

RAPOLOGY:

OR

THE SCIENCE OF SPIRITUAL
KNOCKINGS.

BEING A LECTURE DELIVERED BEFORE THE YOUNG MEN'S
READING SOCIETY, CALLIS, N. Y.

BY A MINOR.

SOLD BY HOTCHKISS & STEWART,
32 Maiden Lane, N. Y.

PRINTED BY HENRY J. HOWLAND,
199 Main St., Worcester, Mass.

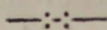
*H. J. H. did not occupy
199 Main St. until
after 1848*

19.61

THE SCIENCE OF SPIRITUAL

KNOWLEDGE

LECTURE.



The subject upon which I propose to speak, this evening, is one which has been looked upon by a large majority of the public as unworthy the consideration of a rational human being; yet, by a few, it has been warmly advocated. Those few, I need not say, are that portion of our community whose hearts are ever open to receive any new theory without inquiring into its merits, and whose consideration is shockingly weak, if not entirely absent from duty. But although there are but few who are thorough believers in the science (?) of RAP-OL-OGY, it may not be amiss to spend a few moments, at this time, in looking at the tendency of these impositions upon morality and religion. And in the course of my lecture, I shall perhaps speak somewhat disrespectful of the sciences of Mesmerism and Psychology, and hope to be able to interest you in a measure, with some few expositions of the conduct of some of our Mesmeric operators, when free from the gaze of the world. It may savor of arrogance for a youth occupying the position which I do, to appear before an enlightened audience and attempt to say aught against Mesmerism or Psychology, and yet, I flatter myself that few, if any, who hear me this evening, can boast a greater experience in these sciences

than myself. Having been a subject for six or more operators in these sciences, and having attended strictly to their instructions and requirements, I feel confident that what I do know, *I know for certainty*, while some who may speak upon this subject, speak upon the knowledge of others. Hoping that you will throw aside all personal feeling and meet me upon the broad platform of merit, I proceed to my task ; and should it be my lot to please you this evening, be it yours to praise ; and should I offend, be it yours *kindly* to censure.

The question upon which I propose to speak at this time, and which will cause me to refer occasionally to the before-mentioned sciences, is this :

IS THERE AN EXISTING MEDIUM THROUGH WHICH WE MAY RECEIVE INTELLIGENCE FROM THE SPIRIT-WORLD ? Or in common parlance, are Rochester Rappings truth or humbug ?

The science of Mesmerism teaches us that there is a fluid passing from one person to another under certain circumstances, and that, through the medium of this fluid, the will of the operator controls the mind of the person operated upon ; while still another science, which boasts as great proficiency in the art of fascination as the former, teaches us that there is neither *will* or *fluid* needed or used to cause the effects which are produced. To argue the superiority of either of these sciences is not my intention at this time ; but a knowledge of the first principles of the latter is necessary, in order that you may the better understand the ground upon which I shall endeavor to explain the ghost-seeing and spiritual rappings which many suppose they have seen and heard. The fond mother, as evening, with its quiet and heaven-born loveliness, steals in upon the earth, and she remembers that at this hour her prattling infant was wont to claim the fondest of maternal attention—

often does she lift her mind to those heavenly courts, and with the eye of fancy behold her darling in the bosom of its guardian angel! The doting husband, whose fond and devoted wife now lies in the cold embrace of death, lifts his soul upon the thread of fancy to that better world, where, in the earnestness of his imagination, he can almost hear the voice of his beloved companion chanting the songs of celestial joy! The brother, whose kind and affectionate sister now "sleeps that sleep which knows no waking," is often reminded of those happy hours, when, with his mind burdened with grief and care, he could repose his head upon her breast, and drink deep of her consolation and friendship! But now, as the clouds of grief roll themselves along above his pathway in life, and the thunders of despair well-nigh shake the very fountain of his soul, he turns his mind to that departed spirit, whose sympathizing voice he can *almost* hear, borne on the wings of celestial breezes, through all the echoing aisles of air! Indeed, scarce a being on earth, who is possessed of a tithe of friendship's blessing, has not some magic tie which binds him to the contemplation of *this* subject.

And that we may the better understand what principles govern mind in its connection with the body, let us look for a moment at the first principles of the science of *Thusology*.

The mind, in its connection with the body, is governed entirely by the five senses—touch, taste, hearing, smell and vision. Without the aid of some one of these senses, not a single idea can be conveyed to the mind; and the accuracy with which these servants convey to the mind the precise idea wanted, is worthy of notice. The optical nerve is the medium through which much knowledge is conveyed to the mind, and yet, the brain will receive the same impression, in many in-

stances, from even the slightest touch. If the organ of vision admits to the retina the form and size of a book, the idea that it is a book, is clear and certain; but if, in the darkness of midnight, the hand is accidentally placed upon the same object, the mind receives the same idea, and it is none the less clear and satisfactory. If the form of a beautiful rose is registered in the mind by the organ of vision, it may also be reproduced by inhaling the sweetness of its perfume. In fact, many ideas are registered in the brain by some one of the five senses, which may be reproduced by some one of its cotemporaries—and yet, each organ has its own peculiar office-work, which none of its brethren can fulfil. For instance, the ear records the sound of music in the mind, and neither touch, taste, smell or vision can convey an idea similar to this. The eye also receives into its chambers the powerful light of the sun, and records the idea in the mind; while all attempts to convey the same idea through the medium of touch, taste, hearing, or smell, are fruitless. Hence, we have but to suspend these five senses, and the mind becomes inactive, from the very fact that there is no medium through which it can receive an impression of any kind. This suspension may be affected in two ways—by the power which one person possesses over another, and by yielding to a deep and long sleep. In either of these cases, the mind receives no ideas from the senses, and consequently is torpid and inactive. From this we are led to believe, that though infinitely active in its primitive state, its energies are fettered and held in subjection by the sluggish operation of the body, through the medium of which it must receive all the knowledge it possesses. To the highest possible action of the mind, then, it becomes necessary that it be untrammelled by the sluggish action of a body, through the

medium of which all its ideas are to pass—for it is a well established law, that in proportion to the force, so is the effect. Hence, if the bodily organs convey an idea to the mind, that idea will be lucid and passionate, or confused and torpid, according to the condition and ability of the organ conveying the idea.

It is also an established law in Thusology, that any idea which takes possession of the mind, *displacing all other impressions*, and holding supreme control over it, becomes, for the time being, a reality. Hence, we have but to suspend the five senses, and hold the powers of mind in gift, to create any idea which we may choose in the mind of the person operated upon; nor is this mere theory, which never has been or can be reduced to practice. Many are the instances on record where the most influential men, both in the literary and scientific world, have been influenced and controlled in this manner. The poet Shelley was a most susceptible subject upon which to perform these experiments, and through the ignorance of Lord Byron, to whom the law which governs these phenomena of mind was unknown, he came well-nigh receiving a lasting injury, both to body and mind. A number of literary and scientific gentlemen were gathered, one evening, around the fireside of one of their number, among whom were Byron and Shelley; the former of which was relating a plot of his, in which the ghost of a headless man was described with that vividness and warmth of which Byron alone was master. At the conclusion of the narrative, Shelley was noticed to remain in a fixed position, with his eyes set, and nostrils distended, and Byron stepping to his side struck him upon the shoulder, exclaiming at the same time, "My Lord Shelley, there it is!" The effect was instantaneous, and such as might reasonably

be expected. Shelley did in reality see the ghost, and in his haste to escape from its grasp, he stumbled and fell, and was taken up rigid and senseless, and borne to his lodging. Had Byron but known the law which governed these phenomena of mind, he could have carried his experiments to any given point within the scope of his intellect, with perfect safety. In noticing this effect in his commentary, Lord Byron says, "Shelley was a complete machine of imagination, moved to action by the slightest touch."

The late Edgar A. Poe was also highly susceptible of receiving impressions in this manner. He has frequently been known to be influenced by another so deeply as to believe himself guilty of the most bloody crimes ; and amid a shower of tears, he has knelt down to ask forgiveness of an offended God, previous to expiating his guilt by a felon's death !—These impressions were the supreme ideas which ruled his actions, and he did, for the time, actually believe himself in the condition described. The warm description of Byron served to fix the attention of Shelley upon the object described, and the positive manner in which he struck him upon the shoulder, affirming that the ghost was there, served to displace all other impressions, and fix in the mind, the precise idea wanted. In like manner, many may be affected and their thoughts controlled, as certainly as the needle points to the magnet. These facts have been cited, simply to falsify the assertion, that only weak and foolish minds can be wrought upon in this manner, for among those who are the most susceptible of these experiments, are many distinguished literary and scientific men, whose productions have done honor to the country which gave them birth ! In fact, the more intellectual the subject, the higher and more interesting the experiments produced.

In the mountainous regions of Norway, Sweden, and Lapland, the entire population are perfect subjects upon which these experiments may be produced. They are also born, natural ghost-seers. The Lapland mother, who has lost the fond babe from her breast, goes no more about her household duties until she has received some intimation from heaven that her darling is safely nestled in the embrace of its guardian angel. For hours does she sit upon the cold, bleak hills, watching for a cloud upon the horizon, and not more surely does she concentrate her mind upon this subject, than she sees in the distance the skiff, which bears the spirit of her babe to the regions of the blest. And you may as well endeavor to persuade that mother that the heart which beats within her breast is cold and motionless, as to question for a moment the fact of her having seen this token in the heavens! The fond and affectionate mother of our own country and clime, as she has lain sleepless upon her couch during the silent hours of midnight, has seen as distinctly as in day-light, the fond, familiar features of her long-lost child; and many, perhaps, have laughed her to scorn for yielding to a belief in such fantasy; but you can never persuade her to the contrary, notwithstanding. The great German reformer, while writing upon the nature of his satanic majesty—the Devil—upon raising his eyes to the wall, beheld the said cloven-footed gentleman belching forth fire and smoke from his mouth and nostrils! Raising his inkstand, he took deliberate aim, and hurled it at the head of the image. The sound of the inkstand, as it struck with force against the wall, displaced the impression and the illusion vanished. He had concentrated the powers of his giant mind upon this subject for two nights and one day, without intermission, until this idea of the devil was a reality to his mind.

And even to this day, the natives of that country believe that he did in reality see the devil, and preserve the ink marks upon the wall, in proof that there once existed a being who dared to fight his Satanic Majesty with his inkstand!

But to be more explicit in describing the effects of this influence upon a subject, let me cite a few simple illustrations.

If I hold my fist, directly under the nose of another individual, and tell him it is a rose, if I succeed in controlling his sense of smell, he will believe it to be a rose and commence inhaling its perfume. If I can suspend the whole five senses and hold the mind in submission to my will, and tell him that I am singing, although I may not utter a single syllable, or make even the slightest noise, he will believe that he does hear music, and any thing you may say to him will not serve to displace the impression so long as I hold possession of all the mediums through which an idea can be conveyed to the mind. Again,—if I hold to his lips a glass of pure cold water and tell him it is brandy, he will believe it to be so, and having drank a sufficient quantity will become as drunk as if he had imbibed the same quantity of liquor. In short, any and every thing, of which mind is capable of taking an estimate, may be pictured with a vividness which will mock reality, *providing the subject acted upon is completely under the control of the operator.*

But methinks some one within the sound of my voice is a total disbeliever in all these experiments. “These ‘if’s’ and ‘and’s,’ ” say they, “are the greatest obstruction to our belief in your theory. *If* you could only do these things—*if* you could but make us believe this folly—*if we were all fools*, then your argument might prevail. But as we are not disposed to be duped by such nonsense, you had better take an

‘overland conveyance’ to the quiet land of ignorance, and thereby rid the world of either a *knave* or a *fool*.”

But though you may disbelieve these things,—though you may condemn them as humbugs and falsehoods, they must and will stand undenied facts upon the very strongest basis of scientific truth. Have you ever submitted yourself to be experimented upon in this science? Have you ever looked deeply into the laws which govern the mind in its connection with the body? And if not, then what are your reasons for denying the truth of these experiments? Would you censure your child for an offence of which you were not certain he was guilty? Would you apply the rod of punishment to the back of your child before you had satisfied yourself beyond the shadow of a doubt that he was guilty? Condemn nothing until you are certain that it deserves your condemnation. Treat the science of Thusology with as much candor as you would examine into the guilt of your child, and I fear no accusations of falsehood from you. This science needs no cloak to hide its principles beneath, but courts the most rigid and scrupulous investigation of its laws. Many perhaps may suppose, that I am speaking to them concerning these experiments, upon the authority of some personal acquaintance, or from mere ocular demonstration. But such I assure you is not the case. I speak not from the experience of others, but from *personal* knowledge. I have drank from a glass of pure cold water, as strong and finely flavored a cup of coffee as was ever produced in the kitchen of the homestead, and from the same glass, a moment after, have become beastly intoxicated upon what I supposed to be brandy.

I have seen the boa-constrictor making towards me with incredible speed, and have felt his cold, deathlike coils tight-

ening around my neck, strangling me to death ; and had not the impression been removed, I doubt not that I should have died upon the stage from mere imagination.

You all, doubtless, are familiar with the story told of two culprits who were experimented upon by a physician some years since, one of whom was bled to death, and the other died from imagination simply. The circumstances were these. One of them was placed in a chair directly in front of the other and a vein opened in his arm which soon caused his death from loss of blood. The other was then placed in the same chair and with his eyes bandaged to prevent his detecting the imposition. A slight scratch was then made upon his arm, and at the same moment a small stream of water was set running into a pail by his side, answering to the sound of blood as it escaped from the wounded man. The physician then said to a friend who was witnessing the experiment, "How many pounds of blood is there in the human body?" He answered, "Twelve."

"Well," said the former, "he has lost six pounds, already, and must soon be dead."

Lowering their voices to a mere whisper, they awaited the expiration of a given number of minutes, and upon examination at the expiration of that time, it was found that the man was dead, and yet not a drop of blood had been taken. He died from imagination simply. He had imbibed the impression that he was bleeding to death, and having no means of correcting this impression he fell a victim to its power. Thus we see that imagination is sufficiently powerful to extinguish the spark of life in our bodies, and yet, withal, is so easily controlled as to yield to the will of another. Having spoken at some length upon the capability of mind to receive impres-

sions from others, and having cited some few instances showing the truth of the assertions made, I now propose to speak more particularly upon the science of *Rap-ology*, or Spiritual Rappings.

To give a history of this system of humbugging, from its first discovery in Rochester, N. Y., up to the present time, would be unnecessary, inasmuch as its extreme novelty has attracted universal attention; and few will be found, at least in the New England states, who are not well versed in the discovery and progress of this art of deception. My design is *first*, simply to show that those who are susceptible of receiving impressions from others, are those most likely to see sights where there are none, and hear noises where all is silent; and in addition to Byron, Shelley, Poe, and Wordsworth, whom I have mentioned as having been good subjects in this respect, I have one whose melancholy death was mourned by thousands, whose hours of leisure were beguiled by a perusal of his poetic effusions.

Clark, one of those high minded, wholesouled poets with which we rarely meet, fell a victim to his mental susceptibility in the following manner. He was walking along in New York, when some young men, who knew his susceptibility to receive impressions from others, accosted him and said, "Clark, don't you see that young lady on the opposite side of the street looking out of that wiudow?"

"Yes," he replied, "I think I do."

"Well," said they, "she has been beckoning at you some time. Suppose you go and ascertain her wants?"

He immediately started for the house in which he *supposed* he saw the female, and after some conversation with the gentleman who resided there, he was unceremoniously kicked out

of doors. Being of a keen and most susceptible nature, his indignation knew no bounds. He raged like a madman, and was secured by the police and thrown into the tombs until the next morning, when he was found dead in his cell ! Had those young men who created this illusion but done their duty, and effaced the impression, this young genius might still have been living to bless the world with his poetry ; than which very little is better. Facts like these have transpired, not in England, France, or South America alone, but in New England, among her best and noblest sons. These men are not men who have been dragged from the more obscure towns and villages, for the purpose of illustrating the truth of the science of *Thusology*, but they are those who have signalized themselves by some achievement either in the literary or scientific world, and against whom the charge of being weak-minded can never be sustained, and it is through the agency of such men as these that we receive all our spiritual communications. By this I do not mean that these men knowingly deceive the public, but that men whose susceptibility is similar to these, are those chosen by the professors of *Rap-ology* as the mediums through which they receive all their communications from the Spirit-world. These persons are usually those whose imagination is to their firmness, as two to one. They have twice as much imagination as they have mental resistance, and consequently they are easily thrown off their guard, and ere they are aware of the fact they are not in possession of themselves. Hence the reason of painters, poets, and musicians being more easily governed than others. Their imagination is stronger. They have two degrees of imagination where they have one degree of mental resistance. But I am not willing to stop here with my experience in this science. I have not only been a subject

of experiment in the sciences of Mesmerism and Psychology, but have also attained to the honor of being visited by the said Spiritual Rappers in the following manner.

Some twelve months since, while under the influence of Prof. B——, I returned to my home about ten o'clock and retired to rest. I had been free from his direct influence that evening, and had taken notes of his lecture upon the "Knockings," which were then raging in Rochester and vicinity. In short, I had not been so free from thoughts of a dreamy nature for months as upon the evening just mentioned. It was a delightful evening, and as the pale silver light of the moon entered my room I could distinctly discern everything about me. I slept soundly until nearly three o'clock when I awaked and heard a rustling among my manuscripts which were carelessly laid upon my table. Supposing some mischievous cat had taken the liberty to peruse my productions without leave or license, I aroused myself to frighten her from the room, when *three* distinct raps were heard at my window. Various were my conjectures concerning the cause of this unceremonious rapping at that early hour, but as I could find no cause for it, I retired to rest again, saying as I did so,—“the devil has proved himself very unceremonious, and withal is no gentleman, to arouse one of his friends at such an early hour as this by rapping at his window in disguise.” For some time after the first rapping was heard, it still continued, and with just three raps, at exact intervals. But, acting upon the impression that it was much more comfortable in bed than out, I persisted in remaining in my then comfortable situation, rather than venture upon a “*wild goose*” hunt for the devil. Since that time I have received no calls from his Satanic majesty, and should I live *forever*, I am fully persuaded that his first visit

to me would still be fresh in his mind; and the apparent coldness with which I received him has probably dampened his affection to such an extent, that I shall never be troubled with a visit from him at as unseasonable hours as upon this former occasion.

Now, some one may ask, How do you account for this phenomenon of mind? I answer thus. I had been under the influence of another person for a long time previous, and although apparently in the full possession of my mental powers, I was not totally free from the operator's influence. Having been regularly upon the stand each evening, and having submitted to experiments of every variety and length of duration, my body had become somewhat disarranged, and the impressions conveyed to the brain through a diseased medium, were as a matter of course imperfect and diseased, also. Had every sense been in a perfectly healthy state, nothing of the nature of rapping would have been heard by me upon the evening previously mentioned. I awakened from a slumber and the crack of a door, the falling of a latch, or some slight noise of that kind fell upon my ear, and the sense of hearing immediately conveyed to the brain an idea of rapping. This idea once firmly in the mind, in the then existing state of the body, and it held supreme control of the mind, and made it for the time being, a *reality*. I do not think that I heard a rapping; neither do I think that I lisped a single syllable concerning the politeness of his majesty in visiting me. But so long as I *believed* I did, just so long it was real to me. The body is often times in a weak and crazed state, and not unfrequently do people, while thus afflicted, see unaccountable sights and hear most unaccountable noises. But while every sense is in a perfectly healthy state, every impression conveyed to the

mind will be true and lasting, and the ideas springing from these impressions will be strong and vivid. This is my idea of ghosts and ghost-seeing, and side by side I place the so-called "Spiritual Knockings," as being of the same nature, and caused by the same irregularities of the body.

Some of the mediums through which information has been received from the Spirit-world, are not, nor ever have been, subjects for experiment in the sciences of Mesmerism and Psychology. But those who have been subjects, are oftentimes honest in themselves, and design to impose upon no man. They actually hear, and interpret according to their best judgment, these "rappings," and are so deeply influenced by the operator, as to be never thoroughly free from visionary thoughts and lofty flights of imagination. They are so susceptible of receiving impressions from the mind of another, that in time they become perfect slaves, and I doubt not are sincere in their belief that they are doing a great and lasting good by interpreting these "rappings," which they suppose come direct from the Spirit-world. But at the fountain of all this humbugging lies the great cause for its continuance, and so long as it remains, so long will imposition stalk naked through the land. These subjects are honest, but at the bottom of it all lies the craft, the cunning, unprincipled, money-seeking operator. The slavery of a subject to the operator is of a nature almost incredible. I have been so completely under the influence of one of these men, as to be unable to resist going at an appointed hour to submit myself to further experiment. All the mind which I possessed was put forth, but the fascinations of the operator were too strong to admit of my remaining away from his room. And, while speaking of the lecture-room, allow me to speak of another branch of the science not generally

known to the public. I refer to the private lectures, of which so little is ever said by either the operator or subject. The operator conceals the transactions of the hour spent within the secret retreat of the private lecture-room, simply because he *knows* that a virtuous and modest community would condemn such scenes as are within enacted. He has such instruction to impart as will not answer to communicate to a mixed audience, and this he makes the grand excuse for private class-lectures. The subjects do not expose these transactions for the very good reason that every recollection is effaced from their memory, and they leave the polluted air of that room wholly ignorant, oftentimes, of the scenes through which they have just passed. Thus, between the two, all remains silent. I do not avow that all are as unprincipled as to be dangerous to the community in which they reside, but I do say that a large majority of those who are professors of the sciences of Mesmerism and Psychology are such men as I should fear to trust. Some of them *may be* honest, but had I a wife,—had I a sister,—had I a female friend who was dear to me by a thousand tender recollections and associations, I would sooner follow her to the cold and silent grave, than to see her become enthralled by one of these virtue-destroying, smooth-faced Mesmeric professors. I have been there, and well know the scenes enacted within the walls of a private lecture-room.

I have seen an operator, who had a wife and daughters of whom he might well be proud,—I have seen him within the walls of a private lecture-room, with three innocent young females folded to his breast, lavishing his lascivious kisses upon them in a most revolting manner! Nor were these his only subjects in *this* branch of instruction. The wife,—fair and beautiful,—of a gentleman with whom I was most intimately

acquainted, was the next to take her turn, and although of a most respectable family, and, when perfectly herself, of a modest and retiring disposition, she submitted to his embraces with seeming pleasure, and that, too, in the absence of her husband who was most faithful and devoted to her ! So much did this man think of this female subject, that he gave her his watch to wear during the day, charging her to “*THINK OF HIM as often as she looked at the watch.*”

Husbands, do you countenance such liberties with your wives ? Do you sit unmoved in your dwellings while a man of no principle is experimenting with your wife in the manner above described ? Do you wish to trust that young, unsuspecting daughter of yours to the care of such a man as this ? Those of you who have gained the confidence of some kindred spirit of the opposite sex,—you who are looking forward to that day when you shall consummate your happiness by joining yourself in wedlock to the object of your choice,—I ask *you*, would you trust that friend in the hands of this scientific libertine ? I once saw a father whose hairs were silvered by the frosts of age, and by his side stood a young man. Both were looking on with intense interest, and apparently with pleasure, as the operator produced a series of experiments upon a young female. That female was the daughter of the one, and the affianced bride of the other. She became enchanted with the science and the gentlemanly conduct of the operator, and joined a private class. Some months after, I again saw that father, and by his side stood the same young man. But both were changed,—ah, how changed ! Where once the flush of joy mantled the cheek of youth, the pale shadow of sorrow was now lurking, and those silver hairs of age were now fast bleaching to a transparent white, under the influence of heart-rending

grief. And what was the cause? Simply this. That young female had become an outcast from society, and the world. She had unconsciously yielded the priceless bauble of her virtue while in a Mesmeric room, and was now reaping the fruits of her folly. She was now no more an angel, but a ruined outcast, destined to live on—a living death—a floating beacon of destruction—a mere thing of former days;—a casket devoid of its jewel!! A childless father, a broken-hearted lover, and a *common prostitute*, will doubtless be the result of this young female's curiosity and the inconsideration of those who might have saved her from ruin. This heartless libertine having rifled one flower of its sweets, will doubtless soon select some other unsuspecting bud of promise whose fate may not be unlike that of its unhappy predecessor. Thus with the science of Mesmerism in one hand, the firebrand of destruction in the other, and a lie in his mouth, he may be suffered to roam at large through the garden of innocence, sowing *double damnation* upon the fairest flowers of virtue!! This is strong language, but language is poverty to express the passionate hatred which I cherish for one who will thus willingly set himself about the task of destroying female innocence. Death is preferable to living misery caused by ruined hopes and lost honor. But, asks some one, what have these things to do with "Spiritual Knockings?" Simply this.

These men are those who are most skilful in interpreting these spiritual knockings. The wretch who can ruin the reputation of a lovely female, whose soul is stained by impure desires,—will a just God make him the medium through which to communicate intelligence to us? Does the Creator choose a living, moving monument of pollution and sin, as the medium through which to speak to men? *I should judge not.*

This, therefore, is the great reason for my disbelief in these spiritual communications. These knockings are made upon some hard substance, in a manner yet to be ascertained; but the only spiritual agency connected therewith, is simply that which the devil uses in instigating the men who are the leaders in this humbugging. The operator either uses a subject as interpreter, or else interprets himself. His presence is necessary in the room, in order that the machine may be complete; and hence, he oftentimes both works the machine himself and interprets also.

I do not say that *all* Mesmeric professors and operators are of a class who deceive the public intentionally, for there are some honorable exceptions to this accusation. And I am not using these facts as weapons against the *proper* use of this science. As a help to medical men it is valuable. In the amputation of limbs it frees the patient from all pain, and hence is of great benefit. But like all other sciences it has its imposters who do more to impede its onward progress, than all its friends can do to speed it onward. It has been thus far the means of more evil than good, and until some method is devised by which the improper use of this science shall be punished, it will still continue a scourge to this and every other land.

These Knockings will continue so long as there are *fools* enough to believe them and *imposters* enough to make them. Take away the *dollars* and cents which are paid for admission to the Knockings, and you will find that the "Spirit," was a spirit of GOLD. *Money* is at the bottom of all this, and when that is taken away, the old cry will be raised, "Our craft is in danger." If these things progress the coming two years in the same proportion that they have for the past, there will, I

doubt not, be factories established for the manufacture of wooden knuckles throughout the various States. And what is the tendency of these "Spiritual Communications" upon religion? Simply this. It tends to a system of *universal* and progressive happiness. Its teachings are these. Man, though wicked when he dies, is allowed to enter a higher state of existence than this, and progresses toward the climax of happiness as he atones for his past ill conduct. But this atonement consists in being happier than while upon earth! It teaches that there are different spheres of happiness, and that those who are in a lower sphere cannot behold those in a higher, but that those of a higher are well acquainted with those who are in a lower. This doctrine is remarkably like the one believed in by him who interpreted the communication. I do not say that it was "word for word," but it was *the* doctrine which was taught by the person who took it upon himself to interpret an answer to various questions concerning the Spirit-world. Now is it reasonable to believe all that may be said by these fanatics, or imposters, when it is in direct opposition to the teachings of the Bible? I trust that I am not vastly mistaken when I reply in the negative. The fact is, we have been clutching at results without looking at the cause. We have swallowed down the base nonsense of impostors, crowding it into our system, until the digestive organs of the mind are in a most weakly and diseased condition. An *emetic* of *sober reflection*, and a *pill* compounded of equal parts of *consideration* and *censure*, would do much towards setting the mind to rights, and restoring to it a healthy action. The *tonic* of *caution* should be taken every day subsequent to this treatment to prevent a second attack of the same malady.

In conclusion, I would remark that what I have said concerning the science of Mesmerism, I have said with good faith; and if I have done injustice to its claims, then some one who has been deeper "bitten" than myself, must set me upon the right track. In relation to the "Spiritual Knockings," I will say that I disbelieve them *firstly*, upon the ground of *improbability*, and *secondly*, upon the ground of *the impurity of the mediums through which they are communicated*. When it shall be shown to me that God endows a libertine, an impostor, a scoundrel or a knave with blessings which he never intends to bestow upon the righteous, then I shall believe that "Spiritual Knockings" are a reality. But all improbabilities must be made rational and consistent, before I can believe the science of *Rap-ology*. God has ever taken the weak and foolish things to confound the strong and wise, and never has he taken such a complicated, mysterious mode of imparting information to human beings, as this Rap-ological science. Therefore, I disbelieve.

But, methinks I hear some person ask, do you not believe in any spiritual agencies whatever? Do you not believe that ministering angels are sent to comfort and sustain us amid trials and privations? I answer, yes. We are often made sensible of their presence, and in our most secret communion they are in our very souls. During the hours of sickness they hover around our bedside, soothing our pain and imparting joy to our hearts. They ever strive to revive our sinking spirits and impart new zest to life. When the clouds of sorrow hover around us, and the sharp pointed lightnings of anguish and the heavy rolling thunders of despair seem ready to destroy us, these angelic spirits are ever ready to bear us away upon the wings of their love, and shield us from farther

danger. Ever ready to impart joy and gladness, these angelic spirits are often passed by, unnoticed by the recipients of their goodness. Would you know their names? They are these—Wife, Mother, Sister, Daughter! These are the angels which kind Heaven has sent to be our ministering spirits, and the communications of whom are the only safe ones upon which to rely. Let us strive, therefore, to make the domestic hearth-stone the only magic throne around which all may gather while upon earth, to receive the “spiritual communications” which these agents may bestow upon us. And as departed years shall roll their swollen, surging waves against the blackened shores of eternity, may we be permitted to look back upon our earthly pilgrimage, and bless the Giver of all, for the angelic mediums through which we received spiritual consolation while upon the tempestuous sea of life.

Let us live for some higher end than to pursue the butterfly fancies of the million, and instead of grasping at effect without looking at the cause, let us use the limited amount of common sense which we do possess, and the only spiritual agency necessary to our happiness and prosperity, will be found in those loved companions in life—Wife, Mother, Sister, Daughter.