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**WORD DECISIVE**

OF THE

**PRESENT PRETENSIONS**

TO

**THE GIFTS**

OF

**SPEAKING WITH TONGUES**

AND

**PROPHESYING.**

**BY A GRADUATE.**

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A  
WORD DECISIVE,

&c.

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By the word of God and reason, I purpose trying these pretensions.

Considered antecedently then, is it a righteous thing with God, or is it a sign of piety towards him, to demand miraculous interference? Happily, our Saviour has in the following words answered this inquiry; “an evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign;” and yet again saith he, in utter disparagement of the efficacy of such interference, “if they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” It is then a sign not of holiness, but of a want of faith; not of a trustful bride, but of a faithless adulteress, to ask a sign from heaven.

A miracle can be demanded for only two purposes; either to accredit words, or to satisfy our physical necessities or wishes. Moreover, those words must contain direct prophecy, not mere spiritual doctrine. A spiritual saying requires no credentials, having its own sufficient witness in every devout and faithful heart; whereas a direct

prophecy of some event to come requires external support. Reason will tell us, that to demand a miracle, is either to evidence a distrust of God, or to be guilty of the presumption and impiety of beseeching our heavenly Father, as we are dissatisfied with what he hath already revealed, to grant us a new revelation, or to enlarge the former one. Is it not impious, wantonly to ask God to satisfy our curiosity respecting things future? or, if we regard it as a request for further spiritual light, are we to understand from it that the pious applicants have fulfilled to their utmost extent all the precepts, and that they have mastered all the spiritual doctrines, of Christ and his Apostles; aspiring to greater things than did Paul, or the rest of the noble army of martyrs?

To me it appears, that St. John, in the closing words of Revelation, has uttered his stern denunciation against all future attempts, which he even then foresaw, to add any thing to the then full and perfected amount and measure of recorded inspiration. Bishop Jeremy Taylor understood the prophet to convey this in his last words: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." (Rev. xxii. 18.) As the Apocalypse closes the canon of Scripture, it might be, perhaps, allowable to consider this awful deprecation as ex-

tending to the whole of Revelation. If it was so considered, it would only accord with the universal expression of mankind, in calling God's multifarious revelation of such various matters, and of such various ages and authors, notwithstanding this as yet only one book. Moreover, though the full expression is "the prophecy of this book," that by prophecy is denoted in Scripture all manner of divine instruction, is sufficiently known to every reader of the Bible. The Law and the Prophets are generally set in contradistinction, yet the lawgiver called himself a prophet. "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me." (Deut. xviii. 15.) Again, "the Law and the Prophets were until John," (Luke xvi. 16.) though we know that a large amount of prophecy was delivered afterwards. Our argument is, however, wholly independent of this amplified interpretation. I have only proposed it as a view that *may* be entertained. In their narrowest meaning, the words relate to the Apocalypse. If God had designed any future addition, how could these words have been written? for in that case a man would have added thereto, and not have inherited "the plagues." Let it be also remembered, that to "add," it is not necessary to utter prophecies

relating to a remoter period than that within which all these predictions shall be terminated. He also "adds," who enlarges upon, or develops, or explains, or in any way casts light upon, these oracles, if he pretends that such light has descended from above. But it is maintained, that inspiration which may be *spoken*, may nevertheless not be *written*. The words of the prophet, however, will not help them to such equivocation. He speaks of additions ; his curse is against additions, however conveyed. We will cut short this point.

Do they maintain, that this oral inspiration is to be "mixed with faith" in them that hear it? Is not then the Apocalypse added to, in the minds of those, no matter how few their number may be? And does not then the pretended prophet incur the full denunciation? This point then is sufficiently cleared, that it is no mark of piety, but of the reverse of it, to ask for any addition to the existing revelation ; and that even were such a request in its moral nature indifferent, yet the Spirit of God has laid all such pretensions under the ban of a very ominous malediction.

Next let me ask, But what is the actual state of the case ? *Has God in fact actually encouraged us to ask for further miracles, or for a fuller inspiration ?* I quote the text on which the oppo-

site party most confidently rely ; “ go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe : in my name shall they cast out devils ; they shall speak with new tongues ; they shall take up serpents ; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them ; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” (Mark xvi. 17, 18.)

Now this promise is limited to the hearers of the *Apostles*, even to those on whom the Apostles might hereafter choose to confer these extraordinary powers. Christ commanded them to preach the Gospel to every creature, and promised that certain signs should follow those that believed *them, that is to say, the Apostles themselves* ; not those who should believe *future preachers*, but those who should receive gladly the very men to whom this discourse was addressed. If I promise something to a selected audience, to induce them to cooperate with me in some great and perilous enterprise, is not this promise, by the nature of the case as well as by the language, restricted to those to whom it is addressed ? Observe the reason which existed for it. It was a deserved compensation, a well-

merited preference, a gracious consolation, granted to those who received the infant Gospel in the face of power, beset with dangers, and environed by countless forms of death. Who does not see, that the language of the text limits it; that the greater difficulty that was to be encountered by the first believers sanctioned the difference? We retain that which is eternal; the temporary support is withdrawn, now that that which hindered has been graciously taken out of the way.

Mark too the significance of our Saviour's expression, "follow." He does not command them to ask for miraculous powers, but he *promises* that such powers shall follow their belief. They were to form no subject of their prayers, but would come "unasked for, if they came at all." Is it ever said that the spiritual blessings of peace, meekness, purity, love, would present themselves uncalled for, and without the aid of prayer? No; the one kind are wholly gifts, the other kind constitute the very essence of the religion itself. The former are gifts in no-wise tending to the believer's advantage, inasmuch as it is not of their nature to increase holiness, but they were designed for the propagation of the faith; and Christ, the Head of the Church, being alone able to judge in what measure they were



required to that end, promised arbitrarily to dispense them.

But it is asserted, that the aforesaid miraculous powers are promised for all times, by the words, "and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Are ye who thus think aware that you are profanely confounding the "I," the personal Jesus, the spiritual Agent, the Word of the Father, with matter and its inert powers? Have you yet to learn, that Jesus is a *person*, not a *thing*? That it is blasphemy and profanity thus to *confound his essence, which is spiritual, with material substances or physical agency*? When Christ says, "I will be with you always," He means *Himself*, that is to say, his *Spirit*, never to be confounded with the command over lifeless nature.

What is a miracle? Is it not reversing a material law? Is it any thing more than altering for a moment the properties of matter? Is it a tongue that is given for utterance? Is this any thing more than to have a command of certain sounds, to effect certain vibrations of the air? Do ye see God a whit nearer to you in this? Ye must, or ye would not so covet it. Be consistent; go forth to worship the sun, or kiss your hands to the moon "walking in her brightness." God is not in the sign, or in the sound, or in the

wonder, but He is discernible only by the Spirit. How durst ye so profane the Idea of Him, whose name is Jealous, by conceiving, that when He said, "I am with you always," He included therein extraordinary physical powers, as it seems to your minds the better half of the donation, the accompaniment, without which even His presence would be tedious and unacceptable !

Again, if this promise was designed for all times, it was equally designed for all persons ; nay more, the words would imply, that the full assemblage and congregation of the gifts were the heritage of every believer ; so that every baptized man and woman is entitled to receive all these signs, and the Church would be obliged to consider such as heathen and unbelieving, who cannot produce these external wonders. Let St. Paul determine it. "Are all Apostles ? are all Prophets ? are all teachers ? are all workers of miracles ? Have all the gifts of healing ? do all speak with tongues ? do all interpret ?" (1 Cor. xii. 29, 30.) Thus this promise was not granted to all, even in the generation of him who spake it. That which guided the various distribution of supernatural aids was the principle of utility. "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal." (1 Cor. xii. 7.) It is, however, contended, that these signs were

promised to be the heritage of the Church in all ages for her own advantage, and not for the benefit of unbelievers. Whereas again Scripture says, a few lines after, that "they confirmed the words with signs following," or, in other words, it was for the sake of authenticating the doctrine.

It only remains to inquire after the fact. Have all believers received them since these words were spoken? It cannot be said that they failed to receive them for want of faith, otherwise they would have been no believers at all. Who, after any consideration, can admit so monstrous a proposition?

We will next examine the much-vaunted passage of Joel, as quoted by St. Peter on the day of Pentecost; "and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy." (Acts ii. 17, 18.) The Apostle Peter declared, that what they then saw and heard was the fulfilment of this prophecy; and when a prophecy has once been fulfilled, may every idle questionist, in order that the power of God may supersede his own

reluctant efforts, demand to see the same fire descend from heaven, or to be able to summon "spirits from the vasty deep" as oft as he will?

But among the words which in their minds fully secure to them this envied endowment, not of working righteousness, but signs and portents, is that which St. Peter says, "for the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts ii. 39.) The mere quotation of the preceding verse will at once clear this matter; "then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts ii. 38.) What is the gift promised? It is the Holy Spirit. And what is the Holy Spirit? Is it aught material? a voice—a phenomenon—physical agency? It is none of all these; but, as our Lord elsewhere says, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John iii. 6.) And again, "God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth;" (John iv. 24.) an admonition, be it observed, by such as seek for signs, shamefully disobeyed. What they worship is physical power; but God dwelleth not in the power, the highest end of which is to win cre-

dence to a doctrine, and so to testify "his hidden residence." The Apostle, in the first part of his discourse, establishes the new religion, on the ground of the promised prodigies ; in the second place, he abridges the history of Christ ; and in the last, he exhorts them to embrace the religion itself, with its great and gracious gift of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in their hearts ; and this promise, says he, is designed for you and your posterity, even to the latest generation. Unless, then, we confess ourselves unable to distinguish between the Spirit of God and the laws of matter, there can be no controversy in this case. Observe, it is not said, the "gifts," but the "gift" of the Holy Spirit. Even had the plural been used, this phrase would not necessarily have included any miraculous endowment ; for those internal qualities of the soul which are the fruits of the indwelling Spirit are not one, but many. If we may use a phrase once applied to hellish occupants of the breast, they are "legion," for they include peace, love, joy, meekness, purity, and whatever else is of good report ; but the singular noun is used. That then which constitutes the eternal possession of the Church, is to have the spirit of her Founder, who is one, though his operations may be manifold. It comes shortly to this, that, the Gospel

being given for the renovation of the spirit of man—that object being the sole end and purpose of the religion—the promise is of the gift of that which is able to effect such purpose. Miraculous power has no such tendency. Spirit can alone come in contact with spirit. The devils see greater displays of the divine power, at least in the region of matter, than ourselves, and yet still remain unbelievers, not indeed in the physical power, but in the love and goodness of their Creator. The signs were only the accompanying credentials; and, when an ambassador is once accredited, is he required to reproduce his credentials, on the occasion of every interview that he may hold? Why should it be otherwise in spiritual concerns? If one merchant pledged himself, at stated seasons, to remit money to another merchant, should we conceive the promise violated if the money was not always conveyed in the same box, or if, instead of gold and silver, the merchant transmitted a bill of exchange? In either case the conveyance may be varied, so long as the *substance* remains. The case, however, is even stronger than this; for a miracle is a credential, and not a *conveyance*. It is even so, because matter and spirit are altogether heterogeneous. Having scrutinized these two passages, which are universally admitted to

favour most the views we reject, and having proved that they contain no such doctrine, but a denial of it, it is needless to examine any more on that head.

I now advance to the third part of our inquiry.  
*What is the nature of the alleged manifestations?*

Before I proceed to examine this, let me beseech the inquirer to scrutinize these alleged gifts, without any reference to his opinion of the soundness of the former argument. If the scales seem equally suspended, let us recur to foreign assistance, but not otherwise. We will conduct our scrutiny of these gifts by proposing certain heads of inquiry. *What supernatural proof has been afforded, that the utterances are those of the Spirit of God?* It is alleged by the believers of them, that an unknown tongue is given as a sign and credential from heaven. *Then what tongue is it?* It is a collection of sounds oftentimes inarticulate, as the writer himself can testify by his own hearing, and which are absolutely undiscoverable in any known language of the world. Any man would here ask, What ground then have we for believing that these unknown sounds are any language at all? There is no ground for believing it. In many utterances there appears an intermixture of Spanish and Hebrew words, that is to say, of utterly diverse sounds and lan-

guages ; but in Scripture is any hint afforded of indiscoverable and unintelligible sounds? Nothing like such an idea appears. It was, indeed, a great mistake, and an indication of intense ignorance, to believe, that the phrase of our translation, " unknown tongues," ever meant unintelligible sounds, or rather no tongues at all. I say " unknown tongues," for no such phrase occurs in the original. The word thus rendered is *γλῶσσα*, a language ; but as these languages were a gift, it of course means foreign languages. On the day of Pentecost, every foreigner heard in his own language " the wonderful works of God." If they admit that such was the nature of the Pentecostal gifts, yet doubt whether the same rule obtained in the case of the Corinthian Church, let the great Apostle decide ; " There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me." (1 Cor. xiv. 10, 11.)

This utterance then is no sign. *But what shall we say of the English utterance?* Let us be thankful to these new prophets, that they do not always speak in these fine languages, but sometimes condescend to use even the tongues of



fleshly men. Having in our hands a written revelation, we are the better able to judge of what may be thought worthy to come from God. Open the Bible where you will, and you see a power of genius and of soul not to be rivaled. The words of it appear to be thought, and uttered by more energetic men than now dwell upon the earth. In the eloquent language of Bishop Heber, it is at once perceived "how hopeless it is by mortal fires to try to emulate heaven's own inimitable lightning." The phrases are so memorable, that they at once fix themselves in our hearts, and defy the power of oblivion. Its expressions have all passed into household words. Even seen in a translation, they are more exact and forcible than can be framed in our own mother tongue. Reason at once teaches us, that what comes from God must be worthy of God. And has not Revelation fulfilled the pledge? Under this head, I lament that I cannot refer my readers to any record of these utterances. All former revelations have been so given, that their divine Author has amply provided for their publicity and preservation. Whether revelations to individuals touching their own safety or fortunes, and which concern no public interest, would necessarily be preserved, does not enter into the question; but that a revelation which concerns

all men, and is addressed to the universal Church, should be preserved for the use of all, as it certainly was the case of all previous inspiration ; so our reason must tell us, that if any future one were granted, equal means would be afforded, under some recognized channel, for its conservation and universal accessibility. Great numbers, however, have heard these utterances, and many of them have been taken down at the time, and brought before the public ; and how do they correspond to the dignity of a revelation ? They pretend to original power ; but what are they, the bulk of them, but repetitions of Scripture sentences ? Does not this argue a want of power, a plentiful lack of ideas, an absence of all originality, and a weakness of understanding, to be ever incoherently reciting scraps and shreds of the sacred writings ? Is the Divine power exhausted ? Has the Spirit lost its richness of utterance, that it is fain to feed its servants with the broken bread and remnants of a former banquet ? Has not each human genius, with whom God favours the world, his own peculiar phrase, distinguishing him from all others ? Is it not so with all the sacred writers ? Even if old wine was served up, would it not have been wise to put it in new bottles ? But so it is, that term and idea are alike borrowed. Whatever is not

Scripture in the utterances is contemptible. For the justice of this, I would appeal to any intelligent man, who has either heard or read them. "From the sublime to the ridiculous," said Napoleon, "there is but one step;" but in the utterances, between the vile and the precious, there is not even that slight interval. Immediately the speakers cease quoting Scripture, and are left to their own resources, to the spirit as they would term it, their discourse becomes flat and contemptible, even beneath the level of the most ordinary and insipid writings. What a contrast to the "winged words" of inspiration! As regards the substance of them, they are pervaded by one idea, and that one the topic which has accompanied every assumption of prophetic power from the earliest times, the doctrine of the second advent of our Lord, the nearness of it, its suddenness, and the fearful judgments which would attend in its train. One principal characteristic of the sacred writers is, their entire sobriety of mind. But spiritual intoxication, like the more sensual, can subsist only by dramming. No false prophet or anti-christ has ever appeared, but the leading theme of his utterances has been the immediate coming of Christ. And as to that coming, not even the angels in heaven, he has himself said, are to be informed of it. As to the place and manner of

it, we need not to go and look after it. (Matt. xxiv. 27.) Besides, he has warned us against false prophets, (*Ibid.* ver. 24.) but has given no intimation that any more true ones would be sent. Behold the amount of the proof of their credibility ; an unintelligible sound, a recitation of scraps of Scripture, and exhortations of their own of one idea, and even the flat phrase in which it is couched repeated *usque ad nauseam*. The writer himself heard a revelation on this wise, “ He is coming, He is coming, why will ye not repent ? ” each word repeated a dozen times, and especially the monosyllable “ why ” repeated as many times successively in so high and discordant a voice, that the senseless manner of it excited contempt. These prophets have now pursued their vocation for four years, so that their inspirations would furnish forth a tolerably large volume. How much has the world lost, that they have not been preserved ! But Mr. Irving informs us, that their very value has occasioned this, for that the “ spoken ” word is a higher ordinance than the “ written.”

So much more commendable then is their humility, as has been remarked, in doing little else than quoting these same despised prophets. The gifted do themselves compare it to manna ; and certainly the likeness holds good in this parti-

cular, that as it has appeared in a day, so it will perish in a day. The sound is heard within four walls, and dies out of all recollection ; the manna instantly melts away, in our act of touching it, into " thin thin air." They have no need of using the prayer of Hamlet for its liquefaction. Is it not the characteristic of a true spirit to come to the light, and of a false one to be huddled up in darkness? If one of their prophecies comes true, how are we to be assured of it where it has never been recorded? If, on the other hand, it is falsified, is not the chance diminished of its detection? Open your eyes to this mark, ye who are on the brink of being ensnared by it. Like the other devices of Satan, it is all a deed of darkness. The utterance may not be recorded, and sometimes not even repeated. The undoubted word is multiplied infinitely. We have seen that these revelations are secret and ephemeral, and therefore ill correspond with the dignity of a divine communication. When the ancient prophets spoke

" In their majestic unaffected style,"

they summoned " heaven and earth to hear, for that the Lord had spoken."

I turn now to another characteristic, to which I have briefly adverted above. In

a recent pamphlet, entitled, " Prove All Things," a strange mistake has been made, in contrasting the tenor of these utterances with former acknowledged delusions. The author truly says, that it is characteristic of madness to be inspired with one idea, and which madness moreover is often confined to one subject ; so that apart from such delusion the subject of it is perfectly sane. He, however, forgets, that this exactly describes the condition of the gifted persons. *Their one idea* is the nearness of the coming of our Lord. The burden of their utterances is, " He is coming, He is coming," accompanied with an exhortation to repentance, ever conveyed in the same bald monotony of expression. If all their sayings had been recorded and gathered into a volume, would not the meanest of their adherents be ashamed to own it ? But this the crafty spirit knew well, and therefore enjoined the strictest secrecy.

Another feature of these utterances is, the unfolding of unfulfilled prophecy, instead of applying the mighty scale of the Apostle, that " one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," (2 Pet. iii. 8.) and that we are not to count the slow progress of divine dispensations " as men count slackness." (*Ibid.* ver. 9.) The new prophets huddle up all almost within the hour-glass of a man's life.

They think they shall themselves see the end of the drama, and they are impatient for the falling of the curtain.

Another characteristic of these utterances is the prominent part taken by women. The Apostle declares that they are not to be allowed to teach in the churches, for that the place of authority belongs to the man. "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." (1 Tim. ii. 12.) To this they reply, that of course celestial *afflatus* renders the subjects of it superior to all ordinary rules. True; but is it likely that the Holy Spirit would so descend upon them, as to cause them to transgress the limits and proprieties of their sex? They might and they have been inspired with lyrical raptures, as in the case of Miriam, Deborah, Elizabeth, and the Virgin Mother; but still their inspiration was distinct from the office of teaching, and as not exercising authority, it "overstepped not the modesty of their nature." If God had sent them, there is of course an end of all discussion; but the question is, is it likely that he would so send them, to the violation of natural feelings, and the *dictum* of the great Apostle? If this reasoning be thought insufficient, let us recur to facts. In the whole Bible, consisting of sixty-six books,

not one is written by a female. A few songs and odes were their production, and nothing more.

*My next question under this head shall be, they have made many prophecies, and have they been fulfilled?*

We are unable, in consequence of the commanded secrecy, to refer to any other predictions than those of Mr. Baxter. It is evident we cannot admit those prophecies to have been fulfilled which are unknown, having never been promulgated. This would be committing the same absurdity, as those who call unknown and unrecognized sounds a language. In reference to pretensions to inspiration, in the book of Deuteronomy the following rule is laid down. "But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." (Deut. xviii. 20, 21, 22.) The author of the "Narrative of Facts"



uttered not less than ten distinct and unequivocal prophecies, and admitting no difference of interpretation, which were every one of them falsified. How can we account for even one remaining believer after such an exposure? They said, that the utterances had a spiritual meaning, and were not to be understood in the gross carnal sense. To say nothing of such imbecility, it is plain, that this principle would render the application of the Hebrew law that I have cited altogether impossible. The Reform Bill of the same person's prophecy did not mean *the* Reform Bill, but some other Bill in the womb of futurity. The forty days after which the Apostolic gifts were to be granted did not mean *days*, but perhaps years, or centuries, or eras. But to pursue this matter farther would be wasting my space. Let all read the "Narrative of Facts," and who can resist its impression? The "Morning Watch," and the other leaders of the party, have denounced its circulation. One declares, that to circulate it is blasphemy. How is it that they do not perceive how this soreness betrays their weakness? Job exclaimed, "O that one would hear me! behold, my desire is, that mine adversary had written a book!" but a deed of darkness can lead to no such desire. It is impatient of light and witnesses. In the first number

of the "Morning Watch" that appeared after the publication of the "Narrative of Facts," Mr. Irving indited a paper on "What caused the fall of Mr. Baxter;" be it observed, before his fall was proved, or his book confuted. It might have been as well if he had first proved this point, before he speculated as to what occasioned it. *To this hour no answer has appeared to the "Narrative of Facts."* Every pamphlet intended as a reply to it has turned upon the point of the supposed spirit of holiness evinced in the utterances. No failure has been disproved. The continual contradictions between the several speakers have not been reconciled.

I will review one more absurdity under this head. Some of the utterances were directed to an unfolding the design of the mysterious Apocalypse. These, though unrecorded, are refracted to the believers through the prism of Mr. Irving's mind. "To repeat these words," says Mr. Irving, "our God hath taught us to be a profanation;" yet does Mr. Irving undertake to supply an interpretation of the fourteenth chapter of the Apocalypse by the light of these utterances. In other words, he usurps a more despotic control over their belief and consciences, than ever did the Pope. For His Holiness never attempted to destroy Revelation out of the earth;

yet Mr. Irving, as soon as it is born, having heard it himself, straightway strangles it, and then serves out what he conceives *to have been* the sense of it, at the same time making no pretension to infallibility, and no record remaining whereby to refresh his memory, or correct the error of even his fallible judgment. And are they doomed to receive and to submit to this? A dim suspicion of its absurdity and unwarrantableness has dawned even upon his mind. "It hath not been without fear and trembling that I have done this, lest I should be profaning the sacredness of the revelation, or making my own use of the secret of His mighty strength, which our Samson had revealed to us. And I have been much tried to find out whether it was right to continue my office of an interpreter in this way of publishing or not; so that I am in a strait, and see it not impossible that I may withdraw from it altogether." *Morning Watch*, vol. vi. p. 265. I am glad that they have all withdrawn from the continuing that talented though mischievous work.

Proceed we now to the fourth head. *What moral effect have these manifestations had upon the gifted persons, and also upon those who receive them?*

This inquiry is the more important, because

the claimants have produced this sole argument, that it is blasphemy to attribute such exalted spirituality to any other author than the Spirit of God. That the converts should be strictly moral, every one would of course expect. That is the lowest attainment of real religion. Whenever we know that a man is extremely earnest about religion, we take it for granted that he is also moral. It is said, that it would destroy the peace of many a good man, to try his practice by the Ten Commandments. I believe the same result would follow, if we were to try the sanctity of the Irvingites by the Apostolic description of the fruits of charity.

“ *Charity suffereth long and is kind.*” They may be kind *one to another* ; but let any person who has argued with one of them say whether they are kind to *him*, or suffer long. The author of the “ Narrative of Facts ” states, and he must know them well, “ that the delusion produces a bitterness of spirit, and violence very manifest.” Will it be said, that they are not bitter to one another? It would be strange if they were. The lower animals do not quarrel with their own species ; but they are impatient and intolerant of argument, and abound in evil surmises, concerning all who oppose their views.

“ *Charity envieth not.*” A received prophetess

confessed to her envying and mimicking the gifts of her more fortunate sisters. Will it be said that they do not covet the high places of the earth, or are intent upon heaping up riches? They may not be engaged upon these projects just now, but they have only differed for the present. They look to enjoy all these sensual delights, *and very soon*, on this very earth, in over measure, for ever.

*“Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.”* The “Morning Watch” is the very incarnation of the spirit of the modern sect. I say modern, because it embodies the principles of all former fanatics; and what fierce and intolerable pride appears in its pages! The writers in that now defunct Journal are the leaders of the party, and are therefore the fairest exemplars of its spirit. “As is the sample, so is the sack.”

*“Doth not behave itself unseemly.”* The author of the “Narrative of Facts” states, “that sectarian feelings are generated, and a bitter spirit of separation.” All who do not admit the utterances, are out of the pale of the Church. Can any thing be more unseemly than this?

*“Seeketh not her own.”* They deem that themselves, a small band, shall inherit the earth, and that their wish will be very soon gratified. Can there be a form of more intense self seeking?

*"Is not easily provoked."* "Another characteristic is the bitterness of denunciation and hastiness of spirit found in the manifestation of the power." *Narrative of Facts*, p. 128.

*"Thinketh no evil."* They are full of a gloomy disbelief of the godliness of all beyond their pale. They consider the Church of England to be "Babylon," and devoted to her plagues. They look upon Europe as about to be a slaughterhouse, and regard the woes which they have proclaimed to be soon coming upon men with little commiseration.

*"Rejoiceth not in iniquity."* To them the shield of human nature presents no golden side. Instead of rejoicing at the prosperous issue of affairs, the worst tidings are the most welcome. The tumults of the earth are their pastime, because they deem that their redemption draweth nigh. Meteors, earthquakes, insurrections, they banquet upon. A list of these is ever received by them with greediness. To them will apply the striking image which Jeremy Taylor has transferred into his writings from Plutarch. "They are like the execrable gates of cities, out of which nothing but malefactors and public executions issue; nothing that is chaste and holy." They are guilty of intellectual cannibalism.

*"But rejoiceth in the truth."* They think that

truth is confined to themselves, while they uphold a cause which is untenable by Scripture or reason.

“ *Beareth all things.*” Truly they bear with failures, and contradictions, and silly utterances, and still remain believers.

“ *Believeth all things.*” They believe a detestable and impure heresy, that Christ took sinful flesh ; so congenial does it to them appear to revel in the contemplation of iniquity and impurity.

“ *Hopeth all things.*” They have neither hope nor wish for the amelioration of either national or human affairs. They have avowedly cast to the winds every remnant of patriotic feeling.

“ *Endureth all things.*” We never wish them to be called upon to endure any other inconvenience than scriptural and argumentative discussion. That they patiently endure contempt and derision, may be equally affirmed of the Southcotians. A Jew will share the same honour, and so will every fanatic. But they think that soon the tables will be turned, and themselves rule the Lords of the ascendant.

Under this head generally, let a man take in hand the numbers of the “ Morning Watch,” which is in truth a vial of wrath. A writer has remarked with truth and wit, “ that if the meek are to inherit the earth, the writers of the

“ Morning Watch ” will come in for a very few acres of it, seeing that of their meekness there is a plentiful lack.” The author of “ Prove All Things ” has stated, that Mr. Baxter allows the moral effects produced by these manifestations to be entirely and purely good ; and then asks, with an air of triumph, can what is good proceed from an evil source ? can we attribute this peaceful and holy frame of mind to the working of Satan ? If it were so, he might well triumph ; but it is a direct, though we will not say a wilful, falsehood. *More than half the truth is here suppressed.* That Satan comes as an angel of light ; that the gifted persons are sincere but misguided religionists, having in them the seeds of true religion, though now choked by tares, will abundantly account for what holiness is intermingled with its operation.

The following evil qualities are attributed by Mr. Baxter to the gifted individuals ; and this witness has every thing to recommend him, having himself experienced its inward working, and having also enjoyed unlimited intercourse with the others. It is moreover noticeable, that though he has abandoned the sect, there does not exist in his bosom a particle of ill-will towards those who still remain under the vile enchantment. His sentiment towards them is that of pure com-



passion. When he speaks of them, it is ever with tenderness. By their own acknowledgment, and more especially by that of his late pastor, he possesses a powerful understanding and a simple heart; in other words, it is to call him one of the best of men. What then does this unexceptionable witness testify to its moral tendency? He distinctly attributes to the party the following vices, than which none are less compatible with real sanctification: a violence and bitterness of spirit—a proneness to stern and remorseless denunciation of all opponents—a sad want of ingenuousness, evinced in their concealing contradictions and failures—credulity, and such a perturbation of mind and restlessness, that they change their views without being conscious of it: moreover he asserts, that this intoxication induces such an imbecility of understanding, that the remembrance even of facts is blotted out—also, that it generates a narrow sectarianism—proud and dogmatic speculation—a fondness for novelties, and an utter prostration of the intellect. That which most unequivocally decides its character, is the testimony which he bears to the fiery persecution which the gifted persons endure under the enchantment of this spirit. His words are, “ Their state is a furnace of affliction; that their spirits are under such bondage, that they

may truly say, "The enemy hath persecuted my soul."

The author of "Prove All Things," however, states, that the gifted persons keep at home, and go not forth or excite others to any wild crusade. The civil and domestic state of the age and society in which they live accounts for this. In an earlier or ruder age, the same spirit would have prompted to overt acts of a ferocious zeal. It is known to all, that they themselves admit that two antagonist spirits are at work, one of light and one of darkness, so that the utterances of the same person may be alternately true or false; yet they do not pretend to a discernment of spirits. Well then, we must be prepared to learn that they task the utmost force of their minds to discern the difference. Let us hear a leading man among them. "What! watch against Jesus! watch against God! watch that our God, whom we love, may not deceive us! No, verily; we will not thus watch." Finally, he couches it all in one monstrous phrase, "dead minds cannot watch."

It is asserted in a pamphlet of Mr. Drummond's, *intended for private circulation*, that the ministrations of the Established Church at Albury and the neighbourhood are no longer channels of grace, that all the "streams are turned to blood."

Many may consider this assertion groundless ; I would, however, incline to the belief, that there may be some truth in it. If it be so, the causes are plain. In the spiritual as in the intellectual and physical worlds, action and reaction are equal and contrary. It is conceivable, that many minds, disgusted by the near sight of extravagant delusion, especially if they entertained some respect for the former characters of the sufferers, and Mr. Drummond is well known to be a kind and generous landlord, may have been driven into the extreme of religious apathy. When Calvin enforced a rigid civil discipline at Geneva, Mosheim informs us, that there was an organized body of open libertines. So is it ever ; and so in Surrey may the regular ministrations have been attended with less than their usual efficacy.

I have heard it sometimes stated, that a presumption arises in favour of these manifestations, from the high rank which some of their adherents possess. Among their adherents are numbered some of the highest rank. I do not mean to attribute a subservient spirit to those who consider this a favourable indication. If all the believers consisted only of the lowest of the people, I should deem this an adverse circumstance. But why any superiority of judgment should be attri-

buted to the highest classes over the middle, I am at a loss to determine. My own judgment would rather incline to the other side.

Let it be observed, that I have not accused any of the party of feeling the slightest pride in consequence of adherents of the class I have mentioned being found among them, because that would negative the unworldliness of their character; but this I do not mean to deny. I have, however, introduced this topic, in order to present to the notice of my reader a moral phenomenon: it is this: that heresies in all ages have most usually been originated, and been supported by, persons of rank and wealth. I will state a few principles, to enable my readers to trace the causes of the phenomenon. I must do those classes the justice to admit, that in spirit and determination, and heroic enterprise, they have far exceeded those below them. So far they have been qualified, as they have ever been found, to take the lead in all civil and religious reforms. But unfortunately there has been often mingled with the fortitude a defect of the reasoning power, and a want of that hard common sense, which especially distinguishes the middle classes of England. In short, their faculties have been more akin to poetry, than to those pursuits of mind which require a

tempered judgment. And is not theology pre-eminently among these ?

There is another cause, which, combined with the above, will fully account for the phenomenon to which I refer. It consists in that craving for excitement, in that exhaustion of the usual sources of interest, and, above all, in that want of having their opinions and principles enforced by practice : not mingling so much with their fellow-creatures, and their religious feelings not equally issuing in appropriate action, these feelings become morbid, and require for their excitement stronger and stronger stimulants. The action of common and wholesome truth is gradually worn out, and new opinions and fancies are required to supply the wanted fuel. On this topic I shall quote Edmund Burke. " The great too are among the unhappy. They want Religion's sovereign balm, under their gnawing cares and anxieties, which, being less conversant about the limited wants of animal life, range without limit, and are diversified by infinite combinations in the wild and unbounded regions of imagination. Some charitable dole is wanting to these, our often very unhappy brethren, to fill the gloomy void which reigns in minds which have nothing on earth to hope or fear ; something to relieve in the killing languor and overlaboured lassitude of

those who have nothing to do ; something to excite an appetite to existence in the palled satiety, which attends on all pleasures which may be bought, where nature is not left to her own process, where even desire is anticipated, and therefore fruition defeated by meditated schemes and contrivances of delight, and no interval, no obstacle, is interposed between the wish and the accomplishment.” *Reflections on the Revolution in France.*

Nor can it be said, that even true religion would eradicate this appetite ; on the contrary, unless severely chastised, it might even serve to influence it ; for religion modifies, but does not destroy individuality. And if this appetite is indulged, and natural infirmities cleave even to the sincere, then, as it is conceived to have an all-mighty sanction, it becomes still more inveterate. Thus misdirected religion is often guilty of worse excesses and more hardened conduct than mere morality. The latter mistrusts itself, the former never.

To ye whose minds are in a state of doubt relative to these pretensions, and especially to those who dwell in this city, I will now speak. And it may be, that although this place might probably be the last which open and enthusiastic heresy would enter and assault, from its nearness

to much sound light and knowledge ; yet, on the other hand, there are many reasons why it should be principally exposed to such assault. From these seats those brilliant enthusiasts, Whitfield and Wesley, issued ; not that I find fault with them, for they were the champions of evangelic truth, the restorers of languid devotion. They sprinkled the waters that spring if not in the heart, yet “ fast by the oracle of God ” on the pale cheek of drooping Faith.

From that mental as well as material law to which I have referred, an ample and imposing ceremonial, like that which is the order of this University, ever generates a mysticism, anxious to dispense with all forms and all ranks. Even so again a sound though somewhat frigid form of doctrine, frigid, I mean, in its mode of inculcation, equally generates a hot and rampant heresy. Be warned, therefore, of these influences, to which your dwelling in this city may leave you open. Resist this tempest of the soul, this delusion of Satan,

“ Whose face was like the deep, when tempest tossed,  
 “ And where he gazed a gloom pervaded space,”

in which many are involved.

Are you willing to encounter those hydras of the mind which I have above enumerated ? And what answer can you give to the affecting per-

sonal experience of the author of the " Narrative of Facts ?" Remember the words of Isaiah, " In quietness and confidence shall be your strength."

My concluding warning shall be drawn from the character of the times. What predisposes the mind to seek further light from heaven, as to the course of national or European affairs, is their rapid march and uncertain tendency ; still it is the Christian's duty not to yield to this irreligious curiosity, but to be content with performing his part in the drama of the world, since he is doing that which if all men did " truth would flourish out of the earth, and righteousness would look down from heaven." It is our wisdom not too exactly to meditate on the amount of vice and infidelity, but to endeavour to lessen the mass of it, each in his own province ; and as for the rest,

" To shun the mischief which we cannot heal."

THE END.

BAXTER, PRINTER, OXFORD.



## AT THE SIGN OF THE SHIP.

We often hear of 'automatic writing' nowadays, less of 'automatic speaking,' or the gift of tongues. St. Paul had much to say about the tongues in his First Epistle to the Corinthians. They were young converts, and he does not conceal his opinion that they are far from perfect. Two, or more, would rise at once, and declaim in languages which neither they nor anyone else understood. The Apostle speaks plainly about these proceedings, and it is pretty apparent that he thought 'tongues' of no practical value, unless the speaker could either translate them or get them translated. Now, about 1830, some persons in Scotland wanted 'a sign.' A woman of great saintliness prayed that grace might be conferred on a Mr. Macdonald, a ship-builder. He at once said, 'I have got it,' and adjured the lady, who was an invalid, to rise. She did so, and her health improved a good deal. Not long afterwards Mr. Macdonald began to speak 'in tongues' not understood of the people, and also to talk automatically in Scotch. Mr. Erskine, of Linlathen, was much exercised about these prodigies, but when the Irvingites varied from his theories concerning ecclesiastical matters his opinion about the tongues and their miraculous character began to change. At one time nothing very remarkable had been occurring at the *séances* where Mr. Macdonald usually spoke. Then there came a brilliant success. What happened, unluckily, Mr. Erskine does not tell us, but Mr. Macdonald's tongues were most eloquent and unintelligible. That orator, therefore, prayed that he might be able to translate his own discourses. The power was granted, and Mr. Macdonald interpreted 'Disco, capto' (spoken in the 'tongue') to signify, 'The shout of a king shall be among them.' The words do not exactly mean that in Latin, to which profane language they bear a specious resemblance.

\* \* \*

After this *séance* Mr. Erskine observed two women embracing with every sign of delight. Some days later he asked Mr. Macdonald what they meant by it. The prophet replied that before the meeting these women had prayed for a special manifestation, and had asked that 'the shout of a king might be among them.' Mr. Macdonald did not add that those devout ladies were his own near relations, as was the case. The circumstances did not make Mr. Erskine suspect Mr. Macdonald's honesty, but they did set him thinking. Here are two ladies praying for 'the shout of a king,' and here is their brother saying 'Disco, capto,' in a

tongue hypothetically unknown, and then rendering these words by 'the shout of a king' and the rest of it. Granting Mr. Macdonald's honesty, which seems to have been unimpeachable, we must fall back on the hypothesis of 'automatic speaking.' His consciousness on this theory was playing him tricks. It reminded him of scraps of Latin heard, perhaps, in school, and it persuaded him that these scraps had a meaning, which had recently been in his own mind. Further, Mr. Erskine later detected Mr. Macdonald speaking automatic rubbish based on casual paragraphs in the newspapers. Mr. Macdonald, when the matter was thus brought to his notice, very frankly admitted that Mr. Erskine's theory was, in these cases, probably correct. His unconscious self was working up hints from the newspapers, hints which his conscious self had perhaps entirely forgotten. These facts are of interest, or may be of interest, to automatic writers. They are, one conceives, doing with their pens what the automatic preachers did with their tongues. It is a queer state of mind to get into, and a jury, in certain circumstances, might decline to make allowances for the doings of the unconscious self. It is obviously full of its fun. Among examples from the 'Tongues' printed by Dr. Hanna, in an appendix to his edition of Mr. Erskine's Letters, some of the words are Greek, as *Aristos* and one or two others. Now Greek is not yet a language quite unknown. Let us imagine that the speakers had heard a little Greek and forgotten it, as the celebrated kitchen-maid had heard Hebrew, which she remembered when delirious. The speakers in those strange old doings on the west coast of Scotland may have been delirious too, in a sense, and then Greek words would pop out among a jargon of sounds which were not words at all. One of the speakers is said to have believed that she was talking in the vernacular of the Pellew Islands. Perhaps the Greek words were a mistake of the reporter's, but there was apparently no doubt about 'Disco, capto.' The Catholic exorcists rather regarded these sudden linguistic acquirements as a proof of diabolical possession, but that is a very unfriendly view in face of other less violent explanations. It does not seem to have been noticed that the common spiritualistic trick of producing a name written in red on the arm was exhibited by the lady superior of the 'possessed' nuns at Loudun, in the affair of Urbain Grandier, about 1640. This was after Grandier's execution. The sceptical Court ladies who viewed the performance made unfriendly criticisms, and the topic is only worth mentioning as an illustra-

tion of the odd uniformity which marks all these proceedings. The Loudun case is difficult to study, the accounts are so involved in Protestant prejudice on one side and superstition on the other.

\* \* \*

Here follows the epigram of Allan Ramsay, already spoken of; it really does not strike one as positively startling:—

*SPOKEN TO THREE YOUNG LADIES.*

Me anes three beauties did surround,  
And ilka beauty gave a wound  
    Whilst they with smiling eye  
Said, 'Allan, which think ye maist fair?  
Gi'e judgment frankly; never spare.'  
    'Hard is the task,' said I,  
But added, seeing them sae free,  
'Ladies, ye maun say mair to me,  
    And my demand right fair is,  
First, like the gay celestial three,  
Shaw a' your charms, and then ha'e wi' ye;  
    Faith, I shall be your Paris.'

\* \* \*

We shall perhaps never find out why the Nine of Diamonds is called the Curse of Scotland; but I learn that, after 1715, it was styled 'Peter Haldane, or the Curse of Scotland.' Mr. Haldane made himself very much hated by greed and malignity when serving on a commission of inquiry. His name was used as an alternative to 'the Curse,' which, therefore, must be older than 1715. The authority is a note to Ramsay of Ochertyre, vol. ii. p. 482.

\* \* \*

*'AND SO THEY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER.'*

Therewith the story ends again,  
And who is not contented?  
The Ogres all are duly slain,  
The Dragons circumvented,  
The Princess weds the hero bold  
Who came her chains to sever,  
And so the blissful pair, we're told,  
    'Live happily for ever.'

*AT THE SIGN OF THE SHIP.*

So—Finis! And the book we close,  
 No other facts are granted,  
 But lovers then, we must suppose,  
 Were never disenchanted;  
 For them was no domestic strife,  
 No troubles intervening,  
 But 'happiness' and 'married life'  
 Were synonyms in meaning.

We too, perhaps, although we dwell  
 In different circumstances,  
 Perform the drama fairly well  
 Set forth in these romances;  
 The Ogre's part a parent plays,  
 The Maid's an heiress pretty,  
 The Prince, in these prosaic days,  
 Is 'something in the City.'

But will the parallel extend  
 Through after-life, I wonder,  
 When grave philosophers perpend  
 That marriage is a blunder?  
 Ah, chroniclers discreetly mute!  
 You were, perchance, too clever  
 To hint at rifts within the lute  
 Of happiness for ever!

And yet . . . the view is out of date,  
 By grave statistics shaken,  
 But still to some, at any rate,  
 It does not seem mistaken;  
 For though the cynic's bitter mirth  
 No truth in it discovers,  
 Love, now as then, can make of earth  
 A paradise for lovers!

ANTHONY C. DEANE.

A. LANG.