as of divine authority shall be eternally damned; and the masses have thereby been deceived and misled by priests and parsons, their self-constituted spiritual teachers.

These so-called spiritual teachers must be either cognizant that they are deceiving their followers, or else they are culpably ignorant on that subject which they profess to be capable of teaching. In the former case, they are wolves in sheep's clothing; in the latter, they are blind leaders of the blind. Which they are is only known to themselves individually, for, as a rule, they keep their counsel to themselves on this subject, from the fear of losing their place and pay if they spoke the truth.

A pious lie that has got a good start has in all ages proved very difficult for truth to overtake, and this one about God having altered His laws regarding spirit manifestations is no exception to the general rule. The chief reason why priests and parsons are so anxious to perpetuate this pious lie is because they well know that through spirit communion the light of truth is let in upon all the other pious falsehoods through which they trade on the credulity of their too-confiding dupes. They are also aware that their childish and self-condemnatory doctrines regarding an eternal psalm-singing heaven for the few, and an everlasting roasting hell for the great majority of God's children, will stand but poor chance of retention in the minds of their followers when once they become aware, through Spiritual investigation, of the glorious destiny which eventually awaits every human soul in the life eternal.

It may be asked why I, the son of a parson and whose

only sister in this life is the wife of a parson, am so severe upon the cloth. My answer to this is plain and simple—namely, because it is and has been through priestcraft that the light of Spiritual truth has been shut out from the world for so many centuries, and men have been kept in darkness and ignorance regarding the infinite goodness, justice, and mercy of God, the impartial Spiritual Father of the race; also because so many of my fellow beings are still kept in mental bondage by the priests and parsons of our day, who are the successors of those men who built houses to God and dungeons for men.

To all who are really animated by the love of truth, the great question is, "If a man die, shall he live again?" The mere hope that there is another life beyond this may satisfy some people, but stronger minds require something more than simple conjecture on so important a subject; they desire scientific and rational evidence that death does not end all, as the materialists assert, and it is only through the investigation of Modern Spiritualism that such evidence can be obtained. Priests and parsons would have men believe that in former times Spiritual manifestations used to take place, but that since then the Almighty has brought in an amending act to prevent their occurrence. Science, on the other hand, has demonstrated that the laws of nature, which are God's laws, are fixed and unchangeable; therefore if Spirit manifestations were possible in former times they must be possible in our day, and if it were true that they cannot occur now, then it follows that they could not have taken place in Biblical times. No one can truly lay claim to consistency who believes in the one and rejects the other as false, and those who denounce modern Spiritual manifestations as all humbug and delusion should bear in mind that they are only playing into the hands of the materialists and atheists, for it is alone by the evidence obtainable through the investigation of Spiritualism that their blank negations can be logically and effectually met. Materialists and atheists claim to be freethinkers, but they are not so in reality, for they

bar Spiritualism, and are as bigoted as churchmen on this subject. Spiritualists alone can truly claim to be freethinkers, for they bar no subject under the sun from their consideration and investigation. Their leading mottoes are "Light, more light," "Prove all things and hold fast to that which is good," "The truth against the world."

In ignorant and superstitious times all Spiritual phenomena were looked upon as being miraculous or supernatural occurrences. Science, however, has proved that in a domain of law every effect must have its antecedent and adequate cause, therefore a miracle, or a suspension of law, is an infinite impossibility. The word "miracle" is only a term used to cover men's ignorance of the producing cause of occult phenomena, and as God, the eternal and infinite cause of all causation, alone is above nature, nothing else can be supernatural. The laws which control Spiritual forces are doubtless supermundane, but this does not constitute them supernatural, for the Spiritual world is governed by natural law as much so as is the physical universe; consequently all Spiritual phenomena are, though occult, natural occurrences. These phenomena furnish the key which alone can explain the mysteries of all ages. Instead of Spiritualism being a superstition, as those who have not investigated it and who consequently are ignorant of the reality of its phenomena, declare it to be, it is the destroyer of all superstition. Surely that which rests on facts capable of demonstration, which courts inquiry, and which can stand a rational analysis, cannot be a superstition. If it is, the Berkleyan theory must be right, and we do not really exist, but merely imagine that we do. No other theory than the Spiritual can be found to fully explain the mysteries recorded in the past. Spiritualism, in fact, offers to every earnest inquirer a true science of life, here and hereafter.

Through Modern Spiritualism, grander, nobler, and more reasonable views of God and the destiny of man are presented than are to be found in any of the established religions of the world. For instance, in the

popular faith God is represented as the titular deity of this tiny speck called earth, the countless other planets with which immensity of space is studded being passed over as quite secondary in His sight; and as regards the other world, in which we are to dwell throughout eternity, it is represented as being divided into a circumscribed place called heaven, where a few of the most credulous are to be for ever singing anthems of praise to a deity seated on a great white throne, and a vast region called hell, where the great majority of the race, who have conscientiously renounced the God-dishonouring doctrines of the popular faith, are to writhe in excruciating agony during the countless ages of eternity. Through Spiritualism, on the other hand, we learn that the Almighty is the infinite God of universal nature, whose love is over all His creatures, and that the world to come is but a higher domain of nature, where, by the inexorable but just law of cause and effect, each individual enjoys as much happiness as he is fitted by his antecedents to receive, and where eventually there is eternal joy for all the race, not through vicarious sacrifice, but alone by personal endeavour to become nearer in goodness to the Great Author of their being through doing good to others, which is the only service God requires of man, both in this life and in that which is to come.

Before this little speck called earth had e'er revolved in space,
 Ten thousand thousand greater orbs had long since run their race,
 And when this world, yet in its youth, its destiny hath run,
 A thousand other worlds will then their courses have begun.
 Eternity, oh! wond'rous word, beyond man's power of thought,
 In thee the purposes of God have all to be outwrought.
 Yet some men talk about God's will as if they knew it all,
 And as if they had been present at man's birth and fabled Fall;
 They speak of God as though He had to them his plans laid bare,
 And of Christ's crucifixion as if they had been there.
 Oh, foolish men! with reason blest, cast fiction to the winds,
 And let the light of truth henceforth illuminate your minds;
 Retain the true and good in all, put all things to the test,
 And hearken to the voice within, which is, of all guides, best.

PART II.

EARLY SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES.

I SHALL now proceed to relate some of the many wonderful experiences I have had since the first opportunity presented itself to investigate Spiritualism ; not with the idea that my experiences will convince others, for personal investigation alone can do this in matters against which such great prejudice exists. My object in submitting these experiences to the consideration of truth-seekers is to induce them to personally investigate this important and grossly misrepresented subject, and thereby share with me, and thousands of others who have realized its soul-satisfying truths, the happiness which a knowledge thereof has conferred, and the consolation in the hour of trial which such knowledge brings with it, and which no religion founded on mere belief can supply.

Some seventeen years ago I met a friend in Melbourne, Australia, where I have resided for nearly forty years, who, like myself, admired the philosophy of Modern Spiritualism, although doubtful of the reality of its reported manifestations. He asked me if I had heard of the arrival from America of the celebrated medium Charles Foster. I replied I had not, and added, "I want very much to see a *live medium*," for, like others who have never witnessed Spiritual manifestations, I then looked upon mediums as tricksters, who, by some cunning device, could make tables move or produce raps at will.

On learning Mr. Foster's address from my friend, who informed me that he had not up to that time seen him, I at once proceeded to call on Mr. Foster. He received me affably, and consented to give me a sitting there and then. His first question to me was—"Do you know anything about Spiritualism?" To which I replied that I had read books on the subject, but that I wanted demonstrable proof of its reality before I could accept it as true. He said he could give me this, and, handing

me a slip of paper and a pencil, requested me to write the name of any friend in spirit life with whom I would like to communicate while he was out of the room; not to show it to him, but to fold the paper up with the name inside, and to hand it to him on his return. As soon as Foster closed the door behind him I looked around the room to see if there were any mirrors to act as reflectors, or any wires to act as conductors. Finding none, I wrote the name of my father, who, at that time, had been "dead" for thirty years, and folded the paper up as directed.

On Foster's re-entering the room I handed him the paper, which he grasped in his left hand, folded as it was, and he said to me, "The spirit whose name you have written will manifest his presence by causing his initials to appear on the back of my hand, the one in which I hold the paper." I sat on his left side, and his folded hand with the paper in it was never out of my sight from the time he grasped it. As I looked at the back of his hand I observed my father's initials, A. B., appear, at first of a pale pink colour, and then gradually darken to a deep red. After a few seconds they as gradually got lighter and lighter in colour until they faded away.

Being very sceptical, the thoughts that passed through my mind at the time were: "This is a very clever trick, but how comes he, a perfect stranger to me, to know my father's initials without opening the paper?" As I was thus thinking, Foster, still with the folded paper grasped in his left hand, suddenly went into a trance, a state I had never before witnessed, and thus addressed me: "My dear son, I am your father, Archibald Browne. This is an opportunity I have long looked forward to."

I here interrupted by observing that my father did not speak with an American accent. The reply to this was, "I am merely making use of this man's vocal organs to express to you my sentiments." I then said, "That may be; but I shall require more evidence before I believe that you are the spirit of my father, as you profess to be." The answer was: "When you were a little boy I took you to so and so" [mentioning several places

in Scotland where I had visited with my father in my childhood. My father passed to the other life when I was about fourteen years of age]. "When you went to Liverpool" [that was after his death] "I was with you. When you went to Africa I was with you, and ever since you came to this country [Australia] I have been with you."

These remarks brought to my mind the woman of Samaria, who is reported to have said, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did." He continued by saying, "You have been changing your theological views for some time past, and have been giving your own reasoning powers the credit of this." I said that was the case, and that it was alone from reading my Bible carefully that I had been obliged to reject the divine authority of it, as popularly claimed. To this he replied, "You must, however, give me a little credit for enabling you to see it in a new light. I was a number of years in the Spiritual world before I discovered that what I taught on earth was not true, and as soon as I did so I began impressing your mind to view theology in a different light." I said that may have been the case, for it explains what I never before could understand—namely, how from extreme orthodoxy I had almost suddenly drifted into extreme heterodoxy about six years previously. I then inquired if, when on entry into spirit life he did not realize the hopes and expectations he held when on earth, he did not at once perceive the erroneous character of his religious belief? He replied that, after his entry into Spiritual life, he met an old professor of theology, under whom he had studied in this life, and for whom he had a great respect; and in answer to his inquiries he was informed by his old friend that the Scriptures were misunderstood on earth, and that Christ would not appear to them until the judgment day. This explanation, coming from one whom he esteemed so much, he said, had satisfied his mind for a time, but gradually the light of truth began to shine on his darkened understanding, and he perceived the erroneous character of his belief, and that he then, although I was

unaware of it, impressed me to see things in a different light. He concluded by saying, "I spent the greater portion of my life on earth in disseminating that which was false and misleading, from my not having made use of my reason in religion as I did in all other subjects, and I wish you, on every occasion in your power, to endeavour to undo the wrongs which I thus did when on earth." I promised that I would do so, which promise I have faithfully kept to this day, and I intend continuing to do so until I join my father and other friends in the world of spirits. This, I am told by those who are in a position to know, is my mission here on earth.

"And truth alone, where'er my lot be cast,
In scenes of plenty or the pining waste,
Shall be my end and aim, my glory to the last."

On Foster coming out of the trance, and while I was contemplating what had been said to me through him, he said to me in his normal condition, "Have you any one in the spirit world of the name of Ada, for there is a little child standing beside you with blue eyes and golden curls who gives that name?" I said I had lost a little daughter of that name, and answering to that description, some years previously, but that she had not crossed my mind for several weeks past. He then said, "She desires me to tell you she is very happy, and is frequently with you and those at home, although you do not see her."

I may here mention that, in consequence of this and its corroboration through subsequent events, I had the following verse inscribed on her tombstone:—

"Rest assured I shall return, mother, from that angelic place;
Though you may not see my form, I shall look upon your face;
Though you may not hear me speak, I shall hearken what you
say,
And be often, often with you when you think I'm far away."

Foster then said to me: "There is someone here speaking to you in a curious language." I asked him to repeat it, when he said, "It is something like *saca bona*."

To which I replied, "*Saca bona waitoo*," and I asked if he could get the name of the spirit who spoke this language. Foster replied, "He gives the name of Henry Shire," which greatly surprised me, as I knew an old gentleman of that name many years before who spoke that language. I then inquired if Foster could see the spirit giving that name, and he said, "Yes, he appears as a very stout man." I then said, "If it is my old friend, Henry Shire, will he give me the nickname the natives used to call him?" Foster said, "He states it was *nonguambeen*," to which I replied, "That is quite right."

Foster then asked me what *nonguambeen* meant, and I answered, "A big pumpkin, which the natives called him on account of his being so stout." He weighed nearly 19 stone. Foster then said, "He is speaking some more of that language," which, on his repeating it, I understood. Foster then asked me what language it was, and I informed him it was the Kaffir language, which I, as a young man, had learnt to speak when in Natal many years before. I inquired of Foster how it was that I did not see the spirit or hear him speak as he (Foster) did. He replied, "You evidently are not so mediumistic as I am, and have not cultivated your clairvoyant and clairaudient faculties."

On my handing Foster his fee for the sitting, I said to him, "Well, Foster, I came with the idea that I would pay you a sovereign very grudgingly, for I looked upon you and all mediums as little better than impostors. I now pay it most freely and with gratitude, for you have solved the problem that has engrossed my attention for years past, and have given me more spiritual knowledge in one sitting than all the parsons have done during my lifetime." As I was leaving the room, Foster said to me, "You need not depend on my mediumship, for your spirit friends say that all your family are mediums, and if you will only hold circles at home you will find it is so." I was so ungenerous at the time as to think that in Foster's saying this he was only flattering me in order to get another sovereign

from me, but in this I did him great injustice, as subsequent events proved to me.

Words cannot express the buoyant feeling I experienced, and with what lightness of step I made my way to my home after my experiences that day with Foster. On my relating them to my wife and an intimate friend, Mrs. G——, who was present, to my great astonishment, as up to that moment they had both been strongly opposed to anything connected with Modern Spiritualism, they each expressed a desire to have a sitting with Foster. I afterwards learnt that it was from Foster having mentioned the name, and having so accurately described our little daughter, Ada, that the mother's heart was touched, and it was this that caused such a sudden change to come over her feelings in regard to this hitherto detested subject.

The next morning the three of us drove over to Foster's rooms. Before leaving home my wife took out of her photographic album some twenty or more photographs of children, in order to test the truth of his assertion about seeing our daughter, Ada, the previous day. On my introducing the ladies to Foster as my wife and a friend, the former of these inquired if he could recognize the photograph of a spirit that he had described the day before. He replied that he could, and on my wife spreading the children's photos. before him on the table he at once said, "That is your little child, Ada, who appeared to me yesterday," pointing to her likeness. Both my wife and Mrs. G—— received some wonderful tests that day.

On one of my many visits to Foster's rooms I took with me a friend of Dutch extraction, a widower, and at my suggestion he put all his questions in Dutch, a language Foster assured me he did not understand. Notwithstanding this, my friend received correct answers to all his questions, so he assured me. His wife, who had "died" a few years previously, gave him a correct account of the circumstances of her "death," and assured him that such was the nature of her disease that the skill of all the doctors in the world could not have saved her.

On another visit, while on my way to call on Foster, I met an old friend who was a sub-editor to the leading newspaper of Melbourne. I asked him if he had seen Foster, to which he replied he had not; and when I said I was going to visit Foster he volunteered to accompany me. As he walked beside me he said: "If Foster can tell me my mother's maiden name, which no one in the colony but myself knows, I shall entertain a different view of Spiritualism to what I do."

On my introducing this gentleman as a representative of the press to Foster, he asked the latter if he could tell the maiden name of his mother. Foster replied, "If you will sit down with Mr. Browne and myself I will see if I can get it." No sooner were we seated than Foster said, "Your mother, Mrs. S——, is present. She says her maiden name was so-and-so; she died at your birth, and would have been living on earth to this day if she had been treated properly by the doctor who attended her," &c. My friend was greatly astonished on hearing this, and assured me it was all correct, stating that it corroborated what his aunt, who had reared him from infancy, had told him about his mother and her "death," &c.

On another occasion I got a young friend who was greatly opposed to Spiritualism to accompany me to Foster's rooms. As Foster entered the room in which we were he said to my friend, "Young man, your spirit friends desire me to tell you that you have not long to live on earth. They say at the utmost three years. Spirits seldom make such a remark, so your spirit friends must have a particular object in view in telling you this." I interposed by saying that I hoped, even on my own account, it was not true, as Mr. M—— was the friend I had named in my will to act as my executor and trustee of my estate at my demise.

My friend, who was under thirty years of age and in good health, ridiculed the prediction, which, he said, only confirmed his contempt for Spiritualism. Within three years from that date my young friend "died" of hydatids. I followed his body to the grave, and since

then was trustee for his widow and children, until I left the colony on my present visit to this country.

The first time Foster called at our house he took up a photographic album that lay on one of the drawingroom tables. Turning over its leaves he pointed out the likenesses of more than a dozen friends who had passed over, and who had appeared to him during sittings we had with him at his rooms. On my saying that there was the likeness of one he had described to me which he had not recognized, he turned back a few leaves and observed, "That is like J. P.," naming the son of a cousin of mine who had "died" in the colony a short time previously from consumption, adding, "but when he appeared to me he had whiskers." I said, "You are quite right; he had before his 'death,' but this likeness of him was taken in Glasgow before leaving for this colony, and at that time his whiskers had not grown."

During Foster's stay in Melbourne a friend called one evening who had been at several *séances*, and at his suggestion we all sat round the table to see if we could get any manifestations. After one or two of us had held a pencil in hand for a few minutes, without any result, the pencil and paper were passed to my eldest daughter, then a girl of eleven years, now married and with a family. No sooner had she taken the pencil than her hand began to move involuntarily, and she cried out, "Oh, mamma, I'm so frightened, my hand is writing." Her mother and I pacified her by saying there was nothing to be afraid of, and on taking up the paper I found a message on it from my eldest sister, and signed by her, not exactly in my sister's handwriting, but quite different to that of my daughter.

This sister, the wife of a colonel in the army, had "died" on her passage home from India; several years before my eldest daughter was born.

Several other messages from those who had passed to the higher life were also received through my daughter's hand that evening. One of them was from a relative of the gentleman who had suggested the *séance*. I may state that neither my daughter nor any of the family

knew anything of the relatives of that gentleman, and that, through the message he received that evening, he sailed for Europe by the out-going mail steamer.

Having discovered that we had a medium in our own family, we commenced to hold regular *séances*. At these we used to receive communications through my daughter's hand from both friends and strangers who had passed to the higher life, and on subjects of which my daughter was totally ignorant. Her hand was frequently controlled to write in foreign languages. As an instance I may mention that one evening when we were sitting for communications her hand suddenly grasped the pencil in a curious way. It was held between the second and third fingers, with the stem pointing upwards between her thumb and forefinger, and went off forming, very hurriedly, what appeared like Chinese characters.

On my showing the nineteen pages her hand wrote in this way to a Chinaman who used to supply us with vegetables, and asking him if he knew what was written, he asked, "Who write this?" and went on saying, "Like little China boy's writing; not know write well." I said to him, "Never mind who wrote it. Can you read it?" He replied that he could read some of it, but that there were other parts so badly written that he could not make them out. I then told him it was written by the spirit of one of his countrymen, through my daughter's hand. Instead of being surprised at this, as I expected he would be, he said, "Ah, I know!" and began describing how the Chinese communicate with their friends in spirit life, namely, by means of a trayful of fine sand, over which they hold a stick, and as the stick is moved by invisible agency the point of it forms the Chinese characters in the sand, and after each message has thus been received they shake the tray, so as to render the sand smooth for the next communication.

On my showing him the way in which the pencil was grasped by my daughter's hand, when controlled to write Chinese, he explained that was the manner in which the Chinese hold their pens when they write.

My daughter said that she felt a numbness come over her right arm every time it was controlled to write, and her chief spirit guide informed us, through her hand, that that arose from his cutting off the connection between her brain and the nerves of her arm, so as to render it susceptible of control by the invisibles. My daughter was what is termed an automatic writing medium, and afterwards developed other phases of mediumship—namely, clairvoyance, clairaudience, &c.

On one occasion I received part of a message through the hand of my daughter, and was then told that the spirit friend communicating would finish it through Foster's hand. On my calling at Foster's, the concluding part of this message was written through Foster's hand, as promised.

On another occasion, I met a coloured man in the street, whom I took to be a Kaffir, owing to a large hole in the lobes of his ears, in which they frequently carry their long snuff-boxes. On my addressing him in his own language he seemed rather astonished. I asked him to call on me next evening, which he did, when I placed him on a seat a little way from the table, and then called my daughter into the room to see if we could get any message from his friends in spirit life. No sooner had she placed the pencil on the paper than her hand went off writing in the Kaffir language.

I may state she was quite unacquainted with that language, not having been born until after I had returned to Australia from my second visit to Africa. On my reading out to my coloured acquaintance what had been written through my daughter's hand, he was evidently much alarmed, stating that the author of the communication, a countryman of his, was dead. But I said that his *enslenzo*, or spirit, still lived, and that it was his friend's spirit that controlled my daughter's hand to write. This did not seem to have much effect in appeasing his alarm, the Kaffirs, as a rule, being afraid of ghosts or spirits.

Some of the words I read out to him were beyond my knowledge of the language, but he understood them.

At last I came to a word that, pronounce it as I could, he did not understand. As I was about giving it up in despair, "click with mouth" was written in English at the bottom of the sheet of paper. Immediately I pronounced the word with a click, which is common in the Kaffir language, my coloured friend understood it.

When sitting for communication with our spirit friends one day, in the middle of a message, my daughter's hand wrote—"Put down that balloon." I said to my wife, who was sitting on my daughter's left, while I sat on her right, "What on earth have they to do with balloons in the spirit world?" Looking up, I found my wife smiling, when she said: "Don't you see she [our daughter] is, child-like, playing with a toy balloon in her left hand, while her right hand is being controlled to write for our information?" I had been so intently looking at what my daughter's right hand was writing that I had not observed the little toy balloon in her left hand. I mention this circumstance to show that our daughter's mind had nothing to do with what was written mechanically through her hand by an outside and invisible intelligence.

Generally the communications received through my daughter's hand were written with extraordinary rapidity, but at other times very slowly. Sometimes the messages were written upside down, so that we had to turn the paper top downwards before we could read them, and occasionally they were written backwards, so that we had to reverse the paper and place it between the light and ourselves before we could make out what was written. This I am aware some people can do who have practised it, which my daughter had not. The nature of the messages thus received was, however, sufficient to refute the idea that the child had practised writing in this way in order to deceive her parents, as opponents might suggest. One of our spirit friends—namely, the doctor who had attended at the birth of our daughter—used always, when communicating through her hand, to write perpendicularly from the top of the paper to the bottom, instead of horizontally, and we had

to turn the paper on its side, or longitudinally, before we could read what was written thereon.

After a time our daughter developed into a clair-voyant and clairaudient as well as a writing medium. She used to describe the various spirits present, give their names, which, on being asked, they would present, so as to be visible to her, and she would repeat after them messages conveyed by them to her. She sometimes described some of my old Kaffir servants who had "died," mentioning on one occasion the mark of a deep cut one of them had on his face, giving his name, and repeating after him a message in the Kaffir language, as Foster did in the case I have related of my old friend, Henry Shire.

When my eldest son passed to the higher life through typhoid fever, his eldest sister, then a girl of sixteen, stood by his bedside and described to me the passage of his spirit from the physical body almost exactly as Andrew Jackson Davis has related what he witnessed at the passing away of a friend of his in his work entitled "Death and the After Life," a book which my daughter had never read. She also described and mentioned the names of our spirit friends who were waiting to receive and guide our son to his home in the spirit world. Let me here ask any parents, however opposed they may be to Modern Spiritualism through misconception thereof, is it at all probable that at such a time a daughter would try to deceive a parent? or is it likely that I, who can have no object to gain thereby, would in a sacred subject like this, tell a deliberate falsehood? No. They may rest assured that, except for the sole purpose of inducing others to investigate Spiritualism and thereby share with me the true comfort and consolation which a knowledge thereof supplies in the hour of trial, I should not thus expose to an unsympathetic public family matters of such a private and, to us, sacred character.

I may here add that while our eldest son's body was lying in the coffin in one room, he was writing through his sister's hand in the adjoining apartment an account of the various spirit friends he had met since he passed

to spirit life, and mentioning those to whom he was most attached. Several of our other children, of whom we have had eleven, also developed into writing and clairvoyant mediums, and since then I have occasionally had glimpses of the spirit world, so that I can describe it, and I have seen, felt, and heard spirits when no one in the flesh was present except my wife and self. To enter into detail of all these spirit manifestations would fill a large volume, so I shall pass on to other experiences.

PART III.

WONDERFUL TEST EXPERIENCES.

BETWEEN seven and eight years ago our fourth son, who was then about eighteen years of age, in conjunction with a young man who was in my employ, bought a yacht called the *Iolanthe*. After having some slight alterations made in her, they, with our third son, aged twenty, started on a trial trip with her on a Saturday afternoon, much against their mother's wish, with the promise that they would return early on the Monday. As they did not do so, and failed to put in an appearance on the Tuesday morning, my wife became greatly excited through anxiety, so I called in a friend, Mr. George Spriggs, late of Cardiff, Wales, a medical clairvoyant, who had prescribed for my wife with beneficial results on a former occasion. He knew nothing about the absence of our sons, and I only requested him to give us a sitting, saying that my wife did not feel at all well. Immediately he passed into the trance state and said: "Oh! I perceive it is all about the sea." Then I asked him what was wrong. He, still in the trance state, said: "If you will give me something belonging to them," not stating to whom the *them* referred, "I will endeavour to trace them." Without mentioning our absent sons' names I went and fetched their pocket books which they had left in their bedrooms, and placed these in the hands of the unconscious medium. He almost immediately began tracing our sons from the

time they left their home till the time the yacht, which he described, had foundered, which he stated occurred at nine o'clock on the Monday morning through the jib-halyard fouling in a squall as they were putting the yacht about on another tack. He went on to say that the yacht had gone down in deep water, and that consequently it would not be washed ashore.

This has proved quite correct, for not a stick of it has ever yet been found, although I offered a handsome reward to any of the fishermen who would bring me anything belonging to the boat.

On Mr. Spriggs coming out of the trance state he assured me he knew nothing of what he had said while in trance. I may here observe that Mr. Spriggs is a young man whom I hold in the highest respect. I do not know of one spot on his character, though I have been on terms of intimate friendship with him ever since he landed in Australia—a compliment I can pay to but few others. Before Mr. Spriggs left that morning I mentioned about our sons' absence and what had been said through him when in trance, and he kindly promised to give us a sitting the next day.

The next morning, on Mr. Spriggs going into trance, our fourth son, the younger of the two who were drowned, came and spoke to us through the medium, telling us all about the occurrence and corroborating what Mr. Spriggs had described when in trance the previous day. On our again sitting for communications the following morning our other son, who had been drowned, spoke through Mr. Spriggs, saying that he was too excited the previous day to speak intelligibly through the medium, and giving us further particulars regarding the catastrophe. They both assured us that they had not suffered any bodily pain in drowning, that their mother's words of entreaty for them not to go out sailing on the evening they started came vividly to both of them on finding themselves in the water, without any vessel in sight to render them assistance, and that the feelings of remorse this caused them to experience seemed to deaden all sense of physical suffering.

The young man who was drowned with them also spoke through the medium, giving his name and asking my wife's forgiveness, as he was the eldest of the three, and was partly to blame for their going out on the evening alluded to. Knowing that this young man—Murray by name—held a mate's certificate, I thought they were all right, and did not interpose to prevent their starting when they did.

My wife, who is much more intuitional than I am, had evidently been impressed, as she, on more than one occasion after they had left, said to me, "I hope the boys are all right in that boat." In one of their communications through the medium they said that if they could not have communicated with us, to let us know they still lived and loved us, they would have felt miserable; as it was, even if they possessed the power to again take on their physical bodies, they would not do so, as the beauty of, and the delight they experienced in the spirit world, were beyond their power of description. They told their mother to thank me for having kept the Spiritual gates open, so as to enable them to come back and unburden their minds to her and all of us.

Although I made every endeavour to ascertain tidings of the missing ones, I was unable to obtain any earthly information regarding them or the yacht until about a fortnight after they left home, when the body of the younger boy was washed ashore, about ten miles from Melbourne, minus one of his arms, which had evidently been torn off the body by a shark. At his funeral, after I had spoken the address over his grave, a friend, occupying a prominent position under Government, and who has since solved the grand problem, came to me and said, "What a nerve you must have to speak as you have done over your son's grave." I replied, "It is not the nerve, but the knowledge which I possess, that enables me so to speak. Unless I had that glorious knowledge, my eyes would now be bathed in tears."

A few days after this a friend, who is a grand clairvoyant and clairsaudient medium, and who was at that time residing at Adelaide, South Australia, which is

about six hundred miles from Melbourne, wrote to me that my other son, the elder of the two who were drowned, came to him and said that a large fish had bitten part of the right arm off his body, and had taken his waistcoat also. On the medium asking him if it was a shark, my son replied, "It may have been, but I never saw one like it before."

Two days after this a large shark was caught at Frankston, which is twenty-seven miles from Melbourne. A young friend of my son's, who happened to be present when the shark was caught, suggested to the policeman stationed there that the shark should be opened, to see if there was anything in it belonging to the three young men who had recently been drowned in Port Phillip Bay. On opening the shark, which was a white, deep-sea shark, quite different to the blue sharks with which the bay is infested, my son's right arm, almost up to the elbow joint, was found, also part of his waistcoat, in the pocket of which were found an old gold watch which his mother had lent to him, as his own silver one was out of order, his keys, pipe, and about twelve shillings in silver. The watch was found to have stopped at nine o'clock, the exact time we were told by Mr. Spriggs, three weeks before, that the accident to the boat had occurred.

On the policeman handing me over in court, by order of the presiding magistrate, the portion of my son's arm, the watch, and other articles which he had found in the shark, he begged me to allow him to give me a shilling for one of those thus found, as he desired to have one of them in remembrance of the occasion. I told him he was welcome to take one. The rest of them I distributed among the members of my family, except one, which I retained, and which I got fastened on to my watch chain, where it has ever since remained. The pipe I gave to a young friend of my son's who was with him when he bought it, consequently was able to recognize it. The old gold watch, set at nine o'clock, I had superficially cleaned, and retain it as a family heirloom.

Being invited to a materializing circle about this time—a circle at which I had been present many times before, and at which I had witnessed numerous marvellous phenomena—I willingly attended. The ladies and gentlemen present on the occasion referred to were nearly all intimate friends of my family, as was also the medium, who, I may observe, received no remuneration for his services.

No sooner had the medium retired behind the curtains, which were hung across a corner of the room to exclude the light, which is generally necessary for manifestations of this kind, than he went into a deep trance.

A few minutes after this I saw the materialized form of the younger of my two sons who were drowned open the curtain and walk out. On his doing so several of the ladies and gentlemen observed, "Oh, there is Willie Browne." That was the name of the younger son. As he stood in front of us he held up his arm in order to show that although his physical body had been deprived of it, that did not affect his spirit form. After remaining before us for a few minutes he retired behind the curtains. He was not able to speak to us. The next spirit to materialize was my other son who was drowned, but he no sooner came from behind the curtains than he had to retire again, and on my asking the reason why he who was more physically developed than his brother could not remain visible to us as long as his younger brother did, I was informed by one of the medium's spirit guides that it was owing to his not possessing the power of concentration of thought to the degree his brother did.

As my sons' characters in this respect were not known to the medium, and as such was the case, the elder of the two not having been able to fix his mind steadfastly on anything for a length of time, while the younger one had no difficulty in doing so, I considered this to be very probably the cause of the difference in the manifestations of my two sons on this occasion.

My sons, I may observe, were both over six feet in height, and appeared so when they were materialized,

while the medium is rather under the ordinary height. About a dozen others materialized that evening, ranging from little children to full-grown people. I am aware that it is only those who have personally witnessed spirit materializations who can credit my account of my sons having appeared in materialized forms, the counterpart of their physical bodies. Even for those who have investigated Spiritualism, the fact that spirits can materialize themselves is almost too much for them to believe until they have actually seen them do so. I may here state that a much fuller account from my pen than I have here given of the loss of the *Iolanthe* yacht appeared at the time in one of the Melbourne newspapers, and was reproduced in many of the English papers of the day.

I shall now relate a few of my experiences in America, through which I returned with my family to Europe, in order to further investigate the phenomena of Modern Spiritualism, or Spiritual Science, as I prefer to call it. On our arrival in San Francisco, where we were totally unknown except to Mr. and Mrs. Fred. Evans, whom we met when they visited Australia, we, in order to remain incognito, determined not to call on these friends until we had sittings with some of the principal mediums of the place. Observing by the papers that a Spiritual meeting was to be held on the Sunday evening at a place called the Temple, at which the celebrated medium Mrs. Whitley, of whom we had never before even heard, was to give tests, my wife and I determined to be present.

We went, accompanied by our youngest daughter, and took a back seat in the body of the hall.

The Temple is a large building, capable of holding about 2,000 people, and was about two-thirds full. After having given some wonderful tests to a number of those present—that is, if those to whom Mrs. Whitney gave these tests were not in collusion with her, which we had no reason to suppose was the case—she said, “I see the spirit of one who when on earth was a clergyman. He says he was known by the name of the

Rev. Archibald Browne, and that there is present in this hall his son, his son's wife, and one of their daughters." I said aloud, "That is quite correct." Mrs. Whitney then said, "Your father says your name is Hugh Junor Browne." I replied that it was, and I was sure no one present, but my wife, daughter, and self knew that name. Mrs. Whitney, continuing, said, "Your father desires me to say that your mother is present with him, and I see three fine tall spirit sons of yours; one passed on through typhoid fever, and the other two were drowned." I said, "That is quite correct." Mrs. Whitney then said, "Your father tells me that there is someone on earth connected with you named Colin Junor; what relation is he to you?" I replied "He is a half-brother." Mrs. Whitney further said, "Your father desires you to write to him, and tell him that in a foreign land, and through the organism of a stranger, he came to say how grieved he was to see that he was still so opposed to the grand Spiritual philosophy, but the time would not be long now before he would know its grand reality."

I may here state that my half-brother is a man of seventy years of age, and is very orthodox in his ideas, notwithstanding all that I have told him about Modern Spiritualism. My youngest daughter, who was present at the meeting, wrote to my half-brother all that was spoken through this medium, but, as I expected it would, it had little effect on his prejudiced and bigoted mind. He is still of the opinion that at death he will "jump into the arms of Jesus." One would not be surprised at an ignorant man saying this, but for a highly educated man, as he is, to use such an expression is totally beyond my comprehension. We are told in Scripture, however, even the worthy Jesus' half-brothers did not believe in him, so I need not be surprised that my half-brother does not believe me when I assure him that Spiritualism is true, and that it presents a more reasonable faith for our acceptance than that of popular theology.

To the rational observer it seems truly strange how people endowed with reason swallow ancient camels,

while they strain at modern gnats. They believe that Moses and Elias appeared many hundreds of years after they had lived on earth, and that a spirit materialized and walked side by side with some men on the road to Emmaus some eighteen centuries ago; but they refuse to believe that spirits can manifest their presence in our day, thereby assuming that God has changed His laws regarding intercourse between the seen and the unseen worlds. Without, however, the demonstration of Spiritual manifestations in modern times, we possess no rational evidence of a future life for man. But I find I am digressing.

Having ascertained the private address of Mrs. Whitney, my wife and I called on her, and asked her to give us a sitting, which she consented to do. As soon as she went into the trance state a spirit came and gave the name of Mayflower. I observed, "I think I have met a little Indian spirit of that name before." To this she replied, "No, it was Sunflower whom you met." I acknowledged my mistake, saying I had confused the two names. Mayflower then said, "You know Emmy and Otto," the names of two of our dear friends in Melbourne. I said, "But how do you know them?" She replied, "Your son Willie took me to them." I then said, "But how do you know that we have a son called Willie?" To this she observed, "He is present, and stands by your side." She then said, "You have a son, with his wife and two little children, travelling." I admitted that was true, and she then remarked, "They have a servant with them named Julia." I said that was the case, and that she seemed to know more about them than I did, for I had quite forgotten the name of the young woman, whom they had engaged to accompany them only a week or two before sailing. I then asked Mayflower if she could tell me when my son and his family would arrive at their destination, to which she answered, "To-morrow." This was on the last day but one of November, 1889, so that, if true, they would arrive on the last day of that month. I may here state that my son and his family went round by Natal, South

Africa, to see the country in which he was born, and which he left when a child, and were to meet us in London, while we came to this country by way of America. On my son joining our party in London, as agreed, I asked him when he had arrived at Natal, and he replied, "The last day of November." My son and his family had not sailed from Australia when my family and self left, and had to take passage in a sailing vessel, as there was no steamer expected to sail for South Africa for several months, so that if the date named through the medium was a *guess*, as opponents to Spiritualism may suggest, it is the most extraordinary guess ever recorded. We received several communications through Mrs. Whitney from our children in spirit life, but, as they were only interesting to ourselves, it would be of no benefit to others to relate what they said.

Having heard that there was a good materializing medium from Chicago in San Francisco at that time, named Mrs. Moore, I called on her and arranged for a private sitting with my family. On our attending at her rooms at the time appointed, she invited us, as we were strangers to her, to examine the cabinet which she used when giving materializing *séances*; also the place where it stood, so as to satisfy ourselves that there could be no trickery. Mrs. Moore also offered to undress and to dress before the ladies of the party, to show that she had no masks or shawls with which to make up bogus spirits to deceive us. This she did, and we thoroughly examined the cabinet and the part of the room where it stood, thereby satisfying ourselves that there were no trap-doors, wires, or other devices connected with it.

The cabinet consisted of a four-leaved screen, which formed a square of about three feet, with a dark cloth placed over it to exclude the light. In the leaf facing where the chairs stood on which we were to sit was an opening towards the top of about two feet by eighteen inches wide, with a small curtain covering it. On our taking our seats Mrs. Moore fastened the door of the room, which was on my left and away from the cabinet, and then entered the cabinet.

In a short time the small curtain in front of the aperture was drawn back, and I saw my father, who, after remaining a few minutes without being able to speak, retired.

Almost as soon as the curtains closed they were thrown back and my mother appeared; she also was unable to speak to us. After she withdrew our daughter Ada came and spoke to us. We recognized her by the strong family likeness she bore to her sisters. She passed away as an infant, but had then grown to womanhood, as we were previously aware. Frequently, during her communications with us, through her sisters and other mediums, she had spoken of the luxuriance of her hair and its golden colour, so I asked her if she could show us her hair. She at once put her hand behind her head and brought her long golden hair forward. It was certainly a most lovely head of hair, and I remarked, "Well, Ada, you might well be proud of such hair; it is even more beautiful than the head of hair represented on the placards advertising Madam Allen's Hair Restorer."

I may state that the medium had but a scant head of hair, and it was of a dark red colour.

After conversing with us for a short time Ada withdrew, and on the curtain opening again we saw our eldest son, Archie, who had passed on through typhoid fever nearly ten years previously. After speaking to us a little he retired; and when the curtain again opened our third son, Hugh, the elder of the two who were drowned, appeared and said a few words to us. After he had retired the curtain opened and we saw our son Willie, the other son who was drowned. He also conversed for a short time with us; and on his withdrawing and the curtain again opening, our friend Mrs. G——, whom I mentioned as having gone with my wife and self on my second visit to Foster's rooms, appeared at the aperture and conversed with us. She said she was delighted that we recognized her; that, although we were not aware of her presence during our journeyings, she was with us, and, in order to prove that she still took an interest in us and in our belongings, she mentioned the exact

number of packages constituting the family luggage—namely, twenty-two in all.

I may state that Mrs. G—— lived with us as lady-help to my wife for over twelve years, and passed to the higher life several years ago. She was very much attached to my wife and our children, and has communicated with us on many occasions since she left the earthly plane of existence.

I omitted to mention that, besides the family, the governess, Miss Rea, who accompanied us from Australia, and who is still with us, was also present at this *séance*, making eight in all. A brother, a sister, and an aunt of hers, also a clergyman under whose ministry she sat when a child, appeared and were recognized by her. Each of them spoke to her except the clergyman, who kept pointing to his throat, as if there was something there to prevent his doing so. I may state that, at the time referred to, Miss Rea was not aware that the clergyman alluded to was "dead," and it was only after our arrival in New York that she learned he had died of cancer in the throat. As it may be thought from this, by those unacquainted with the subject, that infirmities here are continued in the spirit world, I may mention that it is not so; but for the first two or three times of revisiting the earth plane spirits generally experience the same sensations as their physical bodies suffered before passing on.

Let me here ask opponents to Spiritualism on what other hypothesis than the Spiritual one can they account for the experiences just related? We were all total strangers to Mrs. Moore, who could not possibly have known, or even learned in California, what relatives and friends we had in spirit life. The childish assertion that it is all the work of a mythical being called Satan is too absurd to require refutation. It would be as reasonable to assert that all telegrams are the work of the Devil.

Before the *séance* at Mrs. Moore's closed a good-looking young man materialized, whom none of us recognized. He, however, informed us that he was the chief of a band of spirits who controlled the medium, giving his

name, which has slipped my memory. He said he and the medium's other guides had done their best to assist our friends who had manifested themselves to us, and he hoped we were satisfied. This he spoke in a deep masculine voice, quite different to that of the others who had spoken to us, and in a totally distinct tone of voice from that of the medium. We replied that we were more than satisfied, and desired to thank him and the medium's other guides for the aid they had rendered to our spirit friends. He then bade us adieu.

PART IV.

IN AMERICA.

DURING our stay in San Francisco we had sittings with a number of other mediums, but though several of them gave correct descriptions of our spirit friends, they were unable to give us their names or characteristic messages from them, with the exception of Mr. Fred. Evans, the celebrated slate-writing medium, through whom we received a number of messages from various friends with their names signed at the end. When we called on Mr. and Mrs. Evans they received us very kindly, and they were most hospitable and attentive to us during our stay in San Francisco. We had some wonderful experiences in slate-writing with Dr. Slade, when he was in Australia, but Evans's slate-writing was even more marvellous.

On more than one occasion the slates on which the writing appeared were not within six feet of the sitters or the table round which we sat. After he had cleaned the slates and handed them to us to examine them, that we might satisfy ourselves that there was no writing on them, he put a small piece of slate-pencil, not so large as a grain of rice, between the two slates we had examined, then placing them on the floor, several feet from where he and we sat, for a few minutes, on taking them up,

messages from various spirit friends of ours were found written on the inside of the slates. These sittings took place in broad daylight, in a room where there were only an ordinary table and a few chairs.

On one occasion, when the slates were taken up from the floor where they had been placed in the manner I have described, with only the one little piece of slate-pencil between them, several messages, in quite different handwriting and in three distinct colours—namely, white, blue, and red, were found on their inside surfaces. I brought the various slates on which I received messages through the mediumship of Evans away with me, so as to be able to show them to any one who might discredit my description of them. I believe Fred Evans to be the most wonderful slate-writing medium in the world, and I have every confidence in his truthfulness and honesty. His wife is also a very pleasant and straightforward person, and is a good trance medium.

Soon after our arrival in New York, I observed an advertisement stating that a meeting would be held at a certain hall in that city, at which a medium would give tests, to be presided over by Professor Kiddle, whom I had never met, but whom I knew of through his writings on *Modern Spiritualism*. I may mention that Professor Kiddle was formerly Chief Inspector over all the Government schools in the State of New York.

My wife, my youngest daughter, and myself attended that meeting. There were about five hundred people present, all total strangers to us, and, as usual, we took a back seat.

The medium, a young man of about thirty, named Fletcher, commenced by stating that that was his first appearance in that hall, and that he was only acquainted with two or three of all those who were present. After he had given some wonderful tests to several people, who each admitted their accuracy, and at the same time declared that they were total strangers to the medium, he said—"The spirit of the late Charles Henry Foster, the celebrated medium, is here present. He tells me he is going to assist a friend to take control of me." The

medium almost immediately went into the trance state, and then, under control, walked to the end of the hall where we sat. Placing his hand on my shoulder, I was thus addressed—"I am your father, Archibald Browne; I come to show you that I am present with you wherever you go."

After the medium had retired to the platform, I explained to the audience that we were complete strangers in New York, where we had not a single acquaintance, that my father's name was as stated through the medium, whom I had never seen before, and that from many previous proofs of my father's frequent presence with me, I had every reason to believe what he stated; still it was very pleasing to me to have my belief confirmed in the marked manner it had been done that evening.

After the meeting was over, I obtained the medium's private address, and, the next day or the day following, my wife and I had a private sitting with him. From the wonderful tests he had given publicly, we expected to have received through him characteristic messages from a number of our friends in spirit life; but, though we had some few communications, I must say, on the whole, we were greatly disappointed. We afterwards called on Professor Kiddle, at his private residence, and had a long chat with him on the subject in which we were all so mutually interested—viz., Modern Spiritualism.

Hearing that a Mrs. Gray, who resided only a few doors from where we were staying in West Thirty-fourth-street, held circles for materialization my wife and I called on her, and were informed that circles were held at her house (I think it was No. 330) twice weekly, at eight o'clock punctually, her son being the medium. On attending the first sitting to be held after our inquiry, at about ten minutes to eight, we were shown into the front drawingroom, a well-furnished apartment, and requested to take our seats there for a short time. There were one or two inquirers in this room when we entered, and three or four came in after us.

At eight o'clock we were all asked to go into the back

drawingroom, separated from the front one by curtains, the door of the former being then locked, and the gas turned out. In the back drawingroom was a cabinet, of simple construction, which we were invited to examine, and, on our taking our seats on chairs, forming a semi-circle in front of the cabinet, Mrs. Gray's son, a young man of about five or six-and-twenty, entered the cabinet, in which was a chair, and then drew the curtains, which formed its front, together.

The door of the room being locked, the gas was turned down so as to leave a subdued light, and Mrs. Gray took her stand by the side of the cabinet.

After a hymn had been sung, we heard a band of music, seemingly at a distance at first, and gradually drawing nearer, till they all appeared to be playing their various instruments inside the cabinet where the medium was. After a short time they seemed to go away as gradually as they had come, until the sound of the music died away in the distance. Then there came from behind the curtains a thin, eccentric-looking old gentleman, apparently dressed in black clothes, with a stoop, but very active. Mrs. Gray addressed him as "Doctor," and told us his name, but it has escaped my memory. He said he was going to magnetize some paper, to give to any of the sitters who were suffering from any complaint, and, on Mrs. Gray saying there was some paper on a small table at the side of the cabinet, he walked hurriedly to it, and commenced to magnetize the paper. As he did so, I observed a bluish, electrical-looking light proceed from the tips of his fingers. He then grasped the top sheet in his hand, and gave this to one of the sitters. On his return to the small table, he commenced to magnetize the next sheet in a similar way to the first, and then handed this to another sitter. After this he passed between the right-hand seat of the circle and the wall, and went quickly into the front drawingroom, which was in darkness. While we were waiting for the old doctor's return, much to our astonishment, in his stead came a stoutish young woman, draped in white; she did not speak, but passed into the cabinet. In a few

minutes she reappeared, and walked up to one of the lady sitters, with whom she held a conversation in a subdued voice. The lady then got up and walked with her into the front drawingroom, where she dematerialized, and the lady, on returning to her seat, explained to the other sitters that it was her daughter, and that, while speaking to her in the other room she had dematerialized and vanished. Mrs. Gray told us that the doctor had been one of the medium's controls for years, and had the power of dematerializing himself at any distance from the cabinet, and transferring the matter with which he had clothed his spiritual form to another spirit. It was certainly a very remarkable manifestation.

After several spirits had appeared and conversed with the other sitters, who recognized them and talked with them as old and dear friends, the figure of a young woman approached my wife, saying, "Martha!" My wife knew her at once, and embraced her, then turning to me my wife said, "It is Martha W——," when the latter came close to me and shook hands with me with all the warmth and affection she would have done had she been still in this life and not seen me for many years. I said to her, "Martha, dear, I am delighted to see you again and to be able to shake hands with you once more; I little thought of seeing you materialize, though you have often communicated with us before."

After leaving me she took my wife, who sat on the next chair to me, by the hand and led her to a sofa that was in the same room, where she told my wife that her brothers were present, but that they would not be able to materialize that evening. She desired my wife to say to her father and mother, her brother and sisters, that she sent her love to them all, and to tell them that although they did not realize her presence, she was often with them. She led my wife up to the cabinet, and on taking her inside she raised my wife's hand and rested it on the shoulder of the medium, who was breathing heavily at the time, while she held my wife's other hand in hers. After embracing my wife she dematerialized, and we saw no more of her. She seemed

as delighted to make herself visible and to converse with us as we were to see and talk with her.

I may here state that Martha, who thus appeared, is the daughter of very old friends of ours in Australia, and passed to the higher life many years ago. When on earth she was very much attached to my wife, and since then she has frequently, through various mediums, assured my wife of the continuance of the love and regard she had for her in earth life. She was a beautiful girl when in the flesh, and is still more beautiful now that she has grown to womanhood in spirit life. Our only wish at the time she appeared to us in materialized form, was that her mother could have been present to see her angel daughter in her robes of dazzling brightness. On the medium coming out of trance, the circle broke up, and the sitters, who were mostly strangers to each other, dispersed.

On another occasion, when my wife and I were present at a *séance* at Mrs. Gray's, after the spirit friends of several of the sitters had been materialized, been recognized, and held converse with their friends, a spirit, apparently dressed in working men's clothes, made his appearance at the front of the cabinet. As he seemed unable to speak, and was not recognized by any of the sitters, it was suggested that we should each in turn ask if we were the party he wanted to be recognized by. To several who made this inquiry he shook his head, until it came to my turn, when he nodded his head, which I took to mean "Yes," and, with my wife, I went close up to where he stood, when all he seemed to be able to say was "Charlie," in little more than a whisper. While I was endeavouring to make out who he was, my wife said, "Is it not the man that was killed at your works?" No sooner had she said this than he again nodded his head in acknowledgment that he was that individual, and he whispered, "Thank you, thank you," his countenance at the same time changing from one of sadness to a happy expression. Immediately he smiled I recognized him, and said, "Well, Charlie, I fulfilled my promise to you," and

he again nodded assent. As we stood by him, my wife and I observed that he wore, or appeared to do so, the exact counterpart of the blue guernsey that he used to wear at my works. He seemed at first cast down when he was not recognized, but greatly pleased when we did so. He then retired within the cabinet, and we saw no more of him.

I must explain that this man was engine driver at one of my places of business in Australia. He was only a short time in my employ when he was, through his own carelessness, fatally crushed between the fly and the driving wheel of the engine. He was at once conveyed to the Melbourne Hospital, where I went and saw him as soon as I heard of the accident and that he had been taken there. I found him quite sensible, but in a dying condition. He endeavoured to speak to me, but all he was able to say was my name. I said to him, "I know what you want to say, Charlie; I will see after your wife." He passed away shortly after this, and we raised a subscription for his wife which started her in a small shop, which I believe she still carries on. This man was the very last person I should have expected to see materialize. Evidently his desire was to convey his thanks to me, and through me to all those who subscribed for the benefit of his widow.

My wife and I had sittings with several other materializing mediums in New York, but to recount all that occurred at each *séance* we attended would fill a large volume. I may, however, state that what we witnessed at 256 West Forty-third-street were the most marvellous manifestations of all, Mrs. Effie Moss being the medium.

At the first *séance* we attended at Mrs. Moss's, on her entering the cabinet—which we had previously examined—the door of the room being locked, and the light lowered a little, we (the sitters) sang a few verses of a hymn, accompanied by a young lady at the harmonium which was in the room. As soon as we had finished singing, the curtain, which formed the front of the cabinet, opened, and a slender female draped in

white walked out and came over to one of the male sitters sitting beside a lad about ten years of age. After embracing the lad, she took the hand of the male sitter and led him over to a sofa, where they both sat down hand in hand and talked to each other for several minutes in a subdued tone of voice. She then embraced him and the lad, whom he had called up to his side, and retired to the cabinet. On the two sitters resuming their chairs, the elder one informed those present that the materialized spirit we had seen and heard talking to him was his wife, and that he had brought the lad, who was their son, that evening at her request. He also informed us that since his wife had passed from earth life he had not missed attending Mrs. Moss's circle once a week in order to hold communion with his wife in the way we had witnessed, and that she and he talked over family matters the same as they did when she was in this life. He informed us he was the captain of one of the river boats, and he seemed a very respectable and earnest man.

After several of the other sitters' spirit friends had appeared and talked to them, my wife and I observed what appeared like whitish vapour forming above the carpet, about a foot in front of us; this gradually increased in size, until we saw it take the shape of a human form, and lo and behold! there stood in front of us our eldest son, Archie, who, as I have already stated, passed to the higher life some ten years previously through typhoid fever. On my saying to him that he appeared a good deal stouter than he did when we saw him at Mrs. Moore's, in San Francisco, he explained that it was to be accounted for by the difference of the two mediums through whom he materialized, Mrs. Moore being a woman of slender figure, while Mrs. Moss was very stout. After conversing with us for some few minutes, he said, "I must go," shook hands with both of us, and then gradually dematerialized before us where he had stood. His feet first dematerialized, then his limbs, then his body, until all that remained above the floor was his head, which, as it dematerialized, resumed

the whitish vapoury appearance above the carpet I have described, and this seemed to be absorbed into the carpet, until there was nothing visible where our son had stood as solid and tangible as either of us.

After two or three of the other sitters' friends had materialized and dematerialized in the same way as our son had done, the medium came out of the deep trance, and soon afterwards she walked out of the cabinet, in which she had been seated from the commencement of the *séance*. The sitters, who seemed mostly strangers to each other, then held a short conversation upon the manifestations witnessed during the evening, with which all seemed highly pleased, and then separated.

PART V.

GRAND MANIFESTATIONS.

FROM what we reported that we had witnessed at Mrs. Moss's *séance*, our three daughters, second youngest son, Arthur, and Miss Rea, the governess, expressed a desire to attend one of her *séances*. This they did on the following Friday afternoon, when, much to their astonishment, no sooner had the sitters commenced singing, and before the medium had entered the cabinet, than several spirits appeared by her side. Almost immediately after Mrs. Moss took her seat in the cabinet a little American Indian girl came from the cabinet over to where my son, a boy of eight years of age, sat, and said that someone wanted the *pappoose* (the Indian for child).

Taking my son by the hand she led him over to the cabinet, where he saw his sister, Ada, whom he recognized from having seen her at Mrs. Moore's, in San Francisco. She embraced him, and taking his hand in hers walked across the room to where his sisters sat; addressing them as "My sisters," she embraced them. Turning to Miss Rea, she embraced her also, and addressing the latter by her name, "Lizzie," she said to her, "Your sister Emily is here." After Ada had given some messages which she

wished conveyed to her mother and myself, she asked her sisters, brother, and Miss Rea to accompany her to the cabinet. On their doing so they were met by our son, Archie, who conversed with them for some time, and while he and Ada held each a hand of their little brother Arthur, they both began to dematerialize in the same way as Archie did on the evening on which his mother and I were present. They continued to hold their brother's hands until he had to stoop, and it was not until Arthur's hands were close to the floor that theirs dematerialized.

Before the *séance* closed, Miss Rea, who, with our daughters and our son had resumed their seats in the circle, was beckoned to the cabinet by a female spirit. Having heard from our daughter Ada that her sister Emily was present, she naturally expected to see her materialize, but, on approaching the spirit who had beckoned, she recognized a cousin of hers, a Mrs. P——, who had passed to the higher life several years previously. The latter informed Miss Rea that her brother Tom was ill, which proved only too true, as he passed away before she reached her home in the north of Ireland.

In a conversation my wife and I had with a gentleman from Chicago whom we met at a *séance*, he spoke very highly to us of the mediumship of a Mrs. Hesse, residing at 261 West One Hundred and Thirteenth-street, and he said if we would call on her and mention his name he was sure she would give us a sitting. We accordingly called on Mrs. Hesse, whom we found a very ladylike and evidently highly intelligent person, and who at once consented to give us a sitting.

Before, however, relating what occurred, I must explain that our son Archie, who was of a jocular description, used generally, when he communicated with us through a medium in Australia, to introduce himself in a very peculiar manner, namely—by giving a short whistle, then flipping with his thumb and second finger, followed by his holding the medium's hand out to shake hands with us, at the same time saying, "Well ma, well pa, how are you?"

On Mrs. Hesse going into the trance state, one of her guides held a conversation with us for some time, and concluded by saying that there was a spirit who was very anxious to speak to us through the medium. On her giving up the control to this spirit, what was our surprise to hear the old whistle, the flipping noise, and see the hand of the medium held out to shake hands with us, while at the same time—"Well ma, well pa, how are you?" was spoken to us in the old familiar accents. My wife and I both exclaimed at the same time, "Well, Archie, we need not ask who you are; that is a grand test." After conversing with him for some time he told us he could not keep control of the medium longer, and said adieu. On Mrs. Hesse coming out of trance we told her that our eldest son had manifested through her in exactly the same way as he used to do through a friend who is a medium in Australia, and that we were delighted with the *séance*, at which she seemed pleased. After thanking Mrs. Hesse for her courtesy we bade her good-bye.

While at Mrs. Moss's, on one occasion—for my wife and I attended two or three of her *séances*—she mentioned that she was going to give a sitting at Mrs. Wallace's, on behalf of a charity, in a day or two, and that she was sure Mrs. Wallace, who was a very earnest Spiritualist, would be happy to see us. We accordingly called on Mrs. Wallace, whom we found a very pleasant and refined lady, and she kindly invited us to attend the circle referred to by Mrs. Moss.

On our going to Mrs. Wallace's house at the appointed time we found a number of Mrs. Wallace's friends there before us. After we had been introduced to them the circle was formed. Mrs. Moss took her seat in a cabinet improvised for the occasion and a hymn was sung. After several spirits had materialized and been recognized, and had held conversation with some of the other sitters present, our daughter Ada appeared in front of the curtains forming the cabinet, and my wife at once went up and embraced her.

Thinking that she might like to speak to her mother

privately, I kept my seat, but Ada beckoned me to come also. On my going to her she embraced me most affectionately, her beautiful golden hair falling over my shoulder as she did so. I told her how grateful I felt to God for the privilege granted to me to be enabled to embrace, even in this life, one of my children who had passed from earth so many years previously. The dear girl seemed, like myself and her mother, overcome with joy. She told us how exceedingly happy she was in spirit life, and with what joy she looked forward to the time when we all would be re-united in that world where the word "farewell" is unknown. When the *séance* was over we took our leave of Mrs. Wallace and her friends, and thanked the former for her kindly inviting us, who were perfect strangers, to her circle.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

The foregoing experiences are not a hundredth part of the evidences I have received, during the last seventeen years' investigation of Modern Spiritualism, of a future life, and of the continuity of the individuality after the change called "death." They are, however, I consider, sufficient to convince all unprejudiced truth-seekers that I possess good reasons for the hope, or rather knowledge, that is in me. As enjoined in Scripture, I have sought and I have found, I have knocked and it hath been opened unto me; I have proved all things and held fast to that which is good and true, and the truth has made me free. Go ye and do likewise. "Try the spirits," believe not every spirit; beware of deceiving spirits; also "concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." The manifestation of the spirit is given to every man (who earnestly investigates the subject) to profit withal, "for to one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another faith" (based on demonstrable facts), "to another the gift of healing, to another the working of (what appear to be) miracles, to another prophecy, to another the gift of discerning spirits, to another the gift of divers kinds of

tongues, to another the gift of interpreting (various) languages," &c.

Instead of Spiritualism being a superstition, as popularly supposed, it is the Nemesis of all superstition, for it is the key by which the door can be unlocked that lets in the light of truth on all the dark mysteries of the past. It is a complete induction, for it harmonizes with every fact capable of proof that is known to the world; therefore all assumed facts which do not harmonize with Spiritualism are false and misleading theories, which will be rejected and discarded as the world advances in knowledge and wisdom.

The three leading reasons why believers in Spiritualism, as set forth in the Bible, are so opposed to Modern Spiritualism are as follows:—First, their life-long attachment to time-honoured falsities, which, viewed in the light of truth and reason, are untenable; secondly, because the facts brought to light by Modern Spiritualism refute many of the most cherished theories of popular theology; and, thirdly, from the erroneous ideas they have formed of Modern Spiritualism, owing to the gross misrepresentations which appear from time to time in the public press, and the falsehoods, trickery, and deception that have been mixed up with it by unprincipled and designing people for their selfish ends.

Who, let me ask, are the foolish ones—those who, without having investigated Modern Spiritualism, owing to prejudice and bigotry, denounce it as all humbug, or those who, notwithstanding its unpopularity, have, after years of patient investigation, had the honesty to publicly declare that communion with those who have passed through the change called "death" is not only possible but is an accomplished fact? While the former, as a rule, believe in a religion of irrational creeds and ecclesiastical ceremonies which are a disgrace to the intelligence of the age in which we live, the latter uphold a religion resting on a scientific basis, and which can stand a rational analysis.

Owing to its unpopularity, the public advocacy of Modern Spiritualism has as yet, with a few noble ex-

ceptions, been confined to the working classes, many of whom have handicapped its grand philosophy with special fads of their own, such as vegetarianism, teetotalism, phrenology, re-incarnation, re-absorption, &c., &c., much in the same way as the simple religion of love to God and love to man was, soon after its inception, handicapped with the Pauline doctrines of salvation by faith, atonement of sin through vicarious sacrifice, election, predestination, and all the forms and ceremonies of ecclesiasticism. There are, however, a far larger number of the upper classes who are Spiritualists than is generally supposed to be the case. Only their most intimate friends are invited to their circles, their neighbours being kept quite ignorant of the fact that they are Spiritualists. They seldom attend Spiritualistic public meetings, partly from the fear of its becoming known that they have even sympathy with the movement, and partly on account of the frequent illiteracy of the public exponents of Spiritualism. When they do attend any of these meetings they do so stealthily—as Nicodemus is reported to have visited Jesus, by night—so as not to be observed. How comparatively few appreciate the truth in its full value, while all profess to be animated by the love of truth. They thereby deceive themselves, and the truth is not in them.

Several of my friends, who have become interested in Modern Spiritualism through what I have related to them of my experiences, have asked me if I could recommend them to any good medium in this country, but, although I have visited a number of those who advertise themselves as test mediums, I have not as yet met with one sufficiently developed as to give the names of, or characteristic messages from, my spirit friends. The best way, under such circumstances, to ascertain the reality of spirit manifestations is to form private circles at home, with some intimate friends who are interested in the subject. Directions for doing so can be obtained wherever Spiritualistic literature is sold. Some knowledge of the Spiritual philosophy is, however, advisable, before commencing to hold circles for the investigation of the Spiritual phenomena.

The facts I have here stated should supply sufficient data for the Psychical Research Society of London to form their long-looked-for conclusions in regard to Modern Spiritualism. Should that society desire to cross-question me on all or any of the statements I have made, I shall be happy to afford them the opportunity, provided they notify that desire to my publishers, by whom all letters to me will be forwarded.

I did not intend to publish my experiences during my travels until I returned to the land of my adoption, but have been induced to do so now at the request of my much-esteemed friend, Mrs. Hardinge Britten, from whose learned and eloquent lectures, delivered to large and appreciative audiences in Melbourne, some years ago, I derived considerable knowledge on Spiritualism and kindred subjects. From her grand inspirational gift, coupled with her good common sense and her noble desire to uplift humanity, she may well be termed "The Queen of Lecturers."

I shall conclude with a few lines that came to me without thought on my part, since they express my experiences and my sentiments in simple language:—

I have seen the hills and valleys in the beauteous summerland ;
I have heard the angels singing across the golden strand ;
I have grasped the hands of loved ones who've only gone before,
Who'll greet me with a welcome when I reach the other shore.

For years I've held communion with the dear ones of my youth,
And from their loving hearts received sweet messages of truth ;
Our children, too, they often come to tell us of their love,
And how they are progressing in the angel-home above.

Thus my hope has changed to knowledge, all fear of death hath fled,
I *know* that I shall live again though numbered with "the dead,"
And that I shall return in love to those I leave behind,
To guide and comfort them through life with counsels wise and kind.

Oh ! could I but impart to all this knowledge of God's love,
Which here we only dimly see—it shines more clear above ;
Thrice happy will the world become when this great truth is known,
And that, as said of old, we reap just as on earth we've sown.

Then trust not in those foolish creeds for priestly ends devised,
 But hearken to the voice within, and by it be advised;
 To wisdom you will thus attain, and then can truly sing—
 Oh! grave, where is thy victory? Oh! death, where is thy sting?

As some of those who may read the experiences herein related may be interested in Theosophy, and might desire to know my views thereon, I have deemed it right to add the following:—After years of careful study of this subject I came to the conclusion that it is a very ingenious and plausible theory propounded to fit in with facts, and thereby it appears to explain these facts to a certain class of metaphysical minds, but it is a theory, or set of theories, totally devoid of proof. In this respect it differs entirely from Modern Spiritualism, which rests on scientific demonstration and evidence, which all who will take the trouble to earnestly and perseveringly investigate the subject can, in a greater or less degree, obtain for their own satisfaction, while it fully and naturally accounts for and explains all the facts referred to.

A Theosophist, like a church-going Christian, must have the one thing needful, namely, faith. Unless he takes the trouble to travel to Thibet, in India, to witness the alleged powers of a certain class, called adepts, he must take all that is related of these men on mere trust, in the same way as church-going Christians have to accept all the Biblical statements, written by men living in ignorant and superstitious times. To me, one irrefutably demonstrated fact to the majority of my senses—namely, seeing, feeling, and hearing—is worth all the plausible theories in the world, and I challenge the whole body of Theosophists to adduce one-tenth, or even a hundredth, part of the evidence herein related of a rational and natural future life for man. It may surprise some who read this to learn that the re-incarnation theory is held by many in the spirit world, in the same way as millions there still believe in the popular faith, and are looking forward to the appearance of their supposed Saviour on the judgment day. I have at various times held communion with several in spirit life who professed

to believe in re-incarnation, and have listened to their arguments in its favour, but when I have asked them for their proofs of its truth, in no instance have they been able to adduce any. The fact is, God hath endowed all sane men with reason, but He never compels them to utilize this divine gift either in this life or in that which is to come. None, however, can truly spiritually progress, either here or there, until they use their reason in all things, and thereby become God-like.

CONCLUDING NOTE BY THE EDITOR OF "THE TWO WORLDS."

We cannot close this series of articles (kindly and generously prepared by their author for *The Two Worlds*, at much inconvenience to himself, seeing that he with his family are only birds of passage on a tour through Europe) without calling the reader's special attention to the following points of the narrative:—They are prepared by a gentleman whose wealth and social distinction place him far beyond the slightest possibility of having any interested motive in publishing the statements put forth. They are prepared by one equally well known in the great modern city of Melbourne, Australia, for his probity, high sense of honour, and acumen in analyzing and pronouncing judgment upon any subjects, however problematical or abstruse, he undertakes to investigate. It would be generally considered easier to baffle or deceive an experienced man of the law than Mr. H. Junor Browne; and, in addition to all this, we have in these experiences a record of marvellous, almost unparalleled, spiritual phenomena, the like of which might have been exhibited singly and separately to many far-and-wide searchers, but taken collectively as occurring in one family, and to persons still in the prime of life, health, and the maturity of all mental powers, they form a history which, in this modern age, has never before been equalled. Astonishing and transcending all former records as this same history is, who—under the circumstances of their narration—can dispute, or even *dare* to deny them? If they are false, then no testimony upon the face of the earth can be received as true; if they are true, what answer can the opponents of Modern Spiritualism have to make concerning the facts herein narrated? We wait for a reply.—ED. T. W.

A TOUCHING FUNERAL DISCOURSE.

[Reprinted from "The Two Worlds," 18th September, 1891.]

[NOTE.—The following address was delivered at the time and place named, and, under the circumstances, shows most conclusively the abiding certainty with which THE FATHER who delivered the address recorded MUST HAVE regarded the assured fact of his sweet young daughter's continued existence in the land of the immortals, and the consoling assurance that she who had departed would soon be rejoined by those left behind. The noble and inspired gentleman who sends this copy of his funeral oration over the beloved and beautiful blossom of his home and heart, desires that for the present and for special reasons of concern for others, his own name and that of the fair girl who has arisen shall be withheld. We, who knew and loved her, can with truth say—"Earth has one angel less, heaven one angel more."—EDITOR *Two Worlds*.]

ADDRESS delivered over the grave of a beautiful girl of sixteen years of age, by her father, at Highgate Cemetery, London, on Wednesday, 9th September, 1891.

Dear friends, we are met together here to pay the last tribute of respect to the mortal remains of my youngest daughter, who, for some wise cause, has, in the bloom of youth and beauty, been called away from earth, and has entered into that higher state of existence to which we all are hastening. Our dear child was evidently too pure a bud to bloom on earth. Of her it may be truly said—

Pure as the snowflake ere it falls
And takes the stain of earth,
Without a taint of mortal life
Except its mortal birth.

Even to those who, like myself, have had incontrovertible evidence of the continuity of life after the

change called "death," it is hard to part with the physical presence of those we love, but in this our hour of trial we possess that which no religion resting on mere faith can supply—namely, an actual knowledge that our dear child still lives and loves us ; that although she is invisible to our physical vision yet she can see us and be cognizant of all our loving thoughts towards her. Of this fact our dear daughter was aware, for she had many and conclusive evidences of its truth during her life on earth. She was well aware that what is termed "death" is not the end of existence, and that, though lost to our physical eyesight, the loved ones can still, when they have the opportunity afforded them, communicate with us, and thereby assure us of their undying love and deathless affection.

Oh, joy unspeakable to know
 This truth divine made manifest
 To weary, waiting souls below,
 Through those now entered into rest ;
 To know that for the ills we bear,
 The weariness of heart and brain,
 A balm there is awaiting there ;
 Thank God that we shall live again.

Owing to the false teachings of the past, which unfortunately still prevail, the great majority of people know little of the philosophy of death. It is only when they are laid low on a bed of sickness, or when some loved friend is called away by the hand of death, that they give this all-important subject the slightest consideration, consequently they are not familiar with it, as are those who have made it their earnest study, and who therefore know that

They who are lost to outward sense,
 Have but flung off their robes of clay,
 And, clothed in heavenly radiance,
 Attend us on our earthly way.

For the benefit of those who are unacquainted with this subject, I may state that death is not, as has been falsely taught, a penalty of sin—original or otherwise—but a

natural and inevitable transition to a new and higher stage of existence, a rising into clearer light, fuller knowledge, more harmonious surroundings, richer revealings of love, and larger possibilities of progress and happiness.

When the lamp of life is wearing low, the clouds that separate the seen from the unseen fade away, and as the physical matter dies off from that which has been fettered and imprisoned by its earthly scaffolding we see with clearer and more extended eyesight. Things that were previously strange to most of us, and thoughts that could not be followed in their upward flight to the heights to which they pointed, become then quite clear. The mental sight of the past appears as that of one who could now see, not as before through a glass darkly, but as clear as the noonday sun. To this is superadded a heart-sight—more penetrating than any intellectual insight—which makes all plain, and to this enlarged horizon there appears no limit.

Thus we shall shortly know that length of breath
Is not the sweetest gift God sends His friend,
And that sometimes the sable pall of death
Conceals the fairest boon His love can send.

People talk of spectres or ghosts. 'Tis we in the fleshly body who are shadows passing on to join the innumerable crowd gone before to the land of the living, to the land of the great departed, for, as was truly said of old, "The things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are unseen are eternal."

Victor Hugo, treating of the subject of death, wrote—

"The tomb is not an endless night,
It is a thoroughfare—a way
That closes in soft twilight,
And opens in eternal day.

When unto dust we turn once more,
We can say a day's work's done ;
We may not say our work is o'er,
For life will scarcely have begun."

Writing on the same subject, another poet observes—

“ The eye that is closed in the dying hour
 Doth open the next in bliss ;
 The welcome is heard in another world
 Ere the farewell is hushed in this.
 For we pass from the clasp of mourning friends
 To the arms of the loved and lost,
 And the faces of those will greet us then
 Whom on earth we valued most.”

The death of man's physical body is one of the natural and necessary changes that the spirit must experience in its deathless journey through eternity. As the sun at even sets to rise in radiance on another shore, so, at the change called death, does the spirit quit its mortal frame to rise in newness of life in the glorious spirit world, which is not, as has been falsely taught, a far-off region, but lies close around us ; for as man's spirit interblends with his body, so does the spirit world interblend with the physical universe. Truly, as the poet writes—

“ It lies around us like a cloud,
 A world we do not see ;
 Yet the sweet closing of an eye
 May bring us there to be.
 Its gentle breezes fan our cheek,
 Amid our worldly cares ;
 Its gentle voices whisper love,
 And mingle with our prayers.

“ Sweet hearts around us throb and beat,
 Sweet helping hands are stirred,
 And palpitate the veil between
 With breathings almost heard.
 So thin, so soft, so sweet they glide,
 So near to press they seem,
 They lull us gently to our rest,
 They melt into our dream.

“ And in the hush of rest they bring
 'Tis easy now to see
 How lovely and how sweet a pass
 The hour of death may be ;
 Scarce knowing if we wake or sleep,
 Scarce asking where we are,
 To feel all trouble sink away—
 All sorrow and all care.

"Sweet friends around us watch us still,
 Press nearer to our side,
 Into our thoughts, into our prayers,
 With gentle helpings glide.
 Let death between us be as naught,
 A dried and vanished stream ;
 Your joy be the reality,
 Our suffering like the dream."

The spirit form of my dear child, whose physical casket lies in that coffin before us, is, in all probability, standing by our side at this moment, cognizant of all that I am saying to you. She is not lost to us, but is only gone before, and she will without doubt be frequently present with those whom she loved when in the body, to influence them for good, and to guard and comfort them, as far as it is in her power, until they are reunited in that life where there is no parting from those we truly love, and where the word "farewell" is unknown. Viewed through our imperfect vision—

The grave seemeth cold
 And its silence too hushed
 For one who so late
 In life's rosy tints blushed.

Her body we place
 In the darkness so deep,
 But we know that her soul
 Hath not fallen asleep.

Oh ! blessed new gospel,
 Which scatters its balm
 To hearts which are sobbing
 Death's low minor psalm ;
 And bless'd is the chorus
 Which breaks on our ears,
 So hopeful—so grand—
 From the bright angel spheres.

The change called death happily does not sever the ties of love and affection ; on the contrary, it intensifies them, and, as was said of old, "where our treasure is, there shall our hearts be also."

Oh! what is death? 'Tis a fleeting breath—
 A simple but blessed change,
 'Tis rending a chain that the soul may gain
 A higher and broader range.

Oh! though we weep when our loved ones sleep,
 When the rose on the cheek grows pale;
 Yet their forms of light, just concealed from sight,
 Are only behind a veil.

Humbly acknowledging the infinite wisdom, goodness, and mercy of God, the loving Father of us all, and reverently expressing our fervent gratitude to Him who ordereth all things well, and for the glorious evidence which spirit communion affords of His boundless goodness to man, we now commit the mortal remains of my dear child to the earth, to mingle with the elements from which they sprang.

[*Here the coffin was lowered into the grave.*]

The casket here we leave
 To wither and decay;
 The precious jewel it once held
 Hath left its house of clay.

The casket is but dust—
 The merely mortal frame;
 And since it has no further use,
 Returns from whence it came.

The immortal soul it held
 Lives through another birth,
 And, needing not the casket now,
 It gives it back to earth.

So may we labour here
 In goodness, truth, and love,
 That we may meet in joy at last,
 In that great home above.

I shall conclude, dear friends, with a spiritual communication, received through the mediumship of Miss Lizzie Doten, from one who had passed through the change called death and had realized that life is continuous beyond the portals of the tomb. It is entitled

“I STILL LIVE.”

O Thou, whose love is changeless, both now and evermore ;
 Source of all conscious being ! Thy goodness I adore.
 Lord, I would ever praise Thee, for all Thy love can give,
 But most of all, O Father ! I thank Thee that I live.
 I live ! O ye who loved me ! your faith was not in vain !
 Back through the shadowy valley I come to you again.
 Safe in the love that guides me, with fearless feet I tread—
 My home is with the angels—O, say not I am dead !
 Not dead ! O, no, but lifted above all earthly strife,
 Now first I know the meaning and feel the power of life—
 The power to rise uncumbered by woe, or want, or care,
 To breathe fresh inspiration from pure celestial air,
 To feel that all the tempests of human life have passed,
 And that my ark in safety rests on the Mount at last ;
 To send my soul's great longings, like Noah's dove, abroad,
 And find them swift returning with signs of peace from God.
 To soar in boundless freedom through broad, bright, azure skies
 And catch the radiant gleaming of love-lit, angel eyes ;
 To feel the Father's presence around me, near or far,
 And see His shining glory stretch onward star by star ;
 To feel those grand upliftings that know not space nor time—
 To hear all discord ending in harmony sublime ;
 To know that sin and error are dimly understood,
 And that which man calls evil is undeveloped good ;
 To stand in spell-bound rapture on some celestial height,
 And see God's glorious sunshine dispel the shades of night ;
 To feel that all creation with love and joy is rife—
 This, O my earthly loved ones, *this* is eternal life !
 There, eyes that closed in darkness shall open to the morn,
 And those whom death had stricken shall find themselves new-born ;
 The lame shall leap with gladness, the blind rejoice to see ;
 The slave shall know no master, and the prisoner shall be free.
 There, the worn and heavy-laden their burdens shall lay down ;
 There, crosses borne in meekness at length shall win the crown ;
 And lonely hearts that famished for sympathy and love
 Shall find a free affection in the angel home above.
 O children of our Father ! weep not for those who pass
 Like rose-leaves gently scattered, like dewdrops from the grass.
 Ay, look not down in sadness, but fix your gaze on high ;
 They only dropped their mantles—their souls can never die.
 They live ! and still unbroken is that magnetic chain,
 Which, in your tearful blindness, you thought was rent in twain ;
 That chain of love was fashioned by more than human art,
 And every link is welded so firm it cannot part.
 They live, but O, not idly to fold their hands to rest,
 For those who love God truly are they who serve Him best.

Love lightens all their labour, and makes all duty sweet ;
 Their hands are never weary, nor way-worn are their feet.
 Thus—by that world of beauty, and by that life of love,
 And by the holy angels who listen now above—
 I pledge my soul's endeavour to do whate'er I can
 To bless my sister woman and aid my brother man.
 O Thou, whose love is changeless, both now and evermore,
 Source of all conscious being ! Thy goodness I adore.
 Lord, I would ever praise Thee for all Thy love can give ;
 But most of all, O Father, I thank Thee that I live.

NOTE.—The above address was delivered by me over the grave of our youngest daughter, Lillian Violetta Browne, to whom reference is several times made in "Reasons for the Hope that is in Me." Shortly after our return to London from the Cumberland Lakes, where I wrote my experiences for *The Two Worlds*, she was seized, at the hotel where we were staying, with typhoid fever, and passed to the higher life after a fortnight's illness. The morning after she left the mortal body, a few minutes after I awoke, she appeared to me at the foot of my bed, in materialized form, thereby conveying to me a comfort and consolation which words cannot express, and for which I shall ever feel grateful. Well might a writer truly observe:—"Good and gracious Father of Spirits, with what deep ingratitude and pitiful self-denial do poor mortals reject Thy messages of truth, comfort, and blessing, when they refuse to accept, or scoff at, the precious boon of Spiritual communion ! Heaven speed the day of unveiling, when it shall be recognized by all as the Kingdom of Heaven come upon earth."—H. J. B.

LOSS OF THE "IOLANTHE" YACHT.

* [The following is a reprint of a couple of letters by me which appeared in the *Harbinger of Light* of January and April, 1885, in reference to the death by drowning of our two sons, Hugh and William. These letters were issued at the time in pamphlet form, and created a deep interest in the subject, but they have long since been out of print, and I have frequently been requested, by parties anxious to obtain copies, to have them re-published.—H. J. B.]

ONE OF THE MANY ADVANTAGES OF A KNOWLEDGE OF SPIRIT COMMUNION.

SIR,—As public attention has been drawn to my family, during the week that is now closing, through the disappearance of the yacht *Iolanthe*, in which two of my sons—William, aged 18, and Hugh, 20—and a faithful *employé* named Murray, started for a cruise on the night of the 13th, or early morning of the 14th inst. (December, 1884), perhaps the following particulars may be of interest to your readers.

In consequence of their not returning as they intended on the evening of the 14th inst., I came to the conclusion that through adverse winds they might not be back till the following morning, and as they did not put in an appearance by that time, I went to the home of the fisherman who looked after the yacht for them when at its moorings at Fisherman's Bend. From him I learned that they had called at his house in his absence, where they had changed their clothes, leaving those they took off, as well as the boots of my son William and Murray.

Not returning on the 15th, we naturally became very anxious about them, and on the following morning early I called on Mr. G. Spriggs, the medical clairvoyant (who

had on a former occasion diagnosed my wife when suffering from nervous debility, when she derived great benefit from his treatment), requesting him to pay her another visit, as she was not so well again.

I made no reference whatever to the cause thereof, as I wished to leave his mind completely clear, so that I might get a true clairvoyant tracing, if possible, in regard to the missing ones, and in the following report I have italicized my interpolations to render them more distinct from the clairvoyant's utterances.

A little before 8 a.m. Mr. Spriggs called over. Taking my wife's hand as he went into the trance state, the first words he said were, "Have you been down at the sea?" To which she answered, "I have not." He then continued, "There seems to be a great depression of spirits in connection with the sea. At night, when all is quiet, you have great sorrow and trouble, and it seems as if you give way to tears." (*Which was quite true, as my wife on their not returning when expected was impressed that something serious had befallen them.*) Continuing his diagnosis, the clairvoyant said, "The mind causes the nerves to be affected through a melancholy state, and the whole organs are sympathetically acted upon through the great nervous depression. Go to the country for change of air, but not near the sea." He then prescribed a dietary scale, saying, "there was no need of medicine, all that was required was change of scene," and he again remarked, "All seems connected with the sea."

For the first time, I now made a slight reference to what was uppermost on our minds by asking, "Can you perceive any serious loss at sea?" To which the clairvoyant, still in the trance state, replied, "I cannot see that they are in the spirit world, but if you will give me something by which I can trace them, I shall endeavour to find out."

Fetching the pocket-books of my two sons, and placing them in the clairvoyant's hand, he commenced, "They seem to be in a small boat in a bend of a river; they have a big sail and a small one" (*which was quite*

correct). "They go down what looks like a wide river, and have a little trouble with what seems to be the sea" (evidently referring to Hobson's Bay); "there appears like a tower and a pier close by on their right" (this I take to refer to Williamstown lighthouse and pier); "the sea seems to broaden out as they go, then I see the land on their left hand, and there seems to be clouds arising as if a storm were coming on; they seem to bear off to another pier" (they were seen passing Brighton pier on the morning of the 14th); "after a time they endeavour to return, but have the wind against them, and after sailing about for some time they land; they seem to have a little difficulty with the boat as they near the shore." (This I account for by their not having taken their anchor with them, it having fouled in a snag in the Yarra some days previously.) "After making the boat fast they go up a little embankment, and seem to be wet through. It looks as if it were dark, and at a little distance there appears to be a big hill or cliffs. I do not see any houses about. They get under the trees, where they think of their friends at home, and are troubled about it; one of them seems to be writing something on paper with a pencil, then they walk about, and seem to be considering what they should do." (I conjecture that they were hesitating whether they would leave the boat there on the night of the 14th, and make their way home by land, but that the fact of Murray and Willie having left their boots behind determined them otherwise.) "I think you will have news of them to-day." (The only tidings we received of them that day were that they were seen passing Brighton on the 14th, as already stated.)

On my asking where they were now, I was answered—"They seem to be somewhere towards Mornington, but I cannot define the locality exactly, the medium never having been where they are. I cannot trace further at this sitting."

On resuming next morning, the clairvoyant thus continued—"They appear to have taken a rest for a time after landing from the boat; they had been looking about

the bank. After a time they get into the boat again, and go out to sea" (*a boat answering the description of the "Iolanthe" was seen on the morning of the 15th at 8 o'clock from Frankston, off Rickard's Point, steering in the direction of Schnapper Point—this I learnt by telegram*). "After they are out some time I observe on their left-hand side a number of rocks; it looks gloomy and threatening. There is a heavy cloud at their back, the sea seems to rise, and they make for land again, but it is difficult for them to see the pier they want to reach; the wind is changing about, the sails flap, and one of them tears. One, who is not so tall as the others, is sitting at the end of the boat, and he calls to the others to do something with the sail in front." (*This answers the description of Murray, who was not so tall as either of my sons, and who would be at the helm and attending to the main sheet while my sons looked after the jib; to my knowledge Mr. Spriggs never saw Murray or knew anything about him in connection with the boat or otherwise.*) "They seem to be in a difficulty about the ropes not working properly." (*There was a pause here, and the inference left on my mind was that the catastrophe occurred at this period, which has subsequently been corroborated in communications received from my sons.*) "This appears to have taken place about a mile and a half from land, in deep water. There are a number of rocks in the neighbourhood which cause the water to be more broken, and there appears to be an undercurrent as if it were a channel where they are. There is a sand-bank on the other side. This occurred on the morning of the 15th inst."

Up to the time of my writing this out I have received no earthly tidings of the fate of the boat, its occupants, or anything belonging to them, notwithstanding that the Hon. the Commissioner of Trade and Customs has kindly had the coasts of the Bay searched by the Government steamer *Dispatch*, and the Chief Secretary ordered that the shore from Brighton to Sorrento should be patrolled by the police to see if any traces of them could be discovered.

On the 17th we sat in circle to try if we could hear anything of the missing ones from our spirit friends. The medium was controlled by one of his guides, who said that one who had recently left earth-life wished to speak to us, so he would withdraw for a short time. He was then controlled with difficulty by Willie, the younger of my two sons, who seemed to be much distressed, sobbing most bitterly. The first words he uttered were, "Oh! forgive me, Mamma; it was all my fault." It was he who had bought the yacht in conjunction with Murray, who was about 30 years of age. His brother Hugh only went out with them to keep them company. Willie was still too weak to say much, but stated that he was happy, and did not suffer much in passing away; that we were not to mourn for them, as they were safe in a brighter world; and if we would sit again on the following evening they would endeavour to tell us how it occurred. We all, accordingly, sat on the evening of the 18th, when both of my sons spoke through the medium. The elder one, Hugh, exhibited all the signs of one being resuscitated after having been drowned. It was quite painful to witness the contortions of the medium's face and the heavy breathing before Hugh was able to speak through him. We have had two sittings since, and I will give an abridgment of what they said. I may parenthetically remark that Murray spoke a few words through the medium one evening. He said, "Oh, Mr. Browne, tell my mother I have been. Can you forgive me, Mrs. Browne?" To which an affirmative answer was given. He continued—"I hope you will excuse me for intruding to-night. Thank you for letting me come." My son Willie then remarked, "Murray's mind is greatly relieved by this short interview and by the forgiveness so freely granted." My wife had entreated the three of them not to go out in the yacht on the night of the 13th; but they were so anxious to try her sailing qualities, after having painted and put her in trim since they purchased her, that they did not care whether it was stormy or not, and started accordingly. Both my sons corroborate the

clairvoyant's descriptions of their cruise, only they say it was nearer the Cheltenham than the Mornington side of the bay, as they were tacking against the wind, between Rickard's Point and Schnapper Point, that the *Iolanthe* upset, filled, and went down. They landed on the night of the 14th, as the clairvoyant stated; and on my inquiring about the paper one of them was described as having written, it was explained that they at one time contemplated leaving the boat there until the wind became favourable, but they changed their minds, partly because Murray, who was considered a good yachtsman, did not like to return without bringing the boat with him, and because he and my son Willie had no boots to walk home in. The paper was evidently written to inform anyone who saw the boat there that the owners were going to return for it, and not to disturb it. Willie's words are—"Hughie wished us to walk home, but when he saw Murray and me get into the boat he followed and tore up the paper. I felt no danger until the boat upset and I found myself in the water. I tried to swim, but the waves broke over me, causing me soon to lose all consciousness. The last words Mamma said as we left home came to my mind as soon as I was in the sea, which prevented me feeling any bodily pain. I seemed to fall asleep, and I dreamt that I was with Mamma and you all. I must have slept for more than a day. When I woke up I found Archie, Ada [his brother and sister, who passed on about five and twelve years ago] grandpapa and grandmamma [my father and mother] around me. They would not let me come to communicate with you before I did, as they said I was too weak to speak satisfactorily, so as to make you understand that it was me who was addressing you. Until I got strength I could not leave my spirit home. Hugh was anxious to come the first evening that I spoke through the medium, but grandpapa persuaded him not until he got stronger, in order that he might control more positively. After a time a number of spirit friends came to welcome us to the spirit world. They asked me to keep my mind at rest for a time, until I gained strength. I saw, as I

expected, a great change in Archie, although I did not know him at first. Ada has grown quite a big girl ; she is constantly kissing me."

In reply to my inquiries Willie said—"It was about 9 o'clock on Monday morning (the 15th), nearer the Cheltenham than the Mornington side of the bay, that the *Iolanthe* foundered. It was in trying to put her about that she upset; the jib halyards fouled, and she missed stays. I succumbed first, then Hughie, and Murray last. The change called death is like going to sleep, just a tingle on the brain, as if from the effects of a slight blow. You thought, Mamma, that we suffered a great deal of pain in passing away. We did not." Addressing his brother, who was present, he said—"Colin, how will you manage about the books?" (Willie acted as book-keeper in my office, of which fact the medium was ignorant.) I replied, "Don't trouble yourself about that; we will arrange it all right." He then said—"Mamma, if you could see how happy we are, and the beautiful home we are in, you would not weep—except it were for joy. I feel so light in my spiritual body and have no pain. If it were not to come back to be with you and Papa, the spirit world is so beautiful that I would not exchange this life for earth-life even if it were in my power to do so. There is a very strong magnetic chain between you and me, Mamma. I am more anxious about you than all the others. Go out in the mornings with Emily, and both of you rest in the afternoons. Don't bring any stranger to the circle as that would bring back the memory of what has happened. We want to look to the future and not to the past. We have to thank Papa for having kept the spiritual doors open for us so that we can return and speak to those we love. Grandpapa says, 'Tell him ever to keep the lamp of spiritual truth burning.' I wish there were more developed mediums than there are; poor spirits without number are waiting anxiously to communicate with their friends on earth when the opportunity is afforded them. I have been to Ada's school, where they have classes for all the different studies. The children are taken into the garden and the

various plants are explained to them; they are also taught how to travel. The spiritual body is as light as air and is no impediment to our movements. By merely fixing my mind on a certain place I find myself there almost instantaneously. Archie is going to accompany me until I get stronger and know how to travel. Dr. Robinson desires me to say that all friends here send their kindest sympathy to Mamma, and he says she must bear up and not fret now that we are able to come back and talk to her. Mamma, do not let it trouble you any more; we are happy. I must say good night to you all. Tell John how happy we are and remember us kindly to him and to all friends on earth."

My son Hugh says:—"Oh! I can come back. This is a glorious truth. If I could not come back I do not know what I would do. When they told me that I could do so I jumped with joy. No one who has not experienced it can realize the delight it is to return and speak to those we have left on earth. We are not parted, Mamma; we are closer than ever. Willie and I will be constantly with you. I feel quite well and am so happy. It gives me such pleasure to come and speak to you all. I shall be still happier when I see you well again, Mamma; we will then be able to come stronger through the medium. Don't mind about our bodies, Mamma, we are done with them. They are greatly decomposed from being so long in the water. Our bodies fade but our spirits grow brighter. I feel a little cold when I return through the medium, and grandpapa says I shall feel this for a little time but it will wear off ere long." On my asking him to relate what occurred after he left home on the 13th with his brother and Murray, he replied—"Willie has told you all about it. When we landed on the night of the 14th I wanted Murray and Willie to leave the boat till another time, and to walk home, but as they would not do so, and got into the boat, I followed them, as I could not leave Willie—no, I could not—" (*He here gave way to tears, and changed the line of conversation, adding*)—"When the boat upset we were all pitched into the water. Willie made for the yacht again

as she was filling, and went down with her. Murray swam for the shore, but I waited for Willie—I could not leave him. When he came up again to the surface I called to him, but he did not seem to hear me. I looked round to see if there was a sail in sight, but there was none to help us. Your parting words came to me then, Mamma. I felt no pain in drowning. Mental anguish seems to kill pain. It was an awful sight, but it is over now, and we are happy—so don't fret, Mamma, we shall be frequently with you all. Oh! Mamma, if you could but see our spirit home you would be so pleased. Don't cry, dear Mamma; when you do so it makes us feel unhappy. I need not tell you, Papa, what a beautiful place the spirit world is, for you know it. I am thankful we can speak together. What must it be with those who do not know this glorious truth? If I could not come back I should be miserable. I am coming again to-morrow night. I have had such a load taken off my mind to-night. I wanted to come the first evening Willie spoke, but I did not like to do so in case it would make you cry, Mamma. I hope I did not hurt the medium the first time I tried to speak through him. Many thanks to Emily for coming to comfort Mamma. Grandpapa will not allow many friends to come and see us until we get stronger. Rest, he says, is necessary for the spiritual body for some time after entering the spirit world. What strange things some of our friends say to us when they come to see us." On my inquiring what he wished us to do with his greyhounds and his various little things, he replied:—"When we get stronger and Mamma is better we will be able to come and tell you what we want you to do with them. Tell Mary and Sarah that we are both happy. Dear Papa, thank all our friends for the kind sympathy they feel towards us. Tell them we are in the better world, having passed away suddenly without any pain, our only suffering being the thoughts of Mamma and all at home. Tell them we shall never forget their friendship, and ask them always to remember that there is a life beyond that of earth. We realize it, and can say positively that we can come back and hold communion with our friends. Ask

them to encourage mediumship, so that the spirit world may not be such a blank as it is to most people, but a living reality, as Mamma and Papa know. Tell them that death does not annihilate our love, but rather increases our affections for those left behind. Tell them to read that beautiful poem that you often used to quote—"I still live," by Lizzie Doten). Ask them to think over the statements which it contains, and to judge for themselves." Turning to his mother, he remarked—"Am I not getting on well, Mamma?" (referring to what he had been dictating). "Ah, but you are being assisted by your grandfather, are you not?" I asked, which he at once admitted was the case. He continued—"We do like Mr. Spriggs; tell him to be careful of himself, for he does not know how valuable his mediumship is to those in spirit life, as well as to those with you. Remember us most kindly to him. Willie wants to come now, so good-night."

The following is an address from my sons Hugh and Willie, by the latter, assisted by my father, to their friends on earth :—

"Dear Friends,—We thank you all for the kind sympathy shown by you to Mamma and Papa, and the kind feelings you have expressed for us. We have passed to the spirit world rather suddenly, but we both can say it was not a painful death. It was like going to sleep, only we woke up surrounded by the glorious beauties of the spirit world.

"We send our greetings to you all, and only ask one thing, and that is that you will search into this great truth which we now realize. We cannot express the joy and pleasure that it affords us to come back and speak to our parents.

"Live, dear friends, so that you may not be afraid to pass away; then there is nothing to fear in 'death,' for God and His holy angels are good.

"From your loving friends in spirit life,

"HUGH MACKENZIE BROWNE *and*
WM. MACDONALD BROWNE."

The principal portion of the foregoing spirit communications was received on the 18th inst., and no tidings of the yacht, its occupants, or anything connected with it have come to hand up to this date, the 20th December, 1884.

I shall conclude with the following lines :—

“ Oh blessed new gospel ! which scatters its balm,
To hearts which are sobbing Death’s low minor psalm ;
And bless’d is the chorus which breaks on our ears,
So hopeful, so grand, from the bright angel spheres.”

Yours, &c.,

HUGH JUNOR BROWNE.

EAST MELBOURNE,

20th December, 1884.

NOTE.—The John, Mary, and Sarah referred to were the coachman, cook, and housemaid in our employ at the time.

COMMUNICATION received from my Father, who is my spiritual guide or guardian angel, who passed to the higher life some forty years ago.

GOOD evening, all dear friends. I have much pleasure in stating that the boys are now what you would call well, having recovered from the sudden severance of their spiritual from their physical organisms. They will be of great assistance to me in the dissemination of those grand spiritual truths through which alone those in the spirit world, as well as those on earth who are still in darkness, can be enlightened. Do not imagine that their earth-life having been cut short will have the effect of stunting their spiritual growth. Not so; they will thereby be better able to realize the importance of the conditions of earth-life, and to study the spiritual causes and effects on your earth. They are magnetically strong, and being attracted to the earth with great force they will be able to accomplish with greater ease and more facility their earth-experience, and to impart a knowledge of it to others in the spirit world.

The divine laws of Nature, in its extended sense, always hold out a compensating hand. The balance is not unequally divided. It is just and true in every item of life. So, dear ones, take courage. Know this, that the wisdom of God is far above the wisdom of man. He knows and sees what is best. That which has occurred is a grand lesson for you all, to teach you submission to the Divine will. What you view as misfortunes are, in reality, blessings in disguise.

I shall not take up more of your time this evening, as the boys desire to say a few words to you. Believe me, dear one, that my presence is always with you.

Your affectionate father,

ARCHIBALD BROWNE.

THE LOSS OF THE YACHT *IOLANTHE*.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "HARBINGER OF LIGHT."

SIR,—I have abstained until now from commenting on the strictures which appeared in several newspapers on my letter published in your issue of 1st January relative to the drowning of my sons Hugh and William and their companion Murray, as, owing to the state of Mrs. Browne's health, I have refrained up to the present time from informing her of William's body, minus the left arm, having been found floating in the Bay, near Brighton, and of a portion of the right arm, parts of the clothing, watch, chain, &c., belonging to Hugh having been discovered in the stomach of the large shark that was caught at Frankston.

In one of the evening papers it was asserted that nothing had been disclosed through the medium that was not at the time publicly known. This is simply contrary to fact; for the principal portion of the wonderful clairvoyant description, related in my letter to you of 20th December, was given on the morning of the 16th through Mr. George Spriggs, who at the time was not even aware that my sons were absent from home, far less as to their

having gone out yachting ; and, on the 18th, both Hugh and William communicated with us, corroborating the clairvoyant's account of the cruise, stating that the *Iolanthe* foundered off Rickard's Point at nine o'clock on the morning of the 15th, and relating their experiences on their entrance into spirit life ; when it was not until the 21st, the day after my letter to you was written, that any earthly tidings were received as to the fate of the yacht or its occupants, when my son William's body was identified by his eldest surviving brother, news having been brought me very early that morning that a body, which had been found floating in the sea near Picnic Point, was at the Brighton Police Station awaiting identification ; and, further, it was not until the 27th of the month that the shark was caught at Frankston.

Another paper had the assurance to assert that no information was given through the clairvoyant "which was not readily available from purely mundane sources;" but it studiously refrained from stating where such information was available. As is only natural under the circumstances, I had employed all the ordinary means that lay in my power to obtain information regarding our missing boys, by telegraphing to the various townships on the Bay and sending messengers to make inquiries of the fishermen along the coast if they had seen anything of them. I also got the Government to dispatch a steamer to search the Bay and to have the beach, from Brighton to Sorrento, patrolled by the police in order to see if any traces of them could be discovered, but all without avail. The only information obtained through these sources was that a boat was seen, answering the description of the *Iolanthe*, off Brighton pier on the 14th, and a similar boat was observed from Frankston at eight o'clock on the morning of the 15th, off Rickard's Point (which is about three miles nearer Frankston than Picnic Point), steering in the direction of Schnapper Point. Where, then, let me ask, were the purely mundane sources readily available from which information regarding the fate of my sons could have been obtained ?

Another paper, for the purpose of proving that the

utterances of the clairvoyant were erroneous, had the effrontery to misquote one of them by altering "I think you will have news of them to-day" (which we had) to "I think you will have news *from* them to-day." Comment on such a mode of criticism would be superfluous.

The foregoing examples are, I consider, sufficient to illustrate to what subterfuges and quibblings opponents to Spiritual truths will have recourse in order to confirm popular prejudice, to hide the light, and disprove this, the greatest discovery that any age of the world has witnessed, which, notwithstanding all their opposition, is destined in time to revolutionize the popular but absurd conceptions regarding the change called death and the life to come. I may, however, observe that one critic asks why my sons, when communicating, did not tell us about their bodies having been attacked by sharks, instead of merely stating, when asked regarding their physical bodies, that they were greatly decomposed through having been several days in the water. This I consider to be a reasonable question, and in reply, though I may not be credited by those who do not know me, I have to state that my son Hugh, when communicating, called his elder brother aside, out of hearing of his mother, and informed him, through the medium, regarding the mutilation of his brother William's body by a shark. This I did not mention in my letter to you for obvious reasons. Hugh, also, the day previous to the shark being caught at Frankston, told a friend who was in Adelaide at the time, and who is a clairaudient, that a large fish had got part of one of the arms and had torn his waistcoat off the body. On being asked if it was a shark, he replied, "It may be, but I have never seen one like it before." The shark when caught was said to be a white or deep sea shark, the head of which species is quite different in shape to that of the common blue shark with which Port Phillip Bay is infested. I may add, I received a letter from another friend in Adelaide, to whom the clairaudient mentioned the fact at the time, confirming his statement. On the shark being opened, on the 27th of December, part of Hugh's waistcoat was

discovered, in the pocket of which was found his gold watch with the hands pointing to nine o'clock, the very hour at which we had been informed through the medium on the 18th, or nine days previously, that the catastrophe had occurred. The watch, chain, keys, and some silver found with portions of his clothing, are now in my possession.

Nothing further has since been discovered of the yacht or its occupants. It evidently went down in deep water, as stated through the medium. I may here mention that at the inquest held on my son William's body, on the 23rd December, the doctor who made the *post-mortem* examination stated that "there were no marks of injuries occurring before death," so that it must have been after he was drowned that the missing arm was torn off by the shark. The doctor explained that the pericardium was full of blood, through the right auricle of the heart having ruptured at the moment of death, which the coroner said was not an infrequent occurrence in cases of drowning. On my inquiring of the doctor about an extraordinary statement he made as to his having found a plug of tobacco in the stomach, he informed me that it was only a small roll of leaf-tobacco, about half a pipeful, which had not been chewed, and which had evidently been swallowed to allay the desire for food, as they had only taken sufficient provisions to last them till the afternoon of the 14th. This is an old sailor's plan commonly resorted to under the circumstances, and it had doubtless been suggested by Murray, who was part owner of the yacht and accompanied my sons, and who held a second mate's certificate.

I consider that the description of the yacht and its occupants, and of their cruise, given through Mr. Spriggs, is one of the best instances of clairvoyant power that I have either read or heard of, whatever may be said of it by those opposed thereto, who cannot possibly know as I do the circumstances under which it was given. Opponents should bear in mind that I have no object to gain in being deceived myself or in misleading others in this matter. I may here also state that on the evening

of the 31st December my son William materialized himself at Mr. Spriggs's circle, at which I was present. I recognized him distinctly, as did several others who were there and who knew him when he was in earth-life. He held up his left arm in order to show me that the injury to this limb of his physical body did not affect its spiritual counterpart. On another occasion my son Hugh partially materialized himself, but not distinctly enough for me to swear that it was he, as I could do in regard to his brother. I may add that both Hugh and William were over six feet in height, while the medium is not five feet seven inches high. We continue to hear from them once or twice every week, either through Mr. Spriggs or through one of the members of my family. Those ignorant of Spiritual things may ridicule this statement, but let me remind such that all the ridicule in the world cannot gainsay a single fact. I am aware that it is only those who have experienced the difference between a knowledge of these glorious facts and the mere belief in a future life based on the opinions of others, and who in the hour of trial have realized the grand truth of spirit communion, that can appreciate the inestimable value of a knowledge of Spiritual things. Unless I had possessed this knowledge I could not have addressed as I did the assemblage at the grave when the body of my son William was interred. A friend who was present on that occasion remarked—"What a nerve you must have!" To which I replied, "'Tis the knowledge which I possess of the grand reality that gives me the nerve you speak of; without that knowledge my eyes would now be bathed in tears."

The great amount of sympathy received by my family and self from all quarters, from strangers as well as friends, during the trying ordeal through which we passed, has raised my estimate of humanity greatly. It is evident to me that in cases of bereavement human sympathy is much more powerful than religious prejudice, as I have found that it causes, for the time, all differences in regard to religious opinions to be cast aside, and heart seems to throb for heart irrespective of all such

differences. Allow me, through your columns, to thank one and all for the kind sympathy so generously extended to my family and self, and let me ask those whose letters of condolence were unavoidably not acknowledged to kindly excuse this seeming want of courtesy on my part, as it was utterly impossible for me to reply to the numerous letters of inquiry and sympathy daily received for over a fortnight.

If it is not taking up too much of your valuable space I should like to add the following extracts from two of the letters referred to. The first is a quotation from one kindly sent by a lady of the Jewish belief, and is as follows :—

“Please read the enclosed narrative, taken from the Talmud. I have written it as well as I can remember, my father relating it to me when I was a girl :—‘Many years ago, in Jerusalem, lived a very good and learned Rabbi. One Friday, as was his usual custom, he dressed, bade his wife good evening, and went to the synagogue to pay to God his usual devotions. Upon his return home his wife met him, happy and smiling as usual, and put the following question to him :—‘Some time ago,’ she said, ‘I had given to me for safe keeping a very valuable gem. Whilst you have been at the synagogue he who gave it to me came for it. What would you advise me to do in such a case?’ The Rabbi, without hesitation, answered, ‘How can you ask such a question? The gem is not yours; return it at once.’ ‘Come with me,’ she said, and taking him to her room she turned down the sheet that was on the bed, when the Rabbi beheld the dead body of his only son. ‘See,’ she said, ‘God sent for him while you were from home, and I gave him.’ The good Rabbi exclaimed, ‘God gives and He takes; blessed be the name of the Lord.’” The writer concludes her letter with the following lines, which she has entitled

“BEYOND THE SEA.”

The glittering waves are sobbing to-night
 A sorrowful dirge to me;
 For they whom I loved, as but once we love,
 Lie buried beneath the sea.

The waves are singing with joyous tone
 The sweetest of songs to me:
 "Rejoice! for they whom ye mourn'd as lost
 Wait thy coming beyond life's sea."

The following is an inspirational poem very kindly forwarded to me by a lady who is a spiritual medium. It is by her guide, "Katie," and refers to Mrs. Browne's religious ideas and feelings at the times when our little daughter Ada passed to spirit life many years ago; then to the passing on of our eldest son, Archie, some five years back; and, lastly, to the sudden parting with the physical presence of our two sons Hugh and William. It is entitled

"THE PERFECT MOTHERHOOD."

God had planted a fair garden, giving it a mother's care,
 And she had to tend and cherish all the flowers that she found
 there;
 For she had to prune and train them, and to guide them to the
 light,
 Though she knew not which was dearest of those flow'rets in her
 sight—
 Yet one morning as she watched it a pure tiny blossom fell;
 And, oh! the deep grief of losing but a mother's heart can tell—
 Then she tried to kiss Christ's mantle, and be humble in her loss,
 But her nature cried against her, and she could not find the cross.
 So she hushed her heart's great sorrow, for the flow'rets that were
 left,
 Though her garden seemed but barren, with the little bud bereft.
 But fresh flow'rets soon sprang earthward, and she watched them
 side by side
 With those buds that first were given, e'er that tiny snowflake died;
 Till one plant that had out-broadened and spread upward to a tree,
 With its young limbs standing boldly and its branches waving free,
 In its glorious morning splendour faded, drooping on her breast;
 And though hot and fast her tears fell, still she said, "God knoweth
 best,
 For my strong tree has not faded, but has folded as a flower,
 That will open in the morning, 'neath a higher, better power."
 And she knew that it was living in the unseen world around;
 Not on earth, but still in Nature, might her cherished plant be
 found.
 Yet again, without a warning and without a leaf's decay,
 God once more, from her fair garden, took two strong young
 plants away.

But speak softly, here is mourning, Nature gives to sorrow tears—
 Weep on, mother, though the future holds you many happy years;
 But her tears fell fast and faster, what her thoughts were He but
 knew
 Who had given her the garden and had watched the flowers that
 grew.
 And He said, "I gave you many, two I wanted at their best,
 Two young spirits bright and daring, not world-weary needing
 rest;
 They are yours, no seas divide you, they are starting in the fight,
 That will yet o'ercome the darkness, and show forth Eternal
 Light,
 But quite ready and all eager, your sad tears make their tears
 start,
 Mother, think your sons are soldiers, smile upon them as you
 part,
 Think that you have watched them for me, kept them only till
 I came,
 That I asked you for your treasures, and you gave them in my
 name."

Then the mother ceased her weeping, like the women of past years,
 Who could send their firstborn boldly on to battle without tears,
 And she felt that she gave little as compared with what they gave
 Who knew nothing but this earth-life, yet sent darlings to a grave,
 Thinking that they plunged forever into Death's dark, wide abyss,
 They, on that side, sad and silent, she, alone and sad, on this.
 Could they for one single instant have returned, then flown again,
 Joy had lightened half her sorrow, poured its balm upon her pain.
 Then, how joyful is this mother, who has soldiers in the fight,
 Who can live and love beside her, though they battle for the Light.
 And she said, "No tears shall stay them, I will cheer them day
 by day,
 For my garden is replanted with the flowers that seem away."
 Death had narrowed to her vision till he faded out of sight,
 And the change that seemed but terror had brought her Eternal
 Light.

This is Life as God intended, full and perfect, not to close
 When this little dream is ended, full of bitter tears and woes.
 Life is ever, never ceasing, Death a door that leads from earth,
 None are lost that enter through it—Death but gives their spirits
 birth;
 Tell this mother, e'er we leave her, that her garden still is there,
 Needing all her lovely touches, needing mother ev'rywhere.
 She has earth and spirit flow'rets, perfect Motherhood of Love,
 Anxious care to those who need it, smiles to those who work above.

Melbourne, 24th Dec., 1884.

FROM KATIE.

Many others, of the kind and sympathetic letters received by us during the trying ordeal through which we passed, are well worthy of being quoted. Consideration for the space in your columns alone prevents me multiplying the extracts. In conclusion, allow me to say that all communications received were equally appreciated, and none more so than the few spontaneous and evidently heartfelt expressions sent me by your son William, who knew both of my sons who were drowned, but who, thank God, still live; and as they live so shall we live also.

I am, Sir, yours, &c.,

HUGH JUNOR BROWNE.

Park House, Wellington Parade, E. Melbourne,
21st *March*, 1885.

The following is a copy of what is engraved on the tombstone over the graves of our children in the Melbourne General Cemetery:—

**Sacred to the Memory
Of**

ADA VICTORIA,

FOURTH DAUGHTER OF

HUGH JUNOR BROWNE,

Who died Nov. 27, 1872, aged 8 months.

“Rest assured I shall return, mother, from that angelic place;
Tho’ you may not see my form I shall look upon your face;
Tho’ you cannot hear me speak I shall hearken what you say,
And be often, often with you when you think I’m far away.”

AND TO HIS ELDEST SON,

ARCHIBALD JUNOR BROWNE,

Who passed to the inner life on the 26th of June, 1879,

Aged 20 years.

“I live! O ye who loved me! your faith was not in vain;
Back through the shadowy valley I come to you again.
Safe in the love that guides me, with fearless feet I tread—
My home is with the angels—O, say not I am dead!”

ALSO, OF HIS THIRD SON,

HUGH MACKENZIE BROWNE,

Aged 20 years, .

AND OF HIS FOURTH SON,

WILLIAM MACDONALD BROWNE,

Aged 18 years,

Who were drowned in Port Phillip Bay through the foundering of the yacht *Iolanthe*, on the 15th December, 1884.

“Farewell, friends! yet not farewell; where you are we too shall dwell:
We are gone but from your face a moment’s march, a single pace.
When you come where we have stepp’d, you will wonder why you wept,
You will see, by true life taught, that here is all, with you is naught.”

IS SPIRITUALISM CREDIBLE ?

(A paper read at the Scots' Church Literary Association, Melbourne, on Wednesday evening, 7th May, 1884, in reply to an essay bearing the above title read by another member at a previous meeting.)

“The world hath felt a quick'ning breath
From heaven's eternal shore,
And souls triumphant over death
Return to earth once more.”

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—The title of the essay read here this evening fortnight was, “Is Spiritualism credible?” To which I reply emphatically, “It is;” and how those who believe in ancient spiritual manifestations can, with any pretence to consistency, deny their occurrence now is to me a perfect anomaly. More especially so when we have the authority in favour thereof of those upon whom believers in ancient spiritual phenomena place implicit trust. Is it not written: “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. . . . The manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the spirit the word of wisdom; to another, the word of knowledge by the same spirit; to another, faith by the same spirit; to another gifts of healing . . . to another, prophecy; to another, the interpretation of tongues,” &c. Are we not also told to “try the spirits” to “believe not every spirit,” and to beware of deceiving spirits? also that “hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending.” “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men

shall dream dreams; and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out, in those days, of my spirit; and they shall prophesy; and I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath."

Unless it can be demonstrated that the laws of nature, which are the laws of God, are changeable, or that formerly man possessed a faculty which nature has since withdrawn; if it is true that a spirit removed the chains from Peter's limbs and unlocked the prison doors, and if another spirit or angel rolled away a stone from the grave of the crucified Jesus, why, let me ask, should not spirits in our day be able to do equally wonderful acts? Again, if a spirit could show himself to John on the Island of Patmos, and talk to him, why should it be impossible for spirits to do likewise in our day to those who, in accordance with the Scriptures, have cultivated their spiritual gifts, consequently can discern spirits.

The objection to the reception of this modern revelation of the truth arises, in a great measure, from the undue reverence to the authority of the past, and the utter repudiation, on the part of many, of the present active, living, principle of God's ever-operative guidance through the guardian-angelship of His ministering spirits. The same objection has, however, been exhibited in all ages of the world upon the revelation of any new truth in science, philosophy, or religion. This antagonism to anything not in accord with popular opinion has always been characteristic of the living age, and was exhibited in the time of the Great Teacher when the unbelieving Pharisees exclaimed, "We know that God spake unto Moses; as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is!" And they who to-day ridicule the manifestations and reject the teachings of modern Spiritualism would, eighteen hundred years ago, have stoned the apostles.

One of the principal reasons why Spiritualism is so little understood by the generality of people is on account of the opposition shown to it by the priesthood of the various sects, because it lets in the light of

spiritual truth, demonstrates the impartiality of God's love for all His creatures, and proves the rational character of the life to come ; and because it exposes to view the erroneous nature of many of the dogmas that have been added to the simple religion of love and good works as taught by the worthy Nazarene, who is represented as having declared that love to God and love to man comprised all the law and the prophets ; and this we find illustrated in the parable of the good Samaritan.

It appears to me that the reason why some people object to investigate Spiritualism is that they are afraid to have the truth of immortality demonstrated to them ; and in case the real conditions of the inner life may not coincide with the views they entertain regarding the life to come. For my own part I prefer facts to fiction, and consider knowledge preferable to mere belief, but I am aware that all minds are not constituted alike. Those whom the reasons mentioned will not debar from investigating and who are not afraid of public opinion, who will sit down in their own homes with their own families, or intimate friends of the family circle, need have no fear of experiencing that deception and imposture of which they have heard so much. I have no doubt of the results if they will only do so, as mediumship is much more general than is popularly supposed ; it is lying latent in many, only requiring development, and is a natural gift, like that of the poet or painter, which is highly prized when once its value is appreciated.

The Church, as you are aware, has persistently closed its doors against the spirit world, so until it opens them for the reception of Spiritual truth churchmen need not ask why their spirit friends do not come and communicate with them.

There is, I maintain, no logical standpoint between Spiritualism and Materialism ; all between these rests on mere assertion and credulity. If there is another world, as Spiritualism demonstrates there is, surely nothing is more natural than that there should be the means of communication between the two worlds, and nothing

more unreasonable than that people should refuse to avail themselves of this grand avenue of knowledge. Those who have not investigated Spiritualism know little of the joy and pleasure which, owing to their false prejudice, they debar themselves from. And who, let me ask, are the people who denounce Spiritualism, but those who know little or nothing about it, owing to their never having examined it carefully, as they ought to do before passing an opinion upon it? for, as Solomon remarks, "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." Surely those who have for many years carefully and prayerfully investigated the subject are more competent to form a correct opinion regarding it than are those who, without examination, deny the occurrence of modern spiritual manifestations, while they, at the same time, inconsistently believe in their occurrence in former times, merely on the testimony of others, without even a particle of demonstration as to their truth.

In this sceptical age, what does the world require to convince mankind that a future life rests not on mere speculation, as Materialists assert? Is it not evidence of the fact of man's continued existence beyond the portals of the tomb—proof palpable of a life to come? To the credulous who rely on the opinions of others, it may be all very well to say that we have the testimony of this or that writer in Biblical times that death does not end all, and that if they won't believe the Scriptures neither will they believe if one rose from the dead; but to those who think for themselves testimony is not proof, and such a reply is only a palpable evasion of the great question, "If a man die shall he live again?" Where can an answer to this be obtained but through communion with those who, having passed through the change called death, can speak from actual personal experience.

To object to modern Spiritualism on the ground that we have no need of evidence of the life to come is to insult reason, to mock the deepest yearnings of human nature, and to ignore the entire religious history of the world. And, further, it is only a rational faith, supported

by actual knowledge such as Spiritualism supplies, that can restore a vitalizing religion in the minds of men. As has been truly remarked, "Knowledge supports when faith fails;" therefore I advise the thoughtful to investigate Spiritualism and put themselves in communication with those who can really inform them of the best way to prepare for the great change which must sooner or later come upon us all.

But some may ask, "Can this really be done?" Yes, it not only can, but is being done in every civilized quarter of the globe through those who have cultivated their Spiritual gifts. "Is it possible that we can hear from our dear departed ones?" asks another. Yes, I again answer, when the necessary conditions are complied with. "What are these conditions?" may probably be asked. To which I reply, they are very simple, but it may take some time before satisfactory results are obtained; this, however, is not always the case.

The following question may here suggest itself—"How is it that the demonstration of man's continued existence does not come to all without being sought for?" Because if it did so, without exertion, it would not be valued. It is the difficulty experienced in obtaining the precious metals and gems that causes them to be so prized, and it is the same with that most precious gem of all—the truth of immortality, the value of which can only be appreciated by those who, after years of earnest study and patient investigation, have attained unto a knowledge of it. To reject this priceless gem because of the mass of nonsense, falsehood, imposture, and fraud which have been mixed up with it is as unreasonable as it would be to refuse to accept gold or diamonds on account of the mullock or wash-dirt out of which they have been extracted.

Another question frequently asked is—"If Spiritualism is true, how are not the discoveries of physical science anticipated by it?" Because if it did so it would rob man of one of the blessings of life—viz., the incentive to search after knowledge. The true province of Spiritualism is the education of man in things pertaining to

Spiritual life, and thereby to fit him to enter therein at the change called death.

Spiritualism is not *a religion* or system of faith and worship, as is generally supposed: it is the science of continuous life—a science of observation from which each investigator has to draw his own conclusions, in the same way as a student of one of the physical sciences draws his own deductions from facts presented to his senses. Spiritualism is therefore the scientific basis of true religion. Without it there is no rational evidence of a future life—all is mere conjecture—and it is alone through Spiritual demonstration that the arguments of the Materialist can be rationally met. By the rejection of the evidences of man's continued existence afforded through modern Spiritual manifestations, churchmen are foolishly playing into the hands of their opponents, the Atheists and Materialists, who very natually accuse them of being superstitious for believing in another world without having had any valid evidence of its existence. The latter may reply, "We have the evidence of the Bible;" but that is fallacious, for that book only contains the testimony of its various writers of what may have been evidence to themselves, but not to others who were not present to see or hear what they saw and heard. Testimony is not proof; it is only secondary evidence. You can disbelieve my testimony, but you cannot doubt my presence here this evening, for you have proof thereof. Let me ask, is your faith, through the testimony of the Scriptures, at all times so firm that no doubts enter your minds, so that you require no proof of immortality? and is your knowledge of the nature of the future life so great that you need no further light regarding it? Then why this aversion to investigate this subject, so as to receive thereby the demonstration of immortality and learn the conditions of the inner life? It is, I maintain, at the time when death steps in and removes the physical presence of our loved ones from our sight that the relative values of a religion founded on mere belief and one based on actual knowledge can be truly tested, for while the former fails to supply the

consolation which it professes to afford, the latter is found to be "a very present help in time of need."

I've proved them both, I know what's best;
Give me the truth, take all the rest.

The demonstration obtainable through Spiritualism converts that which otherwise would be merely hypothetical into a living reality, and brings the fact of there being a continued existence home to our very senses, transforming hope into knowledge and doubt into certainty.

Many think that Spiritualists are a superstitious lot of people. Surely it is they who believe without evidence that are the superstitious, and not those who have had the fact of there being another world clearly demonstrated to them? and surely the relying on the evidence of one's senses and on the observation of facts does not constitute superstition? Dr. Robert Chambers, of *Chambers' Journal*, writes:—"Spiritualism is the germ of the greatest discovery and the greatest revolution of human thought that any age of the world has witnessed. . . . Instead of being a superstition itself, as some are disposed to think it, they will find it the explanation and the extinguisher of all superstition."

It is objected that mediums are not all reliable: was it not the same in Scriptural times? Do we not read of false prophets as well as true prophets? and have we not the authority of the Bible for saying: "O fools and slow of heart," or dull of comprehension, "to believe all that the prophets have spoken?" "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" Is it reasonable therefore to reject either ancient or modern spiritual communications because some of them are found to be erroneous? If, on this account, we reject the one, to be consistent we should also reject the other. Let us rather as rational beings accept the true and good in each, and reject the false and bad in both, proving all things, and holding fast to that which is good.

As to the truth of Spiritualism and the reality of spirit manifestations, those who doubt them and who

require something to justify their entering upon an investigation thereof need only refer to history to obtain testimony thereto, for both ancient and modern, sacred and profane history teem with numerous records of spiritual manifestations; and there is hardly a family in which, at some time or another, one or more members of it have not witnessed some spiritual manifestation. As has been admitted by Dr. Johnson, and concurred in by Adam Clarke, the eminent Bible commentator: If anything has been tested by facts, if anything has been tested by credible witnesses, the connection and union which blend the spiritual and material worlds have been so tested. No fact in history is better authenticated, I maintain, than that certain individuals, who previously dwelt on earth and who passed through the change called death, have appeared, been recognized, and have communicated with those still in the flesh.

That apparitions of the so-called dead have objectively appeared to many, both in former times and in our own, is established by such an accumulation of testimony that it remains more a matter of unquestionable fact than a subject of discussion.

The movement of pieces of furniture by spirit agency, which is so frequently held up to ridicule by the opponents of Spiritualism, is only one of its lower phases—the A.B.C., it may be termed, of spiritual phenomena. Insignificant, however, as this may appear, it demonstrates that there is a power which can overcome the law of gravitation, and, absurd as it may seem to non-investigators, it is beyond the capacity of our greatest scientists to explain away this power. When, however, as is frequently the case, intelligence is manifested through the movement of a table, and that intelligence is beyond the knowledge of all present, then the question arises, “Whence comes the intelligence?” If this is asked at the time, the answer generally given (through the movement of the table in connection with the alphabet) is that it comes from some individual who once lived on earth. To the unprejudiced investigator the main point is not the quality of every manifestation, but

its reality. Our greatest discoveries, bear in mind, have sprung from trifling things, for, as the poet truly remarks :

“ Rivers from bubbling springs
Have rise at first, and great from abject things.”

The hypothesis that magnetism or electricity causes the various Spiritual manifestations is, to all who have witnessed them, too absurd to merit a moment's consideration, and will continue so until it can be demonstrated that magnetism and electricity can generate rationality, personate a thinking being, and play the part of a sentient, moral agent. One might as reasonably assert that electricity indites the messages received through the telegraphic wires. And the innumerable other hypotheses which, from time to time, have been suggested to account for the phenomena of Modern Spiritualism, make a far greater demand on our imagination than does the simple Spiritual explanation, than which no other has been found to cover all the phenomena. It must be admitted by all that were magnetism or electricity proved to be the cause of the modern manifestations, then the same hypothesis would likewise explain away the wonderful Spiritual phenomena recorded in the Bible.

Some people foolishly object to Spiritualism because, in God's impartiality, the road is open for both good and bad spirits to return; they might as reasonably object to all friendship because some, whom they once considered were friends, have turned out their bitterest enemies. Do they object to the sunlight because of the darkness of the night? or to the rose because it has thorns? Good and bad are mere relative terms, for none are all good and none all bad. Without error we could not perceive the beauty of truth. Perfection implies stagnation, for without imperfection there could be no progression. Those whose aspirations are pure and good need, however, have no fear of being troubled by the presence of evil spirits, for their society has no attraction for them, like attracting like; and if it is wrong for men to

hold communion with spirits now, it must have been equally wrong on the part of Abraham, Peter, Philip, John, &c., to have done so in Biblical times, for there were both good and bad spirits then as now. And, further, how can we "try the spirits" if we do not communicate with them? A rational Spiritualist believes not every spirit out of the flesh any more than he does every spirit in the flesh; he values the statements of both on their merits. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Those who say Spiritualism is all the work of evil spirits resemble the Jews who declared that Jesus acted through the power of Beelzebub, the mythical chief of evil spirits. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil, that put darkness for light, and light for darkness."

Because we declare that

"Angels are but men in lighter vesture clad,"

as Socrates observed,

"Wise men think us clever, while fools think us mad."

Spiritualism, I may remark, is totally unsuited for those who are untruthful, tricky, dishonest, or hypocritical. It is these classes of investigators that have so frequently brought disgrace on the movement. If, at a *séance*, the majority present belong to any of the above classes, the spirits attracted thereby frequently overcome the higher influences of those by whom the medium is usually controlled, and false communications or fraudulent manifestations are the inevitable result; hence the numerous exposures so frequently published in the papers, while the other side of the picture seldom, if ever, appears in the columns of the public press; popular misrepresentation of and repugnance to Spiritualism is but the natural outcome of this one-sided conduct on the part of the press.

All Spiritual phenomena were looked upon in former times as supernatural or miraculous occurrences. They are and have always been the result of natural law; for every Spiritual manifestation that has ever taken place has occurred in strict accordance with fixed and inexorable laws. These laws being beyond man's knowledge,

the terms supernatural and miraculous have merely been employed to vindicate his ignorance thereof, just as a savage, seeing an aeronaut descend in a balloon from the sky, would probably declare it miraculous, whereas to those who understand it there is nothing miraculous about the matter. "The wonders of one age become the commonplace facts of the next."

Spiritualism, I may add, endorses all that is true in science, philosophy, and religion; "it recognizes a continuous inspiration in man; it aims, through a reverent study of facts, at a knowledge of the laws and principles which govern the occult forces of the universe, of the relation of spirit to matter, and of man to God and the Spiritual world. It is thus comprehensive and progressive, leading to true religion as at one with science and the highest philosophy."

Through the revealments of spirit communion we learn that God is Spirit, filling all space with His infinite presence, "in whom we live, move, and have our being," and not a localized anthropomorphic Deity; that the spiritual realms consist not of two divisions, but of many mansions or spheres adapted to the various degrees of spiritualization to which each one attains; that there is no broad path specially made for the majority of God's children and a narrow one reserved for a favoured few, but that in the inner life, as well as in this outward life, God is impartial and the road to happiness is open to all; that there, as well as here, we can only raise ourselves in the scale of being by our own exertions and holy aspirations; that the punishment of the wicked and the joy of the good come from within, not from without; that happiness beyond human conception awaits us all eventually, through purity, wisdom, and love; that the best way to evince our love to God is by aiding and benefiting our fellow men, as He requireth not the glory of men nor of angels, for all His works glorify Him; that He is infinite Love, therefore He rules by love, causing everything to tend to good, and thereby has decreed the attainment of happiness by all His children. Such are a few of the higher laws of truth and right

which spirit communion has revealed to those who have availed themselves of this grand avenue of knowledge.

It is only prejudice and ignorance that debar most people from enjoying the glorious privilege of spirit communion, and it is only a matter of time when it will be gladly accepted by all.

To the question frequently asked: "What good has Spiritualism done?" I reply, it has been the means of proving to many, who formerly denied that there was a life to come, their error, by demonstrating that physical death does not end all, as they had falsely assumed. Through the conclusive evidence that Spiritualism affords some of the most obdurate Materialists have been convinced of man's continued existence in another world. Spiritualism has brought the fact that there is a future life home to many who previously had doubts thereof, and has clearly demonstrated to them that what is termed "death" is a mere shedding of the outer husk, which is only necessary so long as man remains on the physical plane of life; for "the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are unseen are eternal."

To those who once only hoped that there was another life, Spiritualism has given actual knowledge in place of mere belief. It has been the means of restoring peace of mind to many a doubting one, and of changing the gloom of death into a confident awakening to a higher and better life. It has satisfied the doubts of thousands, if not millions, who could not be reached by the various forms of faith presented by the Churches for their acceptance. It has incited many to good by its pointing out that there is no shirking the responsibility of our acts by trusting in the sufferings or merits of another; that there is no royal road to happiness but by a well-spent life; and that our friends who have passed to the inner life still interest themselves in our well-being by aiding us in the weaknesses and difficulties of mundane existence. To the true Spiritualist it has substituted the love of God for the fear of God; it has likewise removed the fear of death and the dread of "the Devil," and it has brought heaven to earth by reuniting us,

even when here, with the loved ones gone before. It makes men and women less discouraged at the many trials and disappointments experienced here, causing life and its passing ills to seem trivial compared to the boundless, glorious hereafter. It comforts, encourages, cheers, and soothes the mourner with a blessed knowledge that no theories or mere beliefs can possibly give. It transforms grim death into a beautiful angel of light, soothing all pain, remedying all wrongs, and opening wide the gateway that leads to the better and higher life. It reinvigorates every great and moral truth that has been revealed to mankind. It intensifies all the sublime thoughts and promptings that urge human natures on to a grand and glorious destiny. It disarms death of its terrors, and brings in reality a new heaven and a new earth to all who have realized its sublime truth. It unlocks the door of the sacred temple of inner realities. It demonstrates beyond doubt the boundless and impartial love of God, the merciful spiritual Father of all, and it brings a comfort and consolation to the sorrowing and broken-hearted which nothing else can supply, for it proves that

“ Mind sets not with the sun ;
Mind fades not with the day.”

And now let me courteously inquire, “Have you, friends, investigated Spiritualism?” If your reply be in the negative, let me ask you to suspend your judgment until you have; for to express an opinion on a matter of which you know little or nothing is to exhibit consummate assumption, which those who have a knowledge of these things can only regard with feelings of pity. Be slow to judge; be not hasty to condemn; be like the noble Bereans commended by Paul, who, having heard him, searched if these things were so. Emulate their manly example with reference to this subject. I ask you to take nothing for granted, nothing upon credit; search all things; prove all things; try the spirits, and hold fast only to that which is good; treasure the golden grains of truth; utilize your reason; discard the chaff of error and

falsehood, trample them under foot; and, entering upon the investigation of that which a great cloud of witnesses can testify to be a glorious fact, in the spirit of sincere inquiry to know what is truth, your perseverance and efforts will, in due time, be amply rewarded and crowned with success.

Finally, which, think you, is the most conducive to the moral and spiritual welfare of man, the higher law of truth and right unfolded by Spiritualism, whereby each one's happiness here and hereafter depends upon his own exertions, or the popular teaching of the Churches that faith in the merits of another and the acceptance of certain dogmas are necessary to secure future rewards and avert endless, consequently irremedial and vindictive, punishment in the life to come? Think over this, and let the voice of enlightened conscience decide.

MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

By MRS. E. L. WATSON.

Again a glorious star we see
 Above life's shadow-shrouded hills;
 The heavens outpour love's melody,
 And all the world with promise thrills;
 Our lives, illumined like the morn,
 Declare another truth is born!

From ghastly depths of doubt and woe
 Our souls are summoned to ascend,
 And now behold our last great foe
 Hath proven universal friend!
 O, Death we have no fear of thee;
 O, Grave where is thy victory!

No more our eager eyes shall turn
 To bygone ages for the light,
 The altars of the Present burn
 With sacred fires as holy, bright.
 To all mankind God's pledge is given,
 His truth alone can lead to Heaven!

The dead, already made alive,
 Now give us greeting face to face,
 And with our doubting spirits strive
 To fill their dear, accustomed place ;
 No more Love's treasures lie entombed,
 "Death's dark" with countless stars hath b loomed.

And as the chains from Peter fell
 In presence of the Angel power,
 So dread of death and fear of hell
 Do lesser grow each day and hour ;
 Wherever angel feet have trod
 There springs a purer trust in God.

The hills of time are touched with flame,
 Foretelling splendours yet to be,
 And swelling songs anew proclaim
 The truth of immortality.
 Not "Christ" alone hath burst his prison,
 For all the dead alike are risen.

The "rustling wing" once heard afar
 Now broods us with a soft caress ;
 The "glimmer of a distant star"
 Now thrills us with love's tenderness ;
 And to each angel-guarded home
 The promised "comforter" hath come.

The seas are bridged with snowy sail
 And space annulled by 'lectric fire,
 The planets weighed in mental scale
 And Heaven o'erleaped by heart's desire ;
 Until at last we hold impearled
 This precious truth of all the world !

There is one God supremely good,
 To whom the universe belongs,
 And when His laws are understood
 We shall no longer suffer wrongs ;
 And death is but a gateway grand
 That leadeth to Love's Morning Land !

ADVICE TO INQUIRERS.

BY M.A. (OXON.)

THE CONDUCT OF CIRCLES.

IF you wish to see whether Spiritualism is really the mass of jugglery and imposture that it suits some people to say that it is, try it by personal experiment.

If you can get an introduction to some experienced Spiritualist, on whose good faith you may rely, ask him for advice; and if he is holding private circles, seek permission to attend one, that you may see how *séances* should be conducted, and of what nature the ordinary phenomena are.

There is, however, difficulty in obtaining access to private circles, and, in any case, you must rely chiefly on your own experiences gained in your own family circle, or amongst your own personal friends, all strangers being excluded. The bulk of Spiritualists have gained conviction thus.

Form a circle of from four to eight persons, of whom half, or at least two, should be of negative, passive temperament and preferably of the female sex. The remainder may be of a more positive type.

Sit, positive and negative alternately, secure against disturbance by fresh visitors, in subdued light, and in comfortable and unconstrained positions, round an uncovered table of convenient size. Place the palms of the hands flat upon its upper surface. It is not important that the hands of each sitter should touch those of his neighbour, though the practice is frequently adopted.

It is important that attention should not be too fixedly concentrated on the expected manifestations. To this end engage in cheerful but not frivolous conversation. Avoid dispute or argument. Scepticism has no deterrent effect, but a bitter spirit of opposition in a person of determined will may totally stop or decidedly impede

manifestations. If conversation flags, music is a great help, if it be agreeable to all, and not of a kind to irritate the sensitive ear.

Avoid anxiety and fidgetiness of all kinds. If you have a medium in your number, results will follow in due time, and you cannot hasten, though you may impede them. Patience is essential; and it may be necessary to meet ten or twelve times, at short intervals, before anything occurs. If after such trial you still fail, break up the circle and form a fresh one. You will probably be able to guess at the reason of your failure, and can eliminate the inharmonious elements and introduce others. An hour should be the limit of an unsuccessful *séance*.

If results are obtained, the first indication usually is a cool breeze passing over the hands, accompanied by involuntary twitching of the hands and arms of some of the sitters, and a sensation of throbbing in the table. These indications, at first so slight as to cause doubt as to their objective reality, will usually develop with more or less rapidity.

Table-tilting is more common than rapping. If the table moves, let your pressure be so gentle on its surface that you are sure you are not aiding its motions. After some time you will probably find that the movement will continue if your hands are held OVER but not in contact with its surface. Do not, however, try any such experiment until the movement has become thoroughly assured, and be in no hurry to get messages.

When you think that the time has come, let some one person take command of the circle and act as spokesman. Explain to the unseen Intelligence that an agreed code of signals is desirable, and ask that a tilt may be given as the alphabet is slowly repeated at the several letters which form the word that the Intelligence wishes to spell. It is convenient to use a single tilt for No., three for Yes, and two to express doubt or uncertainty.

If you are satisfied that a satisfactory communication has been established, ask if you are rightly placed, and if not, request that directions may be given as to the order

you should take. After this, ask who the Intelligence purports to be, which of the company is the medium, and such relevant questions. If confusion occurs at first, ascribe it to the difficulty that undoubtedly exists in directing the table movements at first with exactitude. Patience will eliminate the source of error, if there be a real desire on the part of the communicating Intelligence to speak with you. If you only satisfy yourself at first that it is possible to speak with an intelligence that is separate from that of any person present in the circle, you will have gained a great step.

The signals may take the form of raps. If so, use the same code of signals, and as they become thoroughly established, ask that they may be made on the table, floor, or in a part of the room where they are demonstrably not produced by any natural means. Avoid, however, any vexatious imposition of restrictions on free communication. Let the Intelligence use its own means. If the attempt to communicate deserves your attention, it probably has something to say to you, and will resent being hampered by useless interference. It rests with the sitters to a very great extent to make the manifestations elevating or frivolous, and even tricky.

Should an attempt be made to entrance the medium, or to manifest by any violent methods or by means of form-manifestations, ask that the attempt may be deferred till you can secure the presence of some experienced Spiritualist. If this request is not heeded, discontinue the sitting at once. The process of developing a trance-medium is one that might disconcert an inexperienced inquirer. It will be found that increased light will check noisy and unpleasant manifestations.

Lastly : Try the results you get by the light of reason. Maintain a level head and a clear judgment. Do not believe everything you are told; for, though the great unseen world contains many a wise and discerning spirit, it also has in it the accumulation of human folly, vanity, and error : and this lies nearer to the surface than that which is wise and good. Distrust the free use of great names. Never for a moment abandon the use of your

reason. Do not enter into a very serious and solemn investigation in a spirit of idle curiosity or frivolity. Endeavour to be animated by a reverent desire for what is pure, good, and true. You will be repaid if you gain only a well-grounded conviction that there is a life after death, for which a pure and good life before death is the best and wisest preparation.

THE DOCTRINES OF THE POPULAR FAITH

CONTRASTED WITH

THE TEACHINGS OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

*A LECTURE delivered on the evening of the 5th March, 1891,
at the Longbrook-street Chapel, Exeter, by*
H. JUNOR BROWNE.

[*Reprinted from the "Devon Evening Express."*]

"If God loves only those who love Him, what better is he than a sinner? and can God, who is infinitely perfect, be less just than man, His creature?"

FRIENDS,—As it is erroneously supposed, by the generality of people, that all who reject and denounce the falsities of the popular faith and the conceptions of God it upholds, are atheists, I shall preface my lecture this evening with the following lines, addressed

TO THE INFINITE.

"Oh! sacred Presence, Life divine,
We rear to Thee no gilded shrine.
Unfashioned by the hand of art,
Thy temple is the childlike heart.

No tearful eye, no bended knee,
No servile speech we bring to Thee,
For Thy great love tunes ev'ry voice,
And makes each trusting soul rejoice.

We will not mock Thy holy name
With titles high of empty fame,
For Thou with all Thy works and ways
Art far beyond man's feeble praise;

But freely as the birds that sing,
 The soul's spontaneous gift we bring,
 And like the fragrance of the flowers
 We consecrate to Thee our powers."

It is a curious fact that although all profess to be animated by the love of truth, there is nothing most people dislike more than those truths which disprove that which they have been taught to believe in as divine verities. They prefer adhering to time-honoured falsities, even if they traduce the character of the Almighty, rather than accept that which is self-evidently true, and which represents God in the most adorable aspect—namely, as infinitely good, just, and merciful. Thomas Carlyle declared that there were thirty millions of people in England, mostly fools, and I quite agree with him if he referred to their religious beliefs. From having been taught *what* to think instead of *how* to think, the generality of people profess to believe that which will not stand a rational analysis, and which is palpably false and contradictory. For instance, they profess to believe on the one hand that God is good, and on the other hand that He cursed with an eternal curse all mankind yet unborn because Adam and Eve transgressed; that He is just, yet that He decreed from the foundation of the world the cruel murder of the innocent Jesus, in order that the guilty might escape from the just consequences of their moral wrongdoings; that He is merciful, yet that He has prepared a place of eternal torment for the great majority of His children. These are only a few of the many glaring inconsistencies of the popular faith, but they are sufficient for my purpose. As evidence that the orthodox entertain grave doubts of God's mercifulness, I need only mention that they are constantly beseeching Him to have mercy on them: "Oh, Lord, have mercy upon me" is their frequent prayer to our all-merciful Father.

With these few observations, I shall now proceed to briefly compare the doctrines of the popular faith with the teachings of modern Spiritualism, and see which is the more enlightened and rational of the two, and

therefore the more worthy of our acceptance and support.

Death is claimed by the orthodox faith to have entered into the world through sin; or, in other words, had Adam and Eve not transgressed, they would have been living on earth to the present day.

Science, on the other hand, proves that death was the natural sequence of physical birth long before man existed on this planet, countless millions of insects and animals having lived and died for thousands, if not millions, of years before man appeared upon the scene.

Death is also popularly held to be a consummation to be dreaded by all, as "the great King of Terrors," whereas the fact is, death is a natural and beneficent change which should be looked forward to with complacency by all who have done their duty to their fellow-beings when on earth, death being simply the new birth of the spirit into a higher domain of life. Death has been well termed "the white-winged angel" that comes to call the spirit to its heavenly home when the worn-out physical body is no longer a fit habitation for it.

The reason why death has always been represented by priestcraft as an occurrence to be looked forward to with so much fear and dread is to frighten and overawe its confiding dupes, and thus make them subservient to its purposes. For their selfish ends priests have in all ages traduced the character of the Almighty, representing Him, whose love is infinite and whose mercy endureth for ever, as a God of wrath and vengeance, who has created the wicked for the day of evil, and who will laugh at them when their calamity cometh; and their dupes seem to like it, for they cling to it tenaciously against the light of truth and reason.

It has been truly observed that the teachings of ecclesiasticism have so warped the judgments of its votaries that they are blind to the truth, causing them to accept as divine verities the most absurd and God-dishonouring statements, merely because they have been branded by priestcraft as of Divine authority. We may rest assured, however, that any book, or church, which

represents God as jealous, wrathful, unjust, or vindictive, cannot be true or worthy of our acceptance. Whatever is evil in man must be infinitely worse on the part of Deity.

“The wrongs that pain my soul below I dare not throne above,
I know not of His wrath or hate : I know but of His love.”

From the facts disclosed through scientific investigation, we learn that God's love is over all, whether they be young or old, learned or unlearned, both in this life and in that which is to come, He being the God of Universal Nature, and not of a sect or church ; that *death*, which is as natural as birth, is a beneficent change for all, and that what we really have to dread is the memory of an evil thought, an unkind word, or a bad action.

It is popularly taught that there is no redemption beyond the grave, for as the tree falleth so it lieth. Whereas the fact is, moral probation ceaseth *not* with this life. If it did it would be most unjust, considering the great inequality in the circumstances of men's births and the very different environments by which they are severally surrounded when on earth. Again, if there be no redemption beyond the grave, for what purpose did Jesus, after he had entered spirit life, go and preach to those who had been in the prison-house of darkness since the days of Noah ? Was it merely to tantalize these poor sinners ? If so, his character must have completely changed for the worse since he entered into Spiritual life, and retrogression be the order of the day there, instead of progression.

In the popular faith the humble Jesus is represented as now sitting as a great prince on a white throne by the side of the titular deity of the Jews, Javeh or Jehovah,, or as riding as the King of Kings on a white horse, with a flaming sword in his hand.

Through Spiritual communion, however, we learn that a more humble spirit never entered the spirit world than the worthy Judean Reformer, who there recommenced those sublime teachings for which he was so shamefully treated when upon earth. Unselfish love was the dis-

tinguishing feature of his life here, and we may rest assured that it is the same in the higher life.

The popular faith teaches that in the world to come the righteous shall see God, whereas through Spiritual science we learn that man is a finite spirit, whether in the fleshly body or out of it, and that a finite being can never behold the Infinite. That as on earth God can only be seen through His works, so in the future life He can only be seen by His works there, which far transcend in grandeur and beauty those of earth, grand and beautiful as some of these are. This is corroborated in the 1st Epistle of Paul to Timothy vi. 16, where, in reference to God, it is stated, "Whom no man hath seen, or can see;" and in John i. 18, it is declared, "No man hath seen God at any time, neither heard His voice."

Although in the gospel, said to be *according to Mark*, at the 12th chapter, 32nd verse, it is declared, "There is one God; and there is none other but He," Jesus is represented in the popular faith as a god, one of three; that he is constantly interceding for mankind with the irate and revengeful senior partner of the Trinity, thereby exalting in goodness the man Christ Jesus above his Father and our Father, his *God* and our God. Jesus, on the other hand, is represented in Scripture as having been so humble that he reproved a young man for even addressing him as "good master," saying there was none good but one, that was God. Now, if, as the popular faith teaches, Jesus was God, he must either have been ignorant of the fact or have wilfully deceived the young man whom he addressed. Our elder brother no more claimed to be God than he claimed to be King of Judea. The very idea that we are brothers and sisters to the Almighty is impious. Such, however, would be the corollary if Jesus were God and our elder brother. The usual orthodox reply to this is, that Jesus was God in essence and man in substance. This argument has clearly been refuted in the following words:—

"Talk of essence and substance, and I know not what,
 Either God made Christ or else He did not,
 If He did, Christ's a creature, that's plain to the view,
 If not, he's a God, and then we have two."

When the upholders of the popular faith find themselves floored on this point, they cunningly shift their ground and declare that if Jesus and Jehovah were not one, then Jesus was the only begotten son of their God, but they do not inform us if Jehovah had any begotten daughters, or how a son can be as old, or co-eternal with, his Father. Surely the latter must be older than his son. They also forget that they claim that Jesus was the fullness of the Godhead bodily, yet it is reported that he said "The Father is greater than I." The deeper this subject of the Trinity is probed the more inexplicable it becomes. A doctrine that is not true must be misleading, however revered it may be by the masses. It was evidently borrowed from the old religion of India, with its trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, or from the Egyptian trinity of Osiris, Isis, and Horus.

A popular clergyman being asked by an old friend what his private opinion was regarding the doctrine of the Trinity, replied *sotto voce*, "I reverence it for its antiquity, I adore it for its absurdity, and I preach it because I am well paid for doing so." How different would the teachings in the various churches be if the clergy were paid for preaching that which they believed, instead of that which is in accordance with the articles of their respective churches. Take for instance the doctrine of eternal damnation for unbaptized infants, which is distinctly laid down in the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. How many of your clergy really believe this blasphemous dogma? Not one in a thousand, though few have the honesty to openly repudiate this impious charge against the character of God, whose love is over all. The greatest saint that ever lived might well have envied an infant for its innocence. Baptism is simply an old superstitious ceremony borrowed from the Hindoos, and transferred to the banks of the Jordan from those of the sacred Ganges, where it was practised for thousands of years before the time of Jesus. All the other forms and ceremonies of the popular faith can also be traced to heathen origin. Forms and ceremonies have nothing to do with true religion; they are

but the trappings added, for interested motives, by priestcraft, to the simple religion of Jesus—viz., love to God and love to man, which comprise all the law and the prophets. It has been truly stated—"The (so-called) Christian religion has been tried for eighteen centuries without making people even honest; the simple religion of Jesus remains to be tried."

"Creeds are but shackles that enslave the mind,
Goodness consists of actions pure and kind."

According to the popular faith the next world is divided into two compartments—namely, a very sparsely peopled place called heaven, with a very narrow gateway at its entrance, "and few there be who go in thereat," and a densely populated place called hell or sheol, with a wide path leading thereto, rendering it easy of access to nine-tenths of God's children. Through Spiritual science we learn that this is false as well as God-dishonouring, and that Jesus was right when he declared, as is reported, that in the world to come there were many mansions or spheres. We also learn that there are many grades in these spheres, into one of which, by a natural law, each individual is attracted on entrance into spirit life, according to his or her character formed when on earth; for as we now sow here so shall we reap hereafter, irrespective of our faith or belief, so that an honest sceptic is better than a credulous, hypocritical saint.

The popular faith teaches that the life to come is an indolent one of either eternal anthem singing or of everlasting brimstone roasting; whereas, through Spiritual communion, we learn it is a life of activity to all who desire to progress. This activity consists in doing good to others either on the earth plane or in the spirit world, which is the best and only way we can serve God either here or hereafter. As on earth we all can help others either physically, morally, or intellectually, so in the spirit world all can assist others morally, intellectually, or spiritually who are less developed than themselves in these respects. The doing of good to others is the noblest work of man, and the surest way to secure our

own progress in both states of existence, so that the old adages hold good in both worlds—namely, “Thrice blest is he who blesses others,” and “An ounce of help is worth a ton of pity.” Heaven and hell are states of mind, not localities. When we do good we are in heaven, or are in harmony with that state; and when we do evil we are in hell, or in sheol, as it is now termed in the revised edition of the New Testament. When we enter spirit life we carry our heaven or our hell with us, for the change called death does not alter our state of mind, but merely our condition. If we have cultivated evil passions here, they remain with us there until we have outgrown them, but *there* the means of satisfying these passions of our lower nature are wanting, so in time they die out.

It is popularly taught that the other world is a bourne from which no traveller can return; that there is a great gulf separating the two worlds which prevents this. If so, how came all the spirits, mentioned in the Old Testament as having communicated with and manifested themselves to men in the flesh, to get over this great gulf? How came it that Moses and Elias appeared on the mount to the disciples? and how about the bright spirit which John saw on the Island of Patmos, who reproved John for attempting to worship him, saying, “See thou do it not, for I am one of thy brethren the prophets?” Why is it enjoined in Scripture to believe not every spirit, and to try the spirits, if they cannot return and communicate with mankind when the necessary conditions are present? Spiritualism is not only taught in the Bible, but we are therein enjoined to cultivate our spiritual gifts, for to one is given one gift and to another a different gift, &c. Again, if it be wrong to communicate with spirits now, it must have been equally so in Scriptural times, unless it can be proved that God has in the meantime brought in an amending act.

It is popularly taught that man’s future state for eternity is fixed by his faith or belief in this life, which, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, is solely dependent

on the circumstances of his birth ; whereas we learn through the investigation of Spiritual science that man's character is formed, not by his faith, which is a specious name for pious credulity, but by the daily actions of his life here, and that according to his character so is his condition on entrance into spirit life. If it were otherwise it would be most unjust to all who never heard of the popular faith, and to those who, in accordance with the reason with which God hath endowed them, have had the honesty to reject such a God-dishonouring belief, which was invented long after Jesus was put to death.

The popular faith teaches that God, who is infinitely good, just, and merciful, will, in the future state, visit the majority of mankind with an infinite punishment for a finite transgression, unless they stultify their reason and receive in blind faith its superstitious, priest-made creeds. Through Spiritual science we learn that, by the eternal law of effect following cause, suffering is the natural result of sin, that that suffering is mental, temporal, and remedial, therefore it is not, as popularly taught, physical, everlasting, and vindictive.

It is also popularly taught that man can escape the just consequences of his moral wrongdoings here through the merits and sufferings of another, and that thereby the great law of effect following cause can be contravened. Through Spiritual science we learn that there is no escape from the consequences of sin by any magical, mystical, or priestly process, and that every sin committed brings its own punishment, either in this life or in that which is to come ; that the only way we can blot out our transgressions is by covering them over by good actions either when here or when we have entered into Spiritual life. It therefore follows that the popular doctrine of forgiveness of sins through vicarious sacrifice, which was not invented till long after the cruel murder of the worthy Jesus, is but a snare and a delusion. To uphold the old heathenish doctrine that there can be no remission of sin without the shedding of blood is tantamount to maintaining that two wrongs make one right.

The putting to death of the worthy man Christ Jesus by his own countrymen is but an example of man's cruelty to man. To ascribe this unjust murder to God, for the purpose of appeasing His divine wrath and satisfying His otherwise implacable revenge, is, I maintain, rank blasphemy.

Then trust not faith in foolish creeds,
 Blood ne'er can whitewash wicked deeds ;
 But let your acts here always be
 Those which from sin will make you free.

Now let me ask, which of the two views set forth, think you, is the more enlightened, the more rational, and consequently the more worthy of acceptance by us as rational and responsible beings? Do not let the falsely claimed divine authority of a book or church bias your decision. That the churches place themselves at the head of nearly every public charity I admit, but this is diplomacy on their part, and is for the purpose of giving to their false creeds and dogmas the semblance of truth, in the same way as the chemist coats with sugar his nasty pills in order to induce you to swallow them, and to deceive the palate. The simple religion of Jesus had no absurd creeds, inexplicable dogmas, or any of the imposing ceremonies of ecclesiasticism ; neither had it, nor did it require, grand anthems and loud-sounding organs to attract his followers, as do the churches which falsely profess to teach the religion Jesus inculcated. When you consider the humility of the man Christ Jesus and see or hear of a pompous bishop being enthroned in gorgeous apparel, cannot you perceive the mockery of ecclesiasticism, and that the whole of this priestly assumption is a palpable public fraud, kept alive for the purpose of exalting the few over the many? Does not the existence of this huge, arrogant, and expensive priestly institution, still in full swing up to the present time, prove that Carlyle was right when he wrote that there were thirty millions in England mostly fools? Protestants see the humbug of Roman Catholicism, but are blind to the humbug of Protestantism, with its close

imitation of that of which it is a mere offshoot ; as of old, they see the mote that is in their neighbour's eye, but cannot perceive the beam that is in their own. All that God, who dwelleth not in temples made with hands, requires is that man should act justly and walk humbly in the sight of Him who is ever present, and who knoweth the secrets of men's hearts. If the money that has been expended in building the immense cathedrals and the various churches had been expended in the erection of homes for the houseless poor, and had all the amounts paid annually to the clergy for preaching those foolish old Jewish fables, which turn from the truth, been devoted to feeding the hungry and clothing the naked, we should not have required the scheme lately initiated by General Booth for the amelioration of the condition of the outcasts of England. Do right, is all the religion required to be taught the people, for this comprises all the law and the prophets, as well as love to God and love to man. God requireth not the praises of men or of angels, for all His works glorify Him. The teachings of Jesus were summed up in a few words—namely, love ye one another. He had no cathedral, or even a church, and he preached without money and without price.

The popular faith, I maintain, is impious, for it represents God as jealous, revengeful, unjust, unmerciful, and vindictive ; it also is immoral, as it teaches that man can go on sinning with impunity if he will only, at the eleventh hour, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and him crucified. No wonder, with such misleading teachings, that the world is still steeped in sin and misery. No wonder that with all your old cathedrals, churches, and chapels, large court-houses and prisons are still required in your midst. As long as people are taught to worship a wicked God, who is represented as having decreed the cruel murder of one of His noblest sons, and to have broken almost every one of His own laws, how can they be expected to become righteous ? Teach them the truth, as revealed by Spiritual communion—viz., that if even they escape from punishment in this life for evil

needs committed, there is a world of retributive justice in which every sin brings its own suffering, and from which there is no escape, and you will soon find an improvement. Do not teach them that God is so wicked as to have created a fiery hell to eternally roast them in, but rather that there is hope and happiness for all eventually in that life towards which every one of us is travelling, each day that passes bringing us nearer and nearer thereto. Modern Spiritualism corroborates all the truths and moral teachings of both the Hebrew and the Greek Scriptures. It is only their absurd legendary fables and the God-dishonouring and false dogmas, still popularly taught, that it denounces and repudiates.

The generality of those belonging to the popular faith, I may here observe, look on Spiritualists in anything but a favourable light, forgetting that all who believe in a future life for man are Spiritualists. While viewing ancient Spiritualism with feelings of respect, and even reverence, they inconsistently hold Modern Spiritualism to be a superstition. Instead of this being the case, it is the exposé of all superstition. Surely that which rests on a scientific basis, the phenomena of which can be obtained in your own homes, cannot be a superstition? Without these phenomena, I maintain, we have no rational evidence of a life to come, and religion is a mere farce based on credulity or speculation as to there being a future life for man. Then if, as some assert, the phenomena of Modern Spiritualism be all the result of trickery and delusion, this argument will apply equally to the phenomena recorded in the Scriptures, with the advantage to the former that their reality can be tested, which cannot be done with the latter. That there has been a large amount of imposture connected with the movement by unscrupulous persons does not affect the genuine manifestations, any more than a forged bank-note proves that all others are forgeries. On the contrary, in both cases it is palpable evidence that there are the genuine to copy from. Those who, on the other hand, assert that the spiritual phenomena of our day are the work of the Devil, must first prove that such a person-

age exists; and, even if they were able to do this, they would only be knocking the ground from under their own feet, for if the Devil is the author of the modern manifestations he must have been the author of those in Scriptural times, both being of a similar character in many respects. The question may arise, Why are Spiritual phenomena so uncommon now? The answer to this is simple—Because the church has, for more than a thousand years, closed its doors against Spiritual manifestations, and people have in consequence neglected to cultivate their Spiritual gifts as enjoined in the Scriptures, and to prove all things, holding fast to that which is good.

Through the realization of the facts brought to light through Modern Spiritualism, a silver lining is given to every dark cloud in this world of trial, pain, and sorrow. I can truly say, from personal experience, that the knowledge obtained through the investigation of Spiritual science has given me that peace which passeth all understanding in the darkest hours of my life, which the popular faith failed to supply under less trying circumstances. This knowledge supports and comforts in the hour of death in a manner that no religion based on mere belief can ever supply, as thousands besides myself can testify. This knowledge bridges the tomb, withdraws the veil, and brings heaven to earth, by uniting us, even while here, with the loved ones gone before.

Spiritualism, therefore, notwithstanding all the misrepresentations and ridicule that have been levelled against it, is a subject well worthy of the earnest investigation of all who desire "more light," who are not afraid of the truth, and who can stand the sneers of their prejudiced and ignorant friends, in the attainment of that which truly robs death of its sting and the grave of its victory.

I shall conclude by repeating a few lines that came to me, without thought on my part, many years ago. They are as follows, and are

AN ODE TO TRUTH.

Oh, Truth ! thou beauteous gem, thou pearl of all the seas,
 Visible throughout God's works to men of all degrees,
 Shine forth in all thy splendour, enlighten ev'ry mind,
 Extinguish cherished errors, emancipate mankind.
 From bigotry and priestcraft the souls of men release,
 Let superstitious follies and false religions cease.
 Then true worship by our acts shall senseless creeds displace,
 And base notions of our God no longer man disgrace.
 Then shall thy simple teachings, by Jesus once proclaimed,
 Divested of all errors by which they've been defamed,
 Shine as the second advent, or Love's sublime new birth,
 And countless millenniums reign verily on earth.

ADDENDA.

At the close of the address, the Lecturer replied to a number of questions put by the audience in reference to the subjects under consideration. He also stated that if, during his short stay in Exeter, any of those interested were willing to take a suitable hall in the city for the purpose, he was prepared to meet in debate any accredited member of the various churches with which Exeter is so well supplied, from the Bishop downwards. He further stated that he alone was responsible for the statements he had made that evening. On the other hand, he does not hold himself responsible for the acts or statements of others professing to be Spiritualists. Spiritualism differs from the popular faith in this respect : that while the followers of the latter are supposed to be bound by the same belief, those of the former are held to be individually responsible for their respective views, actions, and statements. So far from the popular faith being harmonious, as is claimed for it, we have only to look at the innumerable sects into which it is divided to prove the inharmony of the one book on which they all profess to base their varying beliefs, and of the jealousies, if not hatred, which exist among them, while he whom they claim as their master is reported to have said, "Love ye one another."

The following, which appeared in the *Devon Evening Express* of 9th March, expresses, with a few slight emendations, the views held by the lecturer:—

CHRISTIANITY: ITS FOUNDER AND ITS FOLLOWERS.

A CONTRAST. BY M. B.

In Nazareth a boy did live,
 One destined to the world to give
 A pure religion for all time.
 The brain which harboured thoughts sublime
 Had not in college routine grown,
 But reason fruitful seed had sown.
 The rich were not those whom he sought;
 He loved the poor, the poor he taught,
 And for his work his only pay
 Was homely hospitality.
 No priestly palace his abode,
 An ass the proudest beast he rode;
 Aspired he not to princely state,
 Nor lived he as a potentate.
 He loved good cheer and cheery mirth,
 And all the good things of the earth;
 His prayers were in few words addressed,
 Good deeds he deemed his worship best.
 The sea, the field, the mountain wild
 To him were temples undefiled;
 No mitre, gown, or special dress
 Had he to clothe his righteousness;
 His work was not a trade of gain,
 His death was but a death of pain.
 His followers must to college go,
 And then with mediæval show,
 Believe themselves a special race,
 Wear solemn airs and lengthened face.
 The rich they praise, the poor deceive
 With surplice, mitre, and lawn-sleeve;
 Their pay by thousands must be told,
 Yet preach they curs'd is love of gold!
 A palace must be their abode,
 Their legs in gaiters must be clothed;
 A retinue have they to wait
 Upon their spiritual lord's estate;
 In lengthy prayers and pagan creeds
 They waste their time; man's goodly deeds
 They say are nought 'less he receive
 And inexplicable creeds believe;
 They cannot worship save in mass
 'Mid sculptured stone and coloured glass;

His simple life they imitate
 In lux'ry, pride and high estate,
 And for his truths of love and light,
 A funeral pall as black as night
 They draw around the searching mind
 That would their Master's meaning find.

NOTE.—Spiritualism is not, as popularly supposed, a religion, although it has a religious as well as a philosophical and scientific phase. In it we have the only rational basis for belief in a future state, and through it we learn that by the just and everlasting law of cause and effect our condition on entrance into the higher life depends solely on our daily thoughts, words, and actions when on earth; also, that by the divine law of eternal progress there is hope eventually for every human soul, however low or degraded it may have been on the physical plane of existence. This may well be termed "the larger hope" by all who believe in religion without superstition, and in a good and wise Father whose love is over all His children, whether called saints or sinners, for all have erred to a greater or less extent. Here, let me ask, who are the foolish ones—those who without a particle of rational evidence believe in a chimerical future existence, or those who from scientific evidence received, believe in a reasonable progressive future state for man?

CHRISTIANITY: ITS ORIGIN AND ESOTERIC MEANING.

(A LECTURE delivered at the Masonic Hall, Melbourne, on Sunday evening, 30th March, 1884.)

“ And truth alone, where'er my lot be cast,
In scenes of plenty or the pining waste,
Shall be my end and aim—my glory to the last.”

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—The title of my lecture this evening is Christianity: its Origin and Esoteric (that is, its hidden) Meaning.

In stating the conclusions which have been arrived at by me in connection with this important subject, I am not so presumptuous as to suppose that they are faultless, but merely submit them for your consideration as being that which appears to me nearer to the truth than the views popularly entertained in regard thereto.

It remains with you to receive or reject the opinions expressed by me, according as they commend themselves or otherwise to your individual consciences. The practice of listening only to opinions which accord with one's views and which confirm one's prejudices is unfortunately too common an error, for in all matters that are undemonstrable it is alone by the interchange of opposite opinions that the truth can be arrived at. Theology, like everything else, has two sides, a false and a true one. If the views which you at present entertain are really true, no argument that can be brought forward can upset them, for truth is invulnerable; on the other hand, if they are erroneous, the sooner you are aware of it the better. Bear in mind that it is much easier to swim with the tide of popular opinion than it is for one to endeavour to stem its surging current, and that my sole

object is the exposure of error and the elucidation of truth. Bear in mind also, as Charles Mackay wisely remarks, that—

“The man is thought a knave or fool,
Or atheist plotting crime,
Who for the advancement of his kind
Is wiser than his time.”

And as the poet Whittier writes:

“Every age on him who strays
From its broad and beaten ways
Pours its sevenfold vial.”

That there is a widespread declension in all the Christian sects from the old standards of faith, and that a disturbed condition of opinion in regard to religion exists throughout Christendom, we have evidence from all quarters. Even from the various pulpits “a growing want of faith” is constantly being deplored; and, as has been truly remarked by Emerson, “No man can go with his thoughts about him into one of our churches without feeling that what hold the public worship once had on man is gone or going. It has lost its grasp on the affections of the good and the fears of the bad.”

We need not travel far to ascertain the reason of this state of affairs in the religious atmosphere, and for the causes which produce this prevalent decay and almost universal death of faith in society. The advance of science, the expansion of thought, and the freedom of speech and investigation, now so generally prevalent, are the chief causes.

Religion throughout the length and breadth of Christendom may, therefore, be said to be in a transition state, owing to the intelligence of the day having outgrown the superstitious ideas which have for ages past been received by the majority of the people as divine verities, and to the general enlightenment of the masses tending to bring men into a greater preparedness for the reception of spiritual truth, thereby indicating that the need of a new revelation was never greater than now. A grand reformation has, in fact, set in, which, though not

yet generally acknowledged, will in due course usher in a higher and nobler conception of God and of man's destiny.

It is a popular but fallacious assumption that respect for all religious truth is likely to go with the rejection of dogmas which are not only totally opposed to science and common sense but are even dishonouring towards God and debasing to those who continue to support them, for, as Carlyle wisely remarks: "The old never dies till this happen—till the soul of the good that was in it has got itself transferred into the practical new."

In the rational religion now dawning on the world, those portions of truth incorporated in anterior religions will be supplanted by new revealments conformable to the advancing enlightenment of the people.

The transition from the old to the new, I am aware, will be slow, for so wedded are most people to the errors, prejudices, and delusions in which they have been brought up, and so tenaciously do they cling to early instilled superstition, that even when the falsity and absurdity thereof are clearly demonstrated to them they still continue to reverence and cherish them, and to reject that which both truth and reason commend to their understanding. If truth, however, is an essential requisite of religion (as it must be), all lovers thereof should willingly surrender those doctrines and positions which are antagonistic to the intelligence of the age they live in, consequently are no longer tenable by all who possess a spark of honesty. You may rely upon it that whatever good has come to the world through a mistaken faith could have come as well without its errors.

All ideas, however ancient they are, and however much they may be revered as truth, which are opposed to natural facts, consequently are undemonstrable, must be fictitious, and the principles of all faiths, aside from their connection with morality, are of little benefit to mankind, for intelligence and morality, virtue and truth are the only means through which the world can be redeemed from ignorance and sin. Before, however, humanity can rise to a truthful plane of religious thought, the real

basis of religious ideas must be understood. Unfortunately, knowledge in advance of popularly received ideas is regarded with distrust, and those who have the candour to submit such knowledge to their neighbours are, as I have remarked, treated with contumely, while those who pander to their predilections and confirm their prejudices, for interested purposes, are revered and respected; for

“ Faith, fanatic faith, once wedded fast
To some dear falsehood, hugs it to the last.”

It is the height of absurdity to shut our eyes to the fact that all religions (Christianity not excepted) must undergo change and modification as man's higher faculties are developed. The crude thoughts of infancy that satisfied the masses in ignorant and superstitious times, being no longer adapted to meet the spiritual wants of educated and intelligent men and women, must give place to higher and nobler views, for human ideas on all subjects expand and alter with growth. Mankind being subject to the inevitable law of progression, must, whether willingly or otherwise, advance, not only in their views of art and science, but also in their views of their relations to God and to each other; for every fresh discovery gives birth to new thoughts and creates new wants; and these wants must be met with responses as intimately connected with them as every effect with its cause. It is in consequence of this that modern thought differs from that of the past, in that its views of God and of man's present and future existence take a much broader scope, and grasp with the hands of a stronger and more rational faith the great fact of immortality. As the poet has truly remarked—

“ The new must e'er supplant the old
While Time's unceasing current flows,
Only new beauties to unfold
And brighter glories to disclose.”

It was, in like manner, owing to the great strides made by philosophy during the first centuries of what is

termed the Christian era, that the pagan temples of Rome began to be less and less attended and supported by the intelligent and wealthy classes, and that the necessity arose for the inauguration of a more enlightened religious system, which, while it retained all the good that was embodied in the old religions, would displace their numerous gods and goddesses, and offer in their place a conception of Deity possessing attributes which would commend the new religion to all—to the enlightened as well as to the ignorant.

It was not, however, till the fourth century, during the reign of Constantine the Great, that the old pagan religions were finally merged into the new. I may here observe that the conversion of this bloodthirsty emperor to Christianity was cunningly ascribed by the priests of his day to a vision which he was said to have seen in the sky; but the real incentive thereto was evidently the promise held out to him by the priests of the new religion of absolution from his sins, of which he had committed many and grievous; no such hopes being held out by the old. The pagan religions inculcated, as you are aware, the truer, juster, and more rational doctrine of retributive justice in the world to come.

Constantine (we learn by history) drowned his wife Fausta in a bath of boiling water. He murdered his father-in-law, two brothers-in-law, a nephew, and several others. The crowning act of this Christian emperor was, however, the beheading of his eldest son, Crispus, in the very year in which he presided at the Council of Nice. Such was the character of the man who changed the Roman empire from paganism to Christianity on the ground that Jesus was better than Jupiter, and Mary than Venus. Even after his conversion to Christianity, Constantine is represented as having retained a certain respect for the old pagan god Jupiter, to whom he caused a statue to be erected.

I may here remark that the misrepresentations of heathen theology, and the distortion of its forms of religious worship indulged in by many Christian writers on the subject, do not redound to their credit, too many

of whom have violated truth for the purpose of extolling their own religion at the expense of the old. As the Rev. F. B. Gross remarks:—"Perhaps on no subject within the ample range of human knowledge have so many fallacious ideas been propagated as upon that of the gods and the worship of heathen antiquity. Nothing but a shameful ignorance, a pitiable prejudice, or the contemptible pride which denounces all investigation as a useless or criminal labour when it must be feared that it will result in the overthrow of established systems of faith or the modification of long-cherished principles of science, can have thus misrepresented the theology of heathenism, and distorted—nay, caricatured—its forms of religious worship. It is time that posterity should raise its voice in vindication of violated truth, and that the present age should learn to recognize in the hoary past a little of that common sense of which it boasts with so much complacency, as if the prerogative of reason was the birthright only of modern times." I fearlessly maintain that every unbiassed and candid scholar must admit that, side by side with the most gross superstition, there was much that was good in paganism, the same as is the case with all the established religions of the day, and that

"Truth is truth where'er 'tis found,
On Christian or on pagan ground."

Tracing religion back as far as we possess materials for so doing, Phallic worship, in which the sexual organs formed the leading symbols, appears to be the most ancient. This in the course of time merged into the astronomical religion, of which (strange as it may appear to those who learn it for the first time), Christianity is but an offshoot, greatly misunderstood by the generality of those who uphold it. In order to substantiate this statement it will be necessary for me to make frequent reference to the astronomical religion, and to explain the connection between the two.

The Sun, it must be admitted, is the best emblem that man possesses of divinity, as it is it that supplieth "that

light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." It is this great orb that shines upon every nation, savage and civilized, that supplies those fructifying rays that give food to all—to the just and to the unjust; it may therefore be truly said to be no respecter of persons. The Sun also is the best symbol for that everlasting truth which will in time enable man to walk uprightly without stumbling; and unite all in one grand universal brotherhood.

The magi, or wise men of the east, of whom we read in olden times—viz., the ancient sages of India, Persia, and Egypt—were the *savants* or philosophers of the times and countries in which they lived. They worshipped the Sun, Moon, and stars simply as visible representatives of ideas. These sages, from their deep contemplation and insight into the working of the Divine force in nature, possessed a profound knowledge of the universe, consequently they were enabled to sway the minds of the ignorant and credulous masses in any way they desired. Thus, while to the initiated the worship of the Sun was merely as the symbol of light, intellectual and spiritual, the ignorant and uninitiated worshipped the Sun, the Moon, and the stars as actual deities.

The successors of these sages—viz., the priests of the various sects founded on the worship of the heavenly bodies—were also the most learned of their day. They, in like manner, continued to control the minds of the masses by forming the primitive theologies into systems, and creating gods and goddesses to suit their own purposes. These priests were perfectly aware of the underlying truth beneath all these images; but from interested motives they sought to hide the truth from the vulgar, upon whose credulity they relied for the aggrandisement of themselves and their temples, giving their dupes merely the outward symbols, so as to keep them in ignorance and thereby subservient to priestcraft.

At length, through the advancement of Grecian philosophy, the falsities and absurdities of the various pagan religions, with their gods and goddesses, and their foolish

rites and ceremonies, became apparent to the more enlightened and wealthy, who in consequence withdrew, as I have remarked, their countenance and support from the different pagan temples. Owing to their withdrawal, and to the diminution of revenue for the purposes of the craft, the priests of the various pagan sects combined, in order to preserve their status, to formulate and proclaim a new religious system, which, while it retained esoterically the leading symbols and doctrines of the old religions, embraced also the highest teachings of the philosophy of the age, thereby to secure its acceptance by all classes of society. It was thus that in the time of Constantine, as I have observed, the numerous pagan gods and goddesses merged into the new virgin-born God, the ancient astronomical symbols being perpetuated in the new religion.

Grecian philosophy, I may here state, was to the ancient world what scientific investigation is to the modern; being opposed to superstition, it was vindictively crushed out (at a terrible cost to humanity) by ecclesiasticism, by which it was superseded. While philosophy taught that all distinctions which existed among men were chiefly the results of natural conditions, ecclesiasticism impudently denied the inherent right of man to the possession of individual mental freedom, and found favour with the world by pandering to its ignorance and credulity with specious promises of absolution from sins and future rewards to all who would acknowledge its claims to jurisdiction over the race.

The conception of the new man-God was evidently borrowed by his priestly creators from the Egyptian theology, in which Horus is represented as the son of Osiris (the Sun) and Isis (the Earth). Thus the sun-God, or son of God, became the offspring of the Sun and Earth, the union of the Sun and Earth being the apparent source of creative power by whom all things are made, and without whom was not anything made that was made; so all life centres in them. These subtle priests, therefore, gave to their God incarnate (in whom they comprised the fulness of the Godhead bodily) power over all

things in heaven and on earth ; at the same time they knavishly assumed to themselves, as his deputies, the power of remission of sins. "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." This was their great master-stroke, as it held out an inducement which the older forms of paganism did not claim to possess.

The popular religion of our day is, therefore, merely reformed paganism, or civilized heathenism, as it has been termed, and, like all the other established religions, its origin, as I have said, is astronomical. A writer truly remarks, "All religions centre around astronomical worship," and in order to preserve the old ideas, all religions (including Christianity), as I shall presently illustrate, have been veiled under astronomical signs. Consequently, the various ancient Scriptures are, to a very large extent, merely allegorical representations, the exoteric or literal meaning of which is not the real one. They were thus designed by their authors in order to hide, as I have already stated, the truths contained therein from the ignorant masses, while conveying to the initiated their esoteric, or hidden, or astrological meaning.

The Old Testament is simply Hebrew mythology, or the Jewish version of an astronomical allegory ; for, taken in its exoteric meaning, it is largely composed of the most absurd fables, that are a standing disgrace to the intelligence of the age we live in. Take, for example, the stories of a serpent speaking to a woman ; of an ass talking to a man ; of a whale swallowing another man, &c. In its esoteric meaning, however, the Bible explains certain combinations in the heavens, and in this way alone are many of its statements made intelligible. In a few instances in this book however, we find the esoteric meaning openly given ; for instance, in Job (to prove that heavenly laws never alter), we find it written : "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion ? Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season ? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons ?"—(Job xxxviii. 31, 32.)

It is worthy of remark that there are twelve signs in the zodiac, twelve tribes of Israel, twelve apostles, and that Elisha, which means "God that saves," or the Sun, is anciently represented as ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen before him. Moses represents Aquarius, or Neptune, whose dwelling is where the Sun rises at the equinox; he is, therefore, said to be saved from, or drawn out of, the water. Esau represents Hercules with the lion's skin, and therefore is all over like a hairy garment. John the Baptist also represents Aquarius, or the water-bearer.

Mr. W. Oxley, a gentleman who has devoted considerable study to the subject, writing in regard to the Bible history as interpreted by the stars, clearly demonstrates the astro-masonic character of the leading Biblical statements. Mr. Oxley declares them to be "an intellectual and spiritual adaptation of solar, sidereal, and planetary motions and positions, which form the base, scientifically true, of an allegory that has supplied the moral and physical life-force to hundreds of thousands of human beings." He further observes:—"All ancient Scriptures bear the same impress, which is at once astronomical and astrological. . . . We are now in actual possession of the veritable system on which the whole of the Bible was based."

The sacred bull of the Brahmins, the Apis of the Egyptians, the baal or bull of the Chaldeans, the bull sacrificed by the Persians in the symbolic mysteries of Mithra, and the bull seen by Ezekiel in the heavens (see Ezek. i.), represented both the active or masculine principle in nature and likewise the constellation Taurus, or the bull, in the Zodiac, styled in the Jewish Scriptures Jehovah, or the Great I Am, who was jealous of the bulls of Bashan, and of all other bulls or gods. The bull was the emblematical symbol of the Sun at the vernal equinox in the sign of Taurus, the celestial bull. As has been truly remarked—"The bull certainly did pertain to astronomical myths among those nations who made him an object of worship; otherwise, why those extended wings attached to the bulls of Chaldea and Persia in

every instance, if they were not flying bulls that were represented; and what bull other than the bull of the Zodiac ever so much as appeared to fly? The outward worship of the celestial bull was twenty-one hundred years older than the outward worship of the celestial lamb; the bull having preceded the ram at the vernal equinox by that period. In Persia there was a religion in which the bull was the leading symbol, contemporary with the baal or bel of the Sun-worship of the Chaldeans; which at a later period, when the vernal equinox occurred in the sign of the lamb, or agni of the Zoroastrian religion, gave place to the worship of the lamb. So in Egypt the worship of the sacred bull Apis was contemporary with the baal or bull-worship of Chaldea and Persia, but was afterwards substituted by the ascendancy of the ram, when the latter took the place of the bull at the vernal equinox. The Sun, whether at the vernal equinox in the bull or the lamb, or ram, was the same Sun and the same object of worship." In Revelation iv. 6 to 9, the second beast, the celestial bull-calf, is manifestly referred to as having relation to the worship of the celestial lamb, the Anointed One, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world by dissipating the cold of winter. This vision evidently related to the state of the heavens at the vernal equinox some eighteen centuries ago, when the Sun reached that point of its apparent annual course, no longer in the sign of the bull, but in the sign of the lamb, as the celestial sign in which the Sun, at that time, rose to reign in glory during the summer months, was regarded by the Persians and the Jews. The sea of glass represented the azure dome of heaven, and the throne the position of the Sun in the sign of Aries or Agni. The four beasts stood for the four seasons, or the Zodiacal constellations—Leo, Taurus, Aquarius, and the Eagle or substitute for Scorpio; there were also four evangelists. The six wings of each of the four beasts represented the six hours which each of these constellations occupied in passing from the horizon to the zenith, making together twenty-four hours, or length of time of the diurnal

revolution of the Earth, which, like the beasts and the four and twenty elders, rests not day nor night; for it revolves unceasingly around the Sun—the king of heaven—which, either symbolically or otherwise, has been the object of veneration and worship for ages of millions upon millions of earth's inhabitants.

As I have already remarked, the Sun is the fundamental symbol of every religion; from its being everywhere a visible manifestation of God it has been accepted as "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person." It is upon this kingly orb that man depends for light and life, through the influence of which are produced all things needful to existence. To this day the course of the Sun not only controls both the secular and ecclesiastical calendars of the Christian Church, and the character and times of the festivals held in honour of Christ, but actually coincides with the main circumstances narrated of his life, from his conception and birth to his ascension and reception into heaven; and the same remarks apply equally to Chrishna of the Hindoos, Mithra of the Persians, Osiris of the Egyptians, and other ancient man-gods.

Sir Isaac Newton was the layman who first discovered and announced to the world that the Christian festivals were determined upon an astronomical basis. The day assigned to the birth of the Sun-God of all the other religions was the same as that assigned, without a particle of historical evidence, by the Church to Christ. The shortest day (*i.e.*, north of the Equator) being the 21st, his birthday is put on to the 25th, the first day that shows any elongation, and which is, therefore, the actual commencement of the year; while the 21st, on which the Sun reaches his lowest point—when his worshippers are supposed to be filled with alarm lest their lord and master fail to rise again—is assigned to the doubting apostle Thomas.

Christmas has come and the Sun is born; but winter has still a long career to run, and consequently the Sun, as yet a feeble infant, has to undergo a series of struggles with the powers of darkness. And just as we find the

infant Christ exposed to the perils celebrated on Innocents' Day, we find the various representations of the Sun with difficulty and danger emerging into childhood. In the case of the Hindoo deity Chrishna—who was also said to have been born on the 25th December, cradled among shepherds, and greeted at his birth by an angelic chorus—a massacre of children was ordered by a jealous king named Cansa, in exact correspondence with the slaughter afterwards ascribed to Herod. In every case, however, the Sun-God escapes all dangers and grows in stature and favour with God and man, the days gradually gaining on the nights as he rises higher above the horizon until the vernal equinox, when they are equal.

This period of equality constitutes in all the solar religions a serious crisis in the Sun-God's history. For a time things seem to go against him, and mankind are in despair. The change to the south-west monsoon brings equinoctial storms which hide the Sun from their sight. He has succumbed to his foe. They fast long and mourn him dead (as in Lent). But being a God he cannot be holden of death. Nay, by his dying he shall prove himself conqueror over death, and his very death shall be a blessing and redemption for the nations; for the rains by which the Sun has been obscured are essential to the life of the Eastern world. Thus hope returns and despair is changed to joy as, from a point still higher in the heavens than that at which he had disappeared, he shines out with new and greater effulgence. His rising is followed by his final triumph and continued ascent towards the zenith, his kingdom of heaven, whence, in the heat and fruitfulness of summer, he sends down sustenance and comfort for men. But during the equinoctial period of the Sun's rising and ascension he is in the constellation of the *lamb*, as Aries used to be called. This also is his time to *pass over* the equinoctial line from the southern to the northern tropic. Now does the orb of day begin to attain his full powers. Thus in the Apocalypse we find the Lamb adored in the presence of the throne by four living creatures, the cardinal constellations of the heavens, corresponding

with the four archangels—viz., Gabriel, Michael, Uriel, and Raphael—and representing the four seasons of the year; and twenty-four elders, who fall down before him crying “Worthy is the Lamb,” &c., representing the twenty-four hours which constitute the solar day, the twelve apostles representing the number of months of the year. The constellation Virgo (the virgin) represents the ideal woman—the Divine mother. Osiris, Mithra, Bacchus, Chrishna, and Christ are all represented as having been born at midnight, between Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, in a cave or stable. At this moment the constellation Virgo is cut exactly in half by the eastern horizon, the Sun itself being beneath the Earth, in the sign of Capricorn, or stable of Augeas, the cleansing of which constituted one of the labours of Hercules, who also represented the Sun. Justin Martyr boasts that Christ was born when the Sun takes its birth in the stable of Augeas, coming as a second Hercules to cleanse a foul world. The Church celebrates the assumption of the Virgin on 15th August, which is exactly the time of the disappearance of the zodiacal constellation Virgo. 8th September, the date at which Virgo emerges from the Sun’s rays so as to be distinctly seen, is the day appointed for the observance of the nativity of the Virgin Mary. The Sun in his descent or passage across the equator is always represented as crucified between the two evil months of November and December. It is the constellation of the serpent, or scorpion, that ushers in the winter, which afflicts the earth five months, and whose tail draws a third part of the stars of heaven.—(See Revelation xii.)

Not less susceptible of a solar interpretation are the miracles ascribed to Christ. Thus the conversion of water into wine represents the formation of the juice of the grape out of the rains by the Sun’s action. The production of food, as in the extraordinary draught of fishes and the feeding of the five thousand, illustrates the Sun’s fertilizing influence on land and water. In the stilling of the tempest we have an example of the dependence of the weather on the Sun. It is the Sun

that, by affording light, gives sight to the eye. He is the universal healer of disease, able, by darting his rays afar, to impart renewed vitality at a distance, as in the cases of the nobleman's son and the centurion's servant. He it is that raises from the dead to new life the body buried in the ground. While in the blasting of the barren fig tree we see the blighting effect of the Sun's heat on a feeble and rootless vegetation. The learned Spaniard, Alphonso the Great, truly stated that "the adventures of Jesus are all depicted in the constellations."

The Persian magicians—from whose philosophy the Jews in their captivity learned, and after their release collated, their legends—accounted for the introduction of evil into the world by a fable of a serpent tempting the first woman to pluck a forbidden apple. This act, as the apple ripens late in autumn, was of course followed by the prevalence of winter, with darkness and cold—the kingdom of the Evil principle—and necessitated the adoption of clothing. The mischief thus brought about could only be remedied by the agency of the Sun, whom they identified with the principle of Good. Hence they supposed the incarnation of the Sun in the person of Mithra. This Mithra was set forth as born of a virgin in a cave, at the winter solstice, and as accompanied by a retinue of twelve persons or apostles, who represented the twelve months of the year. Having vanquished the prince of darkness, who, under the guise of a serpent, had seduced the woman, and having lost his life in the contest, Mithra descended into hell—or under side of the Earth—and at the spring equinox rose again and ascended into heaven, opening to man the gates of light, and redeeming him from the oppression of the Evil One, viz., Winter. Mithra was represented as born of a virgin because the constellation Virgo was on the horizon at the time of the Sun's birth. And because the Sun was at that time in the sign of Aries—then known as the ram—at the vernal equinox, which governs the year. Mithra was called the lamb of God, and the lamb that takes away the evils of the world. The serpent

that causes all the mischief by bringing in the winter is Scorpio, the constellation of the later Autumn. The religion founded in honour of Mithra was provided with the sacraments of baptism, penance, the eucharist, consecration, and others. Its novices were subjected to a severely ascetic *régime*. Chastity and virginity were accounted sacred; and it contained the doctrines of the Fall, the Incarnation, the Atonement, and the Resurrection.

Passing to Egypt we find the Sun-God Osiris, a member of a triune Godhead (evidently borrowed from the older Hindoo conception of the Trimurti), coming upon earth for the benefit of mankind, and gifted with the titles of Manifestor of God and Revealer of Truth. Born on the 25th of December, of a divine virgin, he was persecuted and put to death by the malevolence of the Evil One—namely, Winter, or darkness. He was buried and rose again, and returning to heaven became the judge of all men. Such was the man-God of the Egyptians, whose worship pervaded the country that gave tone and colour, if not actual birth, to the Gospels.*

Hercules, Bacchus, Apollo, Adonis, and many others are also represented as deities who condescended to man's estate to redeem mankind from evil. The coincidences in the histories of these numerous Sun-gods with that related of Jesus are clear evidence that "the same compulsion which dominated the expression of the pagan faiths controlled also the Christian."

Chrishna, for instance, is said to have as a child astonished his teachers by his profound wisdom. He was called "Heri," which in Sanscrit means shepherd. He had a forerunner called "Rama," and a favourite disciple named "Arjuna." He repaired to the river Ganges for ablution or baptism, and retired to a desert for meditation and prayer. He washed the feet of the Brahmins in order to show deep humility. He healed lepers, raised the dead, and taught inspirational truths. On one occa-

* NOTE.—I have taken the liberty of adopting, in a great measure, the phraseology of Mr. Edward Maitland on this subject. See his "Keys of the Creeds."

sion, as he entered the town of Mathura, the people strewed his path with branches of cocoanut trees, and at another time he had a box of ointment poured over his head by a woman whom he had cured of an ailment, and to whom he is reported to have said—"Woman, I accept your sacrifice; the little which is given by the heart is of more worth than all the riches offered through ostentation." Chrishna proscribed revenge, inculcated the returning of good for evil, and taught the people love of each other, self-respect, the practise of good for its own sake, and faith in the inexhaustible goodness of God. He denounced tyranny, sympathized with the feeble, and consoled the unhappy and oppressed. He lived poor and loved the poor, declaring that they were the chosen of God. He lived chaste, and inculcated chastity as being a reasonable sacrifice on the part of all men. He came, he said, not to found a new religion, but to purify the old from all the impurities which the perverseness of man had, during many ages, gradually introduced, and to preach to the people a higher and truer conception of God and of man's destiny. Chrishna's followers believed him to be God, and, according to the testimony of Hadrian, millions worshipped him as such in the time of Alexander the Great, or 350 years before the Christian era; consequently it is little to be wondered at that Christian writers, both ancient and modern, admit that the doctrines of Christianity were known to the pagans before the birth of Jesus.

The history of Jesus, between his birth and his death (as recorded in the New Testament) is merely an improved allegorical representation of the Sun in his relative position to the stars and the planets in their annual journey. The case is stated very plainly in the following lines:—

"Remember, then, in olden times, as we have said before,
The Sun was recognized as God in all religious lore;
And often God did mean the Sun of but a season's reign,
As that of Winter or of Spring—this fact is clear and plain.
At other times a single month was set apart as one
To represent a new-born God—a certain course to run.

Now, let us take the Sun of June, about the twenty-fourth,
 When from the brightest point he went descending from the north.
 Just one degree then he declines, and thus till Christmas morn
 He shortens each succeeding day until the Christ is born.
 For then the new-born Christ, the Sun, was risen into view,
 And John the Baptist had *deceased*, his mission being through,
 But Christ, the new-born Sun, still reigned, and marching on his
 way,
 Did verify the words of John, and *increased* every day..

* * * * *

Dear Christian brother, thus your Christ, together with your creed,
 I've proved are but a Pagan vine—a growth from Pagan seed ;
 And though to you Christ is the God, or God-begotten one,
 He is the same old Pagan youth, the bright-eyed God—the Sun.
 For Jesus is a triune name, and anciently stood thus :

The letter J supplanted I and then the *es* and *us*.
 Now all of these in Pagan tongue a single word design,
 Which when combined a *trio* make denoting *one* Divine.
 The letter *I* but signified the self-existing one,
 And every well-trained Pagan knows that *one* to be the Sun.
 The *es* and *us*, two mystic words, denoting light and fire,
 Descending from the source of life—the Sun—the *holy* sire,
 Who seated high among the stars, clad in his raiment bright,
 Is called 'The Lord,' 'The Great I Am,' or 'Jacob's Star,'
 'The Light.'

Since light and heat proceed from Brahm, the Pagan God—the
 Sun,

"Tis plain you see how Christ—the Lord—is three and yet but one ;
 Behold him rise at early morn—at midday uppermost,
 Then down at eve, and thus we have God, Son, and Holy Ghost.
 These three positions of the Sun by Nature's wise decree,
 Together form that mystic *one*, the same mysterious three.
 The virgin mother of these Gods, who dwells away from Earth,
 Is *Virgo*, who, it seems, each year conceives—to God gives birth.
 And now, since Christ, the Christian's God, is of the Pagan line,
 'Tis easy, hence, to see that he was not a God Divine."

Thus it will be perceived that the Catholics, in praying to "the Holy Virgin" are in reality praying to the constellation Virgo, and the Protestants in worshipping "the man Christ Jesus" are unwittingly paying adoration to the midday Sun. In the words of the bright spirit that is said to have appeared to John on the Island of Patmos, let me say to both—"See thou do it not . . . worship God."

Did you ever consider that if the Bible was, as claimed for it, Divinely inspired, it is only reasonable to suppose

that it would have been Divinely preserved? Instead of this being the case, "there does not exist in the world a single manuscript of any portion of the Old or New Testament which is an original autograph." Theologians admit that none of the copies extant of the New Testament were written prior to the fourth century, and not two of them agree.

It is worthy of note that a Greek monk named Simonides confessed that the celebrated MS., the *Codex Sinaiticus* (discovered in 1859 by Tischendorf in a convent on Mount Sinai, and supposed by him to have been written in the fourth century), was written by his hand at Mount Athos only a few years previously. For all we know, the *Codex Vaticanus* and the *Codex Alexandrinus*, which, with this *Codex Sinaiticus*, are considered the three most ancient manuscripts of the Bible extant, may have had a like origin. And as to deceive and lie for the sake of piety and religion, on the ground that the end justified the means, was regarded, not as a crime, but as a virtue by the Romish priests, we are justified, I maintain, in looking upon all ancient MSS. referring to Christianity with very grave suspicion.

The copies of the Gospels which we possess are not written in Syriac (the language spoken in apostolic times) but in Greek, and do not profess to be the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, but are said to be merely the Gospels *according* to these men. We have nothing to prove that there ever existed originals of these Gospels, but there is strong presumptive evidence that such originals never did exist, for had they done so the early Christians would certainly have referred to them in their disputes with heretics.

That the writers of the four Gospels were unacquainted with the country about which they wrote we have evidence in the Gospels themselves. For instance, Nazareth, which was a town in Galilee, is represented as not being in that division of Palestine. Bethlehem, which was an inland town, is represented as having coasts. In like manner Decapolis, which was an inland district, and which, according to Professor Upham, was

not known before the time of Nero, who did not begin to reign before A.D. 54, is also represented as having coasts. We have also evidence in the Gospels themselves that they were not written for many years after the events they refer to are supposed to have occurred. For example, after the tale about the bribing of the Roman soldiers (who are said to have guarded the tomb of the crucified Jesus) to say that they slept whilst his body was removed, it is stated, "This saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day," evidently indicating that a considerable period had elapsed between the occurrence of the events referred to and the date of writing regarding them. This story is of itself sufficient to prove the falsity of the whole affair, for it is as reasonable to believe that a British officer would order a company of English soldiers to watch the grave of a murdered Maori, as for a Roman guard to have been told off for such a purpose at the request of a few superstitious Jews; besides which, for a Roman soldier to have confessed that he slept when on guard would have been, according to Roman law, instant death, therefore no bribe would have induced them to make such an admission.

When the irreconcilable differences that exist in the various books which constitute the New Testament are unbiassedly considered, its utter unreliability is evident. The accounts of the life of Jesus in the three Synoptical Gospels vary greatly in many points, whilst the Jesus of the Gospel said to be written according to John is of a different character altogether. The latter Gospel is strikingly marked throughout by elegance of language and with Platonic ideas of which the others are devoid.

The Rev. Canon Westcott, in his "Introduction to Study of the Gospels," p. 249, admits that "it is impossible to pass from the Synoptic Gospels to that of St. John without feeling that the transition involves the passage from one world of thought to another. . . . Nothing can destroy the contrast which exists in form and spirit between the earlier and later narratives. The difference between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics,

not only as regards the teaching of Jesus, but also the facts of the narrative, is so great that it is impossible to harmonize them. . . . Both cannot be accepted as correct. If we believe that the Synoptics give a truthful representation of the life and teaching of Jesus, it follows of necessity that in whatever category we . . . place the Fourth Gospel it must be rejected as a historical work."

Another writer acknowledges that "the Fourth Gospel, by whomsoever written, was never written by a Jew, not even a native of Palestine, the numerous geographical and topographical mistakes and blunders in names and explanations given precluding entirely such possibility; that the gospel could have never been written before the end of the second century, *i.e.*, the date assigned to Irenæus; and that it was most probably written at the command of that personage."

It is a fact worthy of note that in Matthew and Luke two different genealogies of Jesus are given; in both of these his descent from King David is traced through Joseph, but through different sons of Solomon, and one has a great many more generations than the other. Curiously enough, however, after all this trouble to prove that Jesus was descended from David, we are seriously informed that he had no earthly father at all, and that he was the maker of all things, consequently, he must have been not only the maker of his own mother, but also of that evil spirit who is said to have taken him up to the top of an exceedingly high mountain, from which one could see right round the globe, and all nations thereon. Certainly if the Bible is divinely inspired, "God works in a mysterious way." Truly might Tertullian exclaim, "I believe that which is impossible."

Even if the Gospel accounts were true regarding "the man Christ Jesus," "a prophet mighty in word and deed," he did not, I maintain, claim to be God. On the contrary, he is therein reported to have reproved a young man for even addressing him as "good master," saying, "There is none good but one, that is God." If it is true

that he said, "I go to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God;" and that he exclaimed in the agonies of death, "My God! my God! why hast Thou forsaken me?" he could not have claimed to be Deity.

I may parenthetically remark that although it is generally taught that Jesus is God, there is no such assertion in the Gospels; the clergy of the various churches are therefore responsible for thus bringing the Almighty down to an equality with man, and changing the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man. I may add that the former great stronghold of Trinitarians in 1 John v. 7, viz., "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one," is now admitted to be an impudent interpolation—a lie inserted by some pious hand for the purpose of supporting a holy falsehood—consequently it is omitted in the revised edition of the New Testament; so that already this portion of the book is acknowledged to be a pious forgery, as in time the remainder will also assuredly be.

I think it was Sir Isaac Newton who declared that "the Incarnation of God is not less absurd than the Impanation of God, or God in a piece of bread." And Evanson maintained that "a virgin daughter producing her Father, and a creature giving birth to her Creator, is a blasphemous impiety." Jerome held that "those who confess the Trinity must bid farewell to science." The doctrine of the Trinity, I may observe, was an open question with the Church until the fourth century, when Athanasius unfortunately carried the day against the earnest protest of Arius. This may be taken as an illustration of how Christianity has developed.

If it is true that Jesus said, "Thy will, not mine, be done," he could not reasonably have said "The Father and I are one." If it is true that he said "The son can do nothing of himself," also "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the son, but the Father," he could not, as represented, have "considered it not robbery to be

equal with God." If it is true that he declared himself to be "the son of man," he could not surely have been the son of a ghost, holy or otherwise. If it is true that he said "Our Father which art in heaven," and further, if he is "our elder brother," then he certainly could not be God, for if so, we would be brothers and sisters to the Infinite, instead of being His finite children, as we are. Again, if it is true that he "walked not more in Galilee, for fear of the Jews," and that he prayed three times that the cup might pass from him, he did not, as asserted, offer himself voluntarily as a sacrifice for mankind.

Did it ever occur to you that if the crucifixion of Jesus was necessary for the redemption of man from sin, why a beneficent Deity should have delayed it for so many thousands of years after Adam is said to have fallen from being a perfect saint to an outcast sinner? And if by no other name than that of Jesus Christ can men be saved, what gross injustice this would be to the millions who have never heard of such an individual? This vicarious-sacrifice doctrine or atonement through the physical death of "the man Christ Jesus" is certainly of heathen or pagan origin, for in the Hebrew Scriptures human sacrifice is strictly forbidden, and only the sacrifice of a few specified kinds of the lower animals was required to be offered by the priests to their god Jehovah, who is represented as at one time delighting in the sweet-smelling savour of roasted flesh, and at other times as abhorring their bloody sacrifices—a contrite heart being more acceptable to him.

I may here observe that outside the New Testament statements we possess no reliable evidence that such a character as the historical Jesus of the Gospels ever lived. As this assertion may be called in question, I may remark that the public archives were in possession of the Romish priests for centuries before they were destroyed, and all papers that had reference to any such person as they made out Jesus to be, would certainly have been preserved by them for the purpose of supporting their cause; also, that for upwards of a thousand years all records concerning the Christian religion were

in the hands of the Romish priests, who, history informs us, caused all manuscripts which were antagonistic to their views and interests to be consigned to the flames. Among these, I may mention, were the works of Celsus, Porphyry, and Julian. We are also informed by history that the Fathers of the Church (as the earlier priests are termed), altered, interpolated, and even forged manuscripts in order to give to their cause the semblance of truth. The eminent Christian historian Mosheim frankly admits that during the two first centuries "forged histories of the life and doctrines of Jesus were palmed upon the world; that these histories were full of pious frauds and fabulous wonders; that they were composed by men whose intentions, perhaps, were not bad, but whose writings discovered the greatest superstition and ignorance." And he adds, "Nor was this all—productions appeared which were imposed upon the world by fraudulent men as the writings of the holy Apostles. . . . Thus they who wished to surpass all others in piety deemed it a pious act to employ deception and fraud in support of piety." With such admissions as these by one of their own cloth, and bearing in mind that all the Christian records were in the hands of such lying and unscrupulous men for more than a thousand years, I maintain that we are justified in concluding that all the boasted writings in support of the churches' claims are simply priestly forgeries. I also maintain that the ingenuity manifested by the unscrupulous Fathers of the Church to verify the fictions of their creed was in keeping with the bitterness they manifested towards philosophy, and with their persistent efforts to rule or ruin all who dared to oppose them in their audacious policy to attain supreme power through appeals to the superstitious nature of man. As has been truly remarked—"The historical life of Jesus bears the same relationship to the individual on whom it was based as does the story of Robinson Crusoe, in De Foe's celebrated romance, to the adventures of Alexander Selkirk." In other words, fantastic decorations have been added to what was simply a benevolent and self-sacrificing life,

which, instead of being adorned by these tawdry embellishments, has been grossly disfigured and travestied thereby.

To prove the unreliability of the Church's evidences, let us take for example the passage in Josephus about Jesus who was the Christ, and about the sect of Christians so named from him, which was evidently written to support the Gospel accounts of him. Dr. Adam Clarke, the great Bible commentator, and all other candid scholars of any note, acknowledge this to be an interpolation, or inserted lie. And as it is admitted that this passage was not referred to before the tenth century by any writer, we are therefore justified in concluding that previous to that date it had no existence in the writings of Josephus.

To my mind this quotation bears the impress of falsehood on its very face; for, let me ask, is it likely that Josephus, who lived and died a Jew, would have made such a statement, which would have been tantamount to his acknowledging that he was a barefaced hypocrite—viz., a Jew by profession and a Christian by belief? It is also in direct contradiction to his statement that in his day the Jews were divided, not into four, but into three sects—viz., the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the Essenes. And further, had such a character as the historical Jesus lived in Josephus's day, we may rest assured that he would not have written such a short paragraph about so important a matter when he devoted whole chapters to things of much less note.

Time will prevent my going into detail about the quotations in Tacitus, in Suetonius, and in Pliny the younger, but we may be assured that they are of a similar character to that in Josephus. I may here remark that the passages in Tacitus about the Emperor Nero having set fire to his own city, about his having persecuted the Christians for the burning thereof, and about the founder of the Christian sect having been put to death as a criminal under Pontius Pilate, are evidently cunning forgeries, for the following reasons:—

Were it true that Nero in this instance acted in the

manner stated, he must have been a compound of virtue and vice, of wisdom and imbecility. Then as to the asserted public crucifixion of Jesus, the Jews, it must be borne in mind, were under subjection to the Romans at the time, and by the Roman law the death penalty was never inflicted for blasphemy. Had such an accusation been made by the Jews against Jesus or anyone else, the Romans would certainly have laughed them to scorn, and if the charge of treason had been made against him he would have been entitled by the Roman law to a fair trial before the governor, who, however, had no authority to pass sentence of death for such an offence. This was reserved to the Emperor, before whom, on appeal, those found guilty were entitled to appear. In all cases when Jewish laws conflicted with those of Rome they were, as a matter of course, annulled. I may further add that there is no valid proof that the Roman Empire instituted, or even tolerated, violence against any nation because of its religious belief, much less concerned itself about the private opinions of individuals or sects. On the contrary, it was the policy of Rome to acknowledge all gods as sacred, and it was only when the principle was violated, or when the worship of the gods was interfered with, that the authority of the Empire was put in force. It is, in fact, the height of folly to suppose that the vast Empire of Rome, in which religious toleration was granted to all sects and individuals of which it was composed, should single out for persecution the humble Jesus or his followers, or seek to enforce the doctrines of the Jews, or of any other religion, upon them. Is it not more probable, from the admissions of Mosheim and others, that these tales were concocted by unscrupulous writers of a subsequent period, who, to perpetuate their priestly power over the people, fabricated a new religion, and sought to substantiate its claims by mutilations of the records, and wholesale defamation of the character of men who lived before their religion had an existence, and who consequently never heard of their religious ideas?

The learned author of "Primitive Church History "

states :—"One thing is certain—namely, that outside the Church there does not appear to be any trace of the Christians prior to the persecution of them, A.D. 249, ordered by Decius." And Judge Strange writes :—"The Jewish historians (as I have endeavoured to show) by their silence exclude the possibility of the Christian movement having taken effect in the first century of the asserted Christian era ; and the testimony of the reputed Christian authors must be considered, from a historical point of view, as an absolute blank to the reign of Commodus, or for a hundred and fifty years from the asserted death of Christ." Another writer remarks :—"Christianity had no existence under that name for over two centuries after the ascribed date of its inception. It was purposely made obscure in the records during the first three centuries ; and it emerged from its obscurity in such varied guises that it was hardly recognizable as an organization in different parts of the Roman Empire until the time of Constantine the Great."

The assertion that Pontius Pilate transmitted to Tiberius, the Roman emperor, a memorial regarding the actions and death of Jesus is simply a cunning fabrication, for had such a memorial existed it would most certainly have been preserved, and would have been quoted by the early Church Fathers as proof of his career in their disputations with those heretics who denied that such an individual as Jesus ever existed except as a phantom. I am aware that to those who, like Paul, are determined not to know anything "save Jesus Christ and Him crucified," whether true or false, these arguments will have little weight, but it is otherwise with all who prefer truth to fiction.

As to the letter by Pliny to Trajan and Trajan's reply, these are evidently spurious writings, for, as far as we possess any evidence, it was not the custom of Roman governors to write such letters to their emperors.

Then as to the accounts given of Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Clement, Polycarp, Justin Martyr, Papius, Irenæus, Tertullian, &c., in connection with the Christian religion, the finding of the holy cross and sepulchre by

Helena, the mother of Constantine, and the localities of the asserted sacred places at Jerusalem, these were evidently all fabrications by the priests for the purpose of supporting their falsities and of giving an appearance of reliability to their fraudulent statements.

These fabrications were similar to one referred to by Lecky, who writes:—"St. Augustine mentions that in his time (the fifth century), there was no authentic portrait of Christ, and that the type of features was still undetermined, so that we have absolutely *no knowledge* of his appearance. . . . The type, however, was soon afterwards found." I may add "this was done that it might be fulfilled what was spoken by the priests," &c.

Let us now turn our attention to the Biblical statements regarding Jesus. The prophecies said to apply to him are found, when unprejudicially examined, to bear no reference to him, and in this I am corroborated by the Jews, who should certainly be the best interpreters of their own Scriptures. The miracles ascribed to Jesus, and which are supposed to bear evidence of his divinity, are far surpassed by those recorded as having been performed by some of the old Testament celebrities. Take for example the exceeding great army of skeletons, or dry bones, that through the prophet Ezekiel were raised to life again, which puts the story of Lazarus's resurrection completely into the shade. (See Ezekiel xxxvii. 1-10.) The stopping the course of the sun, or, more correctly, of the diurnal revolution of the earth by Joshua, far excels the staying of the tempest by Jesus, for the latter might have been a mere coincidence, whereas the former could not be so, as such an occurrence is unprecedented and would have been a truly marvellous feat, for it would have disorganized the whole order of Nature.

The fable of the miraculous conception of Mary was only one of numerous current similar tales that were believed in by the ignorant in these superstitious times. No intelligent Jew, however, would then have accepted as a truth any more than he would now, the idea of a virgin-born Son of God, and so absurd a fiction as this

(which is on a par with that of Jupiter and Danae), can only be believed in by people whose judgments have been warped before they were able to exercise their reasoning faculties. And this fiction could only have retained its sway over educated minds from its having been cunningly interwoven with the purest code of morals, with a few exceptions, that has ever been presented to the world. Not that any moral teachings in the New Testament had not been inculcated previously in the various religious systems, but that the brightest gems of truth were selected therefrom and embodied in the so-called Christian Scriptures. Buckle writes:—"That the system of morals professed by the New Testament contained no maxim which had not been previously enunciated, and that some of the most beautiful passages therein are quotations from Pagan authors, is well known to every scholar; but to assert that Christianity communicated to man moral truth previously unknown argues on the part of the asserter either gross ignorance or else wilful fraud." I may mention that in Acts there is a quotation from the Grecian poet Aratus. In Titus there is one from Epimenides, and in Corinthians one from the Thais of Menander. Such facts speak for themselves.

As to the story of the massacre by Herod of all the children under a certain age, all history outside the Gospels is silent regarding it, therefore we are justified in concluding that this is but a plagiarism from the life of the Hindoo Lord and Saviour, Chrishna Jezeus, who lived many centuries before the Christian era commenced, in which a similar tale is recorded, and of which there is a very ancient representation cut in the rock at the Cave of Elephanta in Hindostan.

Having already disposed of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus by Pontius Pilate, I shall pass on to his so-called resurrection. Here again we have only the Gospel accounts to rely upon, and as not two of these agree upon the leading incidents connected therewith, we may with confidence discard them as totally unreliable.

To sum up what I have said, Christianity is evidently but a new form of religious expression fabricated by the

priests of the Roman Empire, during the two first centuries, out of the truths as well as the myths of antiquity, with which they cunningly interwove doctrines to suit their own purposes. It is, in fact, reformed Paganism, and was promulgated as a new revelation, in which Jesus was represented as the new Sun-God revealed in the flesh, in whom was combined the whole catalogue of virtues as the earthly representative of divine power, all the essential ideas of the old religions being preserved in allegories in the new. Thus the Christian religion supplanted ancient Greek and Roman Paganism in the home of its nativity, which was not Judea, as is generally but erroneously supposed. This accounts for the Gospels having been written in Greek instead of in the language of the men *according to* whom they were ingeniously ascribed. I may add that between the priesthood of the various nations there existed a secret method of intercourse, the esoteric meaning of their different scriptures being similar, therefore the worship of their various gods was the same in its nature; consequently it was an easy matter for the priests of those days to combine the legends of the numerous Pagan gods in their new Judean Apollo, and under his name unite the religious worship of all sects. That the Church Fathers studied Grecian philosophy we have the authority of Clement, who declared that philosophic culture was necessary in order to develop Christianity in a scientific form. (*See Neander's "History of Dogmas,"* page 63.)

All unprejudiced students of Greek and Hebrew mythology must admit that the birth, life, and death of Jesus, as represented in the Gospels, are more in accordance with Grecian ideas than with Judaism.

That Christianity was an evolution, and not, as is claimed for it, a revelation, is evident to all who are not afraid to use their reason, and he who believes that the Supreme Power (who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever) hath spoken by the mouth of priest or prophet, in any age of the world, is simply a victim of superstition and of false ideas. He, also, who feareth that divine

vengeance will abide on him if he refuses obedience to a church, priest, or book, hath not yet found that liberty which inherently belongs to every soul as a divine birthright.

That there is a gigantic error at the base of their faith anyone who will unbiassedly examine the matter will soon discover. This error is the greatest misfortune that has befallen Christendom, for it has caused religious stagnation; consequently it has been the chief hindrance to spiritual enlightenment. "The story of the Cross" may be very affecting, and "faith in the Lord Jesus Christ" may have a very attractive sound in the ears of those who from infancy have been accustomed to associate it with everything that is good and holy, but if these are not in accord with truth, of what benefit, let me ask, are they? Let us rather, as rational and accountable beings, listen to the voice of God within us, and repose full confidence in His infinite love, justice, and mercy. Therefore,

Trust not in faith or foolish creeds,
Blood ne'er will whitewash wicked deeds;
But let your actions always be
Those which from sin will make you free.

Christianity and religion are popularly but erroneously viewed as synonymous terms; the one is a belief, the other a life—the one is a delusion, the other a reality.

"Truth is immortal, and shall live;
Error is mortal, and shall die."

The influx of light in our day has already begun to sound the death-knell of mental bondage to superstition, and the exercise of priestly authority over the intellect and conscience. Ere long our Christian brethren of all sects and denominations, instead of worshipping an ideal embodiment of goodness (however exalted) and trusting to any creed or in any form of worship to ensure future blessedness, will join with us in seeking knowledge and truth, from whatever source derivable, and will follow them wheresoever they lead, giving of

their store plenteously to their less fortunate brethren, for in this way alone can we serve God and secure happiness here and hereafter. Yea, the time is approaching when men will not, in their devotion to their anthropomorphic God, forget their duties to each other, as, unfortunately, is still too commonly done. Then all creedal bonds shall be dissolved, and man thereby be enabled to rise to a higher conception of God, who is infinite love, and to a better knowledge of life and of the glorious destiny which eventually awaits every human soul. May the day soon arrive

“ When all shall bend a willing ear
 To doctrines new and still untried,
 And pause awhile ere they condemn
 Those holy truths as yet decried.”

NOTE.—What will coming generations think of us when they read that up to the close of the nineteenth century, when we had made the sun our portrait painter, electricity our postman and lamplighter, and steam our galley-slave, that the generality of people, who were sane enough on every other subject, still believed in the divine authority of a book in which the most absurd and God-dishonouring fables are set forth? Assuredly they will say, “The height of folly could have gone no further.” As a writer truly observes—“That which is nonsense on a principle of reason cannot be sense on a principle of religion.”

CONCLUDING REMARKS BY THE AUTHOR.

IN this age of inductive reasoning, who that is worthy of being called a rational being can really and honestly believe that God, who is infinitely just, cursed all mankind yet unborn with an eternal curse because Adam and Eve ate a fruit? That He who is infinitely good has prepared a place of everlasting torment for the great majority of His children? That He who is infinitely wise devised such an irrational scheme for the redemption of humanity, in which He required one of His noblest sons to suffer an ignominious death—the innocent for the guilty, as if two wrongs could make one right? Is it not palpable to the meanest intellect that if God would but could not forgive transgressors without the shedding of blood, He cannot be omnipotent; and if He could and would not, He cannot be good? I shall leave upholders of the popular faith to select which horn of the dilemma they will choose.

It may be asked by some who read this—Are we not told in the Bible that there can be no remission of sin without the shedding of blood? To which I reply, the statements contained in ten thousand Bibles cannot cause a lie to be a truth, or a wrong to be a right, and any book or institution which represents God as less than infinitely wise, just, and merciful cannot be true or worthy of our acceptance, however much they may be revered by the masses for their antiquity. The numerous contradictory and God-dishonouring passages contained in the Bible prove that if these were inspired they must have been inspired by different minds occupying varying stages of intellectual development, and not by one and the same mind, Divine or otherwise. Were the Bible the Word of God, as it has been branded

by priestcraft from interested motives, it would be free from contradictions, and harmonious in all its parts. That this is not the case we have irrefutable evidence in the innumerable sects and denominations in our midst, at variance with each other, yet all these base their divergent beliefs on this one book, in which God is represented as an unjust and vindictive Deity seated on a great white throne situated somewhere above the sky, and frowning in anger on all who in religious matters make use of their divine faculty of reason. Surely, if the Almighty is truly wise and good, He cannot be wrathful with those who, in the face of popular opinion, have the nobility of soul to openly reject and denounce the blasphemous accusations brought against Him both in the Bible and in the Churches.

"Can mortal man be more just than God?" was asked many centuries ago, and it is a question as applicable and as sensible to-day as then. It must be palpable to all who place truth before time-honoured falsities that if God is good the Bible cannot be true in all its parts, and that if the Bible is true God cannot be good. Think for one moment of a God of Love sending Moses to ask Pharaoh to allow the Children of Israel to depart, and at the same time hardening Pharaoh's heart that he should not let them go; or of a wise God endowing man with the sense of right and wrong, and afterwards punishing him everlastingly and vindictively for applying that sense in forming a judgment on that which concerns his eternal welfare; and surely if the returning of evil for evil is wrong on the part of frail humanity it must be infinitely more so on the part of a Divine being.

If you can for a few minutes free yourself from prejudice and pious credulity, let me ask you to consider what a solemn farce is what is termed "divine service," with its selfish prayers, its God-dishonouring creeds, its monotonous sermons on old Hebrew and Greek fables, and its drawling anthems, whether accompanied by pious organ-grinding or otherwise, full of fulsome praise to a God of infinite wisdom? Can you, in your sober senses, really believe that the all-wise Deity is less rational than

man His creature, and that He can be pleased with such solemn mummery? To all who have risen above such degrading conceptions of the Almighty, divine service in churches made with hands is merely heathen temple-worship modernized, with Jehovah substituted for Osiris, Mary for Isis, and Jesus for Horus. The popular faith is based on a ghost story, which, if related as occurring in our day, no one would be justified in believing, and which is on a par with the fable of Leda and the swan. What, let me ask, have belief in superstitious legends, irrational dogmas and inexplicable creeds, and the observance of priestly ceremonies to do with good actions? There are good men and women in the world who make no profession of faith, and there are good people to be found in all religious sects. This proves that religious beliefs have little or nothing to do with true righteousness. As a rule our religious belief depends solely on the circumstances of our birth, whereas our actions are our own, and these form our characters, which constitute our deathless individuality. True religion consists of deeds not creeds, actions not professions; being practical and soul-elevating, it is natural and universal. From its having been too simple for priestcraft to thrive upon, it has been adulterated with superstitious fables, pagan ceremonies, and inexplicable creeds. The everlasting Word of God is truth, and truth is that which corresponds with eternal fact. As has been truly observed, "there can be no higher religion than truth." This divine religion existed before Bibles and temples were thought of, and it will continue when these priestly inventions, by which the few have been exalted over the many, have been discarded through the irresistible advance of human intelligence.*

I am aware that the views herein expressed will be more suitable for the twentieth century than they are for the nineteenth, but, being based on reason, philosophy,

* What a different account would history have had to record had the religion of good works prevailed in place of that of conflicting creeds, with its sectarian hatred and its inhuman cruelties, all perpetrated in the holy name of God and religion.

and science, it will be only a matter of time before they are universally adopted. I fortunately live in days when knocking nails into people's hands, or burning them at the stake, have gone out of fashion, or I dare not thus freely have expressed my religious opinions. As it is, I challenge the whole world, both lay and clerical, to refute them, and as in the glorious cause of truth I give no quarter, I ask for none in return, believing as I do that "truth is its own best evidence, for its witness is within."

The following question may be asked:—

"If we, as you suggest, act as rational beings in regard to religion as we do in everything else, and view it as comprised in love to God, exemplified in kind and unselfish actions towards our fellow-men, what will our priests and parsons do for an honest living?" I reply: "Pension them off as you would a dear old nurse who had often frightened you in childhood by telling you of the bogie-man up the chimney, and other blood-curdling fables, conditionally that they will never again preach about a wrathful God, a fiendish Devil, or an everlasting Hell as being divine verities," bearing in mind that

"The priest continues what the nurse began,
And thus the child imposes on the man."

Also,

"For forms of faith let graceless zealots fight,
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

Seeing the untenability of such God-dishonouring conceptions of the Almighty Ruler of Universal Nature, is it not high time that all should endeavour to find out a religion more in accordance with the intelligence of the age in which we live and with the divine faculty of reason which God has implanted in us? And are we, as rational and responsible beings, merely because from the circumstances of our birth we have been taught to believe these irrational doctrines, justified in adhering thereto, and neglecting to investigate a rational and ennobling religion which rests on a scientific basis; a religion which upholds the wisdom,

justice, and mercy of God, which holds out eternal hope for all His erring children, proclaiming as it does a progressive future state and a glorious destiny for all eventually; a religion which those who, after years of earnest study and research know its sublime truth, and have found its knowledge a very present help in time of need, truly robbing death of its sting and the grave of its victory. Let all, therefore, who have too long played the fool in regard to religion be up and doing. Let them prove all things and hold fast that which is good, relying with confidence on the infinite love of God our Father.

True religion, as observed, is too simple for priestcraft to thrive upon, therefore it has been ignored. It consists of love to God, and the only way man can express that love is by acts of kindness to his fellow beings. God requires neither the praise of men nor of angels, for all His works glorify Him. True religion rests on facts; these facts disprove the foolish theories and traditions of old theology, which are irreconcilable with reason and science. In consequence of this, modern thought has progressed beyond the popular faith.

“Theories which thousands cherish
Pass like clouds that sweep the sky;
Creeds and dogmas all shall perish—
Truth itself can never die.”

THE UNIVERSAL SHRINE.

“God dwelleth not in temples made with hands.”

Not in the church by thousands trod seek I and find Thee, oh!
my God—
Not where the swelling anthems rise, and lifted eyes salute the
skies;
Not where hired priests alone may dare to speak aloud and lead
the prayer,
And crowded congregations stand to talk with God at second hand,
For there come pious pomp and pride, fashion and vice stand side
by side,
The hypocrite with smiling face and the backsliding saint embrace;

Dark hearts and sin-stained hands are there, souls dead to truth,
 ears deaf to prayer,
 Men who their brethren rob and cheat, and who the needy oft
 illtreat,
 Men who on gold their hopes have built, who talk of sin yet wink
 at guilt,
 Men who on sensual visions gloat while prayers and praises fill
 their throat,
 And there the preachers (richly feed) their empty declarations
 read,
 Set prayers pronounce, set forms go through, and talk the good
 they ought to do.

Not there, my God—I come not there Thy presence and Thy love
 to share,
 Not there my spirit feels Thee near, not there Thy still small voice
 I hear,
 Not there my soul with love swells high, not there I learn to live
 and die,
 Not there the inward strength is given to conquer earth and enter
 heaven,
 But 'neath the broad o'erarching sky, in the free winds that
 hurry by,
 In the bright orbs that shine above, in all things that have life
 and move,
 In the deep sea's resistless might, in the still watches of the night,
 In songs of birds and laughing rills, in cultivated vales and wood-
 crowned hills,
 In all that meets my wondering eye, I feel, I own that Thou art
 nigh;
 No Saviour there I need; His child will not my Father heed?
 Freely my spirit soars and glows, freely God's love descending
 flows,
 Voiceless before His boundless throne I bend and pray in thought
 alone,
 For words are vain and speech is naught to Him who knows each
 inmost thought—
 Seraphs a fitting song might raise, but silence is man's noblest
 praise.

GOD IS LOVE.

BY H. W. WOODHOUSE.

Who is the man that dares to say
 God's hell-fire burns eternally
 And never shall be quenched ?
 Oh, cruel monster, thus to preach—
 The lessons that you ought to teach
 Are peace and goodwill to man.

Oh, blind men led thus by the blind !
 Cast such vile teachings to the wind,
 And seek truth for yourselves.
 Prove all things—then hold fast the good :
 Believe in God, as wise men should,
 The God of Truth and Love.

All bad men's hell themselves create ;
 Our "God is Love," not priestly hate,
 As these vile preachers tell.
 Oh, who can think the God of love,
 Who reigns in light and truth above,
 Has made a fiendish hell.

There is no death, there is no fire,
 E'en sin and wrong shall rise up higher,
 Beyond this mortal sphere.
 These priests would wrong e'en God Himself
 For lust of power, and rule, and pelf,
 Give to their tales no ear.

Is this religion given by God—
 That He will always hold the rod
 Over His children dear ?
 We will not, cannot think that He
 Would ever wish that you or me
 This priestly hell should fear.

Then let them preach of endless hell
 And demons like themselves—we tell
 Of progress evermore ;
 For spirit friends have ope'd the gate
 Where every soul may, soon or late,
 Reach heaven's eternal shore.

NATURE'S TEMPLE.

BY SHELDON CHADWICK.

There's many a flower of beauteous bloom
 In wilds by man untrod,
 And many a truth can find no room
 In temples raised to God ;
 For true religion never needs
 A temple built with hands,
 No empty forms, no hollow creeds,
 Its sacred shrine commands.

When tongues are tipped with fire divine
 They kindle every heart ;
 It matters not where glows the shrine—
 In field, or camp, or mart.
 No priestly pomp or outward show
 For spirit power we need,
 To breathe sweet balm for human woe
 And heal the hearts that bleed.

We've knelt too long in gorgeous aisles
 Where Pharisees abound,
 Forgetting that where Nature smiles
 That spot is holy ground.
 The painted light or organ's peal
 No true religion brings,
 But when sincere in heart we kneel
 Devotion mounts on wings.

Hurl every priestly fane to dust,
 Religion cannot die :
 In heaven to hope, in God to trust,
 Will raise the soul on high.
 On earth there's one cathedral known,
 Whose roof in splendour towers—
 'Tis where God rears His sapphire throne,
 And speaks in stars and flowers !

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