SPIRITUALISM

AND

SPIRIT-RAPPING.

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GETTYSBURG:
PRINTED BY H. C. NEINSTEDT.
1855.



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Hagerstown, February 9, 1855

DEAR SIR:—The undersigned having listened last evening, with great interest, to your lecture on the history and character of *Modern Spiritualism*, and believing that its extended circulation would be of advantage to the community, beg that you will allow it to appear in print at as early a date as may suit your convenience. And in so doing we would express our most hearty concurrence in the general stand-point you have taken, of a positive belief in the existence of an invisible universe of intelligent spirits, good and bad, and their present relations with mankind.

We shall hope that your lecture, if published, may help to correct that popular materialistic unbelief of our day, which derides altogether the idea of what is mystical and invisible, and may likewise put many on their guard against tampering with a system so full of danger to the best interests of man.

Very truly yours,

W. AYRAULT, Rector Episcopal Church
H. MYERS, " Catholic "
D. GANS, German Reformed Pastor.
W. W. BOWERS, Lutheran "
C. C. BAUGHMAN, " "
I. B. McKEE.
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[From the Evening Post]

SPIRITUALISM ETC.

The subject announced for discussion is no ordinary theme. Minds of a materialistic tendency may indeed regard spiritualism as a sublime folly, but those who have suitable conceptions of the mysteries of their own spiritual organization, and the lofty functions of spiritual beings in general, must look upon the subject as eminently worthy of profound investigation. There have been periods in the history of the past, when materialism prevailed to such an extent, that many regarded their own structure as a bit of organized dust pulsating with conflicting emotions, and capable of performing functions somewhat more elevated than the brute, but claiming no higher origin and no nobler destiny. Happily for the race, these brutalizers of mankind have almost entirely passed away, and if occasionally there is one found who maintains that the soul will be involved in the ruins of the body, his brain is as sluggish as the body in which it resides, and is, therefore, not capable of much mischief to others. For the last several years men have been tending towards the other extreme, and multitudes now dissatisfied with those immense fields over which the human mind may range in safety, and gather the choicest flowers that adorn the ample theatre of learning, they have carried their investigations to the invisible world, and aspire to the knowledge of disembodied spirits.

Viewed in their isolated character, those spiritual manifestations perplex the wise, and alarm the ignorant. They are shrouded in dark mystery, making them all the more attractive, because impenetrably veiled to human scrutiny. When entering upon the investigation of such a subject, we are conscious of far different feelings than those we experience, when setting about the demonstration of some abstruse but certain proposition. Spiritualism is so ærial, so vast, so infinite in its bearings, and so transcendental in its nature, that it does not admit of the absolutely certain deductions of reason from undisputed premises; nor those logical inferences from clearly defined principles, which may be commanded in many other discussions. Demonstrative propositions may be dealt with as

we do with a building—either lay the foundation and then rear the superstructure, until every beam is in its appropriate position, and the crowning block proclaims its completion—or we may reverse the process, and separate and remove one by one, until all its materials are displaced, and the nature of the structure is revealed to the scrutiny of man. It may be necessary, in this instance, partially to call to our aid both these processes, together with another method current among dialectitians.

I have said the subject is no ordinary one, and it is not—whether we regard its intrinsic character, or contemplate the effects which it has already produced, and is still producing in society. Spiritualism has for a considerable time occupied a large share of public attention. Unlike many other delusions, it is not confined to any particular class. While it has found victims among the illiterate, the lovers of the marvelous, and the superstitious, its influence is by no means limited to these classes. It has infused its delirium into lofty minds—made converts among the learned, and prostituted exalted talent to the basest purposes. It has diffused its malaria over a wide extent on the intellectual fields of society—it ranges from the lowly to the lofty—from the humblest members of community to men in high official stations.

Journals and writers unfriendly to the system, have made it a subject of ridicule and denunciation; and its adherents availing themselves of this, at once proclaimed themselves persecuted, and assumed the heroic airs of martyrs. If Judge Edmunds had experienced half the humiliation and grief, which he asserts he endured before he surrendered the consent of his mind to publish his convictions of its truth, and a defense of its principles, he never would have lived to announce himself the champion of the system. But this cry of persecution to which they gave utterance, was unquestionably a successful way to cultivate sympathy for the cause; for the noblest impulses of humanity rise up to defend the injured and oppressed. But however absurd all their pretensions may be, they cannot be reclaimed, nor destroyed by denunciations. Ridicule is not the test of truth, neither is it an antidote for error. A thing that moves amid the sanctities of human sensibilities, and plays among the profound deliberations of the intellect, hovers about the holiest shrines of the spirit, and appeals to the loftiest instincts of immortal beings, cannot be scouted from the stage, nor annihilated by a frown. They who scoff at that which painfully affects human beings, may smile complacently upon the credulous, and glory in their skepticism; but such

men have not yet learned their responsibilities to society. These spiritual manifestations, whether wholly or in part the offspring of imposture, have already been instrumental in sending the most distressing afflictions upon our fellow-men.

It has already made sad havoc among immortal hopes! It has blighted homes! It has dethroned reason in many minds! It has dissolved the tenderest ties of nature; it has broken up households and annulled the laws of heaven; it has divorced hearts joined in holy wedlock, and under pretence of executing direct revelations from the Holy One, given currency to the foulest adulteries, and the most abhorrent licentiousness. Any system productive of such lamentable effects as those which have marked the progress of Spirit-rapping, demands an inquiry into its origin and character, however painful or laborious such an investigation may be found. There are few topics now agitating the public mind. that can compare with its bewitching and varied resources to vitiate human society, and to threaten more alarmingly the most important relations in life.

A few years ago, in a town on the Delaware, a young physician, of superior talent and thorough education, led a blooming and highly respectable bride to the altar, and there vowed to cherish her through life. His intellectual and social qualities, associated with high professional skill, soon secured him an enviable reputation. He rose with astonishing rapidity; he amassed a handsome fortune, and a more excellent or lovelier family could rarely be found. With a charming wife and an interesting group of children, he was the happy monarch of a happy home. But in an evil hour the tempter came, his curiosity was awakened by the reported spiritual manifestations produced by a few strolling spirit-rappers. Relying too confidently upon his intellectual strength, he determined to discover their secret, and then expose the imposture. He joined the magic circle, and soon became a medium. All the enthusiasm of his nature was kindled into burning under the singularly exciting hallucinations, and thoroughly fascinated, he seemed as the passive victim charmed by a monster. Shortly after his induction into the mysteries of the system, a spirit communicated the astounding intelligence that he was not properly mated. It was intimated that the intelligent wife of his bosom, and the beautiful mother of his children, could not be a legitimate companion, because the *spirit* said she possessed not those spiritual affinities necessary to exalt him to his rightful position in the intelligent universe. He hearkened to the voice of the demon—he took unto himself a spiritual wife,

and lived in confessed adultery. When the church of which he had been a prominent and honored member, excommunicated him, he resisted the action of the vestry, and refused to relinquish his pew, but attempted to retain his position in the church, and enjoy, as formerly, the privileges of membership. Such was the strength of his delusion, that he verily believed he was doing right, though his conduct contravened human and divine law, and his life was a foul blot upon society. He kept up his spiritual associations, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his friends, and the tears of an injured wife, until his brilliant and strong mind was thoroughly shattered, and his heart so debased, that he recognized nothing that his depraved nature dictated as morally evil; and finally he sank, a doomed and dishonored man, into an untimely grave. The shame and guilt of the husband soon crushed the spirit of that amiable wife, and her aching heart shortly after found repose in the home of the injured and the weary. The poor children are left to remember the shame and fall of the once noble father, and to deplore the early death of their affectionate mother.

Are such scenes fitted to invite ridicule? Is a system that sends such blinding and blighting curses upon human intellects, and that empties such dark woes upon the homes of earth, to be uprooted by the breath of scorn? Ah, no! no! ten thousand times no! Its character must be exposed—the monster must be stripped of his disguises, and have his ghastly deformities unveiled; and the practical effects produced by it delineated, that those tempted to enter the magic circle of its influence may shrink appalled, as they would from the fangs of the serpent. The incident detailed is not an isolated case, nor the only one induced by extraordinary mental excitement; such are of daily occurrence. Multitudes have had their peace destroyed, their minds perverted, and their reason dethroned, by this fascinating but satanic delusion. Society is summoned to the melancholy task of deploring, not only the fall of the humble, but also of the exalted. Alas! who can think it prudent to dally with the monster, when such minds as those of Edmunds, and Talmadge, are hurled by its fascinations from high judicial positions, to the companionship of libertines and prostitutes.

The suggestions of sound philosophy, as well as the instincts of humanity, demand of us, a charitable bearing towards those whose credulity provokes a smile. Whatever the nature of the object may be that agitates the social state, and carries the popular mind in one particular direction, though it should have stamped upon its surface the insignia of the grossest er-

ror that ever sprang from the mind of erring man; though it be the most melancholy delusion that has ever afflicted mankind, we are bound, either in our private or public capacity, dispassionately to examine its constituent elements, its tendencies in relation to the social state, and to do what we can to neutralize its effects, or, if possible, prevent them; by shattering the broken cisterns from which they flow. I am aware, that even an attempt to unfold the true character of these spiritual manifestations will, with some, become a matter of ridicule, for in their estimation it is superlative folly to treat these things with any degree of seriousness. Science acknowledges no invisible world, and credits neither the existence of good nor evil spirits, and therefore, scouts everything as trickery which cannot be explained on natural principles. Not only those versed in the natural sciences, but theologians have fallen in with this view to such an extent, that the rationalists of Germany, and the expounders of a "liberal christianity in America," explain away, or openly reject all the miraculous incidents in biblical history. They acknowledge not the existence of the arch-spirit of evil, and therefore discredit all satanic agency in connection with those phenomena which science fails to explain. So far from coinciding with this view, we believe that almost every error is the shadow of some great truth, but instead of rashly denouncing it, we should strive to dispel its darkness, and lead back those wandering stars to the truth, from which they have become estranged.

It is a subject which can no longer be regarded with indifference by the christian or the philanthropist. It has acquired such internal force, that its destructive energy is as wide-spread as it is appalling. It gathers within the compass of its influence many immortal minds, whose combined energies are consecrated to its advancement, and the infection is spreading with alarming rapidity. In the language of one fully versed in its diabolical mysteries, "it seizes upon all classes, ministers of religion, lawyers, judges, physicians, comedians, rich and poor, learned and unlearned." It is said by one of their organs, that they have three hundred circles or clubs in the city of Philadelphia, and perhaps several millions in the United States. They have their own literature. Their weekly journals and quarterlies; their volumes issuing continually from the press, and all filled with professed revelations from the spirit-world. It is intended to supplant christianity. Judge Edmunds, in his work on Spiritualism, makes an estimate of the probable number of our population who attend the churches of the different denominations, and concludes that there are "nine mil-

lions three hundred and sixty-three thousand six hundred and ninety-four, who could not go to church if they would;" he consoles himself with the belief that this new system may subserve the place and office of the church of God; or in other words, if it be generally adopted, there is no farther need of christianity. And that he regards it as his mission to destroy the church of Christ, is manifest from the fact, that one of the obligations enjoined upon him by a spirit, he gives in the following language: "Your duty will be to lead the mind away from these theological errors; they have warped the soul too long already." In this same book is denied the fall of man, the divinity of Christ, the vicarious atonement, and indeed every fundamental doctrine of our holy religion, and yet they pretend to be the true expounders of the Bible. Yet notwithstanding the rank infidelity promulgated by these men, and the fearful efforts put forth to multiply converts to this soul-destroying system, there has been scarcely a serious effort made to expose the nature of these errors, or to warn the unsuspecting against the insidious influence, and the seductive but ruinous charms of this system. And seeing that these teachings are in open conflict with the Bible; striking at the vitals of the christian religion, I am amazed that professors of the gospel and ministers of religion content themselves by simply ridiculing the subject, or expending their sarcasm and wit upon those writings which are doing such immense mischief in society. They may, in their self-complacency, regard the effusions of spiritualists as the incoherent ravings of harmless maniacs. But while they amuse themselves by uttering an occasional witicism, or in their heat denounce spiritualists as "knaves," and "dupes," the delusion is making friends among their flocks, and destroying those who might have escaped its withering curse, by a timely admonition not to tamper with that which has already proved so fatal to the hopes and happiness of thousands. Can we remain indifferent while it is spreading desolation over homes, poisoning the fountains of social life, and breaking up christian congregations? Surely that system of evil which selects its victims from all classes, and which bears, with the tremendous energy of great names, and gifted minds, against the Bible and all the cherished associations and hopes which it inspires, demands from christian men active exertions to circumscribe its influence, and resist its destructive tendencies. It is one of the various aspects of infidelity, clothed in apparel of light, and because of its religious guise, the more to be dreaded. Stripped of its borrowed drapery, it would be divested of its strength. But linking its

errors with things that are true; formally clinging to the Bible, while it secretly undermines the foundations of eternal truth; applauding the character of Christ, but nullifying his doctrines; shouting forth its hosannahs to David's son, it labors to crucify David's Lord; it constitutes perhaps the worst enemy that the cause of the great Redeemer has ever encountered. Let us separate the wheat from the chaff; the genuine from the spurious, avoiding the twofold error of rejecting the good with the evil, or receiving the evil with the good; for SPIRITUALISM is a compound of the fabulous and the real, a mixture of truth and error. What, then, is true SPIRITUALISM?

TRUE SPIRITUALISM.

Spiritualism, as distinguished from Materialism, is an ancient and well authenticated dogma. It is one of those doctrines which has its foundation in the religious consciousness of man. Revelation was not needed to convince man of spiritual existences, but its mission was clearly to define, with the glowing light of inspiration, the nature and offices of those unseen intelligences, whose existence and presence were intimated by the intuitions of the human mind. That system popularly known as spiritual manifestations, or as characterized by Judge Edmunds, Spiritualism, has availed itself of the force of these innate convictions of man, in connection with the teachings of the oracles of God, to build up one of the most fascinating and grossest impostures that has ever cursed the world. An imposture that will never be properly met, nor successfully refuted and overthrown by calling it hard names. To denounce it as totally false, will only multiply its converts, for all who know anything of their spiritual structure, and who are accustomed to believe upon the testimony of their internal and external sense, must know that it is not wholly visionary or imaginary in its effects, and will therefore more likely be driven to its adoption by indiscriminate denunciations of the system, than be properly guarded against its delusions. It can only be shorn of its strength, and disrobed of its fascinating apparel, by analyzing the elements of which it is made up, leave to it that which is properly its own, and restore to their rightful sources, those which it has stolen from the Bible and the cause of truth, and incorporated with its errors, into a dangerous system.

Men have always believed in the existence of invisible spiritual beings. The ancient Pagans had their divinities by thousands. Their hills and valleys, their fountains and groves

were peopled with ærial beings. Their characters and offices were as varied as the conceptions of those who worshipped them. The flaming orbs of the firmament were but spirits robed in glory. "In the revolutions of the sun, they saw the path of Phœbus, as seated in his fiery car, and borne along by immortal steeds, he poured light and joy over the universe. The sea, too, had its rulers. In its coral palaces, Thetis and her nymphs celebrated their mysterious revels; while through the blue waters, the long-haired Triton floated in his car of pearl, and guided some favored bark from the whirlpool or rock. To the believers in this ancient creed, it was not only a matter of poetic imagination, but of actual faith, that

> "Millions of spiritual creatures walked the earth
> Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep."

The belief in the existence of spirits was as wide-spread as humanity, and however erroneous many of their ideas were, they yet had their common origin in the creed written upon the human heart. It is one of those universal truths which demands no proof. In the language of Cicero, the concurrent testimony of mankind on any subject, gives it all the force and authority of a law of nature.

Had there, however, been no such belief, so generally current among mankind, the infinite Sovereign revealed to Patriarchs and Prophets, the fact that there are spiritual beings, holy and unholy. Angelic appearances were common in patriarchal times. Important revelations were made to those favored by the Most High, by messengers from heaven. Abraham and Lot, Isaac and Jacob, were thus often brought in direct communication with the father of their spirits. Gabriel was sent to Daniel, and on his passage to the prophet, was hindered by an evil spirit. "The prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me." The same prophet, speaking of a heavenly vision vouchsafed to him, says: "Thousands, thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him." Indeed all the inspired writers testify of the existence of spirits. The adorable Savior still more clearly unfolded the mysteries of the spirit-world. He partially removed the veil which shrouded from human scrutiny the beings and activities of the invisible state. He cast out devils, and restored the possessed to their friends and society. He warned us against that arch fiend, the prince of evil, whose sleepless malice is ever exerted against the sons of God. When, for the instruction of his disciples, he demanded the name of one of those spirits which he cast out, it replied,

our name is legion, for we are many. When a certain one drew the sword in his defence, he said: I could command twelve legions of angels to overcome my enemies. Since Christ and his apostles shed so much light on the spirit-world, it cannot be a matter of doubt whether we are, or are not, encompassed by "a great cloud of witnesses," or invisible, but active spectators of the scenes of our present life. Catholics and Protestants, disagreeing on many other points, have, with beautiful unanimity, proclaimed to the world their belief in the existence of good and evil angels. Without further argument, therefore, it may be stated as an irrefutable fact, that there are invisible spirits. Among these, as among men, there are different ranks and orders. They are called by various titles; there are thrones and dominions; principalities and powers; superiors and inferiors; rulers and subjects. As the divine creator of these intelligences is infinitely holy, all the creatures of his power came from his hands with holy natures, and fitted for the discharge of lofty functions. The invisible spiritual universe, therefore, at one time was clothed with an air of peace. Perfect harmony reigned through the illimitable empire of Jehovah. They were his messengers; the flaming executioners of his sovereign will. But the annals of God's empire have registered a scene which broke that harmony. Some aspiring prince of the celestial world cherished a thought of rebellion against his glorious Lord, and having infused the unholy purpose into the minds of some of his associates, they conspired against the throne of the Eternal. But the omnipotent Maker of all, cast them out from his glorious presence. "For God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." 2 Pet. 2: 4. It does not appear from scripture, that these fallen sons of light lost any property but that of holiness. They are doubtless quite as capable of high intellectual exertion now, as while the raptures of heaven flowed in thrilling streams through their immortal capacities; they still bear upon their natures those marks of grandeur that distinguished them in their unfallen glory. And as they could bring unmeasured energy to the execution of their work for the glory of the universe, so may they now be the masters of a power whose depth and force the human intellect cannot fathom; a fact still more appalling is, that their tremendous faculties are no longer exerted for the divine glory or man's good. While good angels are occupied in furthering the interests of redemption, and "ministering to the heirs of salvation," the fallen angels are in a hostile attitude towards God

and man. It is their office to corrupt; to seduce and to destroy. They labor to cover with the blight of death and the gloom of damnation, the fair fields of that universe through which they once coursed on cheerful wing to bless and beautify. It is not probable that they are rigidly confined to one particular locality, but from the intimations of the Redeemer, and the declarations of his apostles, it seems manifest that they traverse the world, fly in the air, and mingle in the affairs of mankind. Whoever penetrates the surface of things, and with a philosophical spirit investigates the springs of human action, or measures the resources of human wisdom, must recognize in those great movements which have overturned thrones, and radically changed governments, a power superhuman. In many of the great historical epochs, it were folly to ascribe to simply human means, the changes wrought, or the ends accomplished. We recognize the presence of God, either in manifest interpositions, or in providential influences, in that history of miracles, through the influence of which the Hebrew slaves of Egypt are delivered from a painful vassalage, conducted through the sea and the wilderness, and finally built up into a great nation. And it would justly be regarded as impious, not to recognize the agency of God and his angels, in the birth, growth and prosperity of the American republic. That is a shallow view of history which sees only human forces active in the creation of its facts. There is in the rise and progress of nations, much that must be ascribed to a superhuman power; there are in the progress of earthly events the fierce conflicts of invisible powers. If God, when accepting the penitential tears and sacrifices of Israel, cause one of his angels to slay eighty thousand of the Assyrians in one night, might he not permit the evil spirits to mingle in the councils, and to fight against those who have made themselves the subjects of his displeasure. That war which Lucifer, with his confederates, waged against the God of the universe, will continue while this world remains a theatre of crime. "All history, if we did but understand it, is little else but the history of the conflict between these invisible powers; and till we learn this fact, in vain shall we pride ourselves on our philosophies of history." It is impossible that the student of prophecy, who is deeply penetrated with the conviction that the "Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men," should not see in those agitations which now convulse nations, the great purposes of Jehovah in collision with the powers of earth. It is quite as unphilosophical, as it is Atheistic, to regard our earth and its kingdoms, either isolated or disconnected from the re-

mainder of God's universe. Though resting under his displeasure because of sin, he has not surrendered it to Satan, nor left it to a cheerless destiny, for he has set in motion those regenerating agencies which will ultimately remove its pollutions, and reclaiming it to its rightful owner, will lead it back, dazzling with a holiness as spotless as that glory in which the image of its Maker was reflected, when it moved in its unfallen grandeur. Until that event shall be celebrated through his empire, this world must be a scene of conflict, in which God and his holy ones, angels, men, and devils will participate.—Thus far, or this kind of spiritualism or spiritual intercourse, I can cordially accept; for all this intercourse between the visible and invisible world, God himself has taught me. Did I think otherwise, I would first impose upon my mind an unpardonable blindness, and an incurable infidelity concerning the divine word, did I not behold in the stirring events now abroad, an agency higher than human, and activities more exalted than those of mortals. God chooses, raises up and sends forth instruments to promote his glory; his purposes instinct with omnipotence, are mightier than the marshalled hosts of earthly kingdoms, and before his will the grandeurs of earth wither, thrones fall, and kings perish!

Besides angelic beings, there are also invisible spirits that were once shrined in houses of clay. Concerning these there is little said in the scriptures beyond the fact, that they are happy or miserable in the spirit-world. Death has no effect upon the moral character of men, it is a dissolution, not a regeneration, and therefore, at their departure, they carry with them those frames and dispositions which characterized them here. The departed are, therefore, associated in the invisible world either with good or wicked angels, as their moral qualifications may fit them for one or the other class of spirits. These spiritual intelligences, whether angelic or human in their origin, are actively employed They certainly perform some sort of functions, for activity is a necessary law of spirit. Neither is it unreasonable suppose that the disembodied mingle in the activities of mortals. They may hover around some fondly cherished ones, who are still on their pilgrimage to another world. I grant, moreover, that there is nothing in God's inspired word, to prove that the departed are always confined at some distant point, neither does it accord with our ideas of the character of spirits, to suppose that they are as circumscribed in their operations, and as limited in their movements and apprehensions as mortals. It has been beautifully remarked that, between the mortal and immortal, no gulf inter-

poses. "The visible world and the invisible world are, doubtless, in very close contact; there is, indeed, a veil on our eyes, preventing our gazing on spiritual beings and things, but we doubt not that whatsoever passes upon earth, is open to the view of higher and immaterial creatures. And as we are sure that a man of piety enlists good angels on his side, and engages them to perform towards him the ministrations of kindness, we know not why there cannot be such a thing as a man whose wickedness has caused his being abandoned by the spirit of God, and who in this, his desertion, has thrown open to evil angels the chambers of his soul, and made himself so completely their instrument, that they may use him in the uttering or working of miracles." This view of a distinguished divine, accords fully with the sentiments already advanced. I am fully persuaded that evil angels may as completely control the functions of a wicked man's spiritual nature, as good men have been controlled by the inspiration of God, by which they uttered the purposes of the infinite sovereign.

Such a contiguity of the visible and invisible world, is moreover in perfect harmony with our conceptions of the nature of God's empire. This wondrous universe is a perfect structure; an organism in which all the parts are closely linked and dependent on each other. From the central vitalizing and sustaining power, to the most minute or insignificant creation, there is a viewless chain connecting one with the other, and thus all constituting a grand whole; and along these chains, which bind in union all the departments and parts, currents of sympathy circulate, so that a vibration in one part, however minute, will send its pulsations throughout the entire extent of this vast materialism. We know, to a limited degree, the operations of the law of affinity in the kingdom of nature, but this law is little understood in its relation to the spirit-world. We cannot doubt that the immense community, the vast commonwealth of spiritual beings, alike in their moral attributes of character, stand en rapport with each other, so that by those invisible filaments of influence that spread from one to the other, the humblest, as well as the most exalted member, is sending out, through all the channels of the spiritual universe, the emanations of his mind. "As in the external and visible world, the fall of a pebble agitates, not perceptibly indeed, but actually, the whole mass of the globe," thus in the world of spirits, every act of an individual member is felt by every intelligent being that stands in union with him. For if the opinion of philosophers is founded in truth, that the universe is so nicely and sensitively strung, that the vibra-

tions of a pebble thrill through the wide limits of this material structure, it is much more philosophical and probable, that the undulations of thought, or the emotions rising up in one particular spirit, consciously or unconsciously, affect the whole universe of mind.

We are all sensible in our individuality of the intimate and responsive relation that each of us sustains to the outspread materialssm above and around us. The silent utterances of nature are addressed to our inner man, and are not only felt, but partially understood by the spirit within us. The materialistic tendencies must indeed be very decided in that individual, who does not experience a conscious elevation of thought and feeling, when contemplating material objects possessing the attributes of the beautiful and grand. If his mental operations are at all elevated, and his heart measurably freed from the noisome cares of the world, he cannot spend a single hour amid the solitudes of the wilderness, or under the flaming canopy of heaven, without experiencing in the profound sanctuary of his soul, something of the peace that reigns in the quiet skies, and an exaltation of his emotions, and a loftiness of intellectual exertion, which he never could have realized in the crowded city, or while his mind was agitated by the cares and pressures of his avocation. All that is truly poetic, all that is beautiful or sublime in human conceptions, like all the offspring of high genius, are but the embodiments in language, of those burning inspirations that first came flashing from the glorious shrines of nature, and like troops of bright spirits, peopled the poet's mind, before they were touched by the creative hand that gave them form. Now if there is this acknowledged sympathy between man's spiritual nature and the immense materialism that surrounds him, how much more reasonable is the belief that communications and intercommunications are incessantly going on between the same orders of spirits which pervade the universe.

To this extent reason and revelation alike teach us it is safe to go. And in this spiritualism I have unfeigned and implicit confidence. I may still go farther in admissions of that which transpires within my own breast. My consciousness apprizes me of the presence of thoughts, impulses, aspirations, and yearnings which never could have originated in my own nature, they are often products entirely distinct and foreign in their elements from that of which man is capable, and therefore must have come from some spiritual influence exerted upon my mind. Such is no doubt the experience of all men, and if human testimony is at all reliable, numerous instances

might be cited, when under the force of good and evil impressions, persons have been carried forward with an irresistible power, to the execution of benevolent or malevolent deeds.

It is an article of christian faith, that the spirit of God regenerates those souls whose consent makes them accessible to his operations; that he fashions the depraved spirit into a new creation; so that, as in the beginning, the dark unshapen chaos assumed appropriate proportions, and was clothed with an excellent glory, while his influence brooded over the scene, thus does he now beautify the saints with the graces of salvation. He displaces the enmity of the carnal mind by love, sinful thoughts, desires and emotions, by opposite affections, and makes the soul of regenerate man instinct with the forces of a new and holy life. This dogma of regeneration is based upon the presumption that man is naturally depraved, and under the absolute dominion of satan. Indeed the whole structure and significance of christianity and its ordinances, rest upon the fact that man is susceptible of powerful spiritual influences, both good and evil. The fact that the soul does not open to the light of heaven, as the flower unfolds itself to the sun, and becomes not the shrine of the august presence of Deity, implies that it is the victim of satanic delusion. The Holy Ghost and Satan stand opposed to each other, and come in conflict where a deliverance from darkness and sin is effected. Those who deny the personality of Satan, and the existence of evil spirits, might as well, and virtually do, repudiate christianity. For if the kingdom of darkness and its rulers are divested of reality and existence, then is the gospel objectless, and must, of necessity, lose all force and significance, or if it could succeed in retaining its form as a system, it would have nothing positive about it. This is well known and duly appreciated by those who reject Christ and his religion. One of the most distinguished opponents of christianity, and a man of superior acuteness, very justly observes in one of his dissertations: "Prove to unbelievers the existence of evil spirits, and you will, by that alone, force them to concede all your dogmas."

And why should christians, and especially ministers, hesitate to proclaim their unequivocal belief in the existence of Satan and his fallen associates, and their intervention in human affairs, when it is distinctly affirmed that Christ came into the world "that he might destroy the works of the devil." If no such being exists, or is the creation of a superstitious instinct, then the Savior's mission has no motive, no object, and christianity, the hope of the lost, is a sheer fable. Abhorrent as

such a conclusion must be to every holy sentiment, there is no other alternative for those who imagine that the refinement of the age is too far advanced to receive these primitive and positive teachings of the gospel. It is a humiliating reflection that there are men in orthodox denominations, professed ambassadors for Christ, who would take it as the highest indignity, if any one should raise a question whether their credentials were drawn in heaven, who yet, through a time-serving fear, or the charge of superstition, refuse to identify themselves with the doctrines of Christ, so as to assert their belief in the existence of evil spirits. Yet where is the denomination claiming an orthodox faith, that in baptism or confirmation does not require of applicants for membership to renounce the world, the flesh and the devil? Catholics and Protestants, on these occasions, demand a recognition of Satan's existence and agency, for they could not require a renunciation of that which has no existence. This is an important consideration, not merely as it may affect our subsequent argument, but also in view of its influence on the success of the gospel in its action upon human beings.

Another doctrine connected with this branch of the subject, is the belief in guardian angels, so general among christians, which, though a non-essential in the matter of salvation, has, notwithstanding, an elevating and purifying influence upon the mind, and is highly consolatory to those struggling through the dark scenes of this world, towards the rapturous glory that flashes to the eye of faith. Though the manner of their guardianship is not distinctly defined, yet the persuasion of their presence and guidance inspires confidence, and fortifies the heart of the pilgrim with indomitable courage, while he is fighting under the banner of Immanuel. Christianity does not isolate man from the rest of the intelligent creation, but true to the instincts and wants of our humanity, it opens avenues which bring into communication with his soul the entire universe of holy beings. The ladder which the patriarch saw stretching from earth to heaven, was not all a vision, but symbolic of those experiences which repeat themselves in believers from age to age. Such a view is eminently consistent with the revealed character of the great God whom we serve. He is no tyrant, shut up in a gorgeous palace, and casting an indifferent look upon his feeble subjects, but a God of boundless love; a father merciful and gracious, who has adopted us as sons and daughters into his family, and established a most real and affectionate intercourse. "Thus saith the high and lofty one whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy

place, and with him also, who is of an humble and contrite heart, to revive the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite ones." He is the spring of joys unspeakable and full of glory; the fountain whence issue the loftiest raptures that thrill the immortal spirit outside the circle of heaven. The Redeemer of the world, in his promise of the comforter, assures the disciples that himself and the father will take up their abode in those hearts that have become the temples of the Holy Ghost. The soul of the pious is, therefore, en rapport with heaven.

In addition to this direct communication of the adorable Trinity with the spirit of man, there is the agency of angels, which is continually exerted for the benefit of man. "He gives his angels charge concerning them, lest they dash their foot against a stone." "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation?" It may be well here to pause a moment, to hear what the scriptures say concerning these spirits. Our conceptions may indeed fail to measure their intellectual and moral capacities, yet enough is revealed to assure us that they are creatures far transcending ourselves in might and intelligence. "They are represented as God's ministers, executing the orders of his providence." They encircle his throne in a waiting attitude, to receive his commands, and on wings swift as thought, pass through the universe executing the divine will. As to their number, the Psalmist says, "the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels;" "they are represented as creatures of wonderful agility and swiftness of motion, and are therefore called cherubim, that is, winged creatures," and seraphim, or flames of fire, because of so strange a subtlety as to penetrate into any kind of bodies, yea, insinuate themselves into, and affect the very inward senses of men." An angel warned Joseph in a dream, and directed and guarded his flight to Egypt with the infant Savior. When Peter lay manacled in prison, and chained to two soldiers, on the midnight gloom there flashed through that dungeon the light of an angel's presence, who led him forth from his cell, and restored him to his circle of supplicating brethren. Much might be gathered from the page of inspiration, concerning the efficiency and energy of these celestial beings. Numerous instances are on record, when through their powerful ministrations, men were delivered from their enemies, or the consuming fire forgot its office, lions were deprived of their ferocity, and the elements were rendered harmless to the children of God. Seeing therefore that man is not doomed to a cheerless isolation from the Most High, and

is in union with the most powerful and holy beings of the universe, there is no occasion for him to seek the fellowship, or court the intercourse of evil spirits. All the wants of his nature are met in the provisions of the divine economy. Aided by the eternal spirit, and receiving important services by the sons of light, in his onward and upward struggles towards a cloudless immortality, he has need of nothing but a brave heart, a believing soul, and hopeful spirit, to make his happiness complete. This is spiritualism, taught by the holy scriptures, and confirmed by human experience. A spiritualism which harms no one, and is eminently consistent with the fitness of things. It pretends to no revelations beyond the inspired oracles, it vaunts no predictions, and has nothing in it at war with a rational and holy faith.

Satanic agency in Spirit-Rapping and Spiritual Manifestations.

Far different in its nature and tendencies, is the spiritualism which we have been considering, from that modern system of imposture which assumed its name, and thus "stole the livery of heaven to serve the devil in." The manifestations of spirits which have for the last few years agitated the land, and disturbed and deranged the intellects of men, are as distinct from the realizations under the former, as heaven is from hell. Though professing to be "a new dispensation," and therefore to be of recent birth, it is as old as the corruptions of mankind. It is not the offspring of the nineteenth century, fruitful as this age has been in its inventions, it has not produced this hydra. Hoary antiquity is its mother, and Satan its father. Spirit-Rapping is but a child of a numerous family; or the same delusion under a new form. This I shall proceed to establish. And that I may do the system and votaries no injustice, I will briefly state its leading features, its pretensions, and the wonders which it professes to accomplish.

Their own authors are doubtless the most reliable witnesses in the case, and from these I quote. One who was perhaps the most conspicuous in giving currency to the system, and who certainly had no superiors intellectually, but has now abandoned his "dealings with familiar spirits," speaking of the origin and progress of it, remarks: "At first the great object was to establish the reality of the spiritual communications. This was to be done by the communication of secrets, either known only to the interrogator, or incapable of being known to the medium in any ordinary human or natural way. Sometimes the spirits played the part of fortune-tellers; some-

times they assumed to be prophets, and ventured to predict future events, but always events which either depended on them, or lay in the natural order, and which a knowledge of natural causes and effects could easily enable them to foresee. As the spiritual intercourse extended, the somnambulic and rapping mediums ceased to be the only mediums. To the rapping mediums were added writing mediums and speaking mediums, and in some instances the spirits became actually visible to the seers, and telegraphed their messages by visible symbols, and occasionally in words."

The ends which it is contended the system subserves, are thus summed up by Judge Edmunds:

1. "The existence of man after the life on earth, is demonstrated beyond all peradventure.

2. It has also been demonstrated what death is.

3. It is demonstrated that our most secret thoughts can be known to and revealed by the intelligence which is thus surrounding us, and communing with us.

4. So, too, it is demonstrated that our conduct in this life, in a great measure, elaborates our destiny hereafter, and that our happiness in the next stage of existence, depends not upon our adherence to this or that sectarian faith, but upon the purity of our life here, and our obedience according to the lights we have to the great law of loving God and one another. *It is no vicarious atonement which is to redeem us, but we are to work out our own salvation.* THUS STRIKING FOR ONCE AND FOR AYE, A FATAL BLOW AT THE PERNICIOUS DOCTRINE WHICH HAS SO LONG TEMPTED MAN TO DEFER REPENTANCE.

5. We are taught the great doctrine of PROGRESSION.

6. That it is a new dispensation, designed to supplant the church of Christ."

From these and other statements, we may deduce the following, among other ends, which they profess to perform:

I. To hold communication with departed spirits. Many of their works are entirely made up of professed communications from the departed. Many as crude and ridiculous as language could make them, and if they proceed from spirits, they have grossly imposed upon those who received them by signing their names as Webster, Clay, Calhoun, Bacon, and others equally distinguished.

II. These spirits are said to make certain revelations respecting the spirit-world; and so far as I have examined them, in direct conflict with the word of God. During the early communications to those who for the first or second time interrogate them, they carefully abstain from a direct assault upon

the scriptures, but in some minor points may seem to corroborate the divine teachings; but no sooner is the victim charmed than one after the other of the fundamental doctrines is stricken down.

III. They profess to lift the veil of futurity, and foretell things which are to happen.

IV. They consult spirits in relation to business enterprises, whether they will or will not be successful.

V. They pretend to give accurate information concerning the condition, the doings, the health and the prospects of absent friends, or the friends of interrogators.

These pretensions are certainly not very modest. It is manifest, therefore, that they arrogate to themselves prerogatives which God never delegated to his prophets or apostles, the former could only foretell future events under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, so that it was not the human, but the divine mind which foretold, as it alone could foreknow; and in the latter it was only the divine power imparted to the instrument through whom miracles were wrought. But these rappers clothe created spirits with the attributes of omniscience and omnipotence, which Christ has declared cannot belong to angels, the most exalted of his creatures, and therefore to none who occupy an inferior rank in the scale of intelligence. In what light are we then to regard this system? We believe it to be a mixture of truth and error. But is it a new discovery, or has it any connection with the odic force in nature, said to have been discovered by Reichenbach? Or is it a new dispensation (as they assert) designed to supersede the Jewish and christian? We shall not rely for the solution of these questions upon the assertions of its votaries, but depend upon a careful examination of the system, and draw such conclusions as the elemental principles thereof may unfold to an impartial scrutiny. It is most obvious to the careful observer, that it possesses many features in common with those ancient impostures, which have, at different times, astonished and corrupted mankind. Its relation to the cause of God, its debasing tendencies and pernicious and blighting influence upon human hopes and happiness, clearly demonstrate that it is not from above, but from beneath; not from God, but from Satan. It has nothing of light or heaven about its characteristics, but is intimately associated, in all its distinguishing traits, with the kingdom of darkness. Whatever of supernatural there may be in its manifestations, is produced by satanic agency. It has the vitalizing and directing power of those ancient systems, variously designated, but one in design, viz: to deceive and

injure man, and to oppose God. It is the old lying art practiced by evil men, resuscitated. It has been known to the world under the names of sorcery, magic, astrology, aeromancy, meteoromancy, pyromancy, hydromancy, geomancy, and others, or as it is in a general way designated by Cicero, the arts of divination. Persons disposed to be credulous become the ready dupes of these deceivers. Not these alone, however, but all classes are conscious of those constitutional tendencies, which would make them willing to test the arts of those who promised them information, which might affect them as individuals.

The human mind is so constituted, that it has always exhibited a strong desire to penetrate the mysteries of the future. Actuated by a disposition to ascertain the issue of present or projected enterprises, men have not scrupled to avail themselves of the questionable aid which diviners might furnish. Every nation was given to these arts. The far-famed oracle of Delphi was consulted by the Greeks, on all important occasions, and its responses were so shrewdly framed, as to admit of a twofold and opposite interpretation, so that whether the event fell out prosperously or adversely, the reputation of the oracle did not suffer, and in these cunningly framed answers to inquiries, we may recognize a strong resemblance to the responses of our present spirit-rappers. Herodotus records the most remarkable responses which the Delphian oracle delivered to the Athenians about the time of the invasion of Xerxes. As the Jewish kings inquired of the Lord, through their prophets, whether they should or should not undertake a war, so the pagan nations never entered into such conflicts, without first interrogating their oracles. This was a general custom among the leading nations, and will always prevail where men are involved in ignorance and superstition. For wherever there is ignorance concerning those phenomena which science traces to physical law, the fears of men are often greatly excited, as well as their anxieties, and their superstition so nourished as to debase their minds to such a degree that they seek to gratify their innate propensity to unravel the future, by means which have no other relation to the knowledge they seek to obtain, than that imparted by a troubled imagination. "Scarcely a single department of nature," says a writer, "but was appealed to, as furnishing, on certain conditions, good or bad omens of human destiny; and the aspect of things which by the most casual coincidence of some marked event or crisis in the life of one or two individuals, came to be regarded by a blind credulity, as the fixed and invariable precursor of a

similar result in the affairs of mankind in general. By such childish and irrational notions was the conduct of the heathen guided in the most important, no less than in the most ordinary occurrences of life; and from this arose the profession of augurs, soothsayers, et hoc genus omne, of impostors, who, ingrafting vulgar traditions on a small stock of knowledge, established their claims to the possession of an occult science, the importance and influence of which they dexterously increased, by associating with it, all that was pompous and imposing in the ceremonies of religion." The modes adopted to wring from the womb of the future its unmatured mysteries, were as numerous and various as the appearances of nature and art could furnish, so that from the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, to the dregs in a coffee-cup, there was scarcely anything which was not made prophetic, in some of its aspects, of things yet future. The Jews delighted in their Cabalistic philosophy. And to make it more imposing, they professed to derive their cabalistic mysteries from their ancient wise men, some referring their origin to Solomon, others invested them with a still higher antiquity, although it is generally conceded by the learned that these mysteries were imported from pagan nations, and that Simeon Schetachides, an Egyptian, was the founder of the cabalistic science. These mysteries were, in many respects, supposed to be the same as magic.

And if magic and the arts of divination did not originate in Egypt, they were certainly in high esteem among that people. When Moses performed miracles in the presence of the king, in order that he might authenticate his divine mission, Pharaoh called the magicians, who repeated a number of the same miracles. By what agency they wrought those wonders, how they transformed their rods into serpents, by what means they changed water into blood, and whence they procured the frogs which their incantations brought forth, are inquiries which have greatly perplexed those who investigated the subject. Some have followed that easy method, now so frequently current when difficulties are to be solved, and ascribed the miracles of the magicians to jugglery and legerdemain; and therefore contend that the serpents and frogs had been provided for the occasion. But this mode of explanation is embarrassed by manifold and formidable difficulties, and is at best nothing but an assumption for which they can produce no proof. As no one pretends to deny that they were regarded as much miracles by the observers, as those performed by Moses, it is assuredly more consistent with the facts in the case, to conclude that they were aided by an evil spiritual agency, or by Satan

himself, as they were intended to defeat the object which the messenger of God aimed to accomplish. That God permits Satan to exercise a considerable degree of power, is clearly taught in the Bible. The history of our race, moreover, furnishes innumerable instances where men were deluded, or vexed, or afflicted by the agency of the devil. It has been well observed by a master mind: "Earth, air and ocean may contain many things of which our philosophy has never dreamed."

The diviners of the pagan nations proved a great snare to the Israelites. And that magic, divination, and dealing with familiar spirits, were regarded as a real connexion with Satan, and as positively evil, appears manifest from the various prohibitions of these things in the holy word. In Deut. 18: 10, 11, Moses expressly forbids the practice of these arts. "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations, the Lord thy God doth drive them (the Canaanites) from before thee." Notwithstanding this and other express prohibitions, the Israelites frequently resorted to the shrines of those oracles that were sustained, sometimes openly, and at other times secretly. Whenever living piety declined, and the people abandoned the service of the true God, these arts were resorted to, for the purpose of obtaining relief. The oracle at Endor, was no doubt established by the Canaanites, and that it was not wholly suppressed, is evident from the fact that Saul, in the day of his adversity, had recourse to the priestess that ministered at that shrine. However men have tortured that narrative, in order to evoke from it such an explanation as might accord with their previously formed views, the record palpable asserts an actual appearance of Samuel, and we must either reject the entire narrative as fabulous, or believe that the spirit of the prophet appeared. The priestess, as well as the doomed king, was affrighted by the apparition, and the unhappy monarch heard his doom pronounced by him who had anointed him king of Israel, and who had so often and so faithfully instructed him in those things which had reference to the individual and national prosperity of the people whom Saul governed. The Chaldean diviners, it is well known, had obtained great influence and power in their own country, and were exalted to positions of honor and trust, and while their office was invested

with rare prerogatives, they had secured such a hold upon the national mind, and were in such high repute among all classes, that their advice was uniformly sought, not only in relation to the weightier matter of state affairs, but also in unimportant things. So absolutely essential was their service esteemed, that no relation in life could be formed, no building reared, no journey undertaken, until the diviners had first designated the auspicious day. Palestine was overrun by these magicians. During the reign of the later kings of Israel, the nation was greatly corrupted, both in its rulers and subjects. Manassah, indeed, was conspicuous among the diviners, having first liberally patronized these magicians, he afterwards acquired great skill in the art of divination. 2 K. 21 : 6. It is written: "And he made his son go through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards." In the same chapter, v. 11; "Because Manassah, king of Judah, hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, &c. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle." It appears, therefore, from this record, that the same arts which God had forbidden through Moses, and for which the nation had been visited with divine judgments as often as they had become associated with ehchantments, necromancy, and magic, had gained currency to an alarming extent during their later history. When our Savior appeared on earth, they were greatly addicted to these things. Indeed, idolatry and paganism, in all its varied forms and arts, reigned almost triumphant over all nations at that period. Paganism is just as certainly sustained and promoted by the devil, as the kingdom of heaven was built up and extended by the power of God. The most cultivated, as well as the most barbarous nations, encouraged and practiced the arts of divination at the time of the incarnation of Christ. Sacred and profane history are full of melancholy details of the sad results everywhere manifested, and unquestionably produced by satanic agency. I have not seen any intimation from any source, neither can I adduce any cogent proofs that those possessed of demons in the days of Christ, were persons who brought themselves into that deplorable condition by their personal "dealings with familiar spirits," yet to my mind it appears more than probable. When we look upon some of those unhappy creatures now in our lunatic asylums, and brought there by the influence which spiritual manifestations had upon their minds, there is much in their appearance, and

in their incoherent ravings, that corresponds with those cases recorded in the New Testament. There is assuredly no good philosophical objection to the supposition, but many considerations might be urged in favor of this opinion. We cannot entertain the thought that God would allow demons, who are all subject to his power, to enter the bodies of individuals, without the consent of those persons, and if so, it is far more rational to conclude that the parties had so surrendered themselves to satanic influence, as finally to be deprived of the power of their will, and all self-control. To account for the origin of these possessions, by contending that God permitted persons to become possessed of evil spirits, that the Messiahship of Christ might be established—that the mission of Jesus might be recognized as divine, because he cast out devils by his omnific command, is to assume a proposition not consonant with the general plan of God's dealings with his creatures, neither does it accord with any known principle of the divine government. But if we adopt the idea advanced, we may very satisfactorily account for the origin of that unhappy state in which many human beings were found, in the days of our Redeemer's public ministry on earth. We believe it altogether possible for a soul so to surrender itself to the devil, as to become absolutely subject to his dominion. There are many scripture phrases which seem to sustain this idea; "that they may be delivered from the power and dominion of the evil one;" "Who are taken captive at his will," and other declarations in which we find intimations that no limit can be assigned to the control which satan may acquire over a mind that yields to his influence.

In the Acts of Apostles, we find an interesting account of the extent to which those arts prevailed at that period. Ephesus was a stronghold of these impostors. After Paul had preached the gospel, and confirmed his mission by miracles, numbers of them were converted. These converted Ephesians instantly renounced their sorcery and magic, to which they had been addicted, and brought their books and consumed them. "Many that believed came and confessed, and showed their deeds. And many also of them, which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver." These large sums of money had been expended in the purchase of works that treated of magic, and it conclusively demonstrates the fact, that all classes were more or less involved in the influence of those forbidden arts. Paul was clothed with extraordinary prerogatives, when he

came to Ephesus. Acts 19: 6; "And when Paul laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied." And in the eleventh and twelfth verses it is written, "God wrought *special* miracles by the hands of Paul. So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the disease departed from them, and the *evil spirits* went out of them." Why is it that extraordinary powers were conferred upon the apostle at that place? Manifestly for the reason, that the devil had great power in that city. They who were in league with the devil performed some sort of miracles through satanic agency, and probably made some predictions, such as spirit-rappers do at this day, and it was therefore necessary that after a similar manner, but by a different power, and a holy agency, he should overcome the devil. That the Ephesians had produced strange results by some species of magic, such as the servants of Pharaoh had done in the presence of Moses, cannot be doubted, and they would, therefore, naturally ascribe the miracles of Paul to a similar agency. "Hence the miracles which were to serve as credentials of christianity, required to be more than commonly potent, and such as were in no degree imitable by the dexterity of the juggler, or the incantation of the sorcerer." Finding that Paul wrought miracles in the name of Jesus, some of those men attempted to eject demons by the invocation of the same name. The seven sons of Sceva, a Jew exorcists, says the record, went to a man demoniacally possessed, and addressed the foul spirit, saying: "we adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth." The spirit replied: "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" "While the spirit professed submission to Jesus and to Paul, as his minister, he knew no right in these exorcists to dispossess him." And animating the man with supernatural strength, "he fell upon them, and forced them out of the house wounded and naked." There was also Simon Magus, who had attained great celebrity among men, on account of the wonderful feats which he performed, and whom the multitude styled, "the power of God." To ascribe all the results achieved by the magicians of old to legerdemain, and the various and singular effects produced by those acquainted with the occult sciences in the days of the apostles, would be as unphilosophical as to deny the presence of a spiritual agency in the performances of spirit-rappers of the present time.

At this stage of the discussion, I think it important to avail myself of the testimony of a highly distinguished biblical scholar, and a very eminent philological critic. In the "Syno-

nyms of the New Testament," by Dr. Trench, we find his opinion on this subject, in the following observations:

"In conformity with this same law" (one stated previously) of moral fitness in the selection of words, we meet with προφητεύειν, as the constant word in the New Testament to express the prophesying by the spirit of God; while directly a sacred writer has need to make mention of the lying art of heathen divination, he employs this word no longer, but *manteuesthai* in preference. What the essential difference between the two things, prophesying and soothsaying, the 'weissagen' and the 'wahrsagen' is, and why it was necessary to keep them distinct and apart, by different terms, used to designate the one and the other, we shall best perceive and understand when we have considered the etymology of one, at least, of the words. Μαντεύομαι being from μάντις, is through it connected, as Plato has taught us, with μανία and μαίνομαι. It will follow from this, that the word has reference to the tumult of the mind, the fury, the temporary madness under which those were, who were supposed to be possessed by the god, during the time that they delivered their oracles; this mantic fury of theirs, displaying itself in the eyes rolling, the lips foaming, the hair flying, with all other tokens of a more than natural agitation. It is quite possible that these symptoms were sometimes produced, as they were no doubt often heightened, in the seers, Pythonesses, Sybils, and the like, by the use of drugs, or by other artificial means. *Yet no one who believes that real spiritual forces underlie all forms of idolatry, but will also believe that there was often much more in these manifestations than mere trickery of this kind; no one with any insight into the awful mystery of the false worships of this world, but will believe that these symptoms were the evidence and expression of an actual connexion in which these persons stood to a spiritual world; a spiritual world, indeed, which was not above them, but beneath.*"

Such are the conclusions, not hastily formed, of a profound thinker, concerning the satanic agency connected with idolatry, and especially with the art of divination. And here we may draw another legitimate and conclusive argument, that spirit rapping and spiritual manifestations have their origin in the same agency that produced the magical arts, and those of divination among pagans Mediums, through whom spiritual intercourse is carried on, manifest symptoms when under the influence of a spiritual presence, identical with those seen in the Pythonesses and Sybils. They are seized with a trembling sensation, and that part of the body through which the

communication is made, is violently agitated. If the medium is to write, his arm is moved, if he is to speak, the faculty of utterance is affected. Sometimes the medium becomes wholly unconscious of the operations of his own mind, and gives evidence of derangement; or acts in a way, and with such a frenzy as the ancient soothsayers when delivering their oracles. The striking similarity of the effects produced in both cases, points to one and the same power as their producing cause; and while we concede that the agency is supernatural, we agree with the learned divine whom we have quoted, that it proceeds not from the spiritual world above, but from the spiritual world beneath. "Revelation knows nothing of this mantic fury but to condemn it." "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." 1 Cor. 14: 32. The true prophet is, indeed, rapt out of himself; he is in the spirit—(Rev. 1: 10) he is in an ecstacy (Acts 11: 5); he is ὑπὸ πνεῦματου Ἁγιου φερομενος (2 Pet. 1: 21), which is very much more than 'moved,' as we have rendered it; rather 'getrieben,' as De Wette; and we must not go so far in our opposition to heathen and Montanist error, as to deny this, &c. But then he is not *beside* himself; he is *lifted above*, not thus *set beside*, his every day self."

The instances already cited, are amply sufficient to establish the fact, that there were in the different periods of the world's history, and that too among the most enlightened nations, persons who professed to hold communications with spirits; to reveal secrets, and in a word, to do precisely what the spirit-rappers are doing at this time. There has been a vast deal of discussion among learned men, respecting these arts. I have already given the views of Dr. Trench on the distinction that should be drawn between soothsaying and prophesying, but it is necessary to present more fully the views of distinguished scholars, who have patiently investigated the subject. The question which they sought to settle was, whether magicians, sorcerers, and diviners, merely pretended to the powers they exercised, or were actually possessed of superhuman knowledge, and assisted by satanic agency? After a thorough scrutiny, I am clearly of the opinion that the latter opinion is correct, and that, both among the ancient and modern necromancers, there is in force a superhuman agency, and that satan may and does lend them his aid to deceive mankind. This view, so far as it relates to the magicians and diviners of former times, is sustained with singular and almost entire unanimity by the fathers of the primitive church. "They appeal, in support of their views, to the plain language of scripture,

to the achievements of Jannes and Jambres, in the days of Moses; and also to the divine law which forbids these arts." These positions we regard as perfectly tenable, and the arguments which may be deduced from them as irrefutable. Unless we admit the reality of enchantment and sorcery, &c., we must suppose that Moses was beating the air, when he denounced them as abominations to the Lord. A denial of satanic or superhuman agency, would imply a charge of folly upon the law of God, for prohibiting crimes which never existed. This is an alternative which not only every good, but even a prudent man would avoid. God speaks of these things as actual infractions of the law of his government, and treats those given to their practice, as offenders of the worst sort. He reproved those who were guilty of it, and repeatedly forbids them. Some of the weightiest judgments were sent upon kings and subjects, because they disregarded those prohibitions uttered by Moses and the prophets. For these very crimes, Manassah lost his crown, was carried away captive, with many of his people, and Palestine desolated by fire and sword. It is, moreover, highly improbable that these pretensions to interpret dreams, to call up the shades of the dead, to reveal the mysteries of the future, would for so many ages have remained unexposed and uncontradicted, if they had all been empty impostures. The presumption that all those ancients who recognized in them a supernatural power, were mistaken in their conclusions, or were not competent to investigate these subjects, is certainly not very modest. Their opportunities for investigation were quite as good as our own, and if we judge from their other intellectual offspring, their capacity and learning entitle their views to respect. Had there been nothing of a superhuman character in the results produced by magicians and diviners, we would not find those authenticated instances of success in sacred and profane history. It is true that mesmerism was not then understood so well, perhaps, as at present, but may they not have known all its effects under any other name, and whether it is true or not true, that among the elementary forces of nature there is one styled the odic force, which, it is contended, acts like some sort of inspiration upon the human mind, they doubtless were more or less familiar with its influence. We do not hesitate to assert, that the decision of the fathers, that some of the magical arts, in their varied forms, were to be ascribed to satanic agency, was eminently just and philosophical.

This, I believe, is the only conclusion which can be reconciled with the history of the past, and the spiritual manifesta-

tions of the present day. I grant that some very able writers, and profound scholars, altogether reject the idea of satanic influence, and regard the entire mass of results as successful impostures; but these men, it should not be forgotten, are mostly materialists, and like the Sadducees of old, do not believe in the existence of good or evil spirits, and therefore, to be consistent with their own theory, must reject the reality of spiritual manifestations.

Conclusion.

I have thus endeavored, briefly, to trace the origin and nature of this singular system, and from these and other considerations, which I have not room to state, the proof is conclusive that the spirit-rapping of the present day, is the same power, which at different periods assumed the several aspects already presented, and in our day has risen up under a new and more imposing form.

The question now arises, are we to credit the pretensions of these spiritualists? Are they really mediums of spirits? And do they reveal things which could not be done by the unaided powers of man? There is, unquestionably, abundant reason to believe that there is a spiritual agency associated with these "manifestations." We cannot deny that man is intimately connected with the spirit-world, and believing as we do, that an individual may throw open his soul to evil as well as to good spirits, we can have no good ground to doubt that some of the results witnessed at the gatherings of these spiritists are the work of the devil. Philosophers have attempted to account for some of the effects produced, and contented themselves with believing that the remainder were to be ascribed to accident, or collision between interested parties. Some time ago a French savant explained the phenomena of turning tables, on the ground of involuntary muscular motion. He contended that the muscular action induced by the long continued pressure of the hands, was the true cause of its motion. There may be some truth in this, and whatever of honor attaches to the discovery, is not due to monsieur Farago, but to a gentleman originally from this town, but now a resident of South Carolina, who gave me an account of his theory six months before the Frenchman published his views, and sent me a copy of a paper in which his theory was elaborated, three months before the French Academy of science announced the theory of one of its distinguished members. Granted that the turning of a table may be accounted for on scientific principles, where a number of persons are seated around it, and from whom

a current of electricity may be set in motion, or if you please, let it be the relaxing of the muscles by which the table is made to move; this is only a small part of table phenomena. There is a lady in this town, whom a table will follow all around the room, by simply touching it with the tip of the finger. "I have seen," says one familiar with these things, "a table turn in spite of the efforts of four strong men to hold it still, rise up without any visible agency, fly over the heads of the company, rush with violence from one end of the room to the other, spin round like a top, balance itself on one leg, then upon another; in fine, move along some inches on the floor, with the weight of a dozen men resting on it, raise itself from the floor with them, and remain suspended a foot above it, for some minutes."

There is no doubt many of the prodigies of these men are produced by jugglery, others may be explained scientifically, but then other phenomena are, beyond a doubt, produced by satanic agency. Not to contend for the antics of Brownson's tables, and a thousand other items, such as mysterious knockings, and transforming various objects into human shapes—"such as the folios in a Presbyterian clergyman's library, into grave looking ecclesiastics," rejecting all such things as ocular delusions, there are many others which we cannot, as candid inquirers, set aside so summarily. If any credit is to be attached to the testimony of Governor Talmadge, and I cannot call in question his veracity, where he gives statements of actual occurrences, I may quote from the work of Judge Edmunds, one of those cases which science and philosophy cannot solve upon any known and established principles. The Judge, in the introduction of his work, gives the following extract from a letter of his friend, Governor Talmadge:

"My youngest daughter, aged thirteen, plays on the piano by the instructions of the spirits, like an experienced performer. She knows nothing of notes or music, and never played the piano before in her life. The first tune she played was Beethoven's Grand Waltz, and then several others with which we were familiar. After that, she played many we had never heard before, and improvised words suited to the airs, beautiful, and of the highest tone of moral and religious sentiment."

Judge Edmunds says, "I have known Latin, French and Spanish words spelled out through the rappings, and I have heard mediums, who knew no language but their own, speak in those languages, and in Italian, German, and Greek, and in other languages unknown to me, but which were represented to be Arabic, Chinese, and Indian, and all done with

the ease and rapidity of a native."—p. 35. I cannot doubt the testimony of these men, they hold honorable positions, and apart from their spiritualistic mania, are men of irreproachable character. To say that they are deceived, would be as bad as to contend that they misrepresented these things. They must confide in the testimony of their senses, and if they have seen and heard what they have stated, those phenomena must be the products of some intelligent agency. They no doubt believe it to emanate from some good source, but it cannot be ascribed to God or good spirits, unless the ends accomplished by these spiritual manifestations are possessed of that dignity and importance, which are always found in connexion with those miracles performed by the power and sanction of the Most High. This, however, has not been proved, neither can it be demonstrated that any benevolent end is subserved. If, however, the foregoing statements are deemed apocryphal, or suspicious, because they have emanated from interested parties, I may submit another, which lies not open to this objection. An intimate friend, and a gentleman thoroughly skeptical on the subject of spiritual manifestations, and who has no confidence whatever in their revelations imported from the shades of the departed, related to me the following incident: During the last harvest, his hands whom he had employed, and who had come from a distance, and knew nothing of his family, one day conversed about this matter. One of them remarked that he was a medium, though he did not understand the system; the rappings were produced at his request. They procured a table, and having placed his hands upon it, he said, "if there be a spirit present, will he please to rap?" Immediately there was a response. He then requested the spirit to rap once for every five years in the age of the mistress of the family; it did so, and then once for each year, and it was done; and then for each month, week and day, and it was accurately performed in every particular. The gentleman of the house, supposing that the medium produced those raps by some means, seated himself upon the table, and requested him to tell the ages of the different members of his family, and the table rose and rapped with the same ease as before he sat on it, and all its responses were correct.

There are, of course, many apocryphal incidents that are recorded for our amusement, but these rappers do produce some strange results. Such manifestations as no human power or ingenuity could.

If there are wicked spirits, then, there is no reason to suppose that they would not strive to promote the cause of wick-

eduess, provided the Almighty permits them. That God, for wise reasons, allows satan to tempt men, is evident from the sacred word. The virtue of the tempted is thus tested, and their faith exalted and strengthened, in passing through the ordeal. Job is a remarkable example of this. And here I would state what should have been in another part of the argument, that as the book of Job is the most ancient of records, it unveils the views of the most distant periods of our world's history, and therefore constitutes the earliest, and are of the most forcible proofs of the truth of the positions assumed in this treatise. That book not only recognizes the doctrine of the existence of spirits, but gives us some insight into the views then held by mankind, concerning the respective grades of spiritual intelligences. To trace the development of those views through the Holy scriptures, would be an interesting task, but as that does not legitimately fall within the compass of our design, I will refer the reader to the elaborate work—Creuzer's Sym. u. Mythology. Satan is introduced in the first chapter, v. 11, without any formality whatever. He is spoken of as a being whose existence was known, and whose character was no mystery. He is represented as a dark, malignant spirit, who, if he did not question the sincerity of Job's piety, was yet ready to accuse him of hypocrisy, by ascribing his virtues to mercenary motives. And after Providence removed its hedge, reared about the person and possessions of the patriarch, Satan, with his associates, brought a series of the most crushing calamities upon that saint, and yet, through all those fiery ordeals, he passed without wrecking his hopes. The fact that the severe trial was made subservient to his salvation, and because his example is as a star shining amid the dark firmament of affliction, animating and sustaining the multitudes of this world's sufferers, has and does vindicate the goodness and wisdom of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.

The temptation of Jesus is another illustration of the truth of the assertion, that it is the office of Satan and his confederates to tempt mankind. There are perhaps no instances on record, or if there are, they have not fallen under my notice, where individuals destined for some exalted mission, were not first thoroughly tried, before entering upon the work which Providence assigned them. Thus also, all extraordinary manifestations of divine favors, were always preceded by severe conflicts or sufferings. Our adorable Savior submitted to this temptation, that he might encourage his disciples, who might experience the powerful assaults of the evil one. The reality

of that scene described in the fourth chapter of Matthew, has indeed been questioned by some. They maintain that it was altogether ideal; that it is simply a picture of what transpired in the humanity of Christ, but such an exposition has not the shadow of a foundation to sustain it. There was as much reality in that transaction, as in any other recorded scene of the Redeemer's life. He permitted this effort of the tempter to seduce him, that he might realize all the urgency with which Satan assails the pious, and having felt all that they experience, and enduring all they are called to endure, he can succor and deliver those who are tempted. He triumphed over the adversary, that by his victory he might teach us that the feeblest disciple need not yield to the suggestions of the devil, but has power to overcome him. Though Satan is unspeakably malicious and envious of the godly, and therefore disposed to call into active exertion all his tremendous powers to destroy the righteous, no soul should fear him, that leans trustingly on the arm of the great Redeemer. Peter speaks of him as a roaring lion, going about seeking whom he may devour.

And that he may be more successful in his operations, he assumes such guises as are fitted to deceive those whom he has marked as victims. He comes, says Paul, as an angel of light. In this aspect he now presents himself to many given to hold spiritual intercouse. Piously disposed souls may have been bereft of friends, and like Edmunds, labor under painful depressions, until a morbid state of mind is produced, that renders them fit subjects for imposture. They repair to those circles where, through professed mediums, they obtain information concerning their departed friends. At first the cunning seducer imparts such knowledge as may be adapted to their peculiar state of mind; speaks the very words that they are most anxious to hear, and assurances such as soothe their anguished sensibilities, and though thoroughly deceived, the end is accomplished, they are converts to the system. After they are securely snared, then the work of demolition of their principles commences. The system of their christian faith is assailed, at first by intimations concerning more unimportant teachings of revelation, and these swept away, the citadel itself is assaulted, and one dogma after another overthrown, until the entire structure of their faith is demolished, and they are set afloat on the ocean of infidelity, drifted hither and thither by waves of passion, until they have sailed through a starless night, into the unbroken gloom of a cheerless eternity. Among the insect tribes there is none that illustrates more forcibly the machinations of the evil one, than the spider. He cautiously

weaves his web, dexterously spreads his snares, and so adjusting his net-work, that if the merry fly but touches it with his wing he is effectually caught; no sooner is it snared, than the spider issues forth from his hiding place, and with a thousand cords, binds him firmly. It may buzz and struggle, but all in vain; and its enemy rejoices over the hapless victim until satisfied, he devours it at his pleasure. Thus is Satan everywhere spreading the net-work of his snares; and numerous victims deplore their folly and credulity, when deliverance has become impossible. In the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse, the apostle saw an angel coming down from heaven to bind Satan, and to cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set his seal upon him, "that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season." He is therefore spoken of as not only deceiving the nations, but as operating with such seductive arts, that some of the elect will be in danger of falling victims to his malice. Our Lord illustrates this truth by a parable which may often since have become history. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first." Such then is the testimony of the Bible on the existence of the devil and satanic agency, and its connection with human affairs, let us now turn to the other authorities which may be adduced.

It is a well known fact that the Jews, as well as the ancient pagans, believed in the existence of evil spirits. They styled them demons, and assigned them an intermediate rank between men and angels. The word itself signifies "knowing," for they regarded them as beings of superior intelligence. Plato, in his Cratylus, derives the word from δαημων=knowing. It is sometimes used in a good sense, and sometimes in a bad one, depending upon the good or evil spirits to which it is applied. The Greeks also designated their divinities sometimes by that name. Thus Homer, in the Iliad, Book third, speaking of Venus, calls that goddess a demon. When they wish to represent an evil spirit, they affix the adjective which qualifies the noun, so that the meaning of the word is subject to the former. But while this practice was customary among some writers, the great majority of their learned men almost invariably regarded the word demon as significant of an evil spirit.

Plato describes demons as spirits through whom intercourse is carried on by men with the invisible world. When speaking of good spirits, he says: "God is not approached immediately by man, but all the commerce and intercourse between gods and men, are performed by the mediation of demons." "Demons are reporters and carriers from men to the gods, and again from the gods to men, of the supplications and prayers of the one, and of the injunctions and rewards of devotion from the other." "And this," says the learned Mede, "was the œcumenical philosophy of the apostles' times, and of the times long before them." Plutarch remarks, "it is a very ancient opinion, that there are certain wicked and malignant demons, who envy good men, and endeavor to hinder them in the pursuit of virtue, lest they should be partakers of greater happiness than they enjoy." Bishop Newton, a man extensively versed in the classics, in commenting on this quotation from Plutarch, very justly remarks: "This was the opinion of all the later philosophers, and Plutarch undeniably affirms it of the very ancient ones." "Pythagoras held, that certain demons brought diseases upon cattle and men." Josephus Ant. B. 7. 6, 3, says, "Demons are no other than the spirits of the wicked, that enter into men and kill them, unless they can obtain help." The existence of evil spirits is, therefore, as abundantly and conclusively sustained by the concurrent testimony of mankind, as any other historical fact.

The assumption, therefore, is reasonable, that if there is any agency above human, in the spiritual manifestations of the present time, it must be that of these wicked spirits.

The question now arises, what reliance is to be placed upon those communications from the spirit world? Manifestly none whatever. Granting that they do impart information, it is more likely to be false than true, because it is the nature and office of wicked spirits to deceive. Their revelations are entitled to no respect; they come from the father of lies. They assume the character and voice of some departed one, for no other purpose than to impose upon the credulity of their victims. To illustrate the truthfulness of this declaration, I may cite the case of the two kings who consulted the prophets in relation to the issue of a war in which they were about to engage. Ahab, king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, were on terms of amity, and having celebrated a feast at the court of Ahab, in honor of those friendly relations, Jehoshaphat was invited to accompany Ahab in an expedition against the Syrians. The king of Judah requested that the prophets of the Lord might be summoned, to predict the result of this

warfare. Some four hundred seers had already advised Ahab to go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, when Jehoshaphat asked if there were any other prophet whom they had not consulted? "And the king of Judah said, there is yet one man by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he never prophesied good unto me, but always evil: the same is Micaiah, the son of Imla." When he was come and interrogated on the subject, he gave first the same opinion that had proceeded from the others. "And the king said, how many times shall I adjure thee, that thou say nothing but the truth to me in the name of the Lord? Then he said, I did see all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd: and the Lord said these have no master, let them return therefore, every man to his house in peace. And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, did I not tell thee that he would not prophesy good unto me, but evil? Again he said: hear therefore the word of the Lord; I saw the Lord sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing on his right hand, and on his left. And the Lord said, who shall shall entice Ahab, king of Israel, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth—Gilead." "Then there came out a spirit, and stood before the Lord and said, I will entice him, &c. I will go out, and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets, &c. "Now, therefore, behold, the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil against thee." Ahab was enraged, and commanded that Micaiah should be imprisoned, and fed upon the bread of affliction. The kings went forth; Ahab was slain according to the word of Micaiah. Here we have proof from the sacred oracles, that lying spirits do gain possession of even otherwise good men, and make them utter such things as they may find necessary to accomplish the ruin of their victims. If such things did occur, why may they not now? It confirms our position, that no reliance is to be placed on the revelations of those spirits who are not of God. The apostle mourned over those who had given heed to seducing spirits and doctrine of devils, and fallen from the faith. Having the Bible as a guide in matters of doctrine, experience, and faith, those who wilfully depart from the light of revelation, may expect to become the dupes of the wicked one. We have abundant proof, moreover, from the details given by Edmunds and others, that false utterances are given through spiritual mediums. They assume the names of the good and great, with a view to impose more successfully upon mankind. Such names as Bacon, Clay, Webster, Calhoun, and others; distinguished in life by their

talents and labors. That they attempt to imitate the style and manner of these several men, is very evident, that they miserably fail, however, is manifest to every penetrating mind.—Still, these revelations of wicked spirits in the character of distinguished men, do immense injury. While the intelligent, the prudent, easily detect the deception, the undiscriminating masses are carried away by the powerful influence of a great name.

One thing is moreover conclusive, and that is, that these messages do not come from God, nor are they imparted through his angels or his authority. The canon of revelation is closed. Foreseeing that men would arise who should assume the prerogatives of the prophetic office, and thereby deceive many, saying lo! here, or lo! there is Christ: He exhorts us in his gospel not to hearken to these deceivers. Having, moreover, in Jesus Christ, the fulfilment of those promises of the father, which brought hope and peace to the world, the prophetic office is no longer needed for the instruction of men. Jesus is our prophet, as well as our king, and whatever communications may be needed for man in any condition, or under any aspect of his earthly existence, he may find in his gospel, and receive from the Holy Spirit. And that deluded men might not venture, in their wildest presumptions, to offer to the faith of mankind anything professedly coming from heaven, the heaviest woes are denounced against such as would attempt such an imposture. For in so doing, "whosoever addeth to the book," i. e. the Bible, "to him shall be added the plagues written therein, and whosoever taketh therefrom, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things written in this book." That those who tamper with that system of iniquity, and are controlled by those spiritual manifestations, fall under this divine malediction, cannot be doubted. As God has nothing to do with those revelations, so neither have his angels ought to do with them; they minister to the heirs of salvation, but this would be ministering to the heirs of perdition For who are the prime instruments through whom these spirits act? Almost without exception, the vilest characters. It must indeed be a very foul spirit, that would make such a man as Davis a medium. A man whose teachings give the most conclusive evidence of their source, for amid that jargon of intelligence, there flash continually the most disorganizing and rebellious sentiments, so that if those spirits who act through him, had the universe of mind and matter as completely under their control as they have that unfortunate man, it would be divest-

ed of all that beauty, order, harmony and grandeur which now proclaim throughout the vast empire of Jehovah, his sovereignty, and be turned into a scene of anarchy and desolation.

The rulers in that system of error are mostly profane persons—almost without exception infidels and skeptics. Thus presenting a remarkable fact, which should be duly pondered by such as are afflicted with skeptical tendencies. These men who reject the divinely authenticated and inspired word of God, and recognize no divine nature in Jesus, and reject his atonement, and all the dogmas and ordinances of our Holy religion, are the most credulous people in the world. They are ready for any delusion; they embrace the most absurd notions, the most stupid and unreasonable theories; from the wonder-working efficacy of an infinitely small homœopathic globule, or the potency of a thousandth part of an odor from a scented cork, to all the extravagant teachings of phrenology run mad, to the deceiving imps of Satan, whom they regard as angels of light. They reject the Bible, and adopt a system that has in it, no reason, no benevolence, no humanity, no God.

Another consideration worthy of our attention is, its practical influence upon social beings. Spiritualism, technically so called, can do no good to the individual or to society. We have already intimated that its effects upon the mind are decidedly injurious. A gentleman of undoubted veracity informs me that during a visit to Illinois, during the past summer, he fell in with a woman who was a spirit-medium. When the influence came upon her, there was a twitching of the muscles along her neck, which gradually extended over her entire person, her eyes glared wildly, and she foamed at her mouth, during the time when she delivered her messages. She was an uncultivated woman, and when out of that state, slow of speech, but when under the influence, she discoursed fluently and well; and when the spirit passed off, she was not conscious of anything that she had said. Anything, whatever it may be, whether it is of a mesmeric character, or spirit that excites the sensibilities, and produces such unnatural agitation in the material and spiritual framework of man, must exert a deleterious influence upon the health of the individual. But there are many other, and more fatal evils from this source. The intellect is injured, the mind is too highly excited, the laws designed to control its operations are violated, and the individual either sinks into a state of idiocy, or reason is dethroned, and he becomes a maniac. These extremes may not be suddenly reached, but the tendencies of those minds constant-

ly associated with spiritual manifestations, are in one or the other direction, and will eventually conduct the victim to that unhappy state. And where men retain their rationality to some extent, spiritual-rapping unfits them for their duties. The absorbing thought is this system, and no intellectual improvement can go on, no pursuit prosecuted with energy, and the individual becomes a worthless, if not an injurious member of community. In relation to its influence upon the moral nature, it is still worse. It has produced the most melancholy results. It gives a distaste to the soul for the use of those means of grace ordained of God to promote our salvation. Believing in these wicked messengers, and thus supposing that they are carrying on an audible, direct communication with heaven, they dispense with prayer, the public worship, and the reading of God's word. The soul thus withdrawn from the means and the sources of grace, will become destitute of grace, and bereft of every attribute of the christian, and gather upon itself the tokens of perdition. Self-sufficient and proud, it spurns the suggestions of God's spirit, and disregards the voice of conscience, until it becomes as hopeless as it is graceless. And as men are so constituted, as to exert a moulding power upon each other through the law of intercourse, they will exert a vitiating influence upon others, proportioned and limited only by the force and energy of their character. They therefore destroy others. They lead them from the living fountain, to broken cisterns; from God to the devil; thus quenching immortal hopes, and crushing living hearts. It was not long since stated by a physician, who made the subject a theme of inquiry, that thousands are now in lunatic asylums, whose derangement proceeded from their associations with spirit-rapping. The number who have become morally insane through this system, is still more fearful. Rising above all social and divine law, and recognizing no authority but that of these deceiving spirits, they have broken loose from those wholesome restraints which are essential to the well-being of human society. They practice the most shameful immoralities, and revel amid scenes of steaming licentiousness, giving the most painful illustrations of the deep abysses to which human depravity unchecked, may plunge man. To think how deeply some have fallen, fills the heart with sentiments of profound grief. There is a lady, once radiant with the graces of a lofty virtue; a character almost immaculately pure; a mind stored with priceless intellectual treasures, and a heart that canopied pure exalted friendships, and that was the empire of holy love; but now the wreck of a vile impos-

ture. First flattered, then deceived, her unsuspecting spirit drank in the teachings of lying spirits, as the blushing rose drinks sunbeams, until the slumbering corruptions of her nature were vitalized, and her unenkindled passion, that lay as a bound captive angel in its virgin purity, had those golden cords which a pious education had wound softly around it broken, and an unholy fire burned so intensely, that the high considerations which would have been a bulwark against all temptation, are snapped asunder by those infernal teachings; and she is made a prey of the devourer; despoiled of the glorious attire of purity, she sinks unresisting to the lowest level of a cheerless and desolate abandonment. Who can contemplate without the deepest anguish, such a female, once glowing with the charms of angelic beauty, now laid in ruins! Her body a wasted, shattered wreck; her mind, with its exalted faculties, prostrated; and the jewel of her moral character trampled in the dust by swine; she forms an object that invites the sorrow of angels. With such melancholy examples as the legitimate fruits of a widespread and fascinating, but destructive system, is it possible that men of intelligence and position, can have a spark of humanity, not to say religion, when they aid its progress and work of death? Surely no good motive can actuate such men, and yet we are unwilling to ascribe to them hopes of gain or notoriety, which sometimes control the baser sort of their accomplices. The most charitable construction that can be put upon their conduct is, that they have become strangely infatuated by (to them) a new system which has clouded their understandings, perverted their reason, and thrown their intellectual faculties into a state of anarchy.

I have said that it cannot, and does not benefit society. Does it contribute to the morals of a people? I have already presented its effects upon individual character; the same results, upon a large scale, are repeated in society. It neither creates nor fosters a single virtue. It originates no good moral sentiments, but vitiates the public morals, by severing the connection of community with those divine instrumentalities, through which alone the mass of society can be penetrated, and made instinct with the principles of christianity. It accomplishes nothing practically beneficial to human beings. It does not promote the comfort of the poor, neither does it benefit the rich. It adds not to, but diminishes the wealth of a people. It consumes much time that might be devoted to some good purpose. Its operations are most deleterious upon all the sources of individual and national prosperity. These resources are mostly concentrated in individual and associated

talent or energy, and when that is diverted to profitless and hurtful pursuits, or so enfeebled that its application to legitimate enterprises is no longer attended with advantageous results, the system that produces this change is dangerous to the state. We know that it causes men to neglect their avocations, and if their duties to their families and the state receive any attention, they are discharged indifferently. Wherever it acquires a foothold, it sets in motion a process of depletion that emasculates the social body of its vigor, and instead of contributing to a healthful vitality, it creates a morbid state of life. If men are retained in their several pursuits by such considerations as their necessities may suggest, their business is not prosecuted with vigor, and all their conversation, as well as their intellectual offspring, are tinged and rendered worthless by the contact of this vitiating system.

Another serious objection to this spiritualism is, that it makes no contributions to literature and science. Granted that it has a literature of its own, but it can be easily shown that the world would be much better without it. It is, at best, a mass of unintelligible jargon. Sometimes a good thought gleams through its dark canopy, but for one idea that common sense can endorse, there are thousands of an injurious tendency. The *soi disant* revelations of Swedenborg, Bacon, Clay, and other distinguished men whose names it has labored to prostitute to its cause, are often profane or ludicrous, insane or Pantheistical. There is not a single exalted or worthy attribute about their literature; its a worthless unmitigated mass of trash, contravening the laws of the state, and subversive of human and divine government. These characteristics will be fully developed in our examination of Edmunds and Talmadge. Their magazines and periodicals, like their books, abound in idle fancies, and are totally destitute of all those properties necessary to the cultivation and invigoration of the various faculties of the intellect.

As to the pretensions of a new science, which spirit-rappers claim for their system, they are as impudent as they are vain. A new science; that is to reveal new laws in the organism of the universe, laws, which if once fully understood, will place in the possession of man all the mysteries which lie open to the infinite eye above! Absurd as these pretensions are, they gain credit with a large number. So far, therefore, from contributing to the advancement of true science, it diverts minds from those scientific studies whose practical results would minister to the improvement of society. In relation, therefore, to its properties, and the influence of spiritualism upon human

society, it adorns neither the benevolent, moral, nor intellectual fields. It relieves no wants, but creates many, it heals no broken hearts, but breaks many, it soothes no anguished bosom, but crushes many of lovely spirit with sorrow; it invigorates no mind, but deranges many intellects. Nowhere does it beautify, everywhere it blights and desolates. It poisons the fountains of social life, and breathes a withering curse upon the Edens of this world. Are we not warranted in the belief, when reading the blasphemies of Edmunds and others, that their portrait was drawn by the apostle in that terrific denunciation, 2 Thes. 2: 7; "For the *mystery* of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth, *will let*, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. Even him whose coming is after the manner of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

What then are the legitimate tendencies of this system? They are all evil. Its influence upon individuals who have become highly excited by its manifestations, has often been disastrous. Already has this singular imposture sent its thousands to insane asylums, and a yet larger multitude to an untimely grave. Having moreover made converts of distinguished men, it has acquired extraordinary means for the propagation of its doctrines. It is a matter of profound regret, that such men as Edmunds and Talmadge should have consecrated the energies of their minds to the diffusion of error. Not so much on account of anything that has emanated from them, for their intellectual productions are not remarkable for strength, or any other merit, but their position lends a powerful influence to this pernicious system. If they are men of great intellectual force, the spectacle is the more sad, to behold lofty mental energies in league with the devil. To sum up then, the points of this discussion, I may briefly state them as follows:

1. We have seen that it is an old system newly dressed; that its constituent elements are the same as those of magic, sorcery, and the arts of divination in general; that it perverts and abuses those intuitive ideas which we fondly cherish, of the invisible world, and of communion of souls.

2. That forasmuch as it is in the hands of wicked men, and sustained by spirits who are in open rebellion against heaven, it is manifest that it does not and cannot contribute to the honor of the glorious sovereign of the universe, and has no connection with good spirits or God. These manifestations being therefore the work of satanic agency, it is manifestly wrong to repose any confidence in these revelations.

3. That those who belong to these associations of spirit-rappers, are alike the enemies of God and the social state. Wherever they form communities, the system leads to an abandonment of virtue, for it repudiates human and divine law, annuls the marriage relation, and gives license to passion.

4. Its influence upon popular morals is pernicious. Nothing can more effectually blight and desolate society, than a pretended license from the spirit-world to renounce all law, and to act upon the principle that where there is no law, there can be no transgression.

In view, therefore, of its origin, nature, and tendencies, the duty of every patriot or christian is very plain. As good citizens, we cannot countenance a thing so diabolical in its character. Communities that have so far escaped the taint of this moral leprosy, may congratulate themselves, but while they do this, guard every avenue to the circle of their happiness. The emissaries of this system, like its father, go about seeking whom they may devour, and those who have escaped its blight may become its victims. Wherever it does exist, men owe it to themselves, to their children and their country, to scout it from their midst as they would a monster. Having the word of God as an all-sufficient rule of faith and an infallible guide to peace on earth, and to everlasting life and happiness beyond the grave, we may well turn from all pretended revelations of man or demons, and say: "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."

These satanic revelations are false lights kindled on the shadowy cliffs of a wretched eternity, that the tempest-tost mariner may shatter his bark, and wreck his immortal treasures on the bleak rocks of a fearful damnation. Let us rather turn the eye of faith on that brilliant orb—

> "By which the bark of man
> Navigates the sea of life,
> And gains the coast of bliss."

Let us keep in full view the star of Bethlehem, which once guided the wise to the feet of the great Redeemer, and which now flames in the firmament of christianity, and it will lead our weary spirits to the grandeurs of that immortality of which

the infinite Jehovah is the fountain, and his eternity the compass. There, with perfected faculties and a sinless nature, all these yearnings for knowledge will be gratified, and amid the glory of the unveiled mysteries of eternity, of God and his holy ones, we shall be fully satisfied, and the in-flows of knowledge from those vast and unblighted fields, shall fill our capacities unutterably full of glory.