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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

THE

SPIRIT RAPPINGS,

MESMERISM,

CLAIRVOYANCE,

VISIONS, REVELATIONS, STARTLING PHENOMENA, AND

INFIDELITY

OF THE

RAPPING FRATERNITY,

CALMLY CONSIDERED, AND

EXPOSED.

BY

REV. JAMES PORTER, A. M.,

AUTHOR OF "COME-OUTISM," "OPERATIVES' FRIEND," &c., &c.

"For there are certain men crept in unawares, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness." — *Bible.*

"The patriarchal God is a magnified and refined Moses." — *The Poughkeepsie Seer and Clairvoyant.*

"Whom shall I bring up unto thee?" — *Witch of Endor.*

"The soul that turneth after such as have *familiar spirits*, and after *wizards*, I will cut him off from among the living." — *God.*

...RIGHT 1872

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PREFACE.

In submitting these few pages to the public eye, the author has been influenced by a deep sense of his responsibility as a watchman on the walls of Zion. Seeing the "sword coming," — in other words, observing multiplied evils growing out of recent experiments in *Mesmerism*, *Rappings*, &c., — he has been constrained to give what he deemed an appropriate warning. Should this little effort succeed, in any measure, to counterwork the most dangerous movements of the times, and settle the wavering faith of the public in fundamental principles, he will be more than compensated for his labor, and for any reproach he may have to endure as the result of it. God's word is *true*, notwithstanding the "profane and vain babblings" of jugglers, and the opposition of "*science*, falsely so called." Still it is being assaulted by infidels as never before, under new, humane, and even religious pretences; and with a power to *deceive* that has seldom been displayed. But, "though hand join in hand, the wicked *shall not be unpunished*." — Prov. xi. 21. "For the foundation of God *standeth sure*, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his."

We have deemed it best to publish our thoughts in the cheapest form, that "all who run may read." We commend these pages to the candid consideration of all whom they concern, praying that they may be accompanied by the divine blessing and aid in averting the evils with which we are threatened.

Boston, *Feb.* 16, 1853.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I. The Divine Manifestations to Men, ... 5
" II. Objects and Results of Divine Manifestations, . 10
" III. Diabolic Manifestations, ... 13
" IV. Other Evil Agencies, ... 15
" V. Mesmerism, ... 19
" VI. Clairvoyance, particularly as developed in the Experience and Revealments of Andrew Jackson Davis, ... 23
" VII. Spiritual Knockings — their Incredibility, . . 29
" VIII. The Knockings not attributable to Departed Spirits, ... 33
" IX. The Phenomena connected with the Knockings, how disposed of 41
" X. The Conclusion of the whole Matter, . . . 50

CHAPTER I.

THE DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS TO MEN.

God is manifest in his works; but to what extent, is a question about which good men have widely differed. For the present, we have only to say, that the manifestation is not so distinct and copious as to supersede other instructions of a more direct and specific character. Hence, according to the Scriptures, the Creator had no sooner made the first man, than he appeared to him, giving him definite directions for his conduct in the position he occupied, and the consequences of deviation therefrom. (Gen. ii. 16, 17.) He brought before him also the different animals he had created, that he might name them. All these things were undoubtedly effected by some mode of familiar communication that was perfectly intelligible.

After the transgression, there was another manifestation, which, however, gave great alarm. (Gen. iii. 8.) But Adam was brought before his Maker, and conversed with him again, though under very different circumstances than at first. It was a painful interview, and issued in his ejectment from the garden. But God did not utterly withdraw himself from the race. He had respect to the offering of Abel, and testified to him of his gifts, witnessing "that he was righteous." (Heb. xi. 4.) But he did not manifest himself to Cain in the same way, or to the same effect. Cain was, therefore, "wroth," on account of which the Lord reproved him. Subsequently to the death of Abel, he had another manifestation, and received the sentence his crime demanded.

Enoch walked *with God* at least three hundred years, and "had this testimony, that he pleased God." (Heb. xi. 5.) God appeared also to Noah, and informed him of the approaching flood, and of his will concerning the ark. Abraham had frequent manifestations. In one of them he was commanded to leave his country, in another he was promised a son: afterward he was required to offer that son in sacrifice; but he was excused in time to spare his life. Similar manifestations were made to Sarah, Agar, Isaac, Jacob, and numerous other worthies of the patriarchal age, the records of which have come down to us well authenticated.

Moses was particularly favored in this respect. "There appeared to him, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, the angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush; and when Moses saw it he drew near, and the *voice* of the Lord came unto him, saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold." (Acts vii. 30, 32.) It was here that he received his instructions concerning his brethren in Egyptian bondage, which he successfully carried out afterward. At another time numerous others were permitted to share the heavenly vision with him. "Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they *saw the God of Israel*." (Exod. xxiv. 9, 10.) Then Moses went up into the mount at the divine command, and the glory of the Lord surrounded him. "And the Lord *spake* unto Moses," giving him directions about his worship, the ark of the covenant, tabernacle, &c. (Exod. xxv. 1.) He *spake* unto him "face to face,

as a man speaketh to his friend." He showed him "his glory" also, and such was the effect of it upon his countenance, that the children of Israel were afraid to come nigh him.

Joshua *saw* the captain of the Lord's host, and fell on his face to the earth, and worshipped him. (Josh. v. 14.) "The angel of the Lord" [Jehovah himself] appeared to the children of Israel at Bochim, and spake such words unto them, that they "lifted up their voice and wept." (Judges ii. 4.) And the effect was favorable, for "the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the *great works* of the Lord, that he did for Israel." (Ver. 7.)

Gideon was visited by this same divine personage, and directed in relation to delivering Israel out of the hand of the Midianites. (Judges vi. 12, &c.) The conversation which occurred is full of interest. The Lord appeared to Samuel, too, and made communications to him of the highest importance both to himself and others. (1 Sam. iii. 7; ix. 17.) The manifestations of God to David were many. He appeared to his son Solomon in Gibeon, "in a dream by night, and said, What shall I give thee?" But though in a dream, his divine character was not mistaken, as the result fully proved. (1 Kings iii.)

Micaiah "*saw the Lord* sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him, on his right hand and on his left." (1 Kings xxii. 19.) The correspondence between Elijah and his God was very intimate and striking. He spoke to God, and God answered him in rain, and in fire, and in the still small *voice.* (1 Kings xix. 9, &c.) The Lord manifested himself to Job out of the whirlwind, and that good man was constrained to exclaim, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now *mine eye seeth thee;* wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." (Job xlii. 5, 6.) Says Isaiah, "I *saw also the Lord* sitting upon his throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." (Chap. vi. 1.) The object of this manifestation was to endow him for his prophetic mission. His future life furnishes us with a continued series of manifestations, the results of which appear in his prophecies.

To Jeremiah "the Lord appeared, saying, I have loved thee with an everlasting love," &c. (Jer. xxxi. 3.) To Ezekiel he revealed himself variously. Daniel saw the Ancient of Days, and one like the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven." The three worthies in the fiery furnace no doubt saw their divine Associate more clearly than the king himself, who declared him to be "like the Son of God."

Other prophets and good men, of whom the Old Testament Scriptures make honorable mention, had similar manifestations, and spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Coming down to the Christian dispensation, we find numerous instances of the same kind. God manifested himself to Joseph by an angel, and instructed him in regard to the birth of Christ, declaring what Joseph could not have known then to be true, without a revelation. Simeon had it "revealed to him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ."

Not every one who looked upon the person of Christ enjoyed the divine presence; but to many he was emphatically "God manifest in the flesh." Thus Nathaniel saw him, and exclaimed, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel." St. John says that "he *manifested forth his glory,* and his disciples believed on him." Such was the power of his manifestation to that "woman which was a sinner," that "she kissed his feet, and washed them with her tears." Peter and

the two sons of Zebedee, before whom the Saviour was transfigured on Mount Tabor, "saw the King in his beauty." "His face did shine like the sun, and his raiment became white as the light; a bright cloud overshadowed him, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Mary saw Jesus at the sepulchre, and thought him to be the gardener; but when he addressed her by name, her eyes were opened, to see him alive from the dead. He also manifested himself to the two disciples who walked to Emmaus, and were sad, and to other groups, and even to Thomas, whose unbelief seemed to exclude him from so great a favor.

Three thousand on the day of Pentecost "were pricked in their hearts;" they were made to view divine things in a new light. God spoke to them by his word in a wonderful manner. When Stephen stood before the council, "all saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Looking up "steadfastly into heaven, he saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." "The Lord, even Jesus, appeared unto *Saul* while on his way to Damascus. And "suddenly there shone around about him a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun," so that he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice calling him by name. At Corinth, this same man had another manifestation. The Lord spake to him in a vision, and said, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall hurt thee." At another time he was "caught up into the third heaven, into paradise, and heard words which it is not possible for man to utter." Having been arrested for preaching the gospel, he says, the night following, the Lord *stood by him*, and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness of me at Rome." On his way to Rome, while wrecked at sea, he had another manifestation, which he describes in these words: "There stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar; and lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

Similar manifestations were made to others. The Lord appeared to Ananias, and calling him by name, directed him to go into the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of one Judas for Saul of Tarsus, &c. (Acts ix. 10, &c.) Cornelius saw in a vision, about the ninth hour of the day, "an angel of God coming in to him, and *saying unto him*, Cornelius." And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God," &c. (Acts x. 3, 4.) To secure the object of this manifestation, the Lord appeared also to Peter, and prepared him to respond to the call he was about to receive to preach to the Gentiles. (Ver. 9, &c.) The Lord appeared to this apostle again while in prison, loosed and led him out.

The manifestations to St. John were frequent and impressive. "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," says that apostle, "and heard behind me a *great voice*, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. And I turned to see the voice that spake to me, and I saw one like unto the Son of Man," &c. (Rev. i. 10, &c.)

To these instances of divine manifestation might be added many more of equal interest; but these are sufficient. They indicate the manner in which God communicated with men under the patriarchal, Jewish, and the early part of the Christian dispensations.

Whether any further manifestation from God be necessary, is a question concerning which different opinions are entertained. Some assume

that the appearances to the fathers, the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, so fully revealed, and demonstrated the will of God, that we only need to read the Bible to obtain all the light and inspiration requisite. They therefore place almost entire dependence upon the Bible for instruction and success in doing good. They deeply sympathize with the prayer of the Saviour, "Sanctify them through thy *truth*," and teach, that if we continue in his word, "the *truth* will make us free." (John viii. 32; xvii. 17.)

Another class occupy the opposite extreme. They admit the Scriptures to have been valuable in their day, and even now are worthy to be read as historic records, and for the many excellent principles they inculcate. But they do not receive them as an infallible and ample standard of truth. They regard the revelations of science, or it may be, of *magic*, or *mesmeric clairvoyance*, so called, as more full, and of higher authority. Hence they do not hesitate flatly to contradict the Bible whenever its utterances interfere with their assumptions, and to predict a kind and degree of *progress* that will throw all present attainments in religious knowledge entirely in the shade. We see them, therefore, agog for *light*, now gazing into the depths of the earth, or perhaps into the blue dome of heaven; and now, though less scientifically, we think, staring into the eyes of some *favorite medium*, or watching the antics of imaginary spirits under the enchanted table. They are "*free-thinkers*," indeed. They will have liberty. Said one, "I won't be tied down to the Scriptures or any thing else. I mean to seek truth wherever I can find it. I don't care where it comes from. If it comes from a child or from the DEVIL, if it is truth, I will receive it, and call it God's truth."

Now, if we mistake not, the real truth lies somewhere between these two extremes. The canon of Scripture is indeed full, as it was not at the coming of Christ. The Mosaic economy contemplated a brighter day, and a more glorious demonstration of the love and power of God. The prophets foresaw it, and described many of its events with striking particularity. But Christ and his apostles employed a different language. The next grand event to which they looked was the final coming of the Son of Man to judge the quick and the dead. And what more was desirable? God had revealed himself by many signs and wonders, Christ had died and made an atonement for the sins of the whole world, the plan of salvation had been clearly explained, ministers of righteousness provided, the Holy Ghost given, and the invitation had gone forth summoning all to come and partake of the waters of life freely. The amplitude of these arrangements will be seen when we consider the agency of *the Spirit*. This is indicated by the words of Christ to his sorrowing disciples. "It is expedient," said he, "that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will *reprove* the world of sin, and of righteousnes, and of judgment; of sin because they believe not on me," &c. (John xvi. 7, 8.) The Spirit, then, convinces of sin, of the necessity of being righteous, and of the certainty of a judgment to come. This prompts wicked men to regard the instructions of the word, and work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. In this way God really *appears* to them, and influences their minds so as to attract attention, and impress them with their duty, and they often have no more doubt that it is he who speaks, than they have of their existence. This generally arises in connection with the word, either read or preached; but sometimes it has no appar-

ent connection with any outward means whatever. God speaks by his Spirit directly to the heart; but without the Spirit the word is ineffective, as are all other means that man can employ.

The Spirit is also a "*Comforter*." Said Jesus to his disciples, "If ye love me, keep my commandments; and I will pray to the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, even the *Spirit of truth*, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he *dwelleth with you, and shall be in* you." Defining still more particularly whom he regarded as his, and their privileges, he added, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will *manifest* myself unto him." "Lord," said Judas, "not Iscariot, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered, and said unto him, If a man *love* me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will *come unto him, and make our abode* with him. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you; but the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to *remembrance*, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John xiv. 15–26.)

Hence the Christian has *correspondence* with God through the Spirit. God takes up "his *abode* with him," "manifests" himself to his heart, "*helps his infirmities*," *witnesses* to him that he is a Christian, a new creature in Christ Jesus, receives his prayers and homage, and comforts him. Says the apostle to the Romans, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage, again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself *beareth witness* with our spirit that we are the children of God." The same apostle says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath *revealed* them unto *us* by his Spirit."

The means provided for obtaining these and other manifestations and assistance, beyond what is communicated independently of human exertion, are suggested in such scriptures as the following: "If any of you lack *wisdom*, let him *ask of God*, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." He must not ask witches, nor spirits, but "*God*." He is "more willing to give the Spirit of wisdom, power, and grace to them that ask him, than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children." And he urges us to come "boldly *to the throne of grace, that* we may find *grace* to help in EVERY TIME OF NEED." This is our proper course, then, "in *every time of need*." We should go nowhere else for *supernatural* aid. God is equal to all our necessities, and we need no other help. To resort to spirits, therefore, if it were practicable, would be an insult offered to his majesty, no less than to his wisdom and power. Saul attempted this; but God taught him that it was not competent for the dead to bless whom he had cursed.

To encourage us to *call upon God*, and to keep ourselves from *idols* and diviners, it is written, "If we ask *any thing* according to his will, he *heareth us;*" and "we *know* that we *have the petitions* we desired of him." Hence it is also commanded, "Is any among you afflicted, let him *pray*," — not to images or spirits. "Is any sick, let the elders of the church pray over him." Accordingly, when Paul would heal the

father of Publius, "he prayed." Thus the Scriptures provide for all our necessities. What we do not receive in the ordinary course of things, we may obtain by prayer, if it be necessary to our interest.

But may we not be deceived, and suppose we have the Spirit when we have not? Certainly; but the remedy is at hand. God's revelations are consistent with each other; they beautifully harmonize. Whether five minutes or five thousand years old, they agree in spirit, object, and utterance. By bringing our experience to the Bible, which has been established as the word of God, we can soon learn whether it be from above or beneath. If it be not in accordance with that book, we know it is spurious, and not to be trusted. Thus we are to "try the spirits, whether they be of God."

CHAPTER II.

OBJECTS AND RESULTS OF DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS.

In contemplating any phenomena which we attribute to an intelligent agent, it is natural to inquire after their object, and to consider their tendency and results. Such an inquiry, in the present case, is of the highest importance. If no suitable reasons for the manifestations enumerated can be discovered, or the tendency and legitimate results of them are injurious, or unworthy of the Being to whom they are attributed, our confidence in them will become essentially impaired. Not that the Creator always reveals the objects of his action, or that we are always capable of judging of such objects when revealed. This is not assumed; but when the object of any phenomena ascribed to him is manifest, and is clearly worthy of his acknowledged character as the God and Governor of men, we find it easier to concur in such a reference of them than under other circumstances. Besides, such is our confidence in the *purity* and *goodness* of God, we could not be induced to attribute any phenomena to him of obvious *evil tendency.* He is too wise to act without good cause, and too benevolent to act in a way to injure his creatures.

Let us inquire, then, What are the facts in the case under considera tion? What was contemplated by the manifestations to which we have adverted? And what are their tendency and results? In answering these interrogatories, we remark, —

1. That the design of them was evidently of no *trivial character. Magicians, jugglers,* and other human wonder-workers, aim to astonish, amuse, make gain, and *overthrow the truth.* But we see nothing of this here: all is *serious, open, practical, devout.*

2. The object in every case is *important.* God appeared to Adam, at the time of his creation, to acquaint him with his Maker, and instruct him in relation to his duty, and the consequences of neglecting it. Though innocent, he was by no means *omniscient;* he needed instruction. And this was promptly furnished in a way suited to his capacity, so that he seems to have understood it perfectly. The divine appearance to him, after his fall, was for his arrest and banishment from the garden and the tree of life. It was made necessary by transgression. God appeared to Noah to reveal his purpose as to the flood, and to provide for

preserving him and his family, with the specimen of the different birds and beasts, from the general ruin which was at hand. His appearances to Abraham were interesting both to him and the people he represented, and, indeed, to all mankind. They have a connection and bearing, which we can but admire, if we examine their history in regard to the grand scheme of human redemption.

The objects of the numerous manifestations made to Moses were always tangible and important. Israel was in cruel bondage, and must be delivered by human instrumentality. Who so proper to be selected as Moses — an Israelite by birth and by sympathy, and yet the reputed son of the king's daughter? But the undertaking was surrounded with infinite difficulties. No mortal would dare to assume it without divine counsel and assistance. Hence God appeared to Moses, and proposed to send him to Pharaoh, promising to be with him. But Moses apprehended difficulty; he foresaw that the people would not believe that God had appeared to him. Therefore the miracle of the rod being converted into a serpent, and then again back to a rod, in his hand. This was done to convince him of his call to the work, and insure the success of the enterprise. There is no *unnecessary display, no voice, no act*, nothing wonderful, to excite astonishment, gratify curiosity, or glorify Moses. Every remarkable circumstance takes place just at the time it is needed to carry out the plan adopted for the deliverance of the people. And each is so *different* from the others as to convince all that the resources of the Grand Mover in the drama are infinite. The appearances in connection with giving the law were not less necessary. If God would give law to his people, he must do it in a way to convince them that it was he who had spoken to them, and not another. He allowed them, therefore, to witness something of the phenomena accompanying the interview which he held with Moses in the mount.

The gracious appearances to Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, Job, and indeed to all the prophets and apostles, are characterized by similar *importance* Their object in every case seems to be worthy of God himself. And we have called particular attention to this circumstance because of its influence upon our confidence, and because of the contrast, in this respect, between *divine* appearances and those which are *false* and *deceptive.*

For the same reasons, we deem it necessary to make special reference to the *moral influence* and tendency of these manifestations. Did they prompt to *virtue* or to *vice* — to *sin* or to *holiness?* We regard this as one of the best tests, whether of *men or things* — "By their fruits ye shall know them." A manifestation which lulls conscience, *neutralizes* the fear of God, and other stimulants to piety, restrains prayer, dissuades from the means of grace, is evidently from an unworthy source. But the manifestations under consideration exerted a very different influence. They prompted to all those inward graces and outward habits which God enjoins, and which the duty and interests of men require them to observe. When Nebuchadnezzar saw the form of the fourth in the fiery furnace, he was convinced that there was no God like the God of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, and forbade that any one should speak "amiss of him." And how often did the manifestations of God to his prophets reform the Jewish nation! The tendency of these gracious visitations is still in the same direction. We can hardly read of them without thinking more of our Maker, and being excited to obey him.

It is to these phenomena that we are indebted, in a great measure, for

the *law* and the *testimony*. Had not God appeared to Moses, where would have been the Pentateuch? Had the prophets seen no visions, where would have been the prophecies? Had the apostles enjoyed no divine communications, where would have been the Gospels and the Epistles? The influence of these appearances to them has in some sort been transmitted to us. We learn the tendency of them, therefore, by what we feel in reading the Holy Scriptures, and by marking their results upon others. As these manifestations were diversified in their influence, on the one hand comforting and encouraging the good, and on the other striking terror to the heart of sin, as in the case of Cain, so it is with the revelations which we have in the Bible. The obedient love them, and are stimulated to continuance in well doing, while transgressors are admonished and urged to repentance on pain of the most serious consequences.

We beg the reader's special attention to this feature of the subject, as we shall have occasion to advert to it again, when we come to examine certain modern phenomena which are being urged upon our attention.

CHAPTER III.

DIABOLIC MANIFESTATIONS.

Following the Mosaic history, and the other authorities from which we have derived material for the preceding chapters, we are led to contemplate another class of manifestations from a different quarter. It is equally important to our object to examine these also, that we may see wherein they agree with the others, and wherein they differ. We shall, therefore, refer to some of the more prominent of the cases recorded in Scripture, and invite attention to their distinguishing characteristics.

Perhaps some may think that we should first prove the existence of the devil, before we attempt to discourse about his manifestations; but we judge otherwise. Revelation as clearly recognizes his existence as it does the existence of God; and there are various phenomena coming under our observation from day to day which clearly indicate, not only his existence, but a considerable degree of intelligence and power. If any are so blind to the teachings of the Bible as to need any further argument on this subject, while we pity them, we must pass them by for the present. We only write for those who receive the Bible as the word of God, in its simplest and most obvious meaning. Atheists, (if such beings exist,) Deists, Parkerites, Come-outers, Rappers, Universalists, and other infidels, who believe the Bible just so far as it suits their taste, would not certainly believe in the personality of the devil from any thing we could say.* If they believe not Moses and the prophets,

* Should any think us uncharitable in this allusion to Mr. Parker, we ask their attention to the following extracts from his recent publications. If they can refer us to a more consummate infidel of the deistical stamp, we shall be obliged to them if they will do so.

"I do not believe there was a miracle, or ever will be: every where I find law — the constant mode of operation of the infinite God. I do not believe in the miraculous inspiration of the Old Testament or the New Testament. I do not believe that the Old Testament was God's first word, or the New Testament his last. The Scriptures are no finality to me. Inspiration is a perpetual fact. Prophets and apostles did not monopolize the Father; He inspires men to-day as much as heretofore. . . .

and especially if they believe not Christ, neither would they be persuaded though one arose from the dead. And as to others, they already believe. We shall, therefore, take his existence for granted, as the Scriptures do, and trace the manifestations therein detailed.

And in regard to these, it is proper to observe, that they are restricted to no specific modes or forms. His satanic majesty has imitated the Deity in this respect; he has operated through different mediums, and appeared in different forms. His first appearance to the human family was in the form of a *serpent*. God had given his commands, and our first parents were governing themselves accordingly, when he appeared among them as an inquirer. This attitude was a suggestion of his *subtlety*. Much depends upon the *manner* of introducing a subject. "Hath God said," he inquired, "ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" Being informed by the woman that there was an exception, that they must not eat of a certain tree, nor even touch it, on pain of death, he boldly contradicted the divine decree, by saying, "Ye shall not surely die." This was followed by a train of statements, implicating the integrity of the Lawgiver, and the intelligence of his subjects. It was also affirmed that great advantage would result from disobedience. Hence, "when the woman saw that the [forbidden] tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired *to make one wise*, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband, and he did eat." The result taught him that it is wise to obey God, whoever may call us foolish or fanatical.

This same deceiver appeared to David, and "persuaded him to number Israel," which displeased the Lord very greatly, and resulted in heavy judgments. (1 Chron. xxi. 1, 14.) He appeared among the sons of God, too, in the days of Job, when they "came to present themselves before the Lord." (Job i. 6.) It was at that time that he said he had come from "going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." It was then, too, that he commenced his engagement with Job, which resulted in the multiplied afflictions, for the patient endurance of which that good man has since been distinguished. From this we learn that his agency extends to the body as well as the mind, and even to the elements, which he may employ to the destruction of both property and life. Hence he is called "the prince of the power of the air." (Eph. ii. 2.) We learn also that he sometimes appears quite religious, for "when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, he came also to present himself before the Lord." (Job ii. 1.) But it is manifest from the same source that his power is limited. Whatever feats he may achieve, there is a point at which his inferiority will appear, to the glory of God.

His appearances to the Saviour were numerous. At one time he took him up into a high mountain — at another, upon a pinnacle of the temple. The devils which possessed the men coming out of the tombs

"I do not believe the miraculous origin of the Hebrew church, or the Buddhist church, or the Christian church; nor the miraculous character of Jesus. I take not the Bible for my master, nor yet the church; nor even Jesus of Nazareth for my master. I feel not at all bound to believe what the church says is true, nor what any writer in the Old or New Testament declares true; and I am ready to believe that Jesus taught, as I think, eternal torment, the existence of a devil, and that he himself should, ere long, come back in the clouds of heaven. I do not accept these things on his authority. . . .

"He is my best historic ideal of human greatness; not without errors, not without the stain of his times, and, I presume, of course not without sins; for men without sins exist in the dreams of girls, not in real fact: you never saw such a one, nor I, and we never shall."

remonstrated with him to let them alone, and not torment them before the time. They spoke by the men themselves, thus *controlling their lips and tongues to say what they would*, as a mesmerizer controls his victims. Devils appeared to others, and afflicted and took possession of them. One was so possessed, as to be both "*blind*" and "*dumb*." Another was so *vexed*, that he "ofttimes fell into the fire, and into the water." It was the devil that *entered into* Judas, and prompted him to *betray* his Master. One woman was bound by him "*eighteen years*." Whether it was done by mesmeric influence, or otherwise, is not stated. St. Peter says, that "Satan filled the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira to *lie* to the Holy Ghost." (Acts v. 3.) All these things imply the presence and influence of a *personal, intelligent, powerful, and malicious being.*

There are other references to him which indicate how much he has to do with the world, and especially with wicked men. The Saviour said to his enemies, "Ye are of your father the *devil*, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John viii. 44.) When one "heareth the word, then the wicked one cometh and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart." (Matt. xiii. 19.) St. Luke says, "The *devil* taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved." (Chap. viii. 12.) He is the "*spirit* that worketh in the children of *disobedience*." (Eph. ii. 3.) He is the "*tempter*," the "*deceiver*," the "*enemy* of all righteousness." He enables the man of sin to come "with all *power*, and *signs, and lying wonders*, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." He *leads* sinners *captive* at his will. Even those who try to resist him, he often overcomes by his devices. He transforms himself into an "*angel of light*," and goes about seeking whom he may devour. (1 Pet. v. 8, 9.) Indeed, the Scriptures represent him as the instigator and promoter of all moral, and much of the physical evil, there is in the world, or ever has been. "He that committeth sin is of the *devil*." (1 John iii. 8.) "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whoso *doeth not righteousness* is not of God." (Ver. 10.) He is God's grand enemy, resisting him and his work in all possible ways, and through all possible "*mediums*," and we may recognize him wherever we find the children of disobedience.

What renders him the more dangerous is, that he moves under false appearances. His *open attacks* are less frequent, and least successful. It is when he appears an *angel of light*, or the *patron* of some useful *measure*, *art*, or *science*, that he effects the greatest mischief. In his approach to Eve, he assumed to be very *wise;* he probably accused her of *ignorance* and *superstition*, of being under religious *delusion*, &c., and boasted of the advantage of *knowledge*, such as he enjoyed. He assured her that if she would break away from her cruel bondage, and "*follow nature*," eating that desirable and pleasant, though forbidden fruit, she should be as God — be a "*philosopher*," possibly. He promised Christ "all the kingdoms of the world," if he would worship him; and attempted to carry his point by pressing the *Scriptures* into his service. He darkens the understanding and blinds the minds of men, and induces them to believe that they are *peculiarly enlightened*. Thus he deceived Saul of Tarsus, and thus he doubtless deceives many now, who will have to become fools, according to their present views, before they will really become wise.

And yet people often have no idea that any such being as the devil is

near them. They even deny his existence, and put good for evil and evil for good. Being "vain in their imaginations," their "foolish heart" is darkened, and they become fools, and change the glory of the incorruptible God into *electricity* or *animal magnetism*, or some other *pantheistic divinity*, and "*serve* and *worship* the *creature* more than the Creator." (Rom. i. 21, 22, 25.) Thus he *helps* sinners in their work of sin and death, urging them to "*believe a* LIE," or do some fatal deed, that "they may be damned." Hence "the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil." (1 John iii. 8.) "And he sent St. Paul to turn men from darkness to light, and from the *power of Satan* unto God." (Acts xxvi. 17, 18.) *How* he does all these things, we cannot say. We presume, however, it is not by creating any new principle. His miracles and wonders are probably, in some cases, the result of laws he understands and we do not. But if we did know them, the work would not be less chargeable to him. Some think, if they can account for evils *scientifically*, it is not reasonable to attribute them to the devil. But it must be remembered the devil is *obliged to work by means*, and may work scientifically as well as any other way. He wished to have Christ betrayed, and succeeded; but he did it by such means that none but God could see the part he acted. The Sadducees supposed the project originated with Judas, but God saw otherwise. So our modern Sadducees may suppose that their wonders are *scientific*, or *philosophic*, and this may be true; still they may be of satanic suggestion and growth. Let us not forget that the devil seldom *appears* in his works — that success requires *concealment* — and that he sometimes hides himself behind *men*, even *good men*, and at other times takes advantage of *things*, which are acknowledged to be good and right in themselves. But however God-like the power, and harmless the means, by which his work is executed, the tendency and influence will soon betray its proper origin and designs.

There are numerous other allusions in the Scriptures, setting forth the agency of this being; but these must suffice. How to distinguish satanic suggestions from those which come from a better source, is an important lesson to learn. Few can say with the apostle to the Gentiles, "We are not ignorant of his devices." But when the *suggestion*, or *influence*, or *doctrine*, lessens our reverence for God and good people, and alienates us from religious interests, as set forth in the Scriptures, we need not doubt for a moment that the *devil* is in it, and that it will result in evil, and not good, if not resisted. *Mark this!*

CHAPTER IV.

OTHER EVIL AGENCIES.

As every light has its shadow, and every truth its falsehood, so every benevolent measure of the Creator seems to have been confronted and opposed in some way, and by some evil agency, with the view of frustrating the result contemplated. We have intimated that the general object of the divine manifestations has been to instruct, govern, and guide men in such a manner as to promote their best interests. It was necessary, therefore, for the Creator to present himself so as to com-

mand confidence, that his word might be authoritative. This he has done in three ways: 1. By making such a display of *power* as was practicable to no other being; 2. By evincing a degree of *intelligence* beyond the reach of the human mind. And, 3. By a manifestation of *goodness* worthy of himself, and to be found nowhere else. The *first* he effected by working miracles; the *second*, by predicting events that could not have been foreseen by any other than himself; and the *third* by providing for the salvation of offending man. Hence the opposers of his designs, who have not thought it expedient to deny the facts assumed, have attempted to *counteract* their influence by opposing miracle to miracle, knowledge to knowledge, and goodness to goodness. And they have so far succeeded, at times, as to deceive many, and bring religion into distrust. They have foretold coming events, and worked wonders, which observers could not reasonably deny, or satisfactorily explain on natural principles. This is conceded by Moses, where he says, "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul." (Deut. xiii. 1, 3.) The Saviour also predicted the coming of false prophets, who should "show great *signs and wonders*." (Matt. xxiv. 24.) And he assures us that many rejected sinners will say in the day of judgment, "Have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have *cast out devils*, and in thy name done many *wonderful works?*"

This mode of resisting the truth is very ancient. When Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, to prove that the Lord had sent him, and it became a serpent, Pharaoh immediately called the *wise men*, or *philosophers*, the *sorcerers* and *magicians*, and they cast down their rods, which also became serpents. They were equally successful in turning the rivers and ponds into blood, and in bringing up frogs over the land. *How* they did these things we know not, nor are we disposed to deny them, or resolve them into mere sleight of hand. We shall glance at other facts, which show that God sometimes permits men and devils to exceed their ordinary powers, in a way to try the faith of his people. But always, as in this case, he will "make his power known" sooner or later, and take the victory to himself. If he suffers a temporary loss, it is only to make the defeat of his enemies the more complete. Hence he allowed the magicians to convert their rods into serpents, that the rod of Moses might swallow them up; and to achieve other wonders, that he might demonstrate that the greatest wisdom and power of man fall short of infinite; and that their brightest hopes are born but to perish.

The Scripture history of *magic*, witchcraft, sorcery, divination, and the like, places this subject in its true light. It proves not only that the people referred to believed that such beings as magicians, and *witches*, and sorcerers existed, and possessed *great power and intelligence*, but that they did really exist, and wrought many of the wonders attributed to them. Joseph said to his brethren, when his cup was found in the sack of Benjamin, "Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly *divine?*" Nebuchadnezzar, having dreamed troublesome dreams, called "the magicians, and the astrologers, and the sorcerers" to explain them. (Dan. ii. 2.) Balaam sought *enchantments*, and forsook God.

The Israelites, in their *backslidings*, "used *divination* and enchantments," and thus *sold themselves* to do evil, and *provoked* the Lord to remove them out of his sight. (2 Kings xvii. 17.) Among the crimes charged upon Manasseh, these are prominent: viz., "that he made his son to pass through the fire, and *used enchantments*, and dealt with *familiar spirits* and *wizards*." (2 Kings xxi. 6.) St. Paul groups "*witchcraft*" with *idolatry*, "*hatred*, *murders*, *drunkenness*," &c., and characterizes it as a *work of the flesh*. (Gal. v. 20.) "The elders of Moab, and the elders of Midian, departed with the rewards of *divination* in their hands. (Num. xxii. 7.) Ezekiel says that "the King of Babylon stood at the parting of the way to use *divination;* he consulted with *images*, he *looked in the liver*, and God *removed his diadem*, and *took off his crown*. (Ezek. xxi. 21.) When the ark troubled the Philistines, "they called for the priests and the *diviners*," to direct them what to do with it. Saul, being in trouble, "said unto his servants, Seek me a *woman* that hath a *familiar spirit*, that I may go to her and inquire of her. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman BY NIGHT; and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the *familiar spirit*, and *bring me up whom I shall name* unto thee. Then said the woman, *Whom shall I bring up unto thee?* And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman *saw Samuel*, she cried with a loud voice; and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid; for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up, and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul *perceived* that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou *disquieted* me to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is *departed from me*, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams; therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do. Then said Samuel, Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy? The Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbor, even to David. Moreover, the Lord will also deliver Israel, with thee, into the hand of the Philistines, and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me." (1 Sam. xxviii. 7–19.)

A more striking case could not be desired. In obedience to God, Saul had proscribed witchcraft, but was induced nevertheless to invoke its aid. Hence he inquired for "a *woman* that hath a *familiar spirit*." "A *woman!*" Mark that. Such a one was soon found, but with all her power, she had the fear of the king before her eyes. This seems remarkable. Being quieted on this point, she stands forth in her true character. "*Whom* shall I bring up to thee?" Here we see her pretensions. She claimed to hold *converse with the dead*, and to be capable of *calling up whom she would*. Samuel was wanted. Now for the experiment. She looks, and cries aloud. What is the matter? "Thou art Saul!" Wonderful discovery! But "be not afraid; what sawest thou?" Some spirit must have appeared to thee. O! "I saw gods ascending out of the earth." "What form was he of?" "An old man coming up, and covered with a mantle. And *Saul* perceived that it was Samuel, and stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself." Becoming a little recovered from his surprise and

reverence, he was put in communication with the prophet, through the *witch* as a *medium*, and learned that his destiny was fixed, and that his end was near, all of which turned out to be true.

But the apology of Saul for disturbing Samuel is remarkably suggestive. "Why hast thou disquieted me?" said Samuel. And Saul answered, "I am sore distressed, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams; therefore I have called thee." As if he had said, I know that I should have consulted God, and not the witch; but since he has forsaken me, I have been compelled to this course. But Samuel was not satisfied. Not but that, if men are ever justified in such a measure, they are under these circumstances. Certainly no better reason can be given for invoking the aid of the *devil*, than that God has abandoned us. But Samuel knew that, even in this case, it was wrong; for whom God has cursed, neither the devil, nor spirits, good or bad, can bless; so that, according to Samuel, the consultation of "familiar spirits" *is never justifiable*, not even in the greatest extremity.

This is not all. By turning to the Scriptures again, we shall find much more to the same effect. The command of God to Israel was, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." (Exod. xxii. 18.) "There shall not be found among you any that maketh his son or his 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 of familiar spirits*, or a *wizard*, or a *necromancer*. For all that do these things ARE AN ABOMINATION UNTO THE LORD, and because of these abominations the Lord thy God *doth drive them out* from before thee." (Deut. xviii. 10, 12.) "Regard not them that have *familiar spirits*, *neither seek after wizards* to be *defiled by them; I am the Lord your God*." (Lev. xix. 31.) "The soul that turneth after such as have *familiar spirits*, and after *wizards*, to *go a-whoring* after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off." (Lev. xx. 6.) God regards such as seek in this way to know the secrets of eternity, as *idolaters* and *enemies*. We are to learn of HIM. Hence says Isaiah, "When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that *peep* and that *mutter;* should not a people SEEK UNTO THEIR GOD?" (Is. viii. 19.) "Thy *wisdom* and thy *knowledge*, it hath *perverted thee*. Stand now with thine *enchantments*, and with the multitude of thy sorceries, if so be thou shalt be able to profit. Let the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators stand up and save thee." (Is. xlvii. 10, 12, 13.)

The wickedness of resorting to familiar spirits, soothsayers, &c., in the sight of God, is manifest from almost every book in the Bible. It cost Saul his *kingdom* and his *life*. (1 Chron. x. 13.) It made a captive of Manasseh. (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11.) It ruined Egypt, and overthrew Israel, and brought Babylon to the dust. The Revelator consigns *sorcerers* "to the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." (Chap. xxi. 8.) Speaking of the New Jerusalem he says, "Without are dogs, and *sorcerers*, and *murderers*, and *whosoever loveth and maketh* a *lie*." (xxiii. 15.) Said Paul to Elymas, the *sorcerer*, who sought to turn the deputy from the faith, "O, full of all subtlety and mischief, thou *child of the devil*, thou enemy of all righteousness." (Acts xiii. 10.) When he was molested by a certain damsel, who had a spirit of "*divination*," and brought her master much gain by soothsaying, he commanded the spirit to come out of her. (xvi. 18.) It is a spirit of *falsehood*. Says the prophet, "They prophesy unto you a *false divination*

I sent them not." (Jer. xiv. 14.) "Hearken not to your *diviners*, nor to your *dreamers*, nor to your *enchanters*, nor to your *sorcerers*, for they prophesy a lie unto you." (xxvii. 9, 10.) "Thus saith the Lord, Let not your diviners *deceive you*. *I* have not sent them." (xxix. 8, 9.) "The diviners have *seen a lie*, and have told *false dreams;* they COMFORT IN VAIN." (Zech. x. 2.) "Her prophets have daubed with *untempered mortar, seeing vanity and divining lies* unto them." (Ezek. xxii. 28.)

Thus the Scripture history of divination, &c., presents us with a mingled mass of *wonders* and *deceit*, often displaying *knowledge* and *power*, which we are accustomed to ascribe only to God. And they warn us of the fearful consequences of resorting to them for direction in any case. Whatever the diviner may do, or know, however *scientific* or philosophical, we are not permitted to consult him. God will be respected, and those who run after *witches*, or mediums, do it at their peril. Our duty is to consult God, by the means he has ordained.

CHAPTER V.

MESMERISM.

WE come now to contemplate more recent phenomena. Every age has had its pretenders, miracles, prophets, witches, and devils; and the friends of God and the Bible have found it necessary to rally in defence of fundamental principles, against some new mode of assault. Still the foundation standeth sure. The pretensions of Mohammed, the "lying wonders" of Romanism, the baseless visions of Swedenborg, the witchcraft of Salem, the revelations of Jo Smith, and the infidel ravings of Come-outers, all made an impression at first; but investigation has proved them to be "*wanting*," and they have lost their power to invalidate the truth of divine revelation. But invention is not exhausted.

Frederic Anthony Mesmer, a German physician, and the pretended discover of *animal magnetism*, otherwise called *mesmerism*, went to Paris to practise his new discovery in 1778, and made quite an impression; but at length the government appointed a committee of physicians and others, among whom was our own Franklin, to examine the subject. The investigation was had, an able report of which soon after appeared, completely showing the futility of the art, and the quackery of its discoverer. Thus ended the first edition of mesmerism.

Since then, it has made its appearance in different places, and at different times, but has never attracted so much attention as of late. Some dozen years since, we witnessed a specimen of it in Boston. The subject appeared to be a *green*, untutored boy. By much staring in his face, and various manipulations on the part of the operator, he was brought into the mesmeric state, when he answered difficult questions, to the astonishment of most present. He seemed dead as to his own senses, and to know, feel, taste and see just what his master did. He could therefore tell the time of day by a watch held behind him, describe objects in his master's hand, &c., &c. This was all very strange, and, to many, a new thing under the sun, though others understood that it was only the revival of an old art.

But if one in a mesmeric state enjoys an interior or second sight, so

as to describe objects at hand which he does not see, why may he not describe others, at a distance? Sure enough. Hence arose the idea of pilgrimages, which the mesmerized performed with such as were put in communication with them, describing places and scenes they never saw, and discoursing on subjects they never studied. And further, if they can see some things near and distant, why may they not see others? Hence they were set to searching for *rogues*, lost articles, money, and finally, after departed spirits. Their success in finding *terrestrial objects* was not very flattering. It was soon ascertained that little reliance could be placed upon their revelations; but in spiritual things, and in searching out internal diseases, they appeared to be more successful. At all events, their errors were not so easily detected here as in more tangible cases. They could tell *fortunes* too, and describe the state of things in the *moon*, and other spheres, and predict distant events, without much danger from investigation.

This suggested a new idea. Certain clerical gentlemen had already left the altar to practise the "new *science*," and were lecturing and performing, from place to place, under the assumed title of *doctor*. They had long labored, as preachers, to prove that all men will be saved irrespective of their character; that there is *no devil, no hell, no day of judgment*, and therefore no truth in many of the fundamental principles taught in Evangelical churches. But to say the least, they had not been very successful. The Bible was too explicitly against them. Their friends and supporters were harassed with many doubts. Hence it occurred to them to despatch a clairvoyant on a tour of discovery in reference to these great problems. Immediately a MESMERIC shout of joy was heard. Said the doctor to his subject, "What do you see?" "O, heaven! sweet heaven! *I am happy.* PRAISE THE LORD!" "Who do you see there?" "I see Mr. G., and Mrs. W., and Esq. R., and Dr. J.," several of whom were known on earth as "enemies of all righteousness." "Do you see Colonel S.?" "O, yes, and he is happy." "Very good. There, gentlemen, is not that demonstration of our doctrine?" But now says the doctor to his subject, "I want you to search, and see if you can find such a place as *hell*. Look sharp, and make no mistake." The patient commences the work, and canvasses all eternity, above, beneath, around, but finds no such place. No. "*All is heaven. God is love.*"

We were in a certain place where this game was played with great success. We honestly believed at the time, and have no reason to doubt it now, that it did more to convince the people of the truth of Universalism than all the preaching they had heard in ten years. The large hall was crowded night after night, to hear the glad news of salvation right from heaven itself. But the course soon ended, and the lecturer went on his way. The business, however, was too good to flag, and the public curiosity must be gratified. Directly Mr. B. appeared. Now, it was known that he was a man of remarkable mesmeric power, and besides, had made some improvements on the system. He could get people to sleep without *touching* them, and even *draw* them out of the congregation upon the platform; and it was known that he had formerly been a Christian, and hence it was thought, if Mr. B.'s subjects agree with the others, there can be no mistake; Universalism must be true. The time having arrived, the hall was crowded again. Mr. B. arose in his usual moderate way, and proceeded to explain the subject, when several persons walked up to the platform and took seats. Here the inquisition commenced. Soon the sleepers began to sing, and

clap their hands, and praise the Lord, very much as others had done; and they explained themselves by saying that they saw heaven, &c., &c. Universalists were delighted; Christians, if any were present, were alarmed; and the heresy gained ground.

This came to our ears the next morning early. As it happened, we had enjoyed a pleasant acquaintance with the lecturer in former years, and knew enough of his philosophy to be certain that it afforded no justification of the heretical inference which had been drawn from his experiments. We determined, therefore, to give him a call, and did so immediately. After explaining why we deemed it inexpedient to attend his lectures, we referred him to the facts above detailed, and said that whatever might be his views of these theological questions, if we understood his system, there was just as much punishment as reward in it, but it actually afforded no proof of either one or the other. To this he readily assented, when we asked him, as a personal favor, to explain that point in his next lecture, and give an example.

The evening was fine, and a delighted audience was early in waiting to catch the first whispers of the occasion. Operations commenced, and proceeded about as on the preceding evening. The subjects had become very happy, and the audience supposed that they were actually in heaven, or at least were beholding its glories, when a change came over the spirit of their dream by the announcement, that it was a mistake; that clairvoyance, as it is called, was a humbug, and that the sleepers were there in the hall, and had only seen what he willed them to see. He further stated that he could reverse the scene, and make them see frightful objects; but he did not like to do so, because he wished to make the occasion as agreeable as possible. Still, to demonstrate his philosophy, he would depart from his usual custom. Suddenly there was a simultaneous screech of distress among the sleepers. But "What is the matter?" inquired the operator; "what do you see?" "O, HELL! HELL! DEVILS! *and lost spirits.*" The outburst was of short duration, but like an earthquake, it shook all around, and dashed the beautiful hopes of unbelievers as a potter's vessel.

In this way, Mr. B.'s improved views were made useful. Following in the wake of Universalist lecturers, he demolished the doctrinal castles they had constructed for the comfort of sinners, and created for them the necessity of studying up something else to prop the tottering faith of their dear people. The delusion, however, still exists to a certain extent, and the dreamers fancy that they really do visit other spheres, and see the things whereof they affirm.

That mesmerism may have relieved distress in certain cases, is highly probable. We presume it has even cured diseases of a nervous character; and in this respect, it is worthy of the attention of the medical faculty, perhaps. But, like certain drugs, it is a dangerous power in the hands of villains, who are as often found invoking its aid as any other class. If mesmerizers can do what they pretend, none certainly but the most religiously upright may be safely trusted. If, by a single movement of the hand, and even by a single exercise of the will, without any motion whatever, they can dispossess a portion of every community of all consciousness, we see no reason why they may not commit any outrage upon them they please, with utter impunity. One, for instance, knows his victim has in his possession five hundred dollars of his employer's money, which he is conveying to the bank. He meets him, and wills him into a mesmeric

state, and then wills him to deliver the money into his hands, and return to his employer with just such a story as he may think appropriate. How is the robbery to be detected? Nobody has touched him; there has been no scuffle, no noise, nothing suspicious, and yet the money is lost. The poor subject knows nothing about it; and if he did, he would say nothing, for all his affinities are for his operator, whom he would not harm if he could.

How much of our lost money is disposed of in this way we cannot say; but knowing what we do of the power of certain men over others, we will say, the young man or woman who *dabbles* in this thing could not be trusted by us, however honest. We might name a most active youth in this city, whose morals we consider unexceptionable, but who is not trustworthy at all, because he has given himself up to the control of other men, and is often thrown into a state of unconsciousness. Merchants will do well to examine their clerks and other employees on this point; and it may not be amiss for mothers to look after their *daughters*, who expose themselves to this dangerous paralysis. And, lest we should be misunderstood as to the medical influence of mesmerism, we are bound to say, that, in our opinion, where it has improved one invalid, it has *made two*, both physically and mentally.

Says the author of an "*Exposé of Animal Magnetism*," in what he calls the "*Confessions of a Practical Magnetizer*," I cannot here refrain from warning young females, and even married ladies, not to trust themselves alone with practical magnetizers, who are comparative strangers to them; for, did I feel at liberty to reveal some startling facts with which I am conversant, the community would be thoroughly awakened to the danger of permitting the exercise and employment of this agency," &c. (p. 11.) He speaks of a lady he had offended and could not appease for a whole year, whom he then made to say, by magnetizing her without her consent or knowledge, "*I can forgive you*, but *cannot forgive myself*," &c. (p. 11.) He also speaks of winning the heart of his own wife, at the age of seventeen, by first magnetizing her for disease, at the request of her father, whose rank placed her entirely out of his reach, in the ordinary course of things. He claims to have put a young lady to sleep against her obstinate resistance, when he so willed her affections towards himself, that "she would not spare him a moment to leave her, but nestling by his side, seemed happy only there." (p. 15.) In another case, he alienated the affections of a young lady from her suitor, and directed them to another, at the request of the latter. He details also the circumstances of an ingenious robbery at the Howard Hotel, in New York, in 1842, in which a young Frenchman put a lawyer to sleep, and robbed him of his pocket book, containing $950 in cash, and escaped South. Subsequently he was sent to the state prison in New Orleans, for absconding with another man's wife, and taking money from her husband by the aid of mesmerism. He certifies, also, to the ruin of a young lady by the seduction of a magnetizer, under whose care she had placed herself, as a patient in a nervous complaint, who "rather mourns over her misfortune in silence, than expose her own shame." (p. 47.)

Whether all these statements are true, we cannot say, not being acquainted with the author; but considering what mesmerism is, and the use that has been made of it by curious and credulous people, it would be strange if it had not been employed in perpetrating the blackest

crimes, of which the human heart is capable. With these mere hints, we leave this aspect of the subject, assured that the prudent will see the evil, and "hide themselves," before they become entangled in a net from which they may not escape.

CHAPTER VI.

CLAIRVOYANCE, PARTICULARLY AS DEVELOPED IN THE EXPERIENCE AND REVEALMENTS OF ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS.

THIS subject has engaged the attention of lecturers and authors for several years, but is nowhere so fully developed as in the writings of Andrew Jackson Davis. He styles himself the "Poughkeepsie *Seer* and *Clairvoyant*," and distinguishes his writings by the imposing title of "*Divine Revelations*." To give the reader an ample idea of his pretentions, not to say egotism, we had thought of presenting several extracts from his different works; but on further reflection, we think one will suffice. Mr. Davis claims to have fallen into the magnetic state in 1844, and to have been in that state a considerable part of the time since. The extract we propose relates to this condition, and indicates the remarkable powers therein enjoyed. It runs thus: —

"In this state my previous developments are not only enlarged, but all my mental faculties are set in PERFECT ACTION. *I possess the power of extending my vision* THROUGHOUT ALL SPACE — CAN SEE THINGS PAST, PRESENT, AND TO COME. I HAVE NOW ARRIVED AT THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF KNOWLEDGE WHICH THE HUMAN MIND IS CAPABLE OF ACQUIRING, when in the state that I now am. I AM MASTER OF THE GENERAL SCIENCES, CAN SPEAK ALL LANGUAGES, — impart instructions upon those DEEP AND HIDDEN THINGS IN NATURE, *which the world has not been able to solve;* — can name the different organs in the human system, point out their offices and functions, as I have often done; tell the *nature*, *course*, and *symptoms of disease*, *and prescribe the remedies that* WILL EFFECT A CURE." (Rev. p. 535.)

Others have made high claims; but we have seen nothing that exceeds this. One might naturally infer that the man is crazy; for if we except Swedenborg, no other dreamer outside of the madhouse has ever claimed so much. But Mr. Davis thinks he is in his right mind, and others agree with him in this particular. Professor Bush, a recent convert to Swedenborgianism, thought so well of his "revelations," that he did much to bring them before the public in a favorable light. His object was, no doubt, to prop up the fancies of Swedenborg, and help on a clumsy and laboring system. And he has had his reward, for Davis has given Swedenborg unusual credit for him. But he has denounced some of his notions, particularly his "*hells*," in a most unqualified manner, which has occasioned Mr. Bush considerable trouble.

Mr. Davis has had the favor also of other distinguished names. Mr. Sunderland thinks him a good clairvoyant, and a teacher of many sound principles, though imperfect and erroneous in some of his pretended "revealments." Indeed, we believe he is regarded by the votaries of clairvoyance and SPIRIT KNOCKINGS, so called, as a prince and an angel of light. He is often quoted, therefore, as authority of the

highest character. Hence, in examining his revelations, we may feel assured that we are treading on solid ground, if such ground is to be found any where in the utterances of Clairvoyants.

Let us come, then, to Mr. Davis's "*revelations*." How is he "*impressed*," and what does he say? The tree is known by its fruits.

1. *In regard to Deity.* That he acknowledges the existence of a God, is undeniable; but his God is not the God of Noah, or of Moses, or of the apostles. "The patriarchal God," he says, "*is a magnified and refined Moses.*" "The God of Joshua was capricious and revengeful." (*Harmonia*, vol. ii. p. 259.) Writers on this subject, the inspired not excepted, he thinks, have done little more than to make a "*phantom*" instead of a "*God.*" So all our theology is wrong at the starting point. Our God is only a "*phantom*," a "*fabled*" *fiction*, answering to the views of the writer who describes him.

What then is God? Mr. Davis replies, "He is an infinite CAUSE." Very well; this is nothing new. What else? He is "the *Great Positive Mind.*" (p. 270.) But what is mind? "Mind is matter *in a high state of refinement and organization.*" (p. 130.) "It is righteous to believe that He possesses a *cerebral organization*, partially analogous to the human mental structure, and that his celestial and superlative perfect qualities, essences, and principles flow from the mighty centre of his own existence to the unimaginable and immeasurable circumference of infinite space." (p. 290.) "*Mind* and *matter*, or *God* and his *Body*, are *universal and eternal.*" "God is the soul of the universe." He is every where, and forms a part of every thing, though not "as perfect in a hair as heart." "He is life, and *life* is *love.*" So writes Mr. Davis.

2. *In regard to Christ.* He says, "It cannot be disguised that Moses, and Joshua, and *Jesus*, and Mahomet, and Swedenborg, and many modern reformers, claim to be the special agents of the Divine Mind." (p. 72.) This indicates his general view of the Saviour. In another place he associates him with Solon, Socrates, and Plato, and says, "He was a reformer, because he was more free from educational influences than were any of the previous minds." "He was an amiable, benevolent, and an unassuming man." Yet adds our "Seer," "He acknowledged no authority superior to his spontaneous intuitions, and the divine suggestions of his *own reason;*" and "the true reformer *can* have no other," not even the Bible.

3. *As to man*, "he is *God manifest in the flesh.*" "The good which the analytical science of *phrenology* has done, and is doing, and will do to mankind, is embraced in this highly important, yet scarcely admitted *truth*, that mind *is matter.*" (p. 130.) "I esteem this as an invaluable discovery; for it not only strikes a deep and *fatal blow* at the foundation roots of *pulpit theology*, but it proves that the mind is capable of endless progression. The finer *matter* becomes, the *more it expands;* the more it expands, the more it is enabled to *do*, *contemplate*, and *enjoy.*" (p. 131.) Who ever heard the like? Matter "*contemplate*" and "*enjoy*"! But such the clairvoyant "*sees*" "to be the legitimate teachings of phrenology," and he rejoices in them.

In speaking of the theories of metaphysicians who have written on the subject of mind, he says, "I find none so closely allied to truth as those of Charles Fourier." He is not insensible, however, to the system of "*A. Bronson Alcott*," nor to "the profound disclosures of *Swedenborg.*" This is enough to show the moral affinities of the man, and his revelations indicate in more ways than one, that he is with these writers on some very *delicate* points.

Man is, then, *matter*, soul and body. Immortal, because matter is *eternal*. Progressive, because matter is capable of great refinement. *Not a free agent*, because subject to invincible laws in and around him, which forbid his being different in any way from what he really is. He may be unfortunate, therefore, but not wicked; and should not be *punished*, but *pitied*. Hence all our penal enactments are unphilosophical, unjust, and heathenish, especially that which provides for hanging murderers. And the way to reform men is to change their *circumstances*, not their principles, or hearts. So that to look after *matrimonial alliances*, and the physiological and social laws of our nature, is the way to reform society. But should this be neglected, they will fare better in the world to come, and be put upon a course of improvement, which will continue *ad infinitum*, reaching, in the course of ages the highest sphere in the scale of celestial being. So that future punishment is a Bible *fiction* after all.

Thus he comes out just where we expected, and probably just where he intended, when he commenced dreaming. Necessity was laid upon him. Things were not as he thought they ought to be. The Bible teaches depravity, guilt, punishment, and he cannot explain it away. Punishment is allowed in the State, in schools, and families, and it must be broken up. So he goes into a trance, and opens his magnetic battery upon almost every holy principle of the sacred canon; and comes out with a bran new theory, if theory it can be called, except so far as he had seen fit to borrow from Swedenborg, Fourier, Bronson Alcott, and others.

How much *matter* it takes to *distil a soul*, he does not deign to state, though he thinks there is stock enough in the innumerable worlds in existence to last many years yet. Nor does he state at what stage of refinement *matter begins to think*, nor what is to be done in the end, with the coarser matter, that cannot be manufactured into souls. It is not, however, to be destroyed — cannot be. These, and numerous other questions, which naturally occur to common minds, are left for future development.

4. *Of free agency*, he remarks, "It is impossible to calculate the *evil consequences* that have proceeded from this doctrine." Among these, he names *original sin*, the *atonement*, *faith*, and *regeneration*, as held by Christians in general. Clergymen teach their congregations, that each one of them has power to decide whether he will "follow God or Baal." This idea of free agency has also originated our "system of jurisprudence," — is the foundation of "merit and demerit — praise and blame — rewards and punishments." (p. 211.) "It is the thread by which the whole system of *unphilosophical theology* is suspended." (p. 219.) "Man is *compelled to act as he is acted upon*, and to manifest character according to his constitutional capacity, and social situation." (p. 225.) Hence, if he commit murder or theft, it only shows that the temptation is stronger than he. Therefore, "he should be treated, not as a being having the will and power to do what he desires, but he should be *born, educated, situated*, rewarded, and punished *as a tree*, which is capable of yielding an abundance of good *fruit* only when it is properly organized, and correspondingly conditioned in a *good soil*." (p. 230.)

Thus he apologizes for criminals, and represents their punishment as inhuman, and unjust. How strange it is that neither Jesus nor his apostles understood these novelties! And it is hardly less strange, that "*nature*," "*reason*," and "*intuition*," Mr. Davis's three grand guides,

should have always testified to the exact opposite of what he teaches. But they cannot err, for, one of his visions "*impressed*" him that "man is an incarnated *divinity*, and therefore not *intrinsically evil* in himself, and cannot love any thing *intrinsically* evil." (p. 163.) Hence, having no intrinsic bias to evil, and only committing sin as he is constrained by circumstances, the "*hell*" of the Bible is a "*fable*," as are sin and Satan; so that all must and will be saved.

5. *In regard to religion in general*, Mr. Davis is evidently a "*Come-outer*," and an infidel. Hear him. "I attend no church but my *mind;* I listen to no preacher but *reason;* I read no book but *Nature.*" (p. 71.) In referring to evangelical people and principles, he uniformly misrepresents them. His enmity to the word of God and the means of grace is indicated by multiplied slurs like the following: "The Reformer knows he never can secure heaven, by *praying* or being *prayed for*, nor *building churches*, and *hiring* the *gospel preached;* nor by believing any system of religion, or *trying* to *believe*, but only through self-development, and self-harmonization." (p. 103.) He seems to have special dislike to *prayer*, and recommends it in no case whatever. Though Jesus prayed much, and urged it upon his disciples, the "*Seer*" and revelator of Poughkeepsie is opposed to it. On page 275, he speaks of the sad results of believing that "God can be moved to sympathy by *prayers*, or to passion by the *taking of his name in vain.*" "It is unreasonable and unrighteous to believe that God takes special notice of those numerous transgressions, by which individuals only injure themselves." Nor is it good to believe that God exerts his omnipotent power to bestow special endowments in answer to the prayers of the *(so styled)* righteous." (p. 350.)

He treats the Bible with as little respect as he does its friends. "The idea of there having been a *first human pair*," he says, "sounds to the ear of a *geologist* like the tale of an Egyptian priest." That is, in plain English, the Bible account of our first parents is all a *fable;* no such beings ever lived. In page 223, he calls it "*an Oriental fable*," in so many words. He speaks also of the "*fabled hell.*" (p. 254.) He advises, in relation to reading, "If you are moved to read the word of God, go forth to the *highest mountain*, to the *humblest valley*, to the *living forest*, to the simplest flower." (p. 339.) That is, don't read the Bible, but *nature.* He says of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, that it "is probably, *next to the Bible*, the most influential representative of Oriental *superstition* and systematic *mythology*, ever published in Christendom." (p. 386.) On the same page he declares, that "The reason why a devil or evil spirit was first conceived of, is explained in the mythological tale of the Garden of Eden." (p. 386.) "No man must strive to be wise above what is written; this is what I am impressed to pronounce as eminently false and pernicious." (p. 385.) "I feel impressed it is now a proper age to confess, that *revelations* of God in the natural and spiritual universe, and in the soul,—in our deep consciousness,—are the ONLY revealments which can be made to perfectly harmonize with the mighty declarations of Nature." (p. 386.) "This is right to the point. My own experience first, and the Bible next. The Bible contradicts my consciousness, and I will not, therefore, believe it. I will make something to suit my taste better.

But enough of this. We might continue these quotations till scarcely a gospel principle would remain unrejected. Indeed, we cannot call to mind a single principle of religion but what is discarded, while profanity, murder, theft, and every other vice is excused, and principles in-

culcated, which, put in operation, would banish virtue from the world. And all this from a "*seer*," a "*clairvoyant*," who can "*see through all space*," and has acquired the "*highest degree of knowledge*," and is commissioned to make "*divine revelations*"! How false! How ridiculous! What can the man be thinking of? Does he expect to overthrow Christianity with a vision? This is evidently his object. The difference between him and other infidels, is in their mode of attack. He has chosen to follow Mohammed, who claimed that he went to heaven, rather than Thomas Paine, and Voltaire, and Abner Kneeland. His language betrayeth him. It may be the language of fallen "nature," perverted "*reason*," and carnal "*intuition;*" but it is any thing but the language of truth. It sounds much like that of the "*serpent*" — "Ye SHALL NOT surely die. God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods." Be *scientific*, be *wise*, be *philosophers!* The cloven foot stands out on every page.

If his writings do not belie their author, Mr. Davis is unquestionably a *fatalist*, an *infidel*, a *materialist*, a *Come-outer*, a Universalist, and whatsoever else opposes religion, as taught in the Bible. And yet, with this dreadful accumulation of errors about him, he claims to be commissioned from on high, and advertises his unhallowed and irreverent utterances, as "*divine revelations*" to all mankind.

But this is no more than we had reason to expect. It is only another fulfilment of Scripture. Partisans in earthly enterprises generally predict the rising up of friends to their cause in the future; but not so with Jesus and his apostles. They always anticipated opposition, and foreshadowed it in terms of remarkable significance. St. Paul spoke of a coming time, when men "will not endure sound doctrine," but following "*their own lusts*," will "heap to themselves teachers having itching ears, and turn away from the *truth* unto *fables*." (2 Tim. iii. 3, 4.) There were some in his day, who "turned aside unto vain jangling; desiring to be teachers, but understanding neither what they said, nor whereof they affirmed." (1 Tim. i. 6, 7.) He found others who "became *vain in their imaginations*, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be *wise*, they became *fools*, *and changed the glory of the* INCORRUPTIBLE *God into an image made like unto corruptible man;* changed the *truth* of God into a *lie*, and worshipped the *creature* more than the *Creator*." "Brethren, be ye followers of me, and mark them which walk, so as ye have us for an ensample. For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the *enemies of the cross of Christ;* whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things." (Phil. iii. 17–19.) Jude, speaking of certain characters, calls them "*filthy dreamers*, who despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities, and of those things which they know not;" "clouds without water, carried about of winds; trees, whose fruit withereth, twice dead and plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."

How far these descriptions of character are applicable to Mr. Davis and his associates, the reader must judge. But if he has not changed the incorruptible God into an image like unto corruptible man, we mistake. God is "*matter*," that is, a creature, and "*possesses a cerebral organization*." He is a part of every thing, and every thing is a part of him. "Matter is his body," so we are told, and we are called upon to abandon the Bible as a grand "*fable*," and adopt the new revelations,

merely because the "*Seer* of Poughkeepsie" has fallen into the magnetic state. He gives us no miracles, though he came very near it in the chapter of his revelations relating to his early experience. It is written there, that he mysteriously disappeared, leaving the house all fastened on the inside, and miraculously crossed the Hudson River, and made a most precipitate journey, and yet all the while was invisible to mortal eyes. The story is about equal to that of Mohammed, who assumed that he went from Mecca to Jerusalem, and from thence to heaven and back again, in a single night. But subsequent revealments suggested to Mr. Davis, the "*unsupernaturalness* of all human events." That is, I suppose, he saw that to allow any thing to be supernatural, would be giving too much advantage to the Christians, and would not be quite philosophic enough for his new invention. So he goes to work to explain it away, as he does Scripture phenomena. And this is his method: 1. The man who said the doors and windows were fastened in the morning told a *fib;* 2. The Hudson River was *frozen over* at the time, so that any one could cross who pleased; 3. He was gone from Poughkeepsie *five hours* longer than was at first stated; and, 4. His supposed *invisibility* arose from his confounding the flight of his *mind* with that of his *body*. So that there was nothing miraculous in the whole affair; and those who were converted to the revelations by it must find themselves in an unenviable position.

Nor does this "*seer*" bring us any fulfilled prophecies to demonstrate his authority; or any internal evidence, or good tendency, that indicates that his revelations are divine. Jesus, the prophets and apostles, all came *working miracles*, predicting events which *occurred* with *singular exactness* in their time. The tendency of their teachings was *salutary;* many *repented*, and were *converted* through their means, and commenced lives of *piety*, *prayer*, and *holy conversation*. But Mr. Davis brings us nothing. His prophecies relate to eternity, or at least to events so distant, that we cannot test them; the internal evidence is against him; and as to the fruit, it is unto *death*, and not *life*. His revelations *neutralize* the restraints of sin. They say to the sinner, he is not guilty, do what he may; that God loves, *approves*, and will save him at last. He need not pray, because God is not moved by prayer. He need not read the Bible, because it is a book of *fables*. If he takes the name of God in vain, it is *no offence;* nor if he breaks the Sabbath, or does any other wrong, because he can only "*act as he is acted upon.*" Hence nobody is made better, but whoever believes the revelations is made worse. He will pray *less*, keep the Sabbath less, be less scrupulous, and less devout.

We cannot, therefore, receive these revelations. They are not from above. Reason and intuition discard them. Matter cannot *think*, nor *feel*, nor *act*, however refined. Such a thing was never known.

How strange that men can so far bereave themselves of reason and of consciousness, as to cherish this delusion for a single moment! But many do. They forsake the old paths defined by inspired authority, to follow the dubious teachings of this tribe of sleepers, whose auguries indicate that they speak not the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth. "*O, the times and manners!*" Christian reader, as you respect God, and wish well to your race, go not after them. They will lead you to death. If they be correct, of which there is not the barest possibility, you are safe in being a Christian. But if you leave religion, to tamper with the dreamy revelations of knaves or fanatics, you will probably find, when it is too late, that you sold yourself for nought.

CHAPTER VII.

SPIRITUAL KNOCKINGS, SO CALLED. — THEIR EARLY HISTORY, PHENOMENA, AND INCREDIBILITY.

ANOTHER important event, which has recently occurred in the world of wonders, is the appearance of certain strange "*knockings*," or "rappings." They originated with some girls in the neighborhood of Newark, N. Y., a few years since, and were seized upon by certain mesmerizers, attributed to spirits, translated into English, and reduced to a system. They have since been expanded into "*tippings*," "*impressings*," "*speakings*," "*writings*," &c.; so that we are now favored, not only with "*knocking*" mediums, but with *speaking* and *writing* mediums. The assumption is, that the spirits of the departed communicate to them, and through them to others, upon all the mysteries of which they discourse, sometimes by tipping the table at which they sit for responses, sometimes by rapping, or ticking it very lightly, sometimes by taking possession of their right hands and causing them to write, and at other times, by *impressing* their minds, and prompting them to speak. The result is, we have numerous volumes, claiming to be composed of communications from the spirit world, which we are called upon to believe as "*divine*" revelations.

Though the "rappings" had an independent origin, and differ somewhat in their operations, they have come to be intimately connected with mesmerism. The medium needs to be in a trance state, which many can now assume at pleasure, without foreign aid.* We may regard the "*rappings*," therefore, as an *appendix* to mesmerism and clairvoyance, though it is very difficult to see wherefore they were necessary. If clairvoyance opens all eternity, its heights and depths, past and future, and gives perfect knowledge of things present and things to come, it would seem to be quite sufficient. To introduce witnesses, after such a discovery, is to progress backwards. But, then, the "*knockings*" give us an additional mystery, and strengthen the proof of the revelations. Clairvoyants only "*see*," and commune with spirits, in an inaudible manner, and we have to take their word for the result; but "*mediums*" bring forward the spirits, and have them speak for themselves, by certain *raps* and other means, which many find it difficult to explain. The consequence is, the public is in a quandary as to what all these things mean, and the issue to which they will come. Mesmerism alone was more than many could endure. It shook their faith exceedingly on several important points. The addition of clairvoyance, rendered the difficulty still greater; but the "*rappings*" have capped the climax, and so confused some real Christians, and many speculative believers in the Bible, that they know not what to think. To meet this state of things, and counteract the evils that seem likely to grow out of it, we propose to investigate the subject very briefly, and beg the reader's attention, while we "try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John iv. 1.)

That there are certain peculiar noises and other phenomena indicative of more or less intelligence, connected with this subject, we do not deny. As Mr. Ballou says, there are mysterious knockings, rappings,

* This however is getting to be less necessary. The mind intensely directed toward another object will answer.

creakings, tickings, moving of sofas, lightstands, and chairs; and shaking, tipping, sliding, and raising them from the floor; opening and shutting doors, thrumming musical instruments, &c., &c. These things, however, are not new. They have occurred many times before, in different countries, but were never construed exactly as at the present. Now, we do not deny that the spirits of the departed sustain a conscious existence, and enjoy a degree of intelligence that is not practicable in the present state. This has been the sentiment of the church, with slight exceptions, in all ages, and we think it clearly revealed in the word of God. Much less do we deny that the Creator is capable, if he please, of making spirits the medium of communication with man. His power is unlimited. Whether he has ever done so, is not so clear. Instances are upon record which indicate something of the kind; but they are not numerous, and ought not to create the expectation that they will be repeated, especially for trivial purposes. Nor can we say, if he were to commission departed spirits to become the teachers and guides of men in the flesh, that he would not adopt the *mode of communication* employed by the "knockers." But though we know "his ways are not as our ways," we must confess, it looks to us very improbable. From the representation he has given us of his character, and from his *former modes* of addressing men, we certainly should not suspect him, or his spirit representatives, of cutting capers with tables, chairs, and other furniture, much less playing with a fiddle, and rifling pocket books. Such things seem natural enough in *witches* and *wizards*, who have characterized themselves in all countries by feats of this nature; but to charge them upon the Deity, or upon the spirits of the just made perfect, is to degrade the majesty of the Godhead.

But we will not press these points. The limits we have assigned to this work require that we confine ourselves closely to a few radical objections. To state our true position plainly, we cannot believe the "knockings," &c., are authorized by God, or made by good spirits, in any sense whatever, and therefore that their moral lessons are not to be relied on in the slightest degree. For, it is undeniable, —

1. That some of the "*knockers*" do teach what is known to be *false*. A brother, whose name I have not asked the privilege of publishing, was present at a very religious sitting, — that is, in appearance, — in New York, and was permitted by the spirits to propound a question concerning his father. The spirit answered promptly, but without the shadow of truth. The circle was mortified, and desired another sitting. To this the brother assented; but the result of the second trial was as unfortunate as that of the first; there was not one word of truth in the answers given.

In another instance, a young man called on a medium to converse with the spirit of his brother. The case proceeded well to the end. In a few days he called to extend the conversation a little, and concluded by informing the company that his brother was still in the flesh, *teaching school in a neighboring town.*

A similar case occurred near where we write, though the actress was from another state. Wishing to test the truthfulness of the rappers, she arrayed herself in mourning, and visited a distinguished wizard, as a young widow, to hold converse with her departed husband. Matters being duly arranged, his spirit appeared by the raps in regular order, and made developments of a very affecting character. We have nothing to say in justification of such deception, even for a worthy object; but the results were significant. And the same thing has occurred in many

other places, and has been accounted for by the assumption, that there are lying spirits among the departed as well as among the living.

Rev. Adin Ballou, of Hopedale, a Universalist preacher of the Restorationist stamp, speaks of this subject in his recent work, entitled "Spirit Manifestations," like an honest man.* He says, "Implicit reliance cannot be placed on the mere *un*corroborated communications of spirits, as absolutely veritable, for three important reasons, viz.: 1. There are multitudes of imperfect and low spirits. 2. The transition of dreamers, somnambulists, clairvoyants, seers, &c., from the material to the spiritual sphere of consciousness, and back again, is liable to such a *mixture* and confusion of dissimilar ideas, that more or less of *phantasy*, *obscuration*, and *perversion* must occasionally supervene. 3. The generality of mankind are *so ignorant* of spiritual realities, laws, and conditions, so wanting in discernment and *candor*, and so prone to errors of reason as well as imagination, that *few* are even tolerably well qualified to understand and make a proper use of spiritual communications. Hence the *strange* mixtures of truth and error, reality and phantasy, consistency and contradiction, gravity and levity, sober probability and wild extravagance, rational thought and fallacious imagination, *presented in dreams*, *clairvoyant visions*, *spirit trances*, and *the whole family* of mental and spiritual phenomena." (p. 8.)

This is frank, and is unquestionably true. He that was filthy at death is, no doubt, "filthy still." (Rev. xxii. 11.) Many spirits are probably just as *mean*, and *low*, and *knavish*, as he represents them; and it would be just like them to play the "*deuce*" with the knockings of the saints, if they could get a chance. Hence, if all parties herd together in the spirit world, as it seems they do, so as to have equal access to the knocking apparatus, we agree with the gentleman, that if the knockings come from the spirits, they will need pretty close scrutiny, before it will be safe to trust them at all.

But suppose we should succeed in making the proper distinction among the spirits, and detect the lying ones; there is another difficulty not less formidable. The mediums, it seems, are not always *perfect*, but, owing to phantasy, &c., often miscarry, though entirely honest. This looks very reasonable indeed, and confirms us in our previous suspicions. Says Mr. Ballou, "I have known cases, 1. In which the *bias*, *prejudice*, *predilection*, or *will* of the medium *evidently governed* and characterized the demonstration. Questions have been written out and presented to the medium, with a request that the answers should, if possible, be given, *thus* and *so*, and *they were given by raps accordingly*. I myself gave questions in this way to a certain medium, and found that answers could be obtained in the affirmative or negative, or in flat contradiction to previous answers, if the MEDIUM WOULD BUT AGREE TO WILL IT." (pp. 52, 53.)

Hence it follows, that if we will have truthful *raps*, — we must be sure that we call up truthful spirits, and get unbiased mediums. But here is the difficulty. If we call for St. Paul, Satan may come, and rap to suit his own taste, and thus deceive many. Or, if Paul should be permitted by other spirits to speak for himself without interruption, the medium may pervert his utterances, and make him say quite another

* Mr. Ballou is himself a medium, and has had a very large experience in the business of mesmerism, clairvoyance, and the knockings. His book is one of the very best of the kind before the public, and is designed, we apprehend, to establish his philosophy of universal salvation. We shall make free use of it.

thing. For instance, if Paul should speak of the "angels which kept not their first estate, and are reserved in chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day," (Jude 6,) and the medium should happen to be a Restorationist, she might so control the raps as to make them read, that "the judgment is past," or that "they are reserved in a state of discipline and progress, for the highest sphere." So that we are fearfully exposed to deception both from the spirits and the mediums.

But this is not all. Suppose that we make sure of a *good spirit*, and get the medium into so perfect a state of magnetic sleep, as to destroy all personal prejudice and predilection, may we not then depend upon the knockings? Mr. Ballou says no, because, "in other cases there has been an overruling psychological influence exerted by some powerful mind or minds present with the medium. In such cases, this powerful influence, *with* or without the consciousness of the medium, has elicited answers just such as had been wished or willed by the *managing* mind, and these answers have alternately contradicted each other in the plainest manner, during the same half hour s demonstrations. In one instance, a *strong-willed* man resolved to reverse certain disagreeable predictions frequently repeated through two *tipping* mediums, who often sat in conjunction. The result was, he could overrule *one* of them, sitting *alone*, and get a response to suit himself. But both of them *together* overmatched his psychological powers." . . . "I have found that some media were so imperfect, or had been so sophisticated by the management of *overruling minds*, that scarcely any reliance could be placed on what purported to come through their mediumship. Others, especially *tipping* and hand-moved media, are frequently so nervous, doubtfully balanced, and peculiarly affected, that one knows not what to depend on." (pp. 53, 55.)

We shall have occasion to refer to this point again, when we come to consider another aspect of the subject. It is introduced here simply to indicate the liability of mediums to other influences than those of disembodied spirits, and therefore the utter incredibility of their knockings. According to the concessions of Mr. Ballou, the "*knockings*" are as unreliable as the winds. Admitting they come from departed spirits, (which, by the way, we do not believe,) they cannot be trusted for any statement, not otherwise demonstrated. Such is the uncertainty about them, their testimony is no better than that of a heathen oracle.

To give them the least weight with reasonable men, it must be shown, 1. That they are produced by *departed spirits*. 2. That they are produced by *good spirits*, and not by those which are so "*low*" and "*lying*" that there is no truth in them. 3. That they are in a condition to know whereof they affirm. Human spirits are not infinite, and may be very ignorant, and liable to deception. If recent assumptions are well founded, some of them are now in school learning the alphabet, grammar, &c., to enable them to knock in good English. 4. We must be assured that the medium is perfect — is not biased by his own notions, or by bad spirits, and is not influenced by the powerful *wills* of spirits still in the flesh. And, 5. It must be shown that the knockings, &c., are correctly translated.

But how can all these points be settled? As to mortals, they cannot see the spirits to determine their competency as witnesses. The mediums, even, are unable to distinguish the spirit of Voltaire from that of St. Peter, or of the devil. They have to take the "*knocker*" upon trust, whoever he be. Where, then, is our security for the truth of what is knocked? We have none. Nor have we any proof, that the

knockings are not the work of some powerful spirit in the flesh, counteracting the good wishes and efforts of departed spirits, and controlling the knockings through the medium, by his own "*management.*"

We ask, then, in the name of reason, what is such testimony good for? It would be ruled out of any impartial court on earth, as utterly unreliable. It would not be taken as of the least account in the most trifling affairs of life. Is it prudent, then, to receive it in reference to the momentous concerns of eternity? — to make it paramount to God's word? We admonish the reader to beware. This is not the first time that men have undertaken to subvert the truth by pretended revelations. Logic, learning, dreams and visions, art and science, witchcraft and legerdemain, have all been taxed to overthrow the Christian system; but it still remains. And we apprehend it will abide when the knockings shall have ceased forever. Reader, don't be too credulous. Criticize the witnesses — compare their testimonies — look to their associations, and see if there is not a conspiracy against God and truth. And

"God speed the right."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE KNOCKINGS NOT ATTRIBUTABLE TO DEPARTED SPIRITS.

To the objection urged against the spirit "knockings," &c., in our last chapter, we proceed to add others relating especially to the revelations attributed to them. Mr. Ballou divides these into three classes: The *first*, embracing such as he thinks come from departed spirits; the *second*, such as are "greatly affected by *un*departed spirits;" and the *third*, such as are "of a heterogeneous, incongruous, or derogatory character." (p. 12.) In the remarks which we are about to make, we shall confine ourselves chiefly to first class revelations, because we wish to meet the case fairly. The assumption is, that they come from departed spirits, and are reliable as revelations in regard to the spirit world. We object to receiving them as such, —

1. Because of their *want of proper reference to the Father of spirits.* The Scriptures declare that the "spirit," at death, "returns to God, who gave it." (Eccles. xii. 7.) Not to some distant sphere or circle, little above the range of mortality. This is modern language — the language of Restorationism — "*eternal progression*," and perverted "*intuition.*" When Stephen was stoned, he cried, "Lord Jesus, *receive my spirit.*" St. Paul thought it better to depart and "*be with Christ*," because, "whilst we are at home in the body, we are *absent from the Lord;* but when we are absent from the body, we are *present with the Lord.*" If, then, the spirits of the departed are with God, he must be the principal object of attraction to them. Hence, if they should be permitted to communicate with men, they would naturally speak of Him. Besides, to know more of God, and of our relations to him, would seem to be among the most useful attainments; and of what could spirits speak more appropriately than of Him.

But what is the fact in relation to the assumed spirit revelations? It is remarkably this — God is hardly named. Indeed we do not learn

that the spirits have ever seen him, or that he is an object of any considerable interest among them. They have seen the infidel Paine in the sixth circle, and other "enemies of all righteousness" stretching away towards infinity; they have reported their present notions, and described their relative conditions. But the Alpha and Omega of the spirit world, they do not seem to find, nor do they report any thing from him. Their thoughts run in another channel. By adverting to Mr. Ballou's first class revelations, it will be seen that the first mentioned relates to a man in Rochester having received a communication that his child was dead at Lockport. The second describes a conversation the spirit of a Mr. Willets had with his son, advising him to "come to Rochester," where he would *get work*. In the third case, the spirit rapped a man's *age*, &c., and told how many *shells* he held in his hand. The fourth describes how the spirit requested a certain hymn to be sung, and directed where to find it. In the fifth, the spirit states how and when it departed, and how many children it left, &c. (pp. 26–30.) In the sixth, it seized its daughter by the *foot*, to convince her of its real presence. And so on to the end of the class. The name of God is hardly mentioned from first to last. We conclude, therefore, that the knockings are not the work of departed spirits, but of other spirits, which think as little of God in their waking, as in their sleeping moments.

II. We object that the knockings *are deficient in reference to Christ.* They treat the Son with less respect, if possible, than they do the Father. Of the latter they say little, but the former they characterize only as a nice young man, and an excellent "*medium*." This indicates the school of theologians to which they belong, and shows that they have not the slightest sympathy with the Scriptures, which are filled with the praise of the Saviour, as "the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace." The knocks import what many of the leading mediums and their associates have taught for several years, but not what is taught by "holy writ," or congenial to vital piety. The knockers, therefore, show clearly that, whoever they are, they are not "*with Christ*," and have no regard for him in the character he sustains in the Scriptures. In other words, they show that they are *infidels* of the darkest dye. They neither recognize his Godhead, nor his office as an atoning High Priest, nor any one principle of the grand scheme of redemption and mediation developed by his life and death. They steer just as clear of Christ in this respect as though they were Hindoos. We conclude, therefore, that the knockers are not disembodied spirits.

III. We object, also, that they *undervalue the office of the Holy Spirit.* As we have before shown, this is the divinely-appointed agency, by which the world is reproved "of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment to come." To the good, it is a Comforter; it dwells "*in them*," "*fills*," *enlightens*, *guides*, *sanctifies*, and *consoles* them. "I will send the Comforter," said Christ, and "*he shall testify of me*," and he shall "be with you," &c. This is the grand efficient means by which men are *moved*, *reformed*, *saved*, and made happy in the Lord. It is to the gospel what the sun is to the solar system. And yet, the knockers do not seem to have seen HIM at all. They call up any spirit demanded but the Holy Spirit. In reference to Him, they maintain a *deadly silence.*

Now, reader, is not this very singular? What should we think of communications purporting to come from France, that should say nothing of Napoleon? Or from Washington, that should make no

allusion to the President, or to Congress? The prophets, writing of God and heaven, of the means of grace, &c., have given the Holy Spirit large consideration — have defined his character, agency, and importance, in the fullest manner. And so have the apostles, and all Christian authors. But in the new system, the Spirit of God seems to be superseded by the "knockings," and the "communion of the Holy Ghost" has given place to communion with departed spirits. It really brings forward other comforters, who shall lead us into all truth. Mr. Ballou's son writes back to his sister, that the love of the spirits is "doing a VAST AMOUNT of good; rendering many a heart, otherwise desolate, FULL OF JOY AND PEACE; SOOTHING THE COUCH OF SICKNESS and death, and, while it *ushers into immortal blessedness the departed spirit*, speaks such words of hope and *consolation to the mourner*, as no earthly heart could dictate." (p. 226.)

What a pity that St. Paul had not known about this! He never could have said the "fruit of the Spirit is *love, joy, peace*," &c. Nor could Stephen have prayed, when dying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," if he had understood the new system. And St. John, we think, would not have said, "we know that he abideth in us, by *the Spirit* which he hath given us," and "*the Spirit* of glory and of God resteth upon you." Hence we see, that the inspired writers did not recognize the agency of departed spirits in the work of salvation.

But what is there so very consolatory in the words of the spirits to the mourner? Did not this boy hear his father teach the same things before the spiritual knockings commenced? Mr. Ballou has been preaching universal salvation for many years. He undoubtedly comforted great numbers of sinners with the assurance that there is no hell, and no punishment, other than what is reformatory, long before he became a medium. He might not have told them that the "spirits of the dead were pursuing them with words of forgiveness, *restraining them from still viler deeds*," &c., — this is the work of the *Holy Spirit*, not of human spirits, — but he did tell them their departed friends were in a hopeful and improving state, and that they would all get to heaven finally. And was not this as consolatory as words could be? They comforted Eve of old, and she was encouraged to trample divine revelation in the dust.

IV. We submit that *the business of tipping and knocking tables, and playing other pranks connected with these phenomena, is too grovelling and contemptible for departed spirits.* Said Christ to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with *me in paradise*." Not flying hither and thither at the beck of some silly swoon, flirting about under beds and tables, down cellar and in the garret, *scratching and snapping furniture, and fooling over fiddle strings.* If this be *heavenly* work, we have read the Bible to little purpose, and the devil has received more than his due. And if this be all that is meant by being "*before the throne of God*," being "*with Christ*," and crying with a "loud voice, *Salvation to our God*, and unto the Lamb," and "serving God day and night *in his temple*," heaven is no great attainment after all. But it is not so. God hath not written it. It is the work of an enemy. Seeing that they could not annihilate the soul, and send it to eternal silence, as infidels have tried to do, or translate it to heaven unconverted and unrenewed by the Holy Ghost, ungodly men have undertaken now to annihilate heaven, or transform it into a kind of purgatorial Babel, to meet the necessities of certain sinners they have failed to supply by their infidel and jesuitical arguments. But it will not succeed. If the rich man

could not persuade Abraham to let Lazarus come to his relief, or go and warn his five brethren of their dreadful danger, mesmerizers need not think they are going to call down spirits from heaven to amuse them with a miserable jugglery, only befitting *fortune tellers and wizards.* The spirits of the pious dead have better business; and if spirit hunters "believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded, though one arose from the dead."

As it respects the spirits of the wicked dead, though they might covet the mischievous business of *haunting* the living, and *scaring* them with strange and unearthly appearances, they are not permitted. Otherwise, the rich man, who was peremptorily refused the services of Lazarus, would have gone himself, and *knocked*, and *tipped* among his brethren, till he had frightened them to repentance; and this mode of communication between the living and the dead had been divulged, long before the advent of the Newark girls, Mr. Spear, and company. We conclude, therefore, that the new revelations have no connection whatever with departed spirits.

V. Another objection is *found in the character of the mediums and their associates.* Though God has seldom spoken by earthly dignitaries, and has generally "chosen the *foolish* things of the world to confound the wise, and the *weak* things of the world to confound the things which are mighty," he has uniformly chosen persons who were "rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom." If he chose Saul of Tarsus, a persecutor of Christ, to be an apostle, he was not initiated until he became a new, penitent, praying, converted man. So of Peter, and of all the apostles. His communications were made to his friends, to those who sought him in fastings and prayers, in the temple and about his altar. But, in the present case, the order seems to be essentially reversed. *Universalists, Come-outers, infidels, Sabbath breakers, charmers, phrenologists, quack doctors,* and others, who have never been distinguished for devotion to God and his truth as it is in Jesus, are particularly favored. They are chief priests of the profession. Hence, when a Christian gets into the rappings, he instinctively feels that he is out of place, that he belongs with the enemies of the church; and he leaves his old associations, and joins himself to his new friends, the Rappers. Just as Come-outers, Universalists, &c., when they "*repent of their sins,*" and commence a life of *prayer*, and *holy living*, leave their old associates, and go over to the church.

Now, it does seem to us, if God had been going to make a communication to the world through human spirits, for its religious benefit, he would have selected different mediums. But this objection will only have weight with believers in the Scriptures as a revelation from God. The Rappers, of course, if honest, would expect the spirits to hate the church and her ordinances as much as they do, and rap against her Sabbaths, sanctuaries, Bibles, prayers, heaven, hell, and other peculiarities, just as they are said to do.

VI. We object to the new revelations still further, *that they are irreconcilable with the Bible.* Christians agree that the Bible is from God, and is the standard of religious truth and doctrine, so that what is not clearly taught therein, or may not be fairly inferred therefrom, is not true. And it is also agreed, that its teachings are sufficient, accompanied by the Holy Spirit, as they are, for all the purposes of life and salvation. It is claimed, therefore, that no impression, experience, doctrine, or action, which is not according to this book, is from above. Hence, said the apostle to the Galatians, "Though we, or an angel from

heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached, let him be accursed." (Gal. i. 8.)

If, then, the revealments of the "*knockers*" are, as is assumed, from departed spirits, and are to be relied on as true, they must harmonize with the inspired records. But they do not. Some of the most important truths they flatly deny; others they deny by implication from asserted doctrines, while many are passed over with entire silence. For example, —

1. The Bible teaches the future and eternal punishment of those who die in impenitence and unbelief. But the knockers generally say there is no such punishment. They divide departed spirits into ranks, or circles, and set them off upon a course of endless progression, with a certainty, that they will graduate from circle to circle, till they reach the highest sphere. A very pretty notion indeed, extremely comforting to "murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers," and other rebels; but it is utterly destitute of authority. The Bible gives *no hint*, not a *vowel point*, upon which to build the castle. It originated in another quarter. Mr. Ballou says, it is according to the philosophy he has taught for many years, and we believe it. Its origin is earthly. The spirits know it is not true. It is another gospel.

2. The Bible teaches that man is conceived in sin; that he is "*corrupt*," "*sold under sin;*" that he is depraved, "*carnally minded*," and therefore, that he is weak, and poor, and miserable; and that Christ was sent a "quickening spirit." But the "*knockers*" have nothing to say about all this. The fall of man has no place in their creed. "Man," says Jackson Davis, is "an incarnated divinity." They talk about following "*reason*," "*nature*," and "*philosophy*," just as if nothing had happened, and man were as clear sighted, and unbiased to evil as he is to good.

3. Nor do repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, form a part of their creed. They are not even mentioned, though the Scriptures urge them as indispensable to salvation. The prophets preached that men ought to repent, lest iniquity should be "their ruin." (Ezek. xviii. 30.) John came preaching repentance. Jesus followed, urging the same duty by the awful considerations of the love and displeasure of God. And his apostles did the same, as all successful ministers have done since. But the reputed "spirits" do not even *mention the thing*. Repentance has no place among them. They come knocking about the *merest trifles*, and that for the amusement of *infidels*, and other enemies of the cross, whose first duty is to repent and believe the gospel; and yet they say not one word about it. How unlike to heaven is this! The Saviour declares, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over *one sinner* that *repenteth*." And he came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. But the spirits seem to be quite unaffected with any thing of this kind. The reason unquestionably is, they are *Poughkeepsie*, *Rochester*, *Hope Dale*, and other *local spirits*, and not heavenly.

4. The same is true of *pardon* or *forgiveness, and regeneration* — great Scripture doctrines. "Except a man be born again," said Christ, "he cannot see the kingdom of God;" that is, born from above, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," (Gal. vi. 15;) so born as not to sin, but to hate sin and turn from it, and so forgiven that all his sins are "blotted out." These are fundamental principles, the very essence of divine revelation. The way of gaining these grand achievements was the good news which

Christ rung in the ears of the world. The guilty sinner needs pardon; the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, and cannot be subject to his law of its own energy, needs regenerating.

But the "*knockers*" say nothing on the subject. According to Mr. Ballou's book, they are all taken up with the new developments — "*social reform*," and other things of little importance. His spirit son is represented as saying that, when they look on the different kinds of wickedness around, they "are made to rejoice by turning their eyes to this *dale*, [Hope Dale,] and in the vision of *faith* beholding the whole earth under such principles, and those even better, changed into the Eden that once was." (p. 225.) It is interesting to observe the sympathy spirits have for the views of their living friends. Romanists have had many communications from them, and they uniformly relate to masses, purgatory, pilgrimages, alms, &c. Boden, in his Demonology, mentions cases where spirits have appeared to indicate that certain dead were in purgatory, and wanted prayers and alms for their deliverance. It is assumed that a catechumen, dying without baptism, was permitted to return to St. Martin to obtain that rite. (*Phantom World*, pp. 202, 203.) Sancho appeared to his master several centuries ago, four months after his death, and told him he was going to expiate the harm he did in the last war, and desired him to aid him by his good works, and have his wife give the *eight sols* she owed him on his salary to the poor *in his name*, to help him out of trouble. Being interrogated, he reported who was saved and who damned; but King Alphonso had not been dead long enough for Sancho to learn about his case. But another spirit said he was in purgatory with them for a while; but the monks of Clugni extricated him, since which they had not heard from him. (p. 286.) Some time before the death of Pope Leo IX., which occurred in 1059, there was a great rush of spirits, and the community was much alarmed. But one man of rare resolution accosted them, to whom they replied, "We are *spirits*, which, not having yet expiated our sins, we are going into *holy places* in a spirit of repentance. We are now come from visiting the tomb of St. Martin, and we are going straight to Notre Dame." (p. 288.)

If it were necessary, we could furnish volumes of such nonsense, which goes just as far to prove the orthodoxy of Romanism, as the present rappings go to prove Universalism and infidelity. They are all, however, we believe, a libel upon the spirit world, and upon Christianity, got up for the occasion, to help out a wicked system, which God rejects as he did Saul.

5. The rappers are also silent in regard to the doctrines of the *resurrection and the general judgment*. The Bible reveals nothing more clearly than that the dead shall live again; that they shall be judged, and every man receive "according to that he hath done." And all this shall take place at a definite time, called the day of judgment.

But our new system makes no more allusion to these things than though they had never been thought of. And worse than this, it puts all spirits upon a process of progression, which is to continue *ad infinitum*. Of course, there can be no judgment, no adjudication of particular cases, and no punishment. So that the Bible, on these points, must be a grand lie — a mere *scarecrow* to frighten souls.

6. They are equally *heretical in regard to religious duties*. Though the Bible insists on the religious observance of the Sabbath, they do not. Mr. Ballou, who seems to be the very chief of saints among them, enjoins prayer but twice, I think, in all his book, and then only mental

prayer. Most others say nothing about it. It should be observed, however, that those who are gradually receding from the churches, and following the rappings from religious considerations, often pray very ardently when they come around the table for responses. They did so in the cases referred to in New York, where the spirits rapped nothing but falsehood. But this is soon found to be an unnecessary and troublesome ceremony, too "*churchish*" and *unphilosophical* for the new dispensation, and is laid aside, except where it is necessary to keep up appearances. Many are too conscientious to be seduced away from all their old tendencies at once. A little prayer to open, takes off the curse very much, and makes it quite saint-like to consult the spirits.

7. Indeed, they are *wanting in almost every point of Christian theology.* The materialism of Mr. Davis we have before proved. Mr. Ballou says, "*Matter and spirit* are both *eternally coexistent* substances in the universe." (p. 5.) Of course, God is not the Creator of the universe, for what was created must have had a beginning, beyond which it did not exist. "Each," he says, "exists more gross or more refined, the *finer* pervading the *coarser* through all degrees. But these terms seem to belong to *matter*. It does not sound well to say "*coarse*" soul, and "*fine*" soul. What does the writer mean? Does he not hold that the soul is "*refined matter*"? If *he* does not many of his coadjutors do. A Mr. C. H. White, who is both a medium and an author, says "he agrees somewhat with A. J. Davis" about the earth, and he denies that the time ever was when only two human beings existed, and says that "the vegetable and animal kingdoms, not excepting man, were *made and expanded* by natural *process of refinement.*" (*Hist. of Spir. Knockings*, &c., p. 34.) That is, they grew. This writer concedes that he is a Universalist, — says the spirits designate A. J. Davis's, Hammond's, and Ambler's books, as the best to be read at the meetings of the circle. (p. 36.) He thinks a glorious day has dawned. But "ministers of the gospel are the last to assent to new truths." He is, however, comforted in the belief that though "*priest-craft* clings tenaciously, with iron nerves and muscles, to retain her followers in the chains of tyranny and bigotry," "the hour draws nigh when her foundations will crumble headlong, and she become a second Tower of Babel." (p. 17.) Whether this prophecy should prove true or not, the gentleman may be assured that he is not the first sufferer from ministerial tardiness to believe *new notions.* St. Paul gave the masters of a certain medium great trouble in his day, insomuch that they had him arrested and imprisoned. (Acts xvi. 16–24.) He also disturbed Demetrius, a silversmith, to such an extent that the whole city "was filled with confusion." (Acts xix.) And we cannot deny that it would be just like ministers, if they should bring a cloud over the prospects of the Rappers. They certainly will do so, if they are actuated by the spirit of the preacher at Ephesus.

VII. We object to the assumptions of the Rappers, *that they are often presumptuous, childish, and contradictory.*

Presumptuous, in that they attribute to spirits a sort of omniscience and omnipresence which belongs only to God. Said the witch of Endor to Saul, "Whom shall I bring up?" And the medium inquires, "What spirit shall I call for?" just as though the spirits of all the dead were present, and ready to communicate, while there may be a thousand other mediums in different parts of the world calling for the same spirit. It is further presumed that the spirit introduced is capable of giving correct information on all conceivable subjects, from the most

trivial to the most important, and that without a special commission from God. They are *childish and contradictory*, in that they attribute a degree of incapacity to spirits, that has no foundation in revelation or well-established facts. For instance, they account for the bad spelling of some of the spirits, that they had never learned English. One author, speaking of the spirit of a child, who made bad work in this respect, obtained information that it had been placed under the tuition of a relative spirit, and was making fine improvement, and would be able to knock better soon. In one instance, a Rapper commenced a sentence and stopped short. Another spirit, coming up, explained by saying, that he was called away on "*special business.*" A lady visited a medium, during the convention at the Masonic Temple, with important inquiries, but could get no responses whatever, because, as she was informed, the spirits had all gone to the convention. Yet with all this *ignorance, press of business, and liability of being abroad*, the spirits can generally be rallied to suit customers, and we are required to believe that they teach the high mysteries of eternity in truth and righteousness.

They are contradictory in other respects. We are acquainted with a preacher, who, happening into a neighbor's house, was informed that the medium daughter had a communication for him from his departed wife. He heard it with considerable interest, and questioned her on several points of doctrine, and was assured that he was in error. Subsequently he was in another house, where there was an excellent medium, who, to her credit, only operated for family purposes. The wife, being called upon the stand again, assured him he was preaching the truth, and urged him to continue in the work. Such contradictions are constantly occurring. Mr. Ballou details several of them, and adds, "In fine, specimens of almost every thing *incoherent, contradictory, deceitful, and absurd* have come from what purported to be spirits," and says, it is "*extremely difficult* to answer satisfactorily" how these things are to be accounted for. (p. 60.) How, then, we ask, can a sane man receive the testimony of the Rappers on any point, not demonstrated by other evidence?

VIII. Finally, *we reject the whole concern — operators, mediums, clairvoyants, knockings, and other mysteries, be they more or less — as means of information from the spirit world*, on the ground, that its *results are morally and religiously evil, and that continually.* God's revelations have always been characterized by a high moral tendency. Appealing to our *intelligence*, our *sense of right and wrong*, our *self-love*, our *hopes and fears*, they have impressed us with those sentiments which prompt men to obey God and do good to their fellow-men. They have proved themselves "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Tim. iii. 16.) And, if they have not made every man who has come within their influence what he ought to be, it is because some have turned away from the holy commandment, and would not submit to the divine counsel.

But how is it with the pretended revelations of mesmerism, and the knockings? We have no hesitancy in saying, that it is exactly the *reverse.* As a general thing, they are brought forward by *irreligious men*, who have not failed to *rap Christianity* on all favorable occasions; and they have been its chief priests to the present time. If they are not infidels outright, they are *in effect.* They reject the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, particularly those which disturb the conscience, awaken the fears, and bring sinners to Christ. They have been the

enemies of the church for years, and have tried more ways than one to destroy her influence. Several of the men who figured largely in the ranks of the *Come-outers* a few years since, are now prominent among the Rappers, and are rapping away at the church just as *lustily* as they did under their former name. The president of the rapping convention held in the Masonic Temple will excuse me if I say, that, when best acquainted with him, he was a distinguished *Come-outer* of the Garrison and Bronson Alcott school. His history will show, that this is not the first convention in which he has taken a prominent part. And where is the evidence, that he loves the Lord or the church any better now than then? We are not aware that he professes to have changed at all in this respect.

But "some ministers and other good people are interested in the rappings." True, curiosity led many to look into it a little at first, and some, being exceedingly credulous, were carried farther than they intended to go. Where they have embraced the Rappers as divine teachers, they have generally left the church, and gone to their own company. And this is as it should be. When men adopt new revelations, contradicting the Holy Scriptures, and making it religious for Christians to affiliate with the enemies of the cross, as hale brothers well met, we think it time for them to secede. Some did the same thing under the leadership of Mr. Garrison, ten years ago, and took leading parts in the *anti-church* and *anti-Sabbath* conventions. And they were caressed as "*Progressionists*," "*Universal Reformers*," &c.; and they did more for *Come-outism*, than those who had never been in the church at all. And some ministers have run after the "*Rappers*" honestly, perhaps, at first, but they have been corrupted. There are more, however, who have gone far enough to produce the phenomena, and then left it because of its evil tendencies. Like the witchcraft of old, it almost invariably leads its votaries away after other gods. It is therefore to be rejected as an enemy to religion and to man.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PHENOMENA CONNECTED WITH THE "KNOCKINGS" — HOW DISPOSED OF.

"WHAT then," say the advocates of the new revelations, "are you going to do with the *facts?*" "How will you explain them?" To this we reply, —

I. Suppose we should conclude to put them with thousands of others, which are older and more common, and yet remain *unexplained?* If the inquirer will look around, or even within himself, he will be forced to concede many facts, of which he can give no rational explanation. He may, perhaps, discover that the earth rests upon an elephant, but what supports the elephant will not be so easily determined. Should we insist that he give the explanation, or believe that the elephant stands upon the shoulders of the Hindoo god Vishnu, he would think that we had pressed him unreasonably, and would claim the right of choosing some other alternative. Yet this is the precise position in which he places us. We must explain the facts, he says, or

believe they are caused by departed spirits. That is, we must explain the facts, or admit his inferences from them.

II. Suppose we should choose to attribute the phenomena to the *devil*, rather than to departed spirits? His *existence* is substantiated beyond reasonable doubt. We have as clear proof of it as can be produced of the existence of God, or of human spirits. As to *intelligence*, he is represented as standing very high. Hence his power to deceive. His *ability* to produce the knockings, tippings, &c., is undeniable, since we are divinely assured that he has great power. It was he that tempted and afflicted Job, that destroyed his children and property; that bound a daughter of Abraham "*eighteen years;*" and that possessed and tormented many in the days of Christ. The knockings would be easy enough for him, unquestionably. And the tipping of a table with several men sitting upon it would not be a circumstance to what he has done many times. And we see nothing in the phenomena, or their special abetters and supporters, inconsistent with the idea that he is at the bottom of the whole thing. And certainly, there is no *good* resulting from it to invalidate this view of the subject. If there be now and then a ray of light, or even if there be some important truths conceded, and some benevolent results reached, — of which, however, we see no evidence, — it is only in accordance with his old habits. His objects are sometimes secured more readily by transforming himself into an "angel of light," and by admitting some truths, and using some Scripture, as he did in tempting the Saviour. History shows, that rank infidelity does not take well in this religious world. It must be sweetened with some truth, and have some show of goodness, or it cannot succeed. And then these phenomena look just like works of the devil, as detailed in Scripture. So that the presumption that he may be the real "*rapper*," after all, would not be so wild as some may imagine. And the knockers seem to be aware of it, and, therefore, to get rid of the difficulty, deny the existence of such a being as the devil in the very outset.

For ourselves, if we must believe the rappings are produced by unembodied spirits at all, we shall be compelled to take this view of the subject: 1. Because the devil possesses the powers and faculties just named. 2. Because of a very striking correspondence between these things and his former proceedings, as stated in Holy Scripture. 3. Because of the religious *views* and *affinities* of the rapping fraternity. 4. Because the tree is to be known by its fruit. And, finally, because it is not known that departed spirits possess the powers necessary to such results. 1. It remains to be seen that they have any communication with the living, except by special commission, and for a special purpose; whereas the devil has been in frequent communication with them ever since the fall. 2. Suppose they were permitted, the question is, whether they possess the *powers* of ubiquity and *intelligence* attributed to them. We know the devil can do these things, because God has revealed it. But where is the evidence that departed spirits can do them? especially that they can lift *tables loaded with men*, *smash up chairs and crockery*, and perform other feats of power? or that they can look into the future, and disclose the hidden things of eternity, at the bidding of a frivolous circle of unbelievers in everlasting truth? No one of these points is yet revealed, nor can it be proved, while every one of them is provable of the devil, from divine revelation, and his own doings.

III. But suppose we should believe that the knockings are produced

by the *mediums themselves*, though we cannot explain the *manner* in which they are effected. Would this be inconsistent, or unphilosophical, or irreligious? I believe it is the immaterial spirit in me that moves my fingers and pen, but I have not the slightest idea how it is done. We believe the food we eat is transformed into blood, flesh, bones, hair, nails, &c., and thus sustains the different parts of the human system; but no mortal can fully explain the process. Nor has it ever been seen *how* spirit can move matter at all. Mr. Anderson, the great American wizard, keeps his patrons entranced with his jugglery, and they are compelled to say that it is wonderful, though they are unable to explain how he does it. Should he assume to do it by the power of Gabriel, and demand us to believe, or explain, the teachers of the new revelations would be obliged, on their own grounds, to believe. Had the magicians of Egypt placed Moses in this condition, he must have become an idolater, because he was probably unable to explain the power of their enchantments. We object to being limited to these alternatives. There are others which we prefer.

In relation to the raps being produced by the mediums and their associates, we remark, 1. That we see less difficulty than attends the belief that they are produced by departed spirits. But it will be asked, How can spirits in the flesh move tables, without touching them? Here is the "*pinch*," and we do not say that we have the means of giving a satisfactory answer. But if the inquirers will tell us how *departed spirits* can move tables, and produce the other phenomena attributed to them, we will try. Or, if they will prove that *departed* spirits *can do* these things, or HAVE *done* them, though they do not explain *how*, we will engage to show *how* spirits in the flesh can do them. But this is impossible. Hence, we see the grossness of their *assumptions*, and the unreasonableness of their *demands*. They assume that *departed spirits* have the power to produce these phenomena, which we deny; then, that they *do* produce them, though they cannot tell *how*, and demand of us to explain *how* spirits in the flesh can produce them, or *concede what they assume*. The only reason they can give for attributing the raps to departed spirits is, that the rappers say they are spirits. Yet they concede that the spirits are often of a low class, and do *lie;* that they pretend to be what they are not, as one is reported to have said in explanation to her inquiring husband, "My name is often used where I am not." Now, if they *lie* about one thing, they may lie about another; and hence, as no man has seen them, or can see them, to distinguish which is good and which bad, which truthful and which treacherous, were we to admit that departed spirits make the raps, their testimony would not be worth one fig. It would not be taken in court, nor would any sane man venture a sixpence upon its authority. But they are not agreed in this particular. Some claim to be the spirits of beasts. So that the pretence of Rappers, that they are spirits, is no evidence at all.

2. We consider the point conceded by some of the principal movers in the rappings. Mr. Sunderland, whose name stands high in this connection, though heterodox in his religious views, probably, as any of the rapping fraternity, discards the idea. Mr. Ballou, who claims that the rappings are generally produced by departed spirits, and places great account upon their revelations, admits that they may be *caused*, or greatly affected, by undeparted spirits, that is, "spirits in the flesh, who, by their will, or *psychological power, control the agency which gives forth sounds, motions*," &c. (p. 52.) "Hence," he says, "the

communications, even of a *decent* and *well-meaning departed* spirit *might come out in a very awkward translation*, something *quite unlike what was intended*." (p. 61.) We have quoted from this author before to the same effect, and might add several pages more, recognizing the power of mediums to *control* the raps. If, then, the mediums *control* the raps, why not *produce* them? If they *produce* them in some cases, why not in all? It seems to us that if we have discovered a psychological power in mortals, in some cases, to make the raps, and in others to control them, it is more reasonable to believe that they are made in all cases by the *same power*, than to attribute them to an intangible agent, whose presence, power, and action are unestablished by any sufficient evidence.

3. Our third remark is, that there are *numerous facts* which render it decidedly more probable that the raps are produced by the mediums and their associates, than that they are the work of departed spirits. In this we mean to concede certain physical phenomena, such as have been detailed in the preceding pages, and that they are not to be accounted for by any legerdemain, trickery, or sleight of hand, nor purely by magnetism or electricity, though there may have been respectable counterfeits produced by these means. Our opinion is, that there is a certain power in some persons which enables them, under favorable circumstances, to produce all these results. It is not strictly physical, nor is it entirely intellectual, or sympathetic, but seems to be a combination involving perception and will. We hardly know what name to give it. It is not electricity, though we have no doubt electricity has something to do with it. It is not animal magnetism alone, though the magnetic or clairvoyant state has seemed to be a necessary circumstance in producing some of the phenomena. One writer denominates it *spiricity;* but the name is of the least consequence. Does the thing exist in fact? We have no doubt of it; and though we do not design to enter much into the *philosophical* aspects of the question, we beg the reader's attention to the following facts: —

(1.) It is an old *truth*, and not fiction, that there is a power in some persons to detect the locality of metals and water in the earth by the aid of a hazel stick. The writer has seen the operation. What power is that? No one can explain it, and yet its existence is generally conceded. Now, if there be that in persons which causes the stick to bend downward as they hold it over metals or water in the bowels of the earth, why may there not be something in others, that will cause the table to move, or give out sounds as they approach it?

(2.) In 1839, two Smyrna girls visited France to exhibit what was then called their "*electrical powers*" in moving tables without contact. Men of science assembled to witness the performance. They heard sounds, saw the table shake and move, but found that by placing a piece of iron on the table, the phenomena ceased. They were also found to be disturbed by a change of atmosphere, showing clearly enough that electricity was concerned in producing them. — *Philosophy of Mysterious Agents*, p. 101.

(3.) Some thirty years ago there were many experiments of this nature in Europe. Speaking of the results, one writer says, "I saw the chairs move; a large dining table was thrown against me, and a small stand, on which stood a candle, was tossed up and thrown into my wife's lap." In another case, it is recorded, "The table was forced against each one of us so powerfully as to move us from our position, together with the chairs we occupied, in all several feet." (pp. 140, 141.)

This power is not limited to mesmerizers, nor to any particular association. Yet it may be concentrated, and employed to produce remarkable phenomena. The rules laid down for forming circles are philosophical, but they seem to us to explode the idea that the raps are made by spirits. (1.) The circle should be composed of *fourteen* persons. But why *fourteen?* (2.) None must be admitted who are "opposed to receiving manifestations *conflicting* with their preconceived opinions, or WHO WILL NOT SIT IN A PASSIVE STATE." (3.) The circle must combine both *ladies* and gentlemen. (4.) They must seat themselves at the *table*, the ladies *on the opposite* side of the gentlemen, and take the *magnetic cord* in their hands. The object of this is said to be to "*confine their thoughts to one thing*," and "insure a *passiveness* requisite for *mutual improvement*." Will not the spirits rap without all this parade? But this is not enough. (5.) Silence must be preserved for *one hour*. (6.) All must then put their hands upon the table — *Hist. of Spir. Knockings*, pp. 28, 29. Now, which does this look most like, *coaxing the spirits to rap,* or preparing a battery for producing the sounds among themselves? We leave the reader to judge.

4. Mr. Rogers gives us, *in his* "*Philosophy of Mysterious Agents*," a fact of the spirits being banished from a very happy gentleman by a dose of calomel and rhei. He has lectured the doctor many times since on his wickedness in dispersing them, and thinks less of the regular practice than formerly. The same physician, a gentleman of this city, was called to visit a young lady twenty-two years of age, a regular "*rapping medium*." He found her to be affected with headache, sensation of fulness in the cranium, frequent vertigo, resulting often in spasms and convulsions; sometimes had cataleptic attacks, complained of pains in the back, &c.; pulse rapid, coldness of the extremities, amenorrhœa for the last ten months. "She informed me," he says, "that she had not been able to sleep half the nights for the last six months, on account of the almost constant *rapping of the spirits* around her. And they would keep rapping, she said, until she questioned them. To be satisfied whether all this was not the working of a *diseased fancy*, and was not altogether subjective, I made careful observations, and soon became satisfied that the sounds were not *in her fancy*, but outward, *veritable* phenomena, cognizable to my own sense of hearing as well as hers. Neither could they have been produced by collusion. I now asked her to question them. One afternoon I called upon her, and found her nervous system in a high degree of excitement, indicating an epileptic attack. The rappings were heard around, here and there. I immediately administerd a powerful *sedative*. On this the rappings ceased, and have never annoyed her since, with the exception of twice, when a few faint raps were heard during some slight paroxysm of the nervous malady." (p. 288.)

From these and other cases innumerable, it is obvious that the rapping *agent* is *physical*, and not spiritual. The most rigid Thomsonian cannot presume that the spirits would be so offended at a dose of *calomel*, as to take their leave of a favorite subject, and never return. Nor can our spiritmongers think that they would budge an inch, for all the "*sedatives*" in creation. And yet we see, that the administration of certain drugs, has ended the rapping in a day, in the case of a medium of great power.

We should be gratified to give what we regard to be the proper explanation of these facts; but we leave this branch of the subject to

others. If any are disposed to examine this matter of *rapping power*, they will find a multitude of interesting facts, and well-arranged arguments in the above mentioned "*Philosophy*." We regard this as an able work, well worthy of the attention of all persons interested in the true philosophy of the rappings.

But we shall be asked, If this rapping power be a physical agent in the circles, how is it controlled? We answer, Just as the magnetic or mesmeric power is controlled — by the will and movements of mesmerizers. They possess a power to mesmerize certain *willing subjects* more or less, at their pleasure. So mediums possess a power (which time and investigation will more fully explain) to produce mysterious sounds, move tables, shake doors, &c. *How* this power is influenced by the *will*, we cannot explain, any more than we can explain how the feet, and hands, and tongue are governed by the will. One is no greater mystery than the other. And the fact that this power sometimes operates to produce its phenomena without the consciousness of the medium, is no more incredible than that all our limbs and other faculties do the same, as we know they do, from every day's observation. Hence the unconsciousness of having produced these phenomena on the part of the medium, is no satisfactory proof that she did not produce them. People seldom have any consciousness of what they are really doing in a state of dreams and mesmerism. They often fancy they are drowning, flying, falling, &c., though they are actually lying still, or engaged in other ways. Mr. Rogers places this point in a very clear light.

We shall be asked, also, If this rapping power is in the mediums, and is in any way subject to their will, why cannot they produce the phenomena one time as well as another? We answer, For the same reason that a man cannot speak as well at one time as another; and that chemists and philosophers cannot always succeed alike in producing the same scientific phenomena — the circumstances are not alike favorable. Owing to personal causes, the power is not always the same. It varies with the health, and mental and nervous states of the medium, and others of the circle. And these are affected by other circumstances, as the state of the atmosphere, food, exercise, and the company present at the sitting. These are the *surly spirits*, that take fits, and will not knock at all, and then again knock lively. Hence the managers insist that the mediums must not be *overworked*, because it will exhaust the nervous energy, or whatever you please to call it, by which the mystery is wrought. And here, too, they insist on having only a few present, and those of a particular character and demeanor. And then, every thing must be conducted just so gravely and thoughtfully. Not that the spirits are so very *pious* and sensitive, that they would be afflicted, and refuse to knock. For, if there are some punctilious ones, it is evident from the revealments, that others would not mind a little noise or irreverence, since they are quite inclined to deceive their mortal inquisitors, and make sport for themselves. The object of all this nicety is to keep the mind and nerves of the mediums right, so that they may bring their forces to bear upon the point. Moderate mediums would be disturbed by the presence of powerful unbelievers, and not less so by fun and ridicule, noise and disorder.

We have no doubt they are often disarmed by *qualms of conscience*, so as in a measure to lose their power. It is conceded by the ablest expositors of the rappings, that some mediums *begin* very *feebly*, and

wax stronger and stronger, till they reach a high character; and others lose their power altogether.* So long as they allow shame, or guilt, or the fear of man to harass them, they can do but little; but as these impediments pass away, and they become valiant, they are correspondingly perfect. And, then, if by the Spirit of God, or otherwise, they are aroused to see the *sin*, *disgrace*, and danger of their course, and to tremble in view of the consequences of pursuing it, they lose their power, as did the "*damsel*" who possessed the spirit of "*divination*." (Acts xvi. 18.) When she was awakened, and began to follow the apostles, acknowledging their office, she could do no more and "her masters or *magnetizers* saw that the hope of *their gains* was gone."

The reader will understand, that these are not mere hits, but *facts*, conceded by the Rappers in general; that is, so far as they relate to the necessity of having things in just such shape, in order to bring out the *wonders*. If it were necessary, we would prove this beyond a doubt. The explanations and inferences are our own, the justness of which we submit for consideration.

But some will inquire, Suppose this to be true in regard to the raps, and other physical phenomena, how do you explain the indications of intelligence manifested? The question is a fair one, and demands a serious answer, which we will endeavor to give. If we shall fail of making every point as clear as is desirable, the reader will remember, that the subject does not admit of demonstrations either way, and that we are limited to a few lines. We must satisfy ourselves for the present with such conclusions as seem the most probable, all things considered, and await the developments of the future. With this precautionary suggestion, we remark, —

That the intelligence manifested by the phenomena is partially accounted for by the intelligence of the mediums, except where they are perfectly magnetized, or by other means are in that peculiar state in which the brain becomes nicely susceptible to impressions from men and things. When in this state, the mind seems to be defunct, while the brain, in a highly-sensitive state, receives impressions of things, and automatically indicates them to others. The knocks, speech, or writing, therefore, will be directed by that other mind, or *fact*, which occupies the brain. If there are different minds in *rapport* with it, the demonstrations may be confused and contradictory. And the same will be the result where the medium is imperfectly passive. The knocks will be according to the aggregate of the contending minds in *rapport* with the brain. Should there be one more powerful than others, it will control and have every thing in its own way, though it may be entirely concealed from the company present.

This is actually admitted by Mr. Ballou and others, who claim to converse with spirits; and it is demonstrable by facts. We could name a Christian gentleman who has so much power of this kind, that he can go in where experiments are being made, and control them to his own liking. Observing the operations of a most distinguished lecturer one evening, he remarked to a friend, that he could counteract the results, and make them very different. And to prove it, he said, "When the medium gets to such a point," she will stop; and she did so.

* Mr. Loveland informed the writer a little before he left the church, that he was improving in mediumship, and had the promise that he should become a *writing* medium. He has probably reached that point since he left.

Thus he took her right out of the hands of the lecturer, without his knowing what was the difficulty, and controlled her as he pleased.

Now, whether we have stated the philosophy of the thing correctly or not, we do not mistake as to the *facts*. Hence, when the mediums come around the enchanted table with their chosen circle, they enter into communication with that circle together, or separately, and feel and know what they feel and know. Hence, if one asks, "How old am I?" he necessarily thinks of his own age, which thoughts impress the medium in communication with him more than they do himself. If he asks, (to adopt the nomenclature of the Rappers,) "What does the spirit of my wife wish to say to her husband?" the picture of his wife, her views, affections, domestic habits, modes of expression, are all before him, and impress the brain of the medium, so that the answer is made much as the wife used to speak herself, and in accordance with her former views, or the husband's idea of what she would naturally say; provided, however, *first*, that the medium is not partially *conscious*, and biased by preadopted opinions; and *secondly*, that a more powerful mind in the flesh does not interfere, and control the answers. Should the medium disclose what the husband supposes to be a secret, it will be attributable to the fact, that he thinks of it himself. Hence, if the medium goes into communication with the whole circle, she will know and express what they know, and will astonish them with developments of the most wonderful character.

But we are told that "this does not cover the whole ground — that there are phenomena which it does not explain." We concede it. 1. Mediums sometimes give answers different from the true one which is in the inquirer's mind. How is this? 2. They often teach different doctrines from those which the inquirer believes, and wills to have confirmed. 3. They sometimes contradict themselves while in communication with the same person, and without his willing it. 4. They make true statements, contrary to what the inquirer supposes he knows to be facts, and what he wills to have made, and yet they turn out to be true. There is a large class of these difficulties, but we think them perfectly reconcilable with our position.

1. Let it be borne in mind, that mediums are seldom free from personal bias, and hence do not always speak other opinions than their own. 2. That where they are so, that is, where the mind is entirely abstracted, they are an instrument on which the circle may play any tune they please. A Romanist, having the ascendency, elicits responses to his taste. A Christian, overpowering him, brings out Protestant views; but an infidel, of more powerful will than both together, may call out responses demonstrating infidelity. And all this without a word being said by either of them. The inquirer may suppose the fact to be thus, but the answer is different, and correctly given, because another in the circle knew better than the inquirer, and had more influence with the medium.

But how is it where no one in the circle knows the fact, and it is given correctly? For instance, one asks, "Where was my father born?" but does not know himself, nor is the correct answer known to any one in the circle, yet the medium gives it. In such cases it will be generally found, that on asking the question, the inquirer's mind wanders to the old family Bible or other book wherein the fact is recorded, and where, by a process which is not fully understood, the brain of the medium becomes impressed with the record, and gives the right response. The knowledge seems to be *intuitive*. Some would attribute it to "*second*

sight," of which the world has heard so much in past time. The *power* of knowing these things is not very dissimilar, and certainly not more wonderful, than the peculiar power of Colburn and Safford, manifested in solving mathematical problems. It furnishes the result, without the trouble of going through with the usual process of reaching it, and furnishes no more reason for assuming spiritual agency than do the thousand similar cases, of the existence of which we are assured. There is a communication between the brain and that record, as strong as the telegraphic communication between Boston and New Orleans, or the communication between the face of the customer and the plate upon which his phiz is daguerreotyped by a single look.

There is one other class of facts to which we will barely advert. It embraces all those cases where the mediums have reported distant events. For example, a medium visiting Rochester had, as he thought, a communication from a spirit that his child was dead at Lockport, which turned out to be true. How do you explain this? it is triumphantly asked. In reply, we say, as we have before said in a general sense, perhaps we cannot explain it at all. For aught we know, the despatch came over the telegraphic wires to the medium, before it came to the brother who reported the case. Or, he might have known his child was dangerously ill, and guessed he was dead. But if we cannot explain it, it does not follow that a spirit communicated the fact. How could a spirit in Rochester know what was occurring in Lockport? Answer that, my friend, will you? When you have done that, just tell me how you know it was a spirit? How do you know but it was the Great Father of all, and not a human spirit, that did it? or an angel? Prove that it was a spirit, and we will show how it was done.

But it seems to us not so very difficult a case after all. Mesmeric subjects have their congenial operators, who often have such influence over them, that they can throw them into the mesmeric state at will, however *distant*, and impress them with such facts or falsehoods as they please. This man lived at Lockport, and had his *familiar spirits* there, with whom he had been in correspondence. The fact of his child's death was undoubtedly known to the circle. Why might not they have impressed this fact upon him at that distance, as well as any other fact? We see no more difficulty in one case than in the other. If one can throw another into the magnetic sleep sixty miles distant, we see no reason why he may not impress him with any news of the day. The one seems to us as easy as the other, and can be explained as well as the other. If one requires the agency of disembodied spirits, so does the other.

But we will not press this point further. Enough has been said to answer our present purpose. The reader cannot fail to see that the knockings, &c., are not attributable to spirits. There is not the *slightest* reason to believe that departed spirits have any thing to do with them, that does not apply to any other invisible being. The argument seems to be this: "I cannot account for the phenomena; therefore they are produced by departed spirits." Others might say with equal propriety, "Therefore they are produced by an *angel*, or the *devil*, or by *leger-demain*." But this is not good reasoning, and we cannot be influenced by it. If there are other apparent miracles and prophetic announcements to which we have not alluded, they may be set down with many that preceded them, and passed away without explanation. People have in special cases predicted their own death, and that of others, in a remarkable manner, and have achieved other wonders, which have never been explained. Still the word of God remaineth sure.

CHAPTER X.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE MATTER.

From the foregoing considerations we deduce the following practical inferences, to which the reader's attention is especially invited : —

1. The *first* is, that to become a *medium* is dangerous. The physical influence of the operation, particularly upon the nervous system, is manifestly of the most alarming character. It may be endured for a time, but, like other unnatural excitements, it will prey upon the system it convulses until it can no longer perform its proper functions, when disease and premature death will ensue. The extreme weakness and nervous irritability of mediums, should be a warning to others, not to resign themselves to an influence so prejudicial to the laws of life.

Its effects on the mind, are still more appalling. Self-control is an elemental principle in the human character. It is here that we find our responsibility, and safety. Take this away, and we are mere machines, without judgment or will, subject to be driven and tossed at the dictation of others. Thus it is with the subjects of mesmerism. They consent to suspend their moral, conscious existence, and leave themselves entirely in the hands of whatever operator may chance to appear. In this condition they are made to assume different characters, and are excited, and bandied about, till they cannot control themselves in their conscious moments. Multitudes have gone a step further, and taken their places among the insane.

This, of course, involves another danger. In so impure and dishonest a world as this, there is no security for our character and fortune, but in sleepless vigilance. What, then, are the dangers of one who submits himself to be divested of all consciousness and control, and subordinated to the passions of others? Take the case of a young man, in whose integrity you have the utmost confidence. You wish to give him some charge of your business; but how can you do so when you know that by a word, a look, or even a thought, from certain characters, with whom he spends his evenings, he may be paralyzed, and bereft of all capacity to do your business? You could not employ such a man with safety. And what safety has a young lady for her virtue, who submits herself to such a state? Look at it, then, in what light we may, it is full of peril, and should never be submitted to, except by high medical advice.

2. It is also a great sin against nature, and against God. The Creator has endowed us with rational powers, which we are required to exercise to his glory, and our own good. One who unmans himself with alcohol, and becomes senseless, silly, or raving, is a sinner by the law of God, and common sense. If he commits a crime in this state, we punish him, though he was deranged at the time, because he made himself deranged. He voluntarily assumed that state, and is, therefore, holden for all the consequences of it. If he dies by reason of it, he dies by suicide. This is all very plain. The same is true in regard to the use of opium, and other drugs. Good people esteem it a great sin to impair their intellectual and moral powers by any of these means. We should rather strive to keep wide awake, and only consent to a different state when sick, and our medical advisers judge it expedient. But how is it any better to stupefy and befool ourselves

with mesmerism, than with alcohol or opium? We consider the sin as great, at least, in the first case, as in the last. They are but different modes of destroying our moral and intellectual natures; of reducing the free man to a slave, the rational man to a *maniac* or a *fool*. They are, therefore, equally *criminal*, and should be avoided as the road to ruin.

Besides, God requires us to "*watch*," to "*consider*," to be "*active*," to be "*wise*," to confide in him. But mesmerism, like drunkenness, disqualifies us for every duty. It is the extreme opposite of watchfulness, consideration, and right action. It destroys our capacity to see the evils that threaten us, or to resist them. In abandoning ourselves to it, we are liable to be "led captive," not only by "the devil at his will," but by any strong-willed villain that may have an end to serve by taking us in charge. We consent not to one evil only, but to any evil that our managers may fancy.

We ask the Christian reader, then, how he can submit to be a medium, or resign himself to the mesmeric influence; in other words, how he, with the commands of God upon him, obliging him to believe certain sentiments, and pursue a different course of conduct, can acquiesce in the *condition* of mediumship; that is, how he can abandon the truth as it is in Jesus, all settled principles and opinions, will and desire, and become mentally and morally extinct, as it were, on pretence of receiving communications from departed spirits. Those who have no principles, and are floating about on the sea of speculation, may do it without sacrifice, perhaps. They may be "*Orginals*," or any thing else but Christians, without a departure from their position.* But a Christian has to forsake all, and admit that he may be in error at every point, and resign himself up to the mesmeric power, as a poor disciple, who would be instructed. We used to hear much said, in our boyhood, about "forming a league with the devil," but never had any definite idea of what it involved. But is not this the very thing? It is all the devil asked of Christ, and we cannot give more. If we go thus far, and he does not take possession of us, it is either because he is not what he is represented to be, or God, in mercy to our ignorance and folly, lays him under special embargo.

But let it be observed, we do not say, that one may not be mesmerized, or possess the power of rapping and moving tables, without sin. Some have a very strong proclivity to the mesmeric state, even fall into it involuntarily, and may be in so susceptible a condition, as to be thrown into it against their will. And others have the *rapping power*, whether they will or not. It is in them, and they are not to be blamed for it. A gentleman who has no part in this business remarked the other evening, that his little daughter, without the least instruction, would make a table tip, and walk all about the room; and we have this moment been informed of a lady in Portland, Me., who plays all these pranks with tables, knocking, tipping, and shaking them at pleasure, and who scouts the idea of departed spirits having any thing to do with them. Now, that attention is called to the subject, and the experiment is being tried, there are found to be many who have this strange power. What we object to, is the effort being made to obtain,

* "*Originals*," is the title of a party formed in Boston a few months since. We understand the term to indicate the same as FREETHINKERS, or *Deists*. The party have no standards, and acknowledge no authority, but what they are pleased to call "superior goodness, justice, wisdom, reason, intuition." Mr. Sunderland affiliates with this party.

or elicit it, and the use made of it. The power is well enough, but appropriated as it is, it becomes an instrument of *unrighteousness*. It is the innocent occasion of as real "*divination*" and necromancy, as ever existed, and is the most effective instrument of infidelity now in the field. It is to this that we allude, when we speak of the *sin* of mediumship. Here, mediums take rank with the witch of Endor, and the damsel who "brought her masters much gain by *soothsaying*." They assume to converse with the dead, discover secret things, and predict coming events. And, as has generally been the case, they claim to be wise above what is written, and treat the word of God with contempt.

3. We believe it is equally wicked to *patronize* the Rappers, as *spiritual teachers*.

1. It is an insult to God. He is the infinite source of all wisdom, and has freely promised to supply our wants, in response to proper means. We are charged to "ask of him, if we lack wisdom, and are assured, that he giveth liberally and upbraideth not." He is more willing to give "the Holy Spirit" to them that ask him, than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children. Hence, to turn away from him to consult "familiar spirits," and to pry into the mysteries of the spirit world, by the mediation of the dead, is to implicate the Sovereign of the Universe, in being either incompetent, or indisposed to give the necessary light. It is a kind of treatment, which he has always regarded as particularly offensive. If justifiable under any circumstances, it is where he refuses to answer us. But it is wrong even in this case, as may be seen from the application of Saul to the witch of Endor. It seems to say, that God is insufficient for us, that he is only one among many, and that his communications may be enlightened and improved by the arts of necromancy. No matter how we may conceal it under a cloak of *piety*, it is an act of *repudiation*, and idolatry, that will sooner or later bring out the jealous God in judgment on the offenders. And the sooner those who resort to such tricks renounce all religion, and go to their own company, the more creditable it will be to the cause.

2. It is a denial of the sufficiency of the Bible. Christians regard the Scriptures, as a perfect standard of doctrine and morals. They agree, that holy men of God wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. But here is a new revelation, or, at least, an attempt to obtain one, implying that the old is wanting. Many have no hesitancy in avowing this openly. They seek light, and demand a "*sign*." But this is unnecessary; the act speaks; it unequivocally implicates the word of God, in darkness and insufficiency. Thus, doubting, men are soon led to disbelieve. Hence, most who consult the spirits to any considerable extent, have lost their confidence in the Bible. Many boldly deny its teachings, and vindicate the suggestions of the Rappers; while a still greater number are paralyzed. They have lost their former faith in God and his word, are halting between two — hardly knowing what to believe. The *charm* is upon them, the moral poison is working, the snaky coils of infidelity are intwining around them. They are already half fallen, and can only escape by a speedy return to the simplicity of the cross. They need the apostolic warning, "Beware, lest any man spoil you through *philosophy and vain deceit*, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Their condition is alarming.

3. It is a *reproach to the Christian church*. Its appearance is that of dissatisfaction and distrust. It seems to say, that we need other sources

of information, — that the all-wise Creator is not sufficient, — nor his word, nor yet the Holy Spirit. It is said, in the language of the grand seducer, "God doth know, that in the day that ye 'consult the spirits,' ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" — knowing of eternity, past and future, of philosophy and endless *progression*. The church, therefore, with her ordinances, is superseded. Good enough perhaps in the days of darkness, but stale and unnecessary now, nay, an encumbrance. Such are the views and feelings of the new order generally, if we mistake not, and Christians, who run after them, countenance heresy, and bring a reproach upon the cause. We could no sooner participate in these operations, than we could associate with open infidels, and consult the blasphemous rantings of their leading minds. It is a practical betrayal of Christ and his church into the hands of their enemies. One really comes out from among the good, and the spiritual, and goes over to the world, joins himself to idols, and enters into fellowship with Belial. Think of these things, dear reader, before you take the fatal step.

That we do not err in this view, is obvious from two experimental facts, viz.: 1. That many Christians, who have been led by curiosity to examine these phenomena, have done with them altogether, from the conviction that their tendency is evil, and only evil. They see that there is no other alternative — that they must abandon religion, or the knockings; and they have chosen to abandon the latter, and this from their own private conviction of duty. 2. The second fact is, that those professors, who have gone into these operations, and followed them, have generally become unbelievers in the distinguishing doctrines of Christianity. How, then, can any Christian give his influence in favor of them!

4. We object to *patronizing* these strange operations because God has *expressly forbidden it*. "There shall not be found among you any one that useth *divination*, or an *enchanter*, or a *witch*, or a *charmer*, or a *consulter with familiar spirits*, or a *wizard*, or a *necromancer*. For all these things are an abomination unto the Lord." "The soul that turneth after such, I will surely cut him off." "For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name; I have not sent them."

The resemblance between the ancient *charmers* and modern *mesmerizers*, is too striking to require a word of confirmation. A similar resemblance is observable between the ancient witches, *enchanters*, diviners, necromancers, and consulters of *familiar spirits*, and modern *operators*, *mediums*, and *circles*. The *necromancers* were a class of pretenders who divined by consulting the dead. Thus Mr. Webster defines necromancy to be "the art of revealing future events by means of pretended communication with the dead." Mr. Watson says, it is "the art of raising up the ghosts of deceased persons, to get information from them concerning future events." And this is in accordance with the general understanding of the best writers, on the subject. The witch of Endor was, therefore, a *necromancer* — she consulted Samuel. So were those who had familiar spirits, answering to our mediums, *necromancers* — they claimed to converse with the dead. When Saul inquired for a woman who had a familiar spirit, the *witch* was named, because she claimed to commune with the dead. Therefore, she said to Saul, "Whom shall I bring up unto thee"? To pretend to call up the dead, and converse with and divine by them, is *necromancy* — is to consult with "*familiar spirits*." And to resort to such characters for information about this or any other world, is to break a plain command

of the Most High, and incur his displeasure. Thus saith the Lord, "When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have *familiar spirits*, and unto wizards, that peep and mutter; should not a people seek unto their God, for the living to the dead?" Reader, you cannot do this thing and be innocent. You would not offend your Maker more by going into the temple of Dagon, and worshipping his image. God regards himself as forsaken, and his throne insulted alike in both cases.

We say to all, then, in conclusion, Stand clear. Have nothing to do with this whole business, as a source of information from the spirit land. In this respect it is a deception, and a sin. It will alienate and destroy the soul that falls under its power. "Touch not, taste not, handle not." Though it may command respect by its wonders, remember that the miracles of the magicians, and the pretensions of the diviners of old, did the same, in a still higher degree. If you want light, consult God. His is the only true philosophy in the universe. No matter who cries, Lo! here is light, or, Lo! there: follow them not. All philosophy and science, which contradict the revelations of Scripture, are false, and must pass away. Be not deceived; God is not mocked; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. Let us not weary, therefore, in *well doing*, for in due season we shall reap IF WE FAINT not!!

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