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RELIABILITY OF SPIRITS.

We perceive, even in this world, a disposition among those of similar affections and way of thinking, to associate together—like with like; and this is prevented only by external restraints, such as natural relationship, pecuniary interests, reputation, &c. The reflecting and careful observer will very readily come to the conclusion that when these external restraints are removed by our leaving this world, and becoming inhabitants of the spiritual world, that we shall then come into the society of, and remain with, congenial spirits. If we, as to our spirits, are even now inhabitants of the spiritual world, which is fully sustained by the phenomena of clairvoyance, somnambulism, "spiritual manifestations," &c., we necessarily draw around us, in the spirit world, as friends and neighbors, spirits of a similar quality with ourselves; and if a medium of communication is opened between the spiritual and natural worlds, we necessarily come into communication with such spirits. This is the view presented in Swedenborg's revelations, and is both consistent and rational; and likewise is most wonderfully corroborated by the spiritual developments which are being witnessed at this day, and accounts satisfactorily for the fact, which is now becoming evident, that no dependence, whatever, can generally be placed upon the revelations which are being made from the spirit world, in various parts of our country.

If, then, we are now associated with our like in the spirit world, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that if we are to receive truthful communications from that world, by means of clairvoyance, the "rappings," and the like, two conditions are indispensably necessary:

1st. That our ruling loves are love to the Lord and our neighbor; and that we have so far overcome our evil affections, by regeneration, as to be associated with good and angelic spirits; for such alone are in truth, for all truths are in harmony with these loves.

2d. That we are in true faith and doc-

trines, ourselves. The importance of this will be manifest, if the following passages from Swedenborg, be true:—He says, "That as soon as spirits begin to speak with man, they come out of their spiritual state into the natural state of man, and in this case they know that they are with man, and conjoin themselves with the thoughts of his affection, and from those thoughts speak with him. It is owing to this circumstance that the speaking spirit is in the same principles with the man to whom he speaks, whether they be true or false; and likewise that he excites them, and by his affection conjoined to the man's affection, strongly confirms them." He says, again, that "When man believes the Holy Spirit speaks with him, or operates upon him, the spirit also believes that he is the Holy Spirit."

As I intend to devote a separate communication to the subject of Hell, in which I shall give a most striking illustration of my former statement, that in no respect are the doctrines taught in Swedenborg's writings, in harmony with old church doctrines, I will now only state that hell is not a place which the Lord has formed to punish man in, but a state of love of self and the world, which man cultivates while in the enjoyment of freedom on earth, and from which the Lord is ever in the effort to withhold and withdraw him. As the Lord is the centre of all truth and of heaven, so man's self love is the centre of all falsehood, and all in hell are in falses. Therefore, when evil spirits teach man what they believe to be truths, they necessarily teach him falses; and as few of the inhabitants of the world, in this degenerate age, can feel that the work of regeneration has so far progressed with them as to bring them constantly within the sphere of good and angelic spirits, I will make a few quotations from Swedenborg, which should have the effect to make us not believe every spirit, but to try the spirits.

He says, "That spirits relate things exceedingly fictitious, and lie. When spirits begin to speak with man, he must beware lest he believe them in anything; for they say almost anything; things are fabricated by them, and they lie; for if they were permitted to relate what heaven is, and how things are in the heavens, they would tell so many lies, and indeed with solemn affirmation, that man would

be astonished; wherefore, when spirits were speaking, I was not permitted to have faith in the things which they related. For they are extremely fond of fabricating; and whenever any subject of discourse is proposed, they think that they know it, and give their opinions upon it, one after another, one in one way, and another in another, altogether as if they knew; and if man then listens and believes, they press on, and deceive and seduce in divers ways: for example, if they were permitted to tell about things to come, about things unknown in the universal heaven, about all things whatsoever that man desires, yet [they would tell] all the things falsely, while from themselves: wherefore let men beware lest they believe them. On this account, the state of speaking with spirits on this earth, is most perilous, unless one is in true faith. They induce so strong a persuasion that it is the Lord himself who speaks and commands, that man cannot but believe and obey."—*Sp. Diary*, 1622.

"That spirits speaking are little to be believed. Nothing is more familiar to spirits who are speaking, than to say that a thing is so or so; for they think that they know everything, and indeed solemnly assert that it is so, when yet it is not so. From experiments made several times, it may be evident of what quality they are, and how they are to be believed; when it is asked [of them] whether they know how this or that is, then one after another says it is so, one differently from another; even if there were a hundred, one would say differently from another; and indeed, for a time, with confidence, as if it were so, when yet it is not so. As soon as they notice anything which they do not know, they immediately say that it is so; besides very many other proofs that they speak as if they knew, when yet they do not know."—*Sp. Diary*, 1902.

"That the things which I learned in representations and visions, and from discourses with spirits and angels, are from the Lord alone. Whenever there was any representation, vision, and discourse, I was kept interiorly and most interiorly in reflection upon it, as to what thence was useful and good, thus what I might learn therefrom; which reflection was not thus attended to by those who presented the representations and visions, and who

were speaking; yea, sometimes they were indignant when they perceived that I was reflecting. Thus have I been instructed; consequently by no spirit, nor by any angel, but by the Lord alone, from whom is all truth and good; yea, when they wished to instruct me concerning various things, there was scarcely anything but what was false; wherefore I was prohibited from believing anything that they spoke; nor was I permitted to infer any such thing as was proper to them. Besides, when they wished to persuade me, I perceived an interior or most interior persuasion that the thing was such, and not as they wished; which also they wondered at; the perception was manifest, but cannot be easily described to the apprehension."—*Sp. Diary, 1647.*

I have made the above extracts from Swedenborg, as containing some of his testimony as to the reliability of spirits, and I will now make some, showing how little we can depend upon their identity, and the reader will then perceive that according to Swedenborg, we may expect just such cases as that of Capt. West, as detailed in the *Anthropologist*, to occur not unfrequently; and that those who have had spirits appear in the rapping, professing to be the spirits of friends, and claiming to have died in California, need not give themselves much uneasiness until they know of their deaths from some more authentic source; for even though they were to possess a clairvoyant, and speak in the very tone and manner of their friends, it would be no evidence of their identity.

Swedenborg says, [*Spiritual Diary, 2860, 2861, quoted in the Spirit World of March 22, 1851.*]

It will be seen, then, according to the testimony of Swedenborg, that we can rarely have any satisfactory evidence that spirits communicating with us, professing to have been our earthly friends, are, in reality, such; and I have been forcibly impressed with the idea that they are, generally, only personating spirits, conforming to the ideas in the minds of those receiving communications, from looking over the various communications by "rappings," professing to come from children. It is, certainly, reasonable to suppose that a child grows up quite as rapidly to manhood, in the spiritual world, as in the natural—and the testimony of Swedenborg is, that they do much more rapidly—yet I have noticed that spirits who have died children, even though they may have been dead five, ten, or even twenty or thirty years, often manifest themselves by very feeble raps, which is, to say the least, very suspicious. Again, one spirit, because he died before he learned to spell, cannot spell his name; another, although he died before he was six months old, can spell without any trouble. If our friends, when they leave this world, are spiritually allied to us, that is, in similar affections, they will be near us, and may, undoubtedly, communicate with us, through a medium, until either our or their state changes. Our natural friends are oftentimes far from being our spiritual friends; but still there is often a great similarity between members of the same family, and therefore

communications may doubtless sometimes be received from brothers, sisters, or parents; but I have strong doubts about their ever being received from children who have died infants, although I must admit that I am not satisfied upon this point, at present.

Any spirit, in speaking with man, comes into his natural state, and therefore into all the knowledge which the man possesses, and for this reason can speak with him in any language with which the man is acquainted, even though the spirit may not have been acquainted with the language while on earth. In addition to what I have already quoted, Swedenborg says:

"Speaking with spirits, but rarely with angels of heaven, is still given, and has been given for many years back; but when it is given, they speak with man in his mother tongue, yet only a few words; but they who speak from permission of the Lord, never speak anything which takes away freedom of reason, nor teach; for the Lord above teaches man, but mediately through the Word in illustration, which is treated of in what follows; that it is so, it has been given to know, from my own experience. I have had speech with spirits and with angels, now for many years, neither has any spirit dared, nor any angel wished, to tell me anything, still less to instruct me concerning any thing in the Word, or concerning any doctrinals from the Word; but the Lord alone has taught me, who was revealed to me, and afterwards continually appeared and appears before my eyes, as a sun, in which he is, as he appears to the angels, and has illustrated me."—*D. P., 135.*

"Speaking with the dead would produce a like effect, as miracles, concerning which just above: namely, that man would be persuaded and driven to worship for a little time; but because this deprives man of rationality, and at the same time shuts in evils as was said above, this enchantment or internal bond is loosed, and the evils shut in burst forth, with blasphemy and profanation; but this takes place only when the spirits induce some dogma of religion, which is never done by any good spirit, still less by any angel of heaven."—*D. P., 134.*

We are told by Swedenborg, that in the earliest ages of the world, men had constant intercourse with angels, but that when the inhabitants of the earth became evil, it became necessary that the communication should be closed, to prevent man's being led into all manner of evil, by evil spirits with whom he then became associated, according to the law of affinity; and that this communication was so far closed up, for ages, that man hardly knew that there was a spiritual world, and life after death. The Jews had, to say the least, a very indistinct idea of a life after the death of the natural body, for almost all their promises and expectations were temporal. If, at this day, we are coming into communication with the spiritual world, it is because we have, as a light to our feet and a lamp to our paths, in our spiritual investigations, the writings of a man who was raised up, qualified, illuminated, and protected by the

Lord, to reveal to us the laws of the spiritual world, and the state of man after death; and it appears to me, that he who approaches the spiritual world without a knowledge of what Swedenborg has written, is like a vessel at sea, without either compass, helm, or rudder.*

Nor is intercourse with the spiritual world without danger, according to the testimony of Swedenborg, for he says,— "It is believed by many, that man may be taught of the Lord by spirits speaking with him; but they who believe this, and are willing to believe it, do not know that it is connected with danger to their souls."

One of the greatest dangers from open intercourse with the spirit world, is that we shall receive the communications of spirits as oracular, and thereby our rationality be laid asleep, and our liberty be destroyed, and we be confirmed in false doctrines, and our evil loves be strengthened by evil spirits. "Let us believe not every spirit, but try the spirits."

Detroit, Mich., March 24, 1851.

* But how is it to be accounted for by our esteemed correspondent, that if Swedenborg was qualified, in the high sense he assumes, that he (Swedenborg) never wrote one word of the wonderful spiritual manifestations now taking place all over the country?—*Ed.*

NEW CHURCH VIEWS.

The following remarks on the recent spiritual manifestations, are from the April number of the *New Church Repository*. The editor of the *Repository* puts himself in what we can but consider a most unfortunate position—his sphere would seem to be sectarian, from centre to circumference; for while he admits that "it is difficult to find anything in the writings of Swedenborg, which affords an adequate solution" of the "spiritual manifestations," he affirms that "no man of the New Church can be either harmed or benefitted by" them!! And are we to understand, from this, that New Churchmen are "like the heath in the desert, they do not know when good cometh?" Are they, indeed, so bound up in sectarian dogmas, that they cannot be benefitted by one of the most wonderful and extraordinary manifestations of the Divine Providence that ever was made to this external world! Now, we do not believe this; on the contrary, we do not, cannot doubt, but that the New Church has already been more benefitted by these manifestations, than any other one class of people. How, indeed, can it be otherwise? Do not these spiritual phenomena, one and all, point the enquiring mind to the writings of Swedenborg and his followers? And if hundreds and thousands are set to reading the New Church writings, by these occurrences, will not

the New Church be thus benefitted?—But, to the following extracts. The article from which they are taken is written by the Rev. B. F. Barrett, now of Chicago, Ill., an intelligent and liberal-minded man, as this article is sufficient to show:

Swedenborg, in his *Spiritual Diary*, tells us of a certain class of "speaking spirits," who fancy themselves amazingly wise, and capable of unravelling the darkest mysteries. No subject can be broached, however deep and intricate, but they immediately know all about it, and are ready with an explanation. If they possessed the attribute of omniscience, they could hardly be more confident of their ability to explain everything.—"They wish," says the illumined author, "to be called intelligences or sciences, and they think that they alone know, yea, that they govern all things; but with a difference. In every degree there are such spirits: . . . they, however, think but little, although they imagine that they think more than others. . . ."

"It is remarkable, that when any object occurs, or when anything happens in the other life, they immediately think that they know what it is, and they speak as though they knew it, and they say that it is this or that, and they describe it as though they knew all about it; thus one after another describes it in a different manner. Hence they entertain various opinions concerning things which happen, and which move any of their senses, and they instantly persuade themselves that it is so."

Now do we not often discover, in some of our brethren of the New Church, a disposition resembling, in a striking degree, that of the spirits here described? Do we not find them exceedingly unwilling to confess their ignorance on any subject—prone to believe that they understand, and are fully competent to explain the most puzzling questions, and especially questions of a spiritual or theological nature? Do we not often witness a mournful lack of that caution and modesty which are characteristic of the true Christian philosopher, and of that beautiful humility, too, which is not ashamed nor afraid to say, "I don't know,"—"I don't understand it,"—"I am unable to explain it?" We confess that we have often suffered pain and mortification at the readiness with which New Churchmen frequently undertake to explain some new fact or phenomenon, and the confidence which they betray "that they know all about it." As a good illustration of this excessive confidence, or want of humility among us—this extreme reluctance to admit that any spiritual phenomena may occur, which we have not the key to unlock and explain—take the things that have been said and written by New Churchmen about the "Rochester Rappings."

It is presumed that most of our readers have already been made acquainted with the leading facts attending these curious phenomena. They have learned these through the public newspapers.

Such, then, is a brief statement of the principal facts and phenomena alleged, and although we have never witnessed

any of these phenomena, and although we know of nothing in the writings of the New Church, that affords any clue to their explanation—we feel bound to believe them, nevertheless. We believe them, because to disbelieve would be to set aside all the established laws of human testimony. For these remarkable phenomena have occurred, not in one or two places merely, but in hundreds of places.

But if we are asked to explain these singular phenomena upon New Church principles, we are free to confess that we know of nothing in the theological writings of Swedenborg that affords any explanation of them. The New Theology is as void as the Old, of any rational solution of these mysteries. And to pretend otherwise—to hold out the idea that these things are no mysteries to us, that they are all susceptible of an easy explanation in the light of the New Jerusalem, seems to us like a vain boast. And however good our intentions may be, we are guilty of a positive wrong, do a positive injury to ourselves and the Church, by pretending that we, and we alone, hold the key to the solution of these things. We have no such key. As to any rational explanation of these phenomena, we are as much in the dark as the Old Church, save that we have a well-grounded conviction of the existence, reality, and intimate presence of the spiritual world. And this, we say, after a thorough and careful study of the writings of Swedenborg, and after listening to, and perusing attentively what has been said and written by New Churchmen on this subject. In this opinion we are aware of differing from some of our brethren; for in an article which appeared in a late Western paper, on this subject, the writer says: "In looking around into the various prevailing systems of theology, with their collateral philosophies, we seek in vain for any explanation of the mystery of 'spirit knocking,' for a guide to lead us out of the labyrinthian difficulties which facts have created around us, *except in one quarter*. In the doctrines of the New Jerusalem Church (Swedenborgian) *there are explicit declarations on this point.*"

If there are any such "explicit declarations," we have never met with them. For, let us keep in mind the nature of the phenomena alleged. Material substances are suspended in mid-air, or moved about from place to place, without the intervention of material hands, or any visible agency. And as these operations (supposed to be the work of spirits) take place within the domains of this lower world, and are visible to the natural eye, so the sounds or "rappings" are produced in the natural sphere, and are audible to the natural ear. Now, where, in all the writings of Swedenborg, are there any "explicit declarations" in elucidation of such phenomena as these? Where are we taught that spirits have the power to act thus directly upon matter?

New Churchmen who have attempted an explanation of these strange occurrences, have not given precisely the same explanation—a fact sufficient of itself to show that the explanation is *our own*, and

not Swedenborg's, and that he has said nothing at all "explicit" on the subject. Some denominate these "rappings" an "electrical or galvanic" mode of communication between the spiritual and the natural worlds. Our reply to this is, Well, it may be so; this is as probable as anything else. But, besides going only a very short way towards explaining the matter, we ask if this is the *New Church* explanation of it? Is it among the *doctrines of the New Church*, that spirits in the other world, and men in this world, may communicate with each other by the aid of galvanism or electricity, like two remote cities connected by Morse's telegraph wires? Where, in any of his writings, has the herald of the New Jerusalem hinted at anything of the sort, or said anything from which such an inference may fairly be deduced? And if nowhere, then how happens this to be a *New Church* explanation of the matter, admitting it to be any explanation at all? Are galvanism and electricity to be claimed as the exclusive property of the New Church? There is, undoubtedly, a sense in which these, like the steam engine, and all other inventions and discoveries made since the time of the last judgment, may be said to belong to the New Dispensation. But it would provoke a smile on all our cheeks, if a New Churchman, by reference to the known laws of the electric fluid, should pretend that he was explaining the phenomena of thunder and lightning, or the operations of the electric telegraph, upon *New Church principles*.

Let us turn now to the explanation of these phenomena, given in the Boston New Jerusalem Magazine. In the last June No. of that work, we find a letter from the Rev. Mr. Phelps, of Connecticut, from which we have already made a quotation, in which he gives some account of the strange occurrences that had taken place in his house. This letter is followed by some remarks from the editor, in which, after stating what New Church people have learned concerning the connection between the natural and the spiritual worlds, he says: "We also learn from Swedenborg that it is possible that the presence of spirits with men may become manifest, so that actual communications may take place between them and men in the world." This remark from the editor of the Magazine, coming, as it does, immediately after the letter from the Rev. Mr. Phelps, and unaccompanied by any explanation of the manner in which Swedenborg says "that the presence of spirits with men may become manifest," is calculated, we think, to mislead persons unacquainted with our doctrines. For, nothing being said to the contrary, one would naturally infer that it is agreeable to the teachings of Swedenborg, that spirits can manifest their presence with men by moving "knives, forks, spoons," &c., and that "actual communications may take place between them and men in the world," by means of "rappings" or sounds produced by spirits, and heard with the natural ear. It is somewhat surprising that the editor should have dismissed the subject just where he did, for his remarks, we think, could

hardly fail to produce a false impression upon the minds of his readers.

We now come to the Magazine's explanation, or attempted explanation of these phenomena, in the light of the New Church—an explanation which strikes us as a signal failure, notwithstanding the editor thinks it presents such "an interesting view of the subject."

The writer sets out with the assumption (an assumption which we must regard as wholly unauthorized) that spirits are able, by turning themselves to men, to transfer to themselves all the bodily senses of men, and all their natural faculties, i. e. that they come, temporarily, into the exercise of man's natural sight, natural hearing, natural powers of speaking, feeling, and acting, and consequently are able to do in the natural world whatever men can do—eat and drink material food *without* material organs of digestion, and handle material objects *without* material hands. "Spirits," he maintains, "can exert power in the natural world without confounding natural and spiritual things. They are not prevented by the lack of natural faculties. They can assume and exercise the faculties of men in the world when the Lord permits"—"natural sight, or speech, or any other natural faculty." But the argument, as based upon the teachings of Swedenborg, whereby the writer endeavors to sustain himself in this position, strikes us as singularly defective.

He begins by referring to what our illumined author says of the ability of spirits, "to see things in the natural world, through the eyes of men;" the meaning of which, as he understands it, is, that "the spirits see by means of the natural eyes of men. That is, they come into the exercise, for the time being, of natural sight, whenever they associate in the natural degree with men. What the man can see, the spirit also can see, because he appropriates to himself the faculties of the man." In other words, the spirit, by turning himself to a man, becomes at once possessed of man's natural power of vision, or the power of seeing objects in the natural world.

Whether or not "the man's eyes are used mechanically, as eyes for the spirit," on such occasions, is a point which we will not stop here to discuss. We would simply remark, in passing, that the plain teaching of our illumined scribe on this subject, is, that the spirit so conjoins himself to the man to whom he turns, that he knows no otherwise than that the natural sight, hearing, speech, &c., appertaining to the man, are his own. The spirit uses the faculties of the man with whom he is conjoined, *as if they were his own*, and without knowing or thinking that they were *not* his own.

Now, as the teaching of Swedenborg on this point is made the basis of the Magazine's *New Church* explanation of the phenomena in question, or the writer's "endeavor to illustrate the manner in which spirits approach the natural world, and act upon material substances," it claims from us an attentive examination. And the first thing which strikes us (and a most important fact it is, in this connection,) is Swedenborg's uniform declar-

ation that a spirit cannot, by turning himself to *any* man in his ordinary state, come into the use of the man's natural sight, hearing, taste, &c. He everywhere lays it down as an indispensable condition of a spirit's seeing natural objects, that the man with whom he is conjoined must be in open communication with the spiritual world, i. e. must have his spiritual senses open. Thus he says: "An angel and spirit cannot see anything in the natural world, *unless they be with a man to whom it is given to speak with them.*"—*H. H.* 582. "Spirits and angels, when it pleases the Lord, can see the objects of the world through the eyes of men; but this is *only* granted by the Lord, *when He gives to man to discourse with spirits and angels*, and to be in company with them. It has thus been granted to them to see *through my eyes* the objects of this world, and to see them as distinctly as myself, and also to hear what was said by men discoursing with me. . . . I have been informed that, *with other men*, spirits and angels do not see the least of anything in this world, but only perceive the thoughts and affections of those with whom they are associated."—*A. C.* 1880. "It is, however, to be noted, that they who are in the other life, cannot see any thing which is in the world, through the eyes of *any* man (*alicujus hominis*, i. e. of any or every man indiscriminately); the reason why they could see through my eyes was, because I am in the spirit with them, and at the same time in the body with those who are in the world."—*A. C.* 4622. (See also *H. H.* 252, *E. U.*, 135, *A. C.* 5862.)

Thus are we clearly taught, that no spirit or angel can come into the temporary enjoyment of the natural senses appertaining to man, except upon this condition, viz., that the individual with whom the spirit is conjoined, must *have his spiritual senses opened*. The spirit then uses the eyes, ears, tongue, &c., of the man, *as if they were his own*, and not knowing at the time but they are his own. If the man's natural eyesight were suddenly destroyed or taken away, the spirit would as suddenly lose his power to see natural things; and if the man's spiritual sight were suddenly closed, the same result would follow.

It is, then, we apprehend, a great mistake to suppose, with this writer in the Magazine, that the passages in which Swedenborg speaks of spirits being sometimes permitted to see natural objects through the eyes of men, and to hear natural sounds through their ears, and to speak to them in natural language, afford any explanation or illustration of the "Rochester Rappings." For in all such cases of permission we are taught that the subjects in the natural world, through whom the spirits see, hear, &c., must have their spiritual senses opened; otherwise, no such permission can be given. But it is not pretended that any of the persons who hear these rappings—not even those who are thought to be the "mediums"—have their spiritual senses opened, so as to enable them to see and converse with spirits. The sounds are heard alike by all the company present, and obviously enter the organ of hearing

by an external way, like all natural sounds. Between these "rappings," then, and the speech of spirits with man, which is sometimes permitted, there appears to be no analogy whatever; therefore the teachings of Swedenborg upon the latter subject, furnish no clue to an explanation of the former, as the writer in the Magazine supposes.

Equally illogical and unauthorized—nay, more so—is this writer's conclusion in regard to the ability of spirits to handle and move natural objects, as in the cases narrated by the Rev. Mr. Phelps. No such possibility as this is fairly to be inferred from the passages in Swedenborg here referred to, even if the "medium" had his spiritual senses opened, which is not pretended. For we have seen that when a spirit is permitted to see natural objects, or hear natural sounds, it is by means of the eyes and ears of some man in the natural world, with whom the spirit is in conjunction. The conjunction is such that the man's natural senses are as much at the command of the spirit, for the time being, as of the man himself. He uses them as if they were his own—not knowing, indeed, but they are—and this, too, without depriving the man of the use of them at the same time. Thus the spirit sees through the man's eyes, hears through his ears, tastes by means of his tongue or gustatory organs, and never without these. Consequently, if he feel natural objects, it must be through the man's sense of feeling; and if he handle or move them, it must be *with the man's hands* that he does it, and never without them. This, we say, is the fair and logical inference from the teaching of Swedenborg, which the writer in the Magazine has referred to, as the basis of his New Church argument on this subject. How, therefore, from such a starting point, he is able to reach the conclusion that spirits may handle and move natural objects, *without* the hands of man, or any other visible agency, is rather a puzzling question. We presume, however, that this false inference results from the mistake into which the writer seems to have fallen, as to Swedenborg's meaning, when he speaks of spirits seeing natural things *through the eyes of men*.—His interpretation of this language is such as leads him to conclude that spirits, by turning themselves to men, come into the exercise of all men's natural senses and faculties, which they are able to use for the time being, quite independently of those natural organs through which the same faculties are exercised by men. If a spirit is able so to transfer to himself the power of natural vision, as to enable him to see natural objects quite independently of the natural organ of sight appertaining to him with whom he is conjoined, then why may he not so transfer to himself the power to feel and handle natural objects, as to enable him to do this independently of the man's natural hands? This appears to be the writer's argument; and his conclusion, though legitimately reached, is false, because based upon a false assumption, or a mistaken view of Swedenborg's language.

Nor do we conceive that the writer in the Magazine has any sufficient warrant,

either in the writings of the church, or in the events that have transpired, for pronouncing the following ORACULAR decision upon the origin and character of the manifestations in question. "We may be sure they are disorderly in their character and tendency, and if permitted that they are permitted as evils." That some of the phenomena referred to are produced by evil spirits, and therefore "permitted as evils," there can be but little doubt. Probably most of them are the work of foolish, disorderly, and fantastic spirits; but we do not feel so "sure" that they are all of this character. Some facts that have come to our knowledge would seem not only to authorize, but almost to necessitate, the conclusion, that there are some good and orderly spirits engaged in this business; such, for example, as the spirits advising some persons with whom they have communicated, and who have asked how they might obtain correct information in regard to the spiritual world—to procure and read the writings of Swedenborg; and persons having followed the counsel of their spiritual advisers, are said to have become interested readers and receivers of the Heavenly Doctrines. If such advice can be supposed to have emanated from evil spirits, then we must suppose the Devil to be interested in undermining and destroying his own kingdom; for surely nothing is better calculated to do this than the writings of Swedenborg.

The truth probably is, that while many disorderly and fantastic spirits are concerned in making the communications, and producing the phenomena in question, there are also some good and wise ones. Not devils alone are attendant on man. We are, while in the natural world, between heaven and hell, and receiving influx from both. And we conceive it to be quite as much the "nature" of angelic spirits to do some of the things alleged in these remarkable occurrences, "when they find men fit to be used for their purposes," as it is the nature of infernals to do the others. The right rule of action here, therefore, as in other cases, is not to reject every communication from this source as certainly from hell, nor to receive every communication as certainly from heaven, but to heed the Apostle's advice, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

It strikes us a little remarkable that the writer should feel so sure about the evil and disorderly character of the spirits concerned in these rappings, when his entire New Church argument in explanation of them is based upon what Swedenborg teaches concerning angelic intercourse with men. The passages to which he refers, and on which he builds his argument, are those in which E. S. speaks of angels seeing natural objects through the eyes of men, and speaking in men's natural language. Strange that he should so soon have forgotten this, as he seems to have done; and still more strange, if he did not forget it, that he should have failed to perceive how ill adapted is the basis of his argument to support his very positive assurance as to the character of

the spirits concerned in the phenomena alleged. We are not to infer, because these things are out of the common course of events, and fall under the laws of permission, that they are therefore necessarily evil and disorderly. It is by divine permission, and a thing quite out of the common line of human experience, that men are sometimes privileged with a view of the spiritual world, and that angels sometimes see the things of this world through the eyes of men. But who in the New Church would think of pronouncing such intercourse disorderly, on this account, or of saying that it is "permitted as an evil?" Swedenborg speaks of it as a matter of rejoicing to the angels, that they were able to see natural objects through his eyes, and that thus communication was opened between the two worlds. "When my interior sight was first opened," he says, "and spirits and angels, saw, through my eyes, the world, and the objects contained in it, they were so astonished, that they called it a miracle of miracles, and were affected with a new joy, that a communication was thus opened between earth and heaven."—A. C. 1880.

We repeat, then, that because of the mysterious and inexplicable nature of the phenomena in question, because they are things quite out of the common order and course of events, we do not therefore feel warranted in saying that they must, of necessity, be all disorderly, or the work of evil and mischievous spirits; though we doubt not that some, perhaps many of them, are so, because "a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit," and some of the alleged works of these spirits prove them to be both foolish and wicked.

It was our purpose to have commented upon some other parts of the article in the Magazine, which we think open to objection, but our remarks having already extended beyond the limits proposed, we forbear.

In conclusion, we would add, that while we admit the substantial verity of what is alleged respecting the "Rochester Rappings," and their accompanying phenomena—admit it, because we find ourselves compelled to do so by all the known laws of human testimony—if we are asked for an explanation of them, we frankly confess that we have none to offer. We know of nothing in all the writings of Swedenborg—and this we say after a long and patient study of them—that throws any light upon these singular phenomena. As to their nature, design, mode of production, or the laws that govern them, we have no opinion sufficiently well sustained by the alleged facts, and by the teachings and philosophy of the New Church, to venture an expression of it. We might speculate upon them for a long time, as others have done; but probably our speculations would be about as crude as theirs, and—about as worthless.

The New Church, if it would confess the truth, is just as much in the dark here as the Old, and the true way to come into more light on the subject, is not, as we think, to pretend that we already "know all about" the matter, but frankly to acknowledge our ignorance. Our principal

object in penning this article has been to point out some of the fallacies and inconclusiveness of the article in the Magazine, which the editor takes occasion to commend, and to deprecate the inclination, by no means uncommon among us, to believe that we are able to explain every thing, and especially all such phenomena as appear to be allied to their spiritual sphere. The truth is often wounded in the house of its friends; and in no way, perhaps, does it suffer more than from the false assumptions and inconclusive reasonings put forth in its defence. Among individuals it is ever an indication of weakness and superficiality to pretend to much knowledge, or to be ashamed or afraid to say, "I don't know." And the same holds true in relation to bodies of men, or churches. And when the New Church shall become sufficiently developed here on earth, to be conscious of her real power and glory, she will be less pretentious, we think, and less anxious than now and formerly, to explain every thing. She will feel that she can afford sometimes to confess ignorance; and this very confession will be some evidence of her true greatness and strength.

EDITORIAL.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, APRIL 12, 1851.

IDENTITY OF SPIRITS.

"May I know what spirit this is, communicating with me now?" Those familiar with sittings for responses from the spirit world, need not be told how very common it is to hear this question asked. We hear certain "sounds" made. We feel the vibrations in the external substance, and we know that they are made by some invisible intelligence. But *who* is it? And if the invisible gives me to understand that it is my father, or child, how shall I know that it is really *the* spirit it purports to be?

True, there are always a variety of circumstances and corroborating facts, which may combine to convince and satisfy me, beyond all doubt. But the same facts would not have the same influence upon any other mind. All minds are not alike in the degrees of their development. As the mind progresses in the knowledge of spiritual laws, it will, of course, become more and more easy for it to be satisfied of the identity of spirits. But an attempt is now made, on the part of the spirit world, to use certain means which address themselves to the external senses, not merely of such as want a knowledge of the identity of one spirit, but to such as lack all belief as to whether there be any spirits out of the human body. For skeptics and atheists (if there be such, really,) hear the "sounds" made by spirits. They also see physical bodies moved without human agency. But still, they say, if done by spirits, who, or what spirits, are they? Nor would it sat-

isfy them to be told it was the spirit of St. Paul, or Nero, of old. These personages we never knew in this world; and should not know them now, if they were to appear to us. In this manner, many of us are disposed to reason on this subject. And, as if to satisfy a class of minds that cannot well be satisfied in any other way, spirits have recently adopted a new method, certainly, for demonstrating their presence and *identity* to the external senses of their relatives in this world. We have before alluded to their having *written*, and made *fac similes* of their signatures. This has been done in our family, almost daily, for some weeks past. It has been done under a variety of circumstances, calculated to demonstrate the presence of invisible spirits, as well as their identity.

The case described by Dr. Skinner, in our seventh number, was in point; and others, of a similar kind, are constantly occurring. On the 14th of February, Mr. Daniel Davis, (the well-known electrical and magnetical instrument maker,) called here with his lady. He asked for the spirit of his father, and received a promise of an *attempt* at writing. The spirit did so; when Mr. Davis immediately took from his pocket a paper containing his father's signature, made before his death, and on comparing the word "Davis," written by the spirit, with the name on the paper, it was manifest that the "D" was made by the same hand, and the whole name bore resemblance enough to satisfy the son that the writing was produced by the spirit of his father. Indeed, Mr. Davis well remarked that this was, to him, the most easy and satisfactory way in which it was possible to account for what had been done.

Here, then, we have an advance, in these spiritual manifestations, which must not only arrest attention, but go very far toward putting the question of identity at rest, in a certain class of minds, which, perhaps, could not be reached in any other way. If our earthly friends were to go far away, and stay so long that we could not recognize them, on their return, yet if they should, in our presence, write their names, and give us the identical signatures we formerly knew to be theirs, we should, probably, be inclined to give it up, and admit what we otherwise could not possibly believe. If the "hand writing" does not prove *identity*, what would? And especially when the writing is produced in your presence, and under circumstances that absolutely preclude the presumption or belief that it was, or even could have been produced by any human being, present or absent! Do the prevalent sectarian dogmas depend upon evidence half so conclusive and satisfactory as this?

SELF RELIANCE.

Having spoken so freely of the reliability of spirits who have left this sphere, it would be unpardonable not to propose a similar process for self-examination. For, certainly, after all, it is a question of paramount importance, as to how far each mortal may rely upon himself. Our sense of want causes us to rely upon others. When wanting information, we look to what we believe to be superior wisdom, for its bestowment. But our ignorance renders us liable to be deceived. Hence comes the exercise of caution. And as I desire to assist my readers in the acquisition of information of the spiritual world, to which we are all tending, it may be useful to put what I have to say into such form as will enable each one to appreciate my design, and to lay up what is offered in the memory, so as to be really and permanently benefitted by it.

1. Your sense of *dependence* should lead you, first, to the highest source of all *good*, all *justice*, and all *truth*. That source is the INFINITE MAN, who is the Father of us all. He has certainly revealed himself in various degrees, in all kingdoms, all worlds, in all forms of life, and in the HUMAN FORM, as God-Man. In that form he is "First and Last," "All and in All." If you are a finite man, He is an *Infinite Man*; and in that *form* in which he has made himself most known to the human race, you may *see* him, *know* him, *love* him, *approach* him, and from him receive all that you need.

The great importance of having a just idea of God, appears, from this consideration, that the idea of God constitutes the inmost thought of all those who have any religion; for all things of religion and divine worship have respect to God. And as God is universally and particularly in all things of religion and of worship, therefore, unless there be a just idea of God, *no communication is possible with the heavens*. Hence it is, in the spiritual world, every nation has its place, according to its idea of God, as a Man; for in this, and in no other, is the idea of the Lord. That the state of every man's life, after death, is according to the idea of God which he has confirmed in himself, appears manifestly from the reverse of the proposition, namely, that the negation of God constitutes hell; and in the Christian world, the negation of the Lord's divinity.—*Swedenborg's Divine Love and Wisdom*, 13.

2. Be yourself, at heart, *good* and *truthful*. Love good, for goodness' sake; love justice, for the sake of justice; and love truth, for its own sake. In proportion as you *love* goodness and truth, you become receptive of these qualities, and must necessarily *repel* what is false and evil.

3. You want *information* of the *spiritual world*, that is to be the final home of all. Hence, you should read those works which treat expressly upon its laws.—

Among these are the writings of Swedenborg, A. J. Davis, and the *Secrets of Provoost*; also, the "Spirit World," and "Spirit Messenger." These papers should be read because they contain accounts of what is daily developed from the spiritual world, and without a knowledge of which no one can hope to have any tolerable idea of spiritual philosophy.

4. In your intercourse with spirits, always treat them kindly. Never suspect, accuse, or *repel* them, without sufficient cause.

5. Take nothing for granted, because it is said by spirits. Use your own judgment in all things. Obtain all the information you can, from all available sources, and then decide for yourself; and never *act* merely upon advice given you from the spiritual world, except when your own judgment approves, and you are willing, in case you should fail or be involved in trouble, to bear the responsibility of it, yourself.

6. An honest maintenance of the above described state of mind, will assist you, always, not only in detecting what would be false and evil *to you*, but also to repel whatever might otherwise tend to lead you astray. As you are individualized, you must suffer for yourself, rejoice in yourself. If you err, it is yourself that is injured. You must "work out your own salvation." Think, judge, for yourself. Pray, love, and believe, for yourself.

DOGMATICAL.—A correspondent of one of our exchanges suggests that we should have one paper, called "The Spirit Guide," as he thinks "it is most evident that we *want* some *guide* by which to judge of the reliability of communications received from spirits;" though he says, in the next paragraph, that "the works of Swedenborg contain the *fullest* and most *reliable* information" on this subject.

Then, what do we "*want*," that we have not got? Or does he mean that he "*wants*" a better "*guide*" than Swedenborg?

"As loftiest mountains catch the earliest light,
Till, by degrees, the lowest plains grow bright,
So dawns the *truth* upon the greatest minds,
Before the thought the lower mortal finds."

But what would that correspondent have us understand by his "Spirit Guide?" A paper that should be a *guide* for the spirits? or a guide for mortals who seek for information about the spiritual world? If for the latter, it should be called "The *Mortals'* Guide," or "The Human Guide."

Or perhaps he will say that we want a better "*guide*" than any *human* being ever was, or ever can be. In this we should agree with him, believing, as we do, that Swedenborg, himself, has presented to mor-

tals precisely such a GUIDE as is wanted by all mankind.

“Creator, Lord, and loving Spring
Of Love within me, I will fling
Myself on thy sustaining breast,
Confident there, to find my rest.

All that I am, I am from Thee.
All that I have, I had from Thee.
I do not think that Thou art far
Away. Nay, where Thou art, we are.

Be Thou my teacher. Make my land
Thee, above all, to understand.
Defend us from the prate of fools,
And from the theories of schools,

And from the bigotry of churches,
And philological researches.
Thou wilt not fail the smallest creature,
Thou, the sustainer of all nature.

CAUTION REPEATED.—The accounts we have seen of spiritual manifestations in Otsego Co., N. Y., and other places, induce the repetition of the caution we have repeatedly uttered before, in respect to what has been improperly called being “magnetized by spirits.” *Once allow that SPIRITS do what the “medium” participates in, more or less, and you open the door for endless delusion and fanaticism.* Spirits, we know, may or may not move the hand of a medium, but how are we to distinguish between what the spirit does and that which is or may be done by the human medium? It is marvelous what delusions people sometimes fall into. One says, “I requested my guardian spirit to raise my hand to my head, and he did so, immediately.” Ah, indeed, and how do you *know* that your hand went up to your head, merely by the spirit’s influence? Your own soul may have moved your arm, or the spirit may have *assisted* you to raise your hand, while you may not have been conscious of doing any part of the act yourself. An act should not be attributed to spirits which they merely assist in doing; and much less should we attribute acts to spirits which it is scarcely possible to prove that they participated in, at all.

States of mind which may be self-induced, should be attributed to spirits with great caution. There is fanaticism enough in our world, already. Let us hope that the recent spiritual manifestations may not be so perverted by mortals as to increase it in any form or degree.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—“A Lover of Truth,” Auburn, N. Y.—W. M. Fernald, on Clairvoyance—and a letter from D. Lyman, Jr., next week. Our correspondents must not imagine that their articles are rejected, because they do not appear immediately. We have an excellent piece of poetry, from Dr. Thayer, of Dedham, which we could not insert very well, on account of the length of the lines.

CLAIRVOYANCE.—A Frenchman is said to be now engaged in exhibiting his nephew, in New York, who possesses the power of clairvoyance to such a degree as to be able, *in his normal state*, to read his uncle’s thoughts, while they are in separate rooms. If this can be done while the parties are so far apart that the external senses cannot be reached, it is certainly wonderful. The Scotch lads exhibited about the country by Mr. P. T. Barnum, performed in this way, but it was always understood that they operated by the use of the external senses, and not by real clairvoyance at all.

Sympathetic clairvoyance, by which a person entranced reads the thoughts of another, at a distance, is quite common; but it is not common for this power to be developed in the normal state.

MISS JENNIE REYNOLDSOX, the Scotch vocalist, is now engaged to sing every night, at Amory Hall. And thus, while the delighted spectator beholds the wonders of the celebrated Mammoth Cave of Kentucky, his soul is ravished with strains of music more fascinating than it is in the power of language to describe. We heard Jennie, the first night of her performing in this city, and have heard her every opportunity since, and do not hesitate to pronounce her singing far superior to any that we have heard in this city, for many a year, not excepting that of the Swedish Jenny, whom we heard three times.

SOME FURTHER REMARKS on the Glorification of Jesus Christ, involving the True Doctrine of Atonement, by W. M. Fernald, next Sunday afternoon, at Washingtonian Hall, 21 Bromfield street. This will conclude Mr. Fernald’s discourses, for the season.

HINE’S PROGRESS PAMPHLETS.—No. 3, of the series is *The Tenant*. It is discussed under the six following heads, viz: History of Tenantry; Injustice of Tenantry; Wastefulness of Tenantry; Demoralization of Tenantry; Servitude of Tenantry; Redemption from Tenantry. The question is handled with the vigor which is characteristic of the author. The truths he presents should arrest the attention of the Working Classes, and indeed of the whole community, for they are vital to the prosperity of States and the stability of governments. The price of each number of these pamphlets is ten cents. Cincinnati: Bagley & Freeman.—A. S. Bugle.

THE ART OF COUGHING.—It is injurious to cough leaning forward, as it serves to compress the lungs, and makes the irritation greater. Persons prone to the enjoyment should keep their necks straight, and throw out the chest. By these means the lungs expand, and the windpipe is kept free and clear. There is an art in everything, and the art of coughing is, perhaps, as important as any other.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Glenn’s Falls, N. Y., March 22, 1851.

Br. Sunderland,—That the day long since foretold by prophets, is at hand, “even at our doors,” those who hold converse with the holy angels, already perceive. To such, prophecy is no longer a mystery—miracles no strange, unnatural phenomena, or the doctrines of the crucified Redeemer so many subtle dogmas, which require of the individual to annihilate himself in order to receive, through “the church,” a solution of their mysterious meanings; for to such the spirit of prophecy is given, miracles are daily wrought in their presence, and the glorious doctrines of the Gospel are felt to be realities which require no creed, only a pure heart to expound, as it is impressed with its truths.

There are thousands scattered throughout the country, who know that true Christianity seeks a perfect individualism in the progress of the race; and that such individualism has not and cannot be attained while we adhere to existing forms of faith, as set forth in the creeds of the sects. So long as the creeds are deemed authoritative, will be considered by the multitudes Christ came to save, as of higher authority than the voice of God.

Each one of us, in our isolated position, feels incompetent to exert sufficient influence to bring the respective communities in which we live, up to a knowledge of themselves, much less to a knowledge of the true character of God. So far as assistance from man is concerned, we are unaided, and in our intellectual and moral solitudes we hold communion only with the invisible and immortal. How many such minds, strong and true, are praying for the kingdom of heaven to be permanently established in the earth, that sectarianism, pride, and lust, may hinder no more the proper exercise of the powers of the human soul; and that a pure morality and holier affinities may unite man to his fellow man.

To effect this object, to strengthen those who have toiled on in the hope of victory, to confirm the feeble and cheer the desponding, and for the purpose of comparing and harmonizing soul with soul, at the same time resolve to unite on some plan that will tend to secure the perfect individualism of the race—why would it not be for the good of our common cause to call a convention, composed of such minds as feel the necessity of assuming a higher position than that taken by the sects now existing, to assemble at such time and place as yourself and those editors engaged with you in this desirable reform, may select?

Look at the object! The nearer approach of God’s kingdom to the hearts of his children; the lifting up of the veil that has shut immortality from the view of mortals; the preparing of a way that shall be called “the way of holiness,” in which the free and pure may walk; and the concentration of intellectual and moral power, to devise ways and means for the farther dissemination of religious truth. Look at that assemblage! Men—not slaves—who can say, with Paul, I

am "free born;" who desire to see all creeds and dogmas that have heretofore separated the children of the One Father, abandoned, and all men united in harmonizing and developing their souls: men who, having thought and acted for themselves, are determined to resist every influence which seeks to sink the individual in the sect, and institute in its stead a perfect individualism in the unity of the race. Such an object is most certainly worthy of being considered, and such an assemblage would, will, save the world. Were such a meeting called and sustained by the good and true, the place would be to me more than was ever Mount Zion to a Hebrew, and the day a Sabbath to my trusting heart.

Yours, in the Gospel of God,
D. S. MOREY.

South Killingly, Ct., March 17, 1851.

Friend Sunderland,—“The day spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow [fear] of death.” Last Friday, (14th) for the first time, I was one of a circle where the invisibles conversed with mortals, at the house of Mr. N. Law, in this town.

Having heard that at this house the spirits of the departed were giving satisfactory responses to all whose sincerity rendered them worthy of the spirits' regard, I attended, with but faint hope that I should meet with that evidence of its truth so necessary to convince me of my firmness and skepticism. But I was mistaken. There were quite a number of uncongenial spirits (in the flesh) present, as any one could see without a perfect knowledge of the science of phrenology. Nevertheless, we had responses, quite convincing, from my mother, and also from a little brother, who left for the spirit world many years ago.

“Having tasted of the heavenly gift—the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,” we were by no means satisfied, and therefore on Sunday morning, 16th, we re-visited the place of so much comfort, and found, to our great joy, the spirits of two sons and one daughter (all we have in the spirit world,) ready to respond to the questions of their now happy father. All questions were answered correctly, by the three immortals; and our youngest son made a promise to rap on our head-board at eleven o'clock at night, which, no doubt, was promptly fulfilled.

I will give my reasons for supposing so. I retired early to rest, having been deprived, somewhat, of sleep, in consequence of a bad cold and cough. At about midnight, my wife waked me, saying, “There are noises on the head-board for which I cannot account.” I immediately enquired if there was a spirit in the room. No response. I resumed my position in bed, with a feeling of grief and disappointment, when I began to ask, mentally, if the spirit of my boy was present, and if so, will he rap in my hearing, that I may know for certainty that he has fulfilled his promise made to me this morning? The question had hardly escaped me, when three distinct raps were

heard upon the candlestand, within a few inches of my head.

These are facts. Who can explain them? I am not enquiring of C. C. B. I mean, what *rational* man can explain them? The medium at Br. Law's is a young lady from Providence, an unsophisticated girl of about sixteen, with a good phrenological development, and an eye of mildness, beaming with the lustre of deep spirituality. What influence her knee or toe joints had over my mind, at the sitting, I know not; but when I am convinced that knee or toeology had anything to do with the rapping at my house, I shall be forced to the conclusion that C. C. B. has become an honest man, and should no longer be classed with those grave, knee grabbing doctors.

I came in contact with an Advent preacher, this afternoon, direct from the rappings at Br. Law's, and the way he came down upon us was a caution to sinners. He believes nothing about the “brimstone and the old iron poker;” but his Satanic majesty *remains*, and is the instigator of the rappings. W. A. S.

SWEDENBORG.—“I have found,” he says, “that those who are furnished, nay, loaded with particular private experience, are apt to be carried away into untoward views and perverse notions of causes, more easily than those who derive their information not from private, but from general experience—not from their own, but from the experience of others. For not only does the former class study and favor the external senses more than the mind in the senses, and hastily judge of everything that comes before them from their own partial information; but they are smitten with the love of their own discoveries and imaginations, in which they contemplate their own image as a parent does in his offspring. Hence it is that they not unfrequently look down, with royal superciliousness, upon all who pay no homage to their favorite theories which they themselves adore to distraction. But as Seneca observes, He is born for a limited sphere, who thinks of the people of his own time; others will come after him who can judge without offence and without favor.”—*Economy*. 214.

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