

THE
INFIDELITY OF THE TIMES,
AS CONNECTED WITH THE
RAPPINGS AND THE MESMERISTS,
AND ESPECIALLY
AS DEVELOPED IN THE WRITINGS OF
ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS.
BY REV. W. H. CORNING.

BOSTON:
JOHN P. JEWETT & COMPANY.
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PREFACE.

INFIDELITY in our days has disguised itself in spirit rappings and mesmeric dreams. To many these seem as miraculous as the miracles of Jesus, and so they yield themselves to the skepticism they introduce. Thus thousands are becoming unsettled in their minds, who would never have been reached by the writings of Paine, Strauss, and others. Meanwhile no treatise has endeavored to meet this peculiar and all-important phase of the question. The rappings are discussed, but only to show either that they are all humbug, or the result of the nervous fluid, or produced by demons. We purpose to take up this subject, which we deem of the utmost consequence. Without entering into any investigation as to what the manifestations are, we propose to show, that upon the ground assumed by the skeptics themselves, they leave Christianity unharmed and intact. First, we shall strip off the mask of the phenomena, and prove that the real thing underneath is the old infidelity, having nothing whatever to sustain it in the marvellous sights and sounds. Then, second, we shall take up the objections urged against Christianity from this new point of attack, and shall answer them in their order.

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PART FIRST.

NEW FOUNTAINS OF REVELATION.

CHAPTER I.

THERE is a deep want in the soul of man, for a divine revelation of truth. It *is* not satisfied ; it knows it *ought* not to be satisfied with its own finite and sinful thinkings. The history of human philosophy proves this. Plato only gave utterance to the universal consciousness of all great thinkers, as might be easily demonstrated from their writings, when he spake so earnestly and almost prophetically of a divine teacher to come. In all the religions which have gained a footing in the world, the conscious want of a revelation from God is clearly manifested. For they all claim to be such revelations,—Boodhism, Parsism, Mahometanism, and every form of false religion, as well as Christianity. Indeed nothing could keep its hold of humanity, as a religion, which had not in it this element of a supernatural origin. Even now, in this age of the world, infidelity itself gives proof of the spontaneous want which the soul feels in its inmost depths for a revelation from the invisible state, over and above that which it can derive from any inner light within itself. Vaunt as it may, the excellency and sufficiency of reason, it rejoices eagerly to confirm its skepticism by taking refuge in spirit rappings and mysterious mesmeric

states. How quickly when the opportunity occurred did skepticism, the same which was afloat in the books of Strauss and Parker, array itself in the mysterious garments of the new phenomena. And by doing so how truly did it prove the natural proclivity of the human soul towards a supernatural origin of the revelation of truth.

Is then Christianity the Divine Revelation which the soul needs? The answer of the greatest minds of the world has been that it is. In its hopes, a great multitude have trusted, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, and dying triumphantly in a joyful anticipation of a glorious immortality. It has remained firm as a rock amid the persecutions of the powers of the earth, and the subtle reasonings of atheistic and deistic philosophy. Saul of Tarsus first undertook to destroy it, when it was yet in its germ, a man of unsurpassed mental greatness, and a cultivation in all the learning of the times, while he had at his command the entire authority of the State. Yet instead of destroying Christianity, his whole soul was subdued by its power, and he was placed in the forefront of its most successful defenders. The entire Greek philosophy, to which "Christ crucified was foolishness," brought all its subtle wit and power to bear against the progress of the new religion. But the Greek philosophy, with all its intellectual pride, "died amid its worshippers," leaving Christianity to prove itself, in the consciousness of the converted soul, "the wisdom of God." Julian the apostate, when he ascended the throne of the Roman Empire, learned beyond a rival in the deep philosophy of new platonism, a rationalist in his creed, despising the mythology of the times, while the old religion still kept its hold of the people, undertook to roll back the advancing tides of Christianity. But he died with most imbecile blasphemy upon his lips. In later times, Hume, Shaftsbury, Bolingbroke, and Paine, have shown how weak is the power of man against the truth of God. The German schools of infidel philosophy have one after another decayed, each in its turn, giving place, if not to a better, yet to a succeeding. The skeptics of the French Revolution have tried out their problem to its final close, and made their exit in blood.

And now in this age of the world, we are invited to give

up this all-triumphant Christianity, at the mandate of two new revelators from the invisible state. These are,

I. The Spirits, so called.

II. The Mesmerists.

We purpose to examine their claims to stand in the place of the Bible. Have we any reason to give heed to them in respect to any matters beyond the sphere of our thought? And shall we then renounce the hopes of the Gospel?

CHAPTER II.

THE SPIRITS, SO CALLED.

THE most important question connected with the subject of the spiritual manifestations of our day, and happily one which can be answered without any difficulty, is this: Do these new developments, in any view which we may take of them, throw any, the least, shade upon the evidences of Christianity or the truthfulness of the Bible? This is the vital point of the whole subject, and being disentangled from the marvellousness and mysteriousness of the sights and sounds, and presented as the simple question to the mind, can be easily answered. As if God had by his holy providence guarded this all-important point for the good of his church, materials are abundant, and supplied by the very manifestations at hand, to settle beyond controversy that Christianity is far beyond their reach. And yet so confusedly has our holy religion been mingled in this subject, by the cunning craft of infidel minds, so skilfully have our skeptics seized hold of these "nine days' wonders," weaving into them as a fit woof of the marvellous, the suggestions of Paine, Strauss, and Parker, that many minds are being caught in the meshes of unbelief, and some, it is to be feared, entangled forever. I take up this question then, simply and alone, to meet it face to face;—do the manifestations, called spiritual, in any sense reach the foundations of Christianity?

I purposely throw out of view the question altogether foreign to our present purpose, what these manifestations are. It is only necessary in my argument, for me to assume the theory that they are caused by the spirits of the departed, both good and bad, who take possession of the organizations

of persons called mediums, and perform their workings by means of circles. This is not my theory, for I have none upon the subject. But it is the theory of the skeptics who would use the manifestations against Christianity. Supposing this then to be true, I purpose to show, that *the Holy Bible should in no measure be discredited when opposed by the revelations and wonderful workings of these spirits.*

It will be seen that I occupy the most advanced position which could be taken. For if these manifestations shall yet be clearly demonstrated to be the work of evil spirits, and not at all of good, or if the skeptics fail to demonstrate that good spirits are among them, or if the men of science shall yet reduce the whole phenomena under natural laws, such as have always existed, then my whole labor and work are utterly useless. It is plain, therefore, in attacking the point which I have chosen, I advance against the strongest fortress of the new skepticism. And yet it appears to me necessary to do this for the relief of many minds now anxious and troubled and upon the verge of renouncing Christianity.

The method by which it is attempted, by the spiritualists, to disparage and destroy Christianity, is this :

It is said that the spirits, so called, reveal the falsity of the Bible, and declare a system of doctrine very different from evangelical creeds. To some minds, this idea insinuates itself unconsciously and indirectly, while they engage in the study of the marvellous phenomena before them, loosening their grasp by degrees of the truths of our holy religion. If under the remarkable circumstances of the manifestations, a sentence is spelled out which declares the Bible a fable, many persons with large organs of marvellousness see no other alternative than to believe the assertion ; and so, both directly and indirectly, the spirits, so called, are placed in the position of revealers of the Divine Will.

Now to all this I have to answer,—1st. That it is very evident from the manifestations themselves, that if these phenomena are the works of spirits, still they cannot be trusted as the revealers of divine truth. For it is admitted on all hands that they contradict each other, and sometimes contradict themselves. Some of them, especially when there happens to be a circle of orthodox thinkers, will rap out

orthodox sentiments ; a fact which points in the direction of mesmeric sympathy, as the cause of the intelligence manifested.* In Worcester the manifestations declared the creed of the Old South Church, absolutely true, which is thoroughly Calvinistic in its form. The Bible has been declared the word of God over and over again. Even the chief rabbi† of the new school, admit that there are very "mischievous spirits" among the rappers, who assume characters which do not belong to them, as for instance that of Paul and John. Sometimes they take a pleasure in twisting and doubling in their answers, and in giving incoherent and foolish replies. Now then, we need no more to show that they cannot be relied upon in any testimony which they may give above the sphere of our thinkings. If twenty men had gone to the king of Siam with a statement that they had seen water in a solid form in one zone, and twenty more in the same company and with the same credentials had declared that it was always in a liquid state, just as it was in Siam, it is quite certain these forty men would have revealed nothing to the king, which he could believe, and he would have been in precisely the same condition of mind as he was before their coming.

* The following facts are taken from the New York Tribune.

"Take another proof of the unreliable character of these communications. *The Christian Freeman* (Boston) gives a case wherein a Methodist and a Universalist clergyman were present at a 'sitting,' when the Methodist asked questions respecting the world to come, the state of those who left this world sinful, &c., and received responses in faithful accordance with his creed. This caused some chuckling at the expense of the Universalist, who thereupon was moved to put some questions himself, and obtained, through the same medium, and directly after the aforesaid, responses in complete accordance with *his* creed. It is plain enough that the medium did not voluntarily stultify herself in this way ; but it is none the less a fact that some of the utterances from behind the curtain are directly at variance with others, proving that no reliance can be placed on an averment merely because it has come to us apparently from the Spirit World. The responses are, not uniformly, but to a great extent, conformed to the wishes and opinions of the interrogators : and while the Mountain Cove Community, claiming to be favored with direct influx from the very highest sources, is Trinitarian and intensely Orthodox in its faith, Catholics, Methodists, Shakers, Deists, &c., &c., are favored with assurances from disembodied friends that their creeds respectively are 'all right.' The most prevalent inculcation through the 'rappings,' however, is a Rationalistic Theism homœopathically charged with Christianity, and very nearly akin to Mr. Jackson Davis's 'Harmonial Philosophy.'"

† A. J. Davis and Le Roy Sunderland.

I grant that a large proportion of these so-called spirits, are infidel in sentiment, but this may be accounted for from the fact that the class of people who engage, for the most part, in these studies, are skeptics,—for it is an admitted fact that whether there is any thing more in the manifestations or not, mesmeric sympathy mingles in a very great measure with them all. And besides, any single contradiction among the spirits, destroys the value of their testimony, because from the invisible nature of their evidence, we cannot sit in judgment upon their relative truthfulness. And more especially is this the case, when we have the strongest evidence which the human mind can possess, that the Bible is the word of God.

If Thomas Paine should dictate through rappings, his “Age of Reason,” and Richard Watson, his reply to it, how would the state of the question be altered from what it was when they were in the flesh?

Not in the least, excepting that we should not have so good an opportunity to settle the identity of the persons. In real logic, the infidelity of the living Dr. Strauss, embodied in four volumes of acute criticism, is worth much more to the skeptic's cause, than the rappings of all the infidels which the spirit world contains, though in actual result a single response by rappings would be of greatest avail. Such is the unreasonable folly of human credulity.

So far, then, as a revelation from the spirits is concerned, as to the state of things in the future world, and as to the great truths of God, it is plain no reliance whatever can be placed upon it, since the witnesses, with equal credentials of knowledge and veracity, contradict each other, and sometimes even themselves.

2d. I go one step farther, and maintain that it is impossible to authenticate a revelation from spirits, even if they were concordant in their testimony. For by what possible method can spirits disembodied prove their veracity? Among mankind, belief in the truthfulness of others grows up with an observation of their life, as it is manifested in the flesh, so that we see and know and hear them from day to day. We can also form a knowledge of the various motives which influence the present state of being; conjecture with

great certainty the probabilities of veracity in one who lives and moves among those motives. But how can an invisible spirit prove his veracity? God does it by embodying himself in the visible world, and by the incarnation in his Son, and also by the very idea and notion which he has implanted in our souls. But in what manner can disembodied spirits do this? We see them not; we have no means of taking the measurement of their character; we know not the motives of the invisible state. How then shall they prove their truthfulness, so that we may rely upon their revelations of unknown realities?

Do you say they do it by telling the truth? You ask them questions as to facts with which you are familiar, and they answer correctly. But this does not prove veracity, for there is not probably a liar, who ever lived on earth, who has not told ten thousand truths to one lie. For the ten thousand truths touched not the subject, concerning which he did not choose to reveal his knowledge.

Do you say you trust them because they tell you wonderful things which you did not know, but which turn out to be true? I answer, this only proves their knowledge, but not their veracity, for they may have some motive to deceive you.

Do you say you can conceive of no such motive? I answer, *that* matters not, for the motives of the invisible state are not open to your ken. And besides, the Bible, which was certainly revealed under circumstances as wonderful as the present manifestations, declares that there are such motives, evil beings, endeavoring by all means, to draw this world from its allegiance to God. Giving the Bible no greater credit than the manifestations, it even then destroys this part of your argument.

Do you say the manifestations are miracles, and they prove the truthfulness of the spirits? No! for they are miracles without a visible worker, if miracles at all, standing therefore alone and confirming no one. The miracles are all you have. You have no beings before you, separate from the miracles, but only know them in and by the miracles. It is as if one should attempt to demonstrate a theorem in Geometry, by adducing the theorem, or solve a question in

Arithmetic, by reading the question. Such an argument would prove that every communication from spirits must of course be true, which no one pretends. No; miracles cannot demonstrate the character of an invisible being, because miracles are all we know of him. But when Jesus of Nazareth, with his divine purpose and superhuman life, fills the whole circle of his being with wonderful works of power, we may then receive the works as confirmations of his testimony, because he is present to infuse into them a moral value and make them radiant with his glorious character.

And besides, has it never occurred to you, who adduce the manifestations as miraculous proof of the credibility of the spirits, that you yourselves deny all power to such proof, even in those whose life is visible in the world?

I think, then, it is evident that it is as utterly impossible for an invisible spirit to give sufficient proof of his veracity as to form a rational basis for believing his testimony. If God has a new revelation to make, he must send into the world an embodied revealer.

Here it is objected to me, How in the primitive ages did God authenticate his revelations by angelic visitants and the voice? I answer, 1. Angelic communications were always given through the assumption of a body. 2. Miracles in attestations over and above the miracle of the communication itself were given; as to Moses in the burning bush, and to Gideon in the fleece wet with dew. 3. And chiefly a positively logical proof was neither necessary nor possible to those times;—not necessary, because in the superstitious minds of the people a sign was more effectual than logic; nor possible, because they had not reached that point of cultivation at which the mind is influenced in any great degree by merely rational evidence. In the time of Moses the world had advanced further, and at the time of Jesus, “the fulness of time” for the highest attestation in a superhuman being performing superhuman acts had arrived.

There is indeed to many, such an attraction in the converse of spirits, especially with those claiming to be departed friends, that although no rational grounds for believing either their pretensions or their communications exist, yet they will continue, moved by their feelings, to seek such intercourse and

to trust the responses. "Why should we not," say they, "avail ourselves of the opportunity so kindly vouchsafed us, to enter into communion with the lost loved ones who have gone before us? How can they be other than those whose names they assume, since they manifest so many little peculiarities which belong to the deceased, speaking even in their methods and symbolizing their actions; since they tell us things which no one else could know, and which even we ourselves had forgotten concerning them; since the table dips as they alone would tip it, either with their nervous jerk, or their light, feeble movements, or their calm, strong force?"

Plainly do these persons forget the wonderful laws of sympathetic mesmerism, so closely connected as they are with the manifestations. Cannot human beings in the flesh, under certain circumstances, read the thoughts of their neighbors? Do not clairvoyants imitate the ways and peculiarities of those around them? Are there not facts on record wherein the secret cells of memory have been opened to the wonderful powers of the human soul, even in this earthly state, so that it could recall the past history of beings in sympathy with it? And even more, is there not evidence that the eye within has in some cases been so illuminated that, —with reverence be it spoken,—man has seemed to become a partaker of the divine foreknowledge, and to penetrate the future? These wonderful presages of the latent power concealed within the mind, open a wide train of thought, spiritual and soul-inspiring, if restrained from the wild path of skepticism, as to the prospects of *immortality*.

But if these are facts, how far from satisfactory is the proof just presented by the communer with the dead, that the real friends with whom he wishes to converse are truly in his presence. Other spirits, bent upon mischief, spirits of darkness, may, for aught he knows, assume their names. They may, by a mesmeric power far superior to that developed in this world, have a complete knowledge of the entire mental history and peculiarities of those they imitate. It is a thought, presented by Swedenborg, that in the spirit world spirits are as visible to each other in their interior life as now human beings are to each other in their physical bodies.

Every emotion, passion, thought and purpose, images itself as a visible thing. Join then this increased power of mesmeric sympathy with the spirits of the departed, with the power of reading the thoughts of the circle in the flesh, and even of entering the cells of the memory, and perchance by clairvoyance, of going forth into the minds of the entire family of friends on earth who are distant, and what phenomena have you which are not accounted for without any necessity of supposing your departed friend absolutely present with you? If the rappings announce facts which you know, this may be accounted for by mesmeric sympathy with your own mind. If they announce facts known in the circle, for this you may likewise so account. If they state facts of which you are unconscious, they may enter your memory for its forgotten treasures. If they rap out an answer contrary to your thought, or concerning a matter which you do not know, they may obtain it by a clairvoyant power from your friends at a distance. On any supposition you have no positive evidence that the real friend, who is among the dead, has returned to converse with you.*

Nor if your real friend was there could he possibly prove to you his identity and presence.† The spirit world is sealed

* It will be seen this argument is based upon the theory of the spiritualists. I avoid maintaining any.

† The following facts from the New York Tribune, will confirm our position:—

Very soon after the Rochester beginning, a "circle," or body of believers, was formed in Auburn, who professed to have communications from the most exalted sources, even from the Apostles of Christ. Rev. John M. Austin was called in to witness some of these manifestations, and reproached for his incredulity. He concluded to "try the spirits," and on one announcing himself as St. Paul, he said, "If you are indeed St. Paul, you will oblige me by rendering this passage in one of your Epistles back into the original Greek in which you wrote it." The "spirit" declined, and hauled off to repair damages. We do not risk much in assuming that if St. Paul had been really present, and anxious to convince mortals of the fact, he would not have shrunk from so reasonable a test as this. We might multiply such cases, but need we?

Again: "Spirits" have repeatedly represented themselves to be persons who were afterwards found to be still tenants of this mortal frame. *The Oberlin Evangelist* gave a striking example of this some time ago; we know another that occurred recently in Massachusetts, where a young lady who is very low with consumption was personated as speaking from the world of spirits, and describing her departure from earth and first experience of the state beyond, when in fact she was and still is tabernacled in the flesh—at all events, we had a very intelligent and satisfactory letter from her written after this had occurred; and we have not yet heard of our Old Foggy Post Office bringing any letters yet from beyond "this bank and shoal of Time." There are more cases like this.

up to us except as God has revealed it. "*Spirits in the body pent*" have no basis of logic upon which to rest a rational conclusion that a disembodied spirit communing with them is veracious in his statements, or the being which he claims to be.

3d. These spiritual manifestations cannot be a new era of Divine Revelation, a dispensation of spirits, as some impiously claim, because they have no living power to rouse the world to duty and repentance. They come not, as John the Baptist came, with heavenly unction, persuading souls to turn to God, crying in the ears of sin, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Here are no startling thunder notes of love, like those of the divine Jesus which he spoke upon the mount and in his holy parables. Here is no heroic energy, like that of the Christian hero, Paul, preaching the regenerating grace of an all-powerful gospel throughout the world. Surely it is absurd to bring these developments of our day into comparison with those of the days of the early church, when Christianity moved forward in its own holy evidence to conquer the world; when before it proud hearts of sin melted in sweet submission and holy love; dark organized wrongs, which had long cursed the nations, departed from the sight; the oracles of pagan temples grew dumb, and over the wicked mummeries of heathenism, the purest religion which the world has ever seen or ever can see, triumphed in the demonstration of the spirit.

What appears to be the practical mission of these new manifestations? To gather together into one band the universalists and infidels scattered over the world, and furnish confirmation to their unbelief; to shake the faith of some, giving them over the prey to doubts and fears cruel as the grave; to gratify the prurient curiosity of others, who seek communion with departed friends, and are satisfied even though they are informed of nothing which they do not already know; to declare some common-place axioms in morality, in new forms far inferior to the old, as for example the much admired precept, rapped out so universally, "live in harmony;" to stir up the intellectual powers of some persons, and set them upon thoughts unrestrained and un-

guided in the region of infidelity ;—this is the practical work of the new revelation.

Whatever any, even the firmest believer, may say in its favor, this much must be granted by every rational mind,—the proof of a revelation from God contained in a manifested divine power in the truths presented, working to the regeneration of human hearts, and the demolition of sin and the kingdom of evil, is not found in this pretended revelation of the spirits. Compared with the work effected by Christianity, or even by John the Baptist, it is not worthy to be named. Indeed, the very fundamental doctrine of the new system is that there is no sin. It comes,—not crying to careless sinners, “Repent,—believe,—turn to God,”—but it comes into this world of evil, crying, “Peace, peace, for there is no such thing as sin, of such a nature as to cause you anxiety or alarm.” And such a valueless gospel, such a weak, imbecile, unworthy system of belief, we are called upon to embrace as a revelation superseding Christianity.

This argument does not rest upon the assumption that the communications of the rappers are all frivolous, though it must be admitted that, with now and then a thought of some respectability, the great mass of revealings is of the least possible value. Even were they all of more worth than they are, they would then, unless they assumed an entirely different relation to the sins of the world, be destitute of one of the highest credentials of divine truth. If God gives a revelation, we naturally look, not for pretty poems, nor acute sentiments, but for something that will stir the world as with a sense of wrong, and have a power within it that will redeem us unto Himself. Without this, any pretended revelation absolutely fails on account of the want of material evidence. While within the circles of the rappers there are not known any rebukes of sin and wrong, we need no other evidence that there is no divine revelation in the manifestations. Nay, were there, now and then, a reproof of sin, this would not be enough ; the entire method of the revealings must be reversed, starting from sin as the great central point of evil, and taking hold of it as with a Divine power.

These three positions, that the revelations of the spirits are contradictory, that it is impossible to authenticate them,

and that they fail in the internal evidence, are sufficient to destroy all confidence in them as the revealers of Divine truth to the world, and as the revealers of truth at all, even in its lowest forms. Even upon the supposition that there are spirits both good and bad, which we do not admit, and which has not yet by any means been proved,* — even upon this supposition, *there is no reason to lead us to consult them upon any subject whatever.*

And here the question arises, admitting that we cannot trust the spirits as revealers of truth upon subjects beyond our capacities of investigation, MAY THEY NOT SUGGEST TO US VALUABLE THOUGHTS, AS GREAT MINDS IN THE FLESH, BACON AND NEWTON AND COLERIDGE, HAVE DONE IN THEIR IMMORTAL WORKS? This question, it appears to us, is hardly worth raising, yet we present it because it was advanced to us by a follower of the new system when driven up to this point by the course of argument now presented. And I answer, First, this theory deprives the manifestations of all elements of the marvellous by placing the spirits, so far as their authority goes, upon a par with thinkers in the flesh. Let this position be really understood and assumed, and how long would the thousands of people engaged in seeking wisdom from the spirits continue at their labors? In this view, it will be seen that every statement of fact in the invisible state which we cannot verify in our own knowledge, as, for example, that the spirit communicating is happy, or that when he died death was a delightful process, or that there is no heaven and no hell, — all this kind of statements are to be accounted valueless, because they are not of the nature of suggestions, but of revelations. But if the spirits rap out a sentiment like "live in harmony," or an idea of any kind, and our minds perceive the truthfulness of such sentiment or idea, then we are to receive it. In short, we cannot go to the spirits to learn facts in the invisible world, but only to receive suggestions which may start new trains of thought, as when we are apprised of some truth, not before thought of, in the pages of some great thinker. Hence, as a necessary consequence, all the inquiries made of departed

* See E. C. Rogers's book, in which he maintains that the phenomena are all natural.

friends as to their condition and prospects, must cease entirely, since upon their statements of facts we cannot rely at all. And when these shall cease, three quarters of all the consultations of spirits will cease with them; and with these, all attempts also to obtain new revelations of facts in the invisible state, or new proof against the claims of the Bible must also vanish away. Moreover, it cannot be, that upon this supposition,—that the spirits are merely like all human thinkers,—they will for any great length of time be consulted at all.

For, secondly, nothing is more evident than that the spirits, considered as mere teachers in the sense of suggesting thought, are altogether inferior to living teachers and to the writings of the great thinkers of the world. For in the first place, their method of communicating their thoughts or suggestions is most difficult and lame. You sit down in a circle for hours and hours together, and by spelling out the ideas, you finally, in the whole course of an evening, will get two or three of very little value; whereas, in the same time, you might have read two hundred pages of some one of the master minds of the world. It is like going back to the days of a b, ab, when you spelled out your reading tasks in long drawled syllables. Compared with hearing a lecture from the living, or conversing with persons of real power, or reading the standard works of literature, this way of arriving at thought is, in its method, extremely deficient. There should, at least, be some promise of reaching a lofty thought, which you can find in no other way, to induce you to seek it in this.

But there is another objection to the spirits as teachers, in that you cannot choose which you will have. Here in the flesh you can consult Bacon, or Macaulay, or any other writer, as you will. But in this other method of learning you must take whatever comes. A foolish spirit may waste half your time. A bad spirit may worse than waste it. I am arguing upon the admitted principles of believers.

Thirdly, it is beyond doubt true, that whether there are spirits or not, mesmeric sympathy is mixed up with the responses to a very great extent, so that a large part of the communications are nothing more than a rehearsal of one's own thoughts.

Fourthly, the actual result of knowledge gained is not comparable with that derived from converse with the living, or with the books which flood the world. This need only to be stated to receive assent. Indeed it seems necessary that one who should devote all his time to converse with the spirits, so called, must in a few years deteriorate greatly in mental resources and powers.

Now, then, is not the conclusion just, that if the spirits have no supernatural right or power to instruct us, they are not worthy of receiving attention in any of the common relations of teachers? And, hence, that their suggestions being less valuable than those of the living and of books, have no value for us sufficient to induce us to expend upon them a large amount of our time, which might be much better employed?

We have thus, as we think, conclusively shown these two truths: First, that the spirits, so called, have not authenticated a divine mission, or proved their ability to enlighten us upon subjects beyond our ken in the invisible world, and hence that all their pretended revelations against Christianity are absolutely absurd; and second, that as mere teachers of truth within the compass of our thought, they are so very inferior as to be utterly unworthy of the time so foolishly wasted upon them.

CHAPTER III.

THE MESMERISTS.

IN treating of these, and their claims to higher sources of knowledge than belong to the normal state of the human intellect, it will serve to give definiteness to what we have to say, if we take the great prince of mesmerists in our day, A. J. Davis, as a type of the whole class, and examine his claims in the light of his own writings. This we now undertake to do.

What, then, are the pretensions of this writer to the power of discovering and revealing divine truth? And what is the real value of these claims? We commence by saying, that there is a large class of important facts coming under the name of mesmerism which are not yet thoroughly investigated. Science has a great work here to do. In this relation, we do not discuss the subject. We take it up only in its super-scientific relations. It pretends to give us revelations from God. These pretensions, especially as put forth by A. J. Davis, we now propose to examine.

In his book entitled "Nature's Divine Revelations," this gentleman enters into an account of the mesmeric state. It is only with one of these with which we are concerned — the one in which revelations are said to be made to the soul, or rather, as the mesmerists phrase it, truth is attracted to it.

This highest state, or the "superior state," induced by mesmeric power, is, according to Mr. Davis, death itself, in which the soul is kept in union with the body only by the power of the operator, whose mesmeric connection prevents entire dissolution. The soul is, therefore, released from the chains of the body, and brought into "*the second sphere of*

truth," which is a position in which it sees the things of this world as they really are, and finds itself attracted to a mysterious centre or "focus" of truth which illuminates the mind without any effort of its own. From this sphere it mounts successively up through the spheres above it, till it comes to the seventh, or the highest sphere of love and glory.

In making his revelations, Mr. Davis was assisted by an operator and a scribe—the operator placing him in the mesmeric state, and the scribe writing down his utterances. The "utterances," however, were not made in "the superior state" itself; but he returned at short intervals to consciousness, and related his "impressions," and then went back into the high regions of truth. He thus describes the process:—

"I do not receive these [*i. e.* impressions] from the Great Supreme, but from this second sphere, focus, or medium, which legitimately belongs to this globe alone. When you ask me a question, I am then existing in the medium, or sphere of the body; but in investigating and finding the answer, I pass to the sphere where I can associate with the truth and reality.

"It is impossible, by words, to convey a full and adequate conception of the manner in which I arrive at truth. I can only employ such words as convey all the idea that words *can* convey of this process. My information is not derived from any *persons* that exist in the sphere into which my mind enters, but it is the result of a Law of truth, emanating from the Great Positive Mind, and pervading all spheres of existence. By this, truth is attracted to, and is received by, the mind."—p. 44.

"I pass from the body with a desire for a particular kind of information. This desire attracts the particular kind of truth of which I would be informed, separates it from all other things, and causes it to flow into the mind. And when I thus obtain the truth of which I am in quest, I return to communicate it through the organization."—p. 46.

"Thus, though the transition of my inner life to its second sphere presents to the senses but little evidence of its reality, to me it appears a metamorphosis analogous to death."—p. 46.

Such is the description of the process of these "Nature's

Divine Revelations." The claims set up under it are, of course, that we should believe, as undoubted truth, the statements made in these circumstances, throwing aside our Bible to receive this new revelation. If it be true that, in this state, Mr. Davis was in the focus of truth, "where he could associate with truth and reality;" where "information" "is the result of a Law of truth emanating from the Great Positive Mind," "by which truth is attracted to, and is received by, the mind;" if he "passes from the body" with a desire for information, which desire "attracts the particular kind of truth, separates it from all other things, and causes it to flow into the mind;"—if all this is true, then, of course, Mr. Davis is a "superior" and authoritative instructor, and we must "sit at his feet to learn of him." No higher claims to supernatural and divine knowledge could be made. Hence Mr. Davis does distinctly require us to listen to him as a "revealer," and receive his utterances. Thus, page 64, after stating the impossibility of our arriving at the knowledge he reveals, because it implies the power of "self-investigation," or "self-comprehension," which he maintains is an absurdity, he proceeds thus:—"Having no means to arrive distinctly and evidently at a knowledge of the essence and principle of Intelligence, you are compelled to let me occupy the situation which you have been supposed to sustain, and thereby reveal what you would willingly and joyously receive as corresponding to your natural yearnings, and answering your desires for a higher, nobler, and more dignified understanding of your nature, and its legitimate offices and ultimate destination." Throughout the book claims equally strong are made, and in one place the writer rises to a pitch of extravagance beyond even himself. He says, (p. 533,) "I descend not into details to collect external proofs of the seemingly mere assertions that have been made, for this would not comport with the use and object of these revelations concerning the laws and requirements of nature. * * * But be it distinctly understood, that I am impressed to maintain the responsibility of the statements herein presented, and at a future period I shall descend into the minutæ of the various subjects generalized in this book, for the sole purpose of giving forth an incontestable encyclopedia, in which every unreal and

erroneous conception may be exhibited in its proper light, and in which may be established every important truth that is not at the present day known or comprehended by the generality of mankind."

Such are the claims of Mr. Davis. In relation to them we remark — First, that it is not by any means certain that the state described is a "superior" state; but, on the contrary, there is evidence that it is, in relation to the whole matter of reason and thought, a very inferior state, compared with that of vigorous health and activity of the bodily powers. It is claimed, as we have seen, that the state is that of death, the soul being separated from the body and left to commune with truth unshackled and free; and upon this is based the idea of its superiority. But it is very clear that this is not the fact, for the evidence of real death, or even of suspended animation, is not given; but, on the contrary, there is evidence of continued life appreciable by the senses. Mr. Davis himself admits that life is continued, though, he says, it is only by the power of the magnetizer, which is a bare theory, without proof and of little account; for the point is whether life is continued, and not *how* it is. There can be no question that the soul still continues in the organization, and that the change of death, or a change tantamount to it, has not taken place. Mr. Davis, indeed, says, that to him it appears "a metamorphosis analogous to death;" but he knows not what death is, and, therefore, cannot assert even this. The state is evidently not so much like death as the trance; for in this the body has been known to lie for several days, giving every indication of death, with the single exception of a very slight warmth in the region of the heart, and this when out of all connection with any mesmerizer; but Mr. Davis only remained in his state a few moments, returning intermittently to consciousness, and even while in it gave positive evidence of continued life. It is very clear, then, nothing like death, in any other sense than sleep is like death, had passed upon him. Consequently, he still used the organization in his thinking or perceiving truth. But this, it is evident, was greatly impaired, not being in a healthy, vigorous, waking state. No one doubts that in dreams the mental power is impaired, though the scope of its

comprehension, and its power of annihilating time and space are very remarkable.

But what evidence have we that the highest mesmeric state is not more analogous to dreaming, than to the reality of the soul's thoughts after death? Certainly none at all, but the bare assertion of Mr. Davis. On the contrary, there is proof, in the very vagaries of his own book, that the state was a dreamy, unreal, imaginative one, in which, if he thought at all, he merely recombined and adjusted, in this alembic of his unnatural and unreasoning state, the ideas with which he prepared himself to enter it.

There is no single phenomenon relating to the magnetic states, which goes to show that the power of reasoning, or of perceiving truth in its highest relations, is any way increased; but, on the contrary, there is evidence that the imaginative power and the fancy are, as in dreams, the controlling faculties. Swedenborg was a philosopher and theologian of the first class, and when he thought out of his "superior states," there is a clearness and vigor in his ratiocination, surpassed by no writer; but, in those states, it is easy to trace the play of the fancy of a great thinker, mingled with the great thoughts which, in his common states, occupied his mind. Otherwise he would never have undertaken to describe heaven and hell, which, Paul says, cannot be described in human language, and which, our own reasons teach us, must so far transcend all our present experience, that our language can give no specific idea of them whatever. Paul was a greater philosopher than Swedenborg, for he understood the inadequacy of human language to represent a totally different state of being.

So also we discover the sovereignty of fancy in Mr. Davis's book, else how can we account for the extravagant and absurd idea, that every grain of dust in the universe is in the process of gradual purification and development into a spiritual intelligence!! Every pebble stone is to be an angel of God!!! So, throughout the book, the same power of dreaming is visible.

Does any one suppose that Daniel Webster could write his magnificent orations, or that Judge Taney could compose his weighty and consecutively reasoned decisions in a mesmeric

state? Swedenborg was as great a man as either of them. Let their writings be compared, to see where the granite strength of thought is most strongly developed.

There is one phenomenon of magnetism which it is necessary to consider here, — that of clairvoyance. But the utmost that is claimed for this is the power of far-seeing, or an enlargement of the perceptions, which is perfectly consistent with an inferior state of the reason and understanding, or the powers which apprehend and comprehend truth. The only point in which this clairvoyant power might infringe upon our position, is in the claim it makes to see into the invisible world; but in relation to this we may say, first, that even admitting the power, it leaves the great regions of truth and duty, of the will and purposes and laws of God, untouched, for these are plainly not the objects of sight, but only things visible; and secondly, that as the invisible world is a world of spirits, it is highly probable that human sight, however enlarged, can have no perception of it; and then thirdly, that there is no proof, and can be none, of any such power of looking into the other world, since none have been there to verify it. Clairvoyance, therefore, though it may perhaps prove a "superior" state of the organ of vision in this world, does not interfere with our proposition, that the condition of mesmeric influence is an inferior condition of the rational powers, both of intuitive and deductive perception. Facts confirm this view, for in all ages of the world those persons who have claimed these remarkable powers of looking into the future, reading destiny in black stones, and seeing things afar off, have been almost entirely persons of inferior mental power, connected with low tribes of gypsies and vagrants, and having almost no knowledge of the best truths of being. And the ages of the world most remarkable for these phenomena, have been the early or barbarous ages, the advancing light of civilization having dispersed them as mist before the rising sun. We apprehend that a different and far higher use of this class of facts is by and by to be developed in the progress of science, and that the idea that the mesmeric states are higher states of mind will soon be scouted as utterly absurd, men avoiding them as they would visitations of insanity.

If, on the contrary, the world is to develop, in its progress of advancement, a "superior" race of mesmerists, what a reasonable set of beings they will be! Fancy a world of noble beings, all sitting in elbow chairs, with tongues lolling out of their mouths, their muscles rigid, their eyes dim, their faces clothed in the pallor of death, and they all dreaming out golden visions and gewgaw vagaries in the glorious "mesmeric" state!! What noble developments of mind may we then expect! How profound in logic! how marvellous in research! how clear in method! how powerful in thought! Say, would it not rather be a race of fools?

Secondly. If the mesmeric state described is a "superior state," in the sense they claim, no proof to us remains of it. No evidence is given to show the right of these superior teachers to declare the high and transcendent truths of God, such as lie above the plane of our knowledge; demanding our belief upon the authority of their declarations. No evidence is given to show that the soul, in this abnormal state, really does come in contact with divine knowledge. This is the mere declaration of these pretended revealers of the truth of God, and, among them, of Andrew Jackson Davis. He, without giving any vouchers for his authority, any proof from Jehovah of his mission, speaks to us thus presumptuously:—"Having no means to arrive distinctly and evidently at a knowledge of the essence and principle of Intelligence, *you are compelled to let me occupy the situation which you have been supposed to sustain*, and REVEAL what you would willingly and joyously receive as corresponding to your natural yearnings, and answering your desires for a higher, nobler, and more dignified understanding of your nature, and its legitimate offices and ultimate destination." Compelled! and why? by what proof of authority or ability to teach us, on these great subjects, our duties, our natures, as creatures of God, and our "ultimate destination?" Why should we give place to him? No reason is given. No credentials of authority from the great Father of all, commanding us to receive what he teaches in things, concerning which we have no power of judgment or reason, they being *above* us. When Mr. Davis tells us that there are seven spheres in the invisible world which he describes, why are we

to believe him? We have no means of reasoning upon this subject. No logic of our natures, no "*yearning*" or "*desire*," teaches us to receive "*willingly and joyously*" this statement, any more than that there are six spheres, or four, or no spheres at all, but simply heaven and hell. There is no power of decision upon this great fact in the invisible world, in the reasoning or moral nature of any man's soul, but it is wholly a matter of revelation. If he declares "the golden rule," upon that we are fitted to judge, because it belongs to the duties of this world; but there is a high class of transcendent truths relating to God and the unseen world, which can only come to us by revelation, and that revelation must be clothed with credentials of authority from the great Father of the universe. But Mr. Davis shows us none. He relies entirely upon this peculiar state which he calls "superior;" but he gives no evidence that it was "superior," or a state of mind illuminated with divine truth. He even intimates, that there can be no evidence of authority to declare truth in respect to things unknowable without revelation; that the only evidence is in the mind judging whether they are consonant with its thoughts, "*yearnings*," or "*desires*." But in the region of truth of which we speak, the mind has no capacity of judging. And is it so,—that God can in no way authenticate a revelation of his will, and of the soul's destination and duties, comprising truth and facts beyond the range of the natural powers of the mind, so that we may have our sphere of knowledge extended into the high and invisible truths of God and immortality? Every man's soul answers that there is such a way, and *must* be, and it is by miraculous interposition. If God would reveal truth to us, he must appear in the works of creation, showing the power of Deity by new laws of nature, seemingly, though not really, contravening the old; thus attesting, by works which can be wrought only by his divine power, a revelation from himself. Without this evidence, a writer claiming "superior" power at once sinks to the level of any other writer, and is to be received, not at all by virtue of his "superior" power, which is to be considered in value as zero, but only by virtue of the logic and thought in his work, relative to those subjects, which the mind of man can verify. There can be

nothing then in "mesmeric" states of the nature of divine revealing, and no "superior" reverence, like that paid to real inspiration, is to be paid to writings produced in connection with these states; but every such writing is to be looked upon as a product of the human mind, simply, like any other writing; and every thing in it, as to the invisible world and the designs of God, which our minds cannot verify, is to be dismissed at once as absolutely valueless.

Thirdly. To this very same conclusion Mr. Davis himself arrives, notwithstanding his high claims, repeatedly asserted and explained, in the first part of his work, at great length. He says, — as if common sense would find vent somehow in the midst of his vagaries, p. 103, — "The inquiring mind is solicited to venerate the truth, as it is herein presented, and as it may be convinced to his understanding. Such truth should be venerated only the same as it should be, if it had been conceived of, and accumulated by, any other process." So he repeats the same on page 432. We need not stop to show the contradiction here apparent. We need not ask, what we are to do in respect to those things which "we have no means to arrive distinctly and evidently at a knowledge of." — (Page 64 of the same work.) Whether we are not "*compelled to let him reveal.*" Nor need we ask why he took all the pains to reveal several hundred pages in explanation of the marvellous process of dying every few moments and going into the invisible world, and returning with rays from the focus of truth. We need not ask whether a peculiar halo of reverence was not designed thus to be thrown around his book; nor whether he permitted the introduction, narrating the marvel which he claims to be, and which we shall proceed soon to examine, to be inserted for the same end; nor whether Prof. Bush saw such a scientific and noble work in it, because of these same mesmeric revealings; nor whether a single edition, or even a single copy would have sold, if it had been placed from the first upon the position of any other book. We need not ask these questions. Mr. Davis confesses that the revelations of the "superior state" are not "superior" to any other, and are "*to be venerated only the same as if* they had been conceived of and accumulated by any other process." Here then vanishes all claim

to a peculiar power of revelation in the mesmeric state, and three quarters at least of Mr. Davis's book vanish with it. For who would believe anything about the seven spheres in the invisible world, or the tracing of spirits after death, or the gradual spiritualization of every particle of matter into an intelligent agent, or the descriptions of the inhabitants of Saturn and the planets, if he depended wholly upon the common processes of investigation and thought in his own mind? Plainly no one, for all these things are wholly beyond the sphere of our earthly knowledge, and an intelligence above us can only communicate them to us. Take an example, too, of his method of confuting Christianity, and see how a large part of his blasphemies upon this subject are swept away by this single admission of his, that we are to attach a value to his sayings only as we would to the sayings of any man, by their becoming verified in our own reasons and judgments. On page 538 he thus disposes of Paul's miraculous conversion;—"I am fully aware of the circumstances, and also why such an ocular impression was received; and an acquaintance with the fact as it occurred dissipates immediately all superstitious ideas of a miraculous interposition." Indeed! and because you are "aware," we must believe! There is no evidence presented to our understanding. If any other person should tell us this, we should pronounce it extremely presumptuous and irrational, and so we must pronounce it, though declared in a "superior state." Now this is a fair specimen of a great part of his sayings against Christianity. They are merely assertions without proof, of that which he pretends to discover in a superior state. No mind will attach any value to these utterances, unless he believes that Mr. Davis is exalted to a "superior state," qualifying him for the office of an authoritative teacher. For it is plain they merit no attention as resulting from any common processes of the mind.

But Mr. Davis awakes at last to the result of the position he here assumes, and in the last part of his book, just before entering upon the subjects of the process of death and the seven spheres of the future world, subjects totally beyond the reach of any of our processes of thought, and, therefore, requiring absolute faith in him as a teacher of "superior"

truth ; he anticipates the objection that he has given no evidence of his authority to teach, or of the value of his utterances, and his answer is one of the most remarkable, considered logically, in the whole compass of human thinking. We give it at length, p. 649 : " I now perceive the *objection* that will be raised against the preceding relations, and those which are to follow. The first of these is embodied in the question, ' What proof have we that this account of the spirit world is true ? ' I perceive the answer ; and that is, Recognize the unchangeable tendency of the universal laws and principles that govern the whole system of creation ; and by them and their unvarying teachings, the mind may decide upon the truth or falsity of all assertions, beyond the possibility of sensuous demonstration. If they are recognized as *immutable*, then a sameness in their tendency must be manifested in all parts of the general structure of the universe ; and all philosophy that is truthful must correspond thereunto. If they proclaim *universal association*, then the same principle should be considered as holding alike in every department of Nature and the Univercoelum. If they proclaim *universal development*, then the same must inevitably be perpetuated, from the lowest point of time to the highest point in eternity. Upon these universal and eternal principles of progression rests the truth of that which will hereafter be asserted. And that which has been asserted will, in the main, receive the approbation of the most enlightened judgments, and is analogically demonstrated in the visible fields of creation."

Now this is certainly a choice bit of logic, for (1.) the very principles here presented as tests, *universal development* and *unchangeable laws*, are the very pith of the "divine revelations" of which they are made the test, *themselves* demanding evidence and receiving none. It is demanded that we receive them upon the declarations of Mr. Davis in his "superior state," and then receive all his other declarations because they harmonize with them. This resembles very much reasoning in a circle. (2.) It is easy to draw out from the imagination ten thousand other systems as well as the one of Mr. Davis, all harmonizing with these principles ; that is, all consistent with universal development and general

laws. For example, suppose I say there are ten thousand spheres instead of seven; why is Mr. Davis to be believed sooner than I? Or suppose I maintain that there is to be a universal development of sin, or, as he calls it, "misdirection," according to an unchangeable law, will not this theory harmonize with both these principles? Unchangeable law and development as *general principles* can prove nothing as to *specific facts* in the history of man here or hereafter.

The attempt, then, to meet the want of evidence, on the part of Mr. Davis, is a decided failure. He must substantiate his claim to "superior" knowledge before we can believe. While he throws this aside, we must lay aside three-fourths of his book, compelled by the very dictates of reason.

Fourthly. It is impossible, in the very nature of thought, to derive facts or past historical knowledge, from any "mesmeric" or "superior" state whatever. Truth, as embracing principles and ideas, is thought and reasoning; — truth, as embracing facts or actual events, is not the subject of any logical or intuitive process. The one is worked out in the mind by its active energy; — the other is simply received by a passive knowledge. Facts may become the subjects of thought and reasoning, when they have become so hidden and buried in the past, that they must be debated in order truly to discover them; or when their bearings upon great questions are brought into view; though even then, it is the principle of the fact, or the true idea concerning it, rather than the fact itself, which is the subject of the reasoning faculty. In no case can a fact become a subject of intuition.

The "superior" state, as described by Mr. Davis, is, however, a state of intuitive or spontaneous thinking. Ideas develop themselves in the mind without effort. No person in the invisible world communicates anything to him. But truth is attracted to him, and the peculiar kind of truth of which he is in quest. Now, then, it will be evident that facts in past history, actual events, cannot, in the nature of things, come into his mind in this state. For these cannot be thought out; these cannot be generated by intuition; they have occurred outside of the mind, and must be related to it by persons or by writings; they cannot be developed in the mind itself by means of its own acting. Facts or real events

happening in the invisible world at the time of the presence of a spirit in it, may, so far as philosophic possibility is concerned, be seen and known ; or facts or real events happening upon the earth at the time ; but there is no possible process by which past history can be presented. Here, then, we may lay out of the question the whole class of facts asserted against history, which are only the vagaries of Mr. Davis's mesmeric dreams, such as, for example, that Matthew held office under the Roman Government till old age, and embraced Christianity only after Paul's conversion, and then wrote his Gospel ; when all history proves that Matthew was an early follower of Jesus ; was chosen as one of the apostles ; was with the eleven when they chose one in the place of Judas, and wrote his Gospel, at the latest, only fifteen years, and probably only eight years after the death of Jesus. Concerning these facts, there never was any question in the unanimous testimony of both heathen and Jewish witnesses. Yet now our writer would have us believe that he has discovered a new fact in his "superior" state, a thing impossible absolutely. This is a single example of a large class of assertions in which the writer attempts to falsify the truth of history.

Moreover, it will be seen in this connection that the scientific and historic facts presented in the book, of which such a parade is made in the introduction to the work before us, as if it were a miracle that so ignorant a man as Mr. Davis should know them all, and as if they certainly must have been obtained in the "superior" state ; — it will be seen that they must have been obtained outside of it. We shall have occasion to refer to this point again.

Fifthly. Mr. Davis himself, not satisfied with declaring the valuelessness of the thoughts of the "superior" state, unless verified by our common processes, proceeds to *prove* it in other parts of his book. He does not mean to do this, to be sure, and yet he inadvertently though surely does it.

It is very clear to the mind, that if the "superior" state, or mesmeric power, is valuable as a medium for discovering the truths of the invisible world, of our present being, and of the nature, and works, and will of God, then the testimony given in it, by different witnesses, must not clash, but must

entirely harmonize. Otherwise, what shall we poor mortals, who have no such power, believe?

"Who shall decide when doctors disagree?" In every thing above the discovery of our present powers of investigation, we can have confidence in these revelators only as they present one testimony. Otherwise the whole idea of revelation of facts above us, by mesmeric power, is blown to the winds. And we have seen that in all those things which the human mind can investigate, the "superior" state is a very inferior one.

Now, then, what says our author as to the revelations of previous mesmerists? He tells us, p. 417, that these revelations were in early times "the agents and causes" "of an immense amount of disunity, deception and wickedness." Then, p. 530, "The followers of Anna Lee seriously believe and teach that select persons among them commune with spirits that inhabit celestial spheres. They frequently induce, by excitement, a cataleptic condition of the body, and then are said to be in heaven, walking among and conversing with the angels. And when they return to outward consciousness, they relate these marvellous peregrinations, with all the seriousness and solemnity of truth — because *they believe them*." Then as to Swedenborg, he speaks* as of a great mind, involved in his "superior" states in great errors, and presenting a useless philosophy of the spirit world. Especially does he reprove this great man for reverencing the Bible as a divine book, in which he finds his mesmeric state gave him no true knowledge. We submit whether mesmeric revelations with such a history as this, are of much value.

Sixthly and lastly. We shall proceed to examine the evidence presented by Mr. Fishbough, the scribe, to prove that Mr. Davis himself is a miracle, and imparts to the world knowledge miraculously obtained. The scribe does not, indeed, use this language. On the contrary, he maintains that the mesmeric process is strictly natural, only being "superior" to the common processes of the mind. Yet for all this, the impression made upon the public by the claims

*Pages 547 and 591.

set up, *must* be, and as a fact, *is*, that Mr. Davis obtained these revelations in a miraculous or supernatural state. *And it was the object to make this impression.* Otherwise there is no meaning in his marvellous statements. There is an instinct in the soul which spontaneously demands miraculous or supernatural evidence, in proof of the teachings of one claiming to reveal the will and nature of God, the great facts of the invisible world, and the true nature of our religious duties, — *a proof in itself of the possibility of miracles.* Now it must have been to this instinct after the miraculous, that the scribe addressed the strange facts asserted of Mr. Davis, and which Mr. Davis suffered to remain to influence the public mind.

But whether their claims are essentially miraculous or not, sure we are they were designed to produce a strong impression of the "superior" powers of Mr. Davis in the discovery of truth, so as to generate a faith in him which would lead to the reception of his utterances upon his simple declaration. As such we now proceed to examine them.

We are told, then, that Mr. Davis is a young man, having been only 21 years of age when the wonderful book before us was written, in 1847; that he had no education, excepting five months of schooling, when he learned "to read imperfectly, to write a fair hand, and to do simple sums in arithmetic;"* that he was so busily employed in his youth as to have no time to acquaint himself at all with the sciences, or with history; that, in fine, being totally ignorant, he has written a book filled in its every part with a knowledge of "all important writings, extant in *all languages*, upon the subjects of cosmogony, history, metaphysics, &c., &c., &c.;"† and, moreover, that if we can show how he could have arrived at all this marvellous knowledge, by any common process, still, "the *wisdom* with which *gleanings* have been made from all these [writings], the ability displayed in their classification, the bold and familiar criticism displayed in reference to them all, and especially the soaring flights of mind into regions not previously explored by any earthly being, will constitute a phenomenon still demanding explanation." (Introduction, p. 16.)

* Introduction, p. 8.

† Introduction, p. 16.

Now to all this we have to say that the marvel of Mr. Davis's knowledge will entirely fade away if we remember two things: First, that his opportunities of knowledge and his natural capacities are greatly underrated by his scribe. Secondly, that the learning and depth of the book he has dictated are greatly overrated.

Taking up the last of these in the first place, no one can read the book in question without seeing that it would require no uncommon amount of knowledge or genius to have written it. All which it contains, every idea of any value, psychologic, historic, scientific, theologic, is contained in a much better form in three books,—The Vestiges of Creation, Dr. Strauss on Christianity, and Bush's Tracts on Swedenborg; all which books, by a marvellous coincidence, made their appearance about the time that Mr. Davis dictated his Revelations. Added to that which was derived from these sources, are a multitude of rapid notions and inanities, which may be safely set down as original productions, such, for example, as the animal in Saturn of surpassing beauty, with a leg unjointed, like whalebone, capable of bending anywhere. The whole description of the inhabitants of the planets is as great a mass of nonsense as can be well put together. And so the new logic which he introduces, wherein he discards all our present methods of reasoning, and maintains that the only true method is the intuition of the "superior" state.

Thus, with the addition here and there of a gem of his own, the entire book is a rehash and a dilution of the three books in question. And an acquaintance with these three only is necessary to write it. Besides, it is illy put together, badly written, with the greatest violations of grammar and good taste, illogical, bombastic, containing repetitions, and weak,—showing the hand of an uneducated and comparatively ignorant man. Occasionally we find a few pages written with some beauty, but the greater part is slipshod in the extreme. There are facts of science and history requiring considerable knowledge, but these might all be gathered from the books to which we have alluded. It will be seen that Mr. Fishbough, the scribe, greatly overrates the production.

Now, then, could Mr. Davis have written this book, out of the "superior state," and by virtue of his own common

knowledge? We answer, Undoubtedly he could. And here our grounds of decision are based upon what we ourselves know of Mr. Davis, and what Mr. Fishbough has told us of him. His natural capabilities and means of knowledge are greatly underrated. To write so large a book and assume such a position before the world, requires a certain kind of mental power. A fool could not do it. A *very* common mind could not do it. We are desirous to argue fairly, and to admit all the truth; for we seek only truth. Yet it does not require the first order of mind, nor a very high order of mind. It simply requires natural vigor, deep self-reliance, a retentive memory, and a heated fancy. Mr. Davis has all these. No one who has seen or known him, can doubt his capability to produce such a book without any thing miraculous or marvellous. He could read and select and combine, and throw together in a disorderly way, intermixed with fanciful inanities, just such a book. Just such a production would be expected from him, if he came under the superstition of the "superior" state, and imagined himself illuminated with truth. We need not suppose that he understood precisely the process of his own mind, or that he knew that the notions he communicated were *not* the products of his "superior" state. Doubtless, they floated in his fancy in the dreamy vagaries of that condition, and were so given off as he returned to consciousness,—in a heterogeneous mixture, very much like the compound of a dream, making precisely such a book as from the data we might calculate. But the original of all this mass of revelations, was derived from common sources of knowledge, and worked up into this present form, in the strange processes, and under the superstitious circumstances of the "superior state." Their native hue was in this way considerably changed, as it must needs be; for who could sit down with the belief that he was going into eternity, and not have that belief give shape and color to his thoughts? Hence nothing was more natural than to suppose them the product of that state, when in fact they were not.

Let us turn to Mr. Fishbough's account of the native powers and education of Mr. Davis, to see if he does not prove himself mistaken in his belief, that he had not sufficient

ability to write such a book without miraculous or marvellous communications of knowledge. He says of his natural capacities, — "His mind indicated a delicate susceptibility to impressions, and a capacity to comprehend natural principles, which we had witnessed in few of his age. Still his unique style of expression irresistibly proved that his own heart within, and the invariable indications of nature without, were almost the only books which he had perused." Again, he gives us a letter of Mr. W. R. Bartlett, in respect to the youth of Mr. Davis, in which we are told that "*he possessed an inquiring mind, LOVED BOOKS, ESPECIALLY CONTROVERSIAL RELIGIOUS BOOKS, which he always preferred whenever he could borrow them, and obtain leisure for their perusal. He became a good thinker. Still, his natural method of communication at times tended to obscure his thoughts through a misuse of words.*" [A frailty still clinging to him, e.g., his "rectilinear spiral line" in Review of Bushnell.] "He had few associates of his own age, and preferred the society of more experienced men, though a few companions suited him better than many. He was always fond of asking questions. He was rather devotional in his feelings, with very strong sympathies."

Now, from this scanty evidence which Mr. Fishbough furnishes of the early life of Mr. Davis,—and we could wish he had presented more,—it appears that he had always an "*inquiring mind*;" "*loved books, especially religious controversial books*," "*sought the society of experienced men*;" "*desired only a few companions*," had "*strong sympathies*," and a "*devotional tendency*;" "*a mind of delicate susceptibility*," and "*a capacity to comprehend natural principles, surpassing most of his age*;" and "*with a unique style of expression.*"

We say that this evidence describes precisely the man who was fitted to write *the* book, such as it is. If the evidence was that he had received an education beyond five months, it would be altogether more miraculous! Not that the book does not indicate a certain kind of knowledge and mental ability, but that it is precisely of *the uneducated, crude kind*, derived from inquiries made by a precocious boy of warm sympathies and devotional feelings, without any

one to guide into a true development his opening faculties. Now a great deal may be learned in a certain way by "inquiries," and "conversation with experienced" infidels, and by reading books of skepticism, and thinking in that direction, till the age of twenty-one, by a susceptible mind. *It is no marvel at all that he could write the book, but it is precisely what we should suppose he would have written.*

Of the neglect which the boy suffered in his early years, which would naturally lead him to grow up into a reckless, skeptical man, we may judge from the fact that no one knows his age. His father told Mr. Fishbough that he would be 21 at such a date, but there was no record, it seems, and no data for this statement. If he was only 21 at the time stated, he would be only 25 now, a supposition contradicted by every indication in his personal appearance. Ten years more, at least, should be added to it. Yet this is of little consequence, except as showing the neglect of his early years.

That Mr. Davis *must* have obtained somehow in his common processes, the great facts in past history which he presents, we have already shown. And in obtaining these, many of his notions would have crept in also.

Mr. Davis states himself that he "prepared the questions" with which he went into the invisible world. How much is meant by this we cannot tell. There was plenty of time for a thorough study of his subjects between his lectures. Thus there were 157 lectures, the first commencing Nov. 28, 1845, the last delivered Jan. 25, 1847, in all, 395 days,—giving three and a half days between them. And the lectures were about five pages. (Introduction, p. 18.)

There is another species of evidence introduced to prove Mr. Davis's miraculous or marvellous knowledge, and it consists in his declaring two great astronomical facts, which, as Mr. Fishbough maintains, were not discovered at the time of the revelation, but have since been verified. One is the existence of the planet Neptune, and the other, the general motion of our whole solar system around a point in the direction of the Pleiades. Unhappily, however, for this evidence of superhuman knowledge, both these facts were so far rendered probable in astronomic science long before the

revelation, as to render a mere statement of them without verification, no marvel at all. The honor of Le Verrier consisted in showing the motions and position of the planet, not in declaring one to exist. Herschel had long before said:—"Other planets yet undiscovered may exist, and it is extremely probable that such is the case; the multitude of telescopic stars being so great, that only a small fraction of their number have been sufficiently noticed to ascertain whether they retain the same places or not, and five planets have already been discovered within half a century from the present time."* So the same Herschel said that "our great sun, with all his planets, is moving on towards the constellation Hercules." These two astronomic facts are both presented in the "Vestiges of Creation," and have long been before the world. All which is new, is that *Le Verrier*, has verified the one, and *Maedler* the other. And both these verifications occurred about the same time that the book was written, so that they themselves may have crept inadvertently into it. This, however, the scribe denies, saying that Mr. Davis "in his normal state had no knowledge of the discoveries of Maedler, until many months"† after the revelation, and that "what was said of the planet" *Le Verrier*, "was in manuscript months before *Le Verrier's* calculations and conclusions had been announced in this country." Allow this, and yet it is no very great marvel that so positive a mind as Mr. Davis's, stretching itself for something new in its "superior" state, should have asserted as facts, these two almost certain probabilities of astronomy, declared by Herschel years before, as positively as a *scientific* man would dare to declare them, without absolute scientific verification. We can see no great wonder in this, though the scribe says, "these facts cannot but be regarded as important, proving as they do, the ability of the clairvoyant to obtain knowledge of things beyond the reach of the natural senses, and hence of imparting confidence to his revelations which cannot be verified by any process of sensuous investigation." (Revelations, note, p. 161.)

Here we see the desire of bolstering up the tottering

* Herschel's Astronomy, p. 231, 1836.

† Revelations, note, p. 160.

fabric of the Revelations. Even the scribe and the revealer would seek to obtain faith from their readers, by evidence bordering at least upon the miraculous, only called by another name. How can they who scout the very idea of a revelation as receiving any authority from such divine credentials as "signs, and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost?" It is nature itself, speaking out and witnessing that we need miraculous attestations to divine revelations. It is the voice of the soul, declaring the *possibility* and the *probability* of miracles.

But how empty and vain are the miraculous pretensions of Andrew Jackson Davis. There is no substance in them whatever. The evidence is worthless. We have now reached the end of our argument. Our conclusion from these premises is, and we believe it to be firmly established, that *the claim of Mr. Davis to the power of revealing divine truth, in his "superior" states, has no reasonable ground to rest upon*;—that any and every notion of a high prophetic power, like that presiding in the writers of the Bible, giving him the right to teach in relation to the invisible world and transcendent truth, as one who has seen and known, or been divinely enlightened above the rest of mankind, is a mere figment of his own imagination, and is absolutely groundless; that therefore every thing which he has said, which cannot be verified by the common processes of our minds, or which is beyond our ken, is absolutely worthless, and is to be thrown aside without hesitation; and that what he has said which comes within the scope of our thought, is to be examined as the writings of any common mind, without any reverence for the method of the "superior" state, through which it is said to pass.

Our conclusion is even broader than this, applicable to the whole subject of mesmeric revelation, for Mr. Davis is a fair specimen of all, *that the mesmeric states are not to be relied upon for the discovery of divine truth,* in any degree*

* We say here divine truth, for this is the scope of our argument; but we may make the same declaration in respect to any truth. A very dangerous consultation of clairvoyants, as in the days of the sorcerers of old, to discover who has stolen property, or committed other crimes, prevails to a lamentable extent. In one case in a thousand the answer may happen to be right. But how many false suspicions are thus fastened upon individuals, upon no reasonable grounds. The law should hold clairvoyants liable to the responsibility of slander in all such cases.

whatever. The mesmeric states are strange phenomena of the mind, worthy of investigation, but they have no power to reveal the will and ways of God. Let no one appeal to them for this purpose. God himself clearly forbids in his word, the consulting of wizards and charmers, who were doubtless the mesmerists of old, and it was because there was no value in their revealings. "We have a more sure word of prophecy, unto which we shall do well that we take heed, as unto a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts."

PART SECOND.

OBJECTIONS OF THE NEW SKEPTICISM TO CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER IV.

HAVING shown that no confidence is to be placed in the revelations either of the spirits or the mesmerists, considered simply as revealers of truth and facts above us, we turn next to consider the weapons which they wield against our system of faith, just as we would those of any other skeptical teachers. As we would answer Paine and Strauss, so would we these ghostly and marvellous inculcators of infidelity. And it is not a little remarkable that all their objections have been brought forward over and over again by skeptics, from the days of Porphyry to Parker. Skepticism has nothing new to oppose to Christianity, even from the spirit world. Substantially the very same difficulties have been met and overcome a thousand times. The form which the infidelity of our times assumes is somewhat modified, the effort seeming to be to convince us that it is the best Christianity in the world. Paine maintained that he was a Deist, and so did Hume, but Parker resolutely keeps his position in a Christian pulpit, firmly declaring himself a Christian; and Davis himself denies that he has given up the religion of Jesus.

Certainly this is quite an advance for Christianity to make, that its enemies can no longer attack it in the open field. It is only by professing to be its friends that they can gain even

a hearing for their often repeated and often answered difficulties. For when you come to search these out, and strip off the veil in which they are concealed, behold they are the very same which you have met with so often before. Yet, thus they get themselves before the public, and through the tenderest sympathies of our nature, which bind us to the dead, they commend themselves at once to credulity. It is necessary, therefore, to go through with the argument again, conforming it, so far as need be, to the circumstances of the present time. We proceed, therefore, to take up and answer the principal objections which have been brought against Christianity by the new Infidelity.

CHAPTER V.

That an authoritative revelation of great facts in the divine government of the world is impossible in the nature of things.

One of the most subtle objections against Christianity, is that which denies the possibility of personal authority in a divine revealer. We can believe, argue these new skeptics, nothing, for the reason that it is told us by another, even though that other come with the highest credentials. We can believe only because our own reasons respond to what is taught. If we feel that truth is spoken, we believe from the authority of the wiser reason which declares it to be truth. What Jesus Christ says has no authority in that he says it, but only in that the reason declares it true. If he declares the golden rule, we will believe him; if he declares the doctrine of regeneration, we will convict him of mistake, and disbelieve him. Shakspeare and Emerson are put on an equality with Christ, in so far as respects their authority to teach the truth. In fact, all men are inspired alike, though in different degrees; and whoever utters a sentiment that falls in with my views, is to me equally a divine revealer with Jesus of Nazareth. Thus Mr. Parker heads one of his chapters in his "Discourse on Religion," *The only authority of Christianity is its truth*. And again he says, in his "Discourse on the Transient and Permanent in Christianity," *"The authority of Jesus, as of all teachers, one would naturally think must rest on the truth of his words."* And so in many other places. Mr. Davis and the dealers with the spirits make much of this argument, though it directly con-

fronts and overturns all the power which their system obtains from the marvellousness of the phenomena which surround it. Now in all this kind of reasoning, a great fallacy is wrapped up in a good deal of truth, by which the unwary are deceived. As a basis of the idea there lies something of a reality, but the form which he has given to it does not express it, but error only.

We shall proceed to show, first, that the position thus assumed is absurd; and secondly, we shall endeavor to point out the true relation which Christ and the human reason bear respectively to the truth of revelation.

And first, when Mr. Parker avers that "the authority of Jesus, as of all teachers, must rest on the truth of his words," he utters a gross absurdity. For by "the truth of his words," he must mean that truth either as ascertained by the human mind, or as a reality in itself unknown to the human mind. But if he meant the first, then plainly there is no room left for authority in a teacher, or for a teacher at all; for if the truth is already ascertained by the human mind, what do we need?—do we need more? If we already know, how are we to be taught? If Mr. Parker should insist upon an essential modification of this part of the dilemma, claiming that he meant the truth as ascertained, not before the utterance of it by the teacher, but simultaneously with it, the reason giving its assent,—I answer, this does not relieve the difficulty, for on this supposition there is no *authority* in Christ as a teacher, to which the reason submits, but only an authority in the reason which assents to Christ's teaching. There is no room for *authority* if there is no belief until the truth is discovered by ourselves. Nothing can be more absurd than to suppose it.

If, on the other hand, Mr. Parker meant "the truth of Christ's word," not as ascertained, but as it is in reality, though unknown to the mind; then plainly there is no truth in the mind on which to base authority. It is all vacant. Truth exists in the nature of things, but it is not discovered by the reason. We must of course seek some other ground of authority than the truth.

On the one supposition, Mr. Parker throws Christianity completely aside, giving to Christ no authority, but enthron-

ing the reason as a sufficient light. On the other, he leaves no groundwork for authority in the soul of man.

Now the whole case is very clear. Take the instance of any teacher, and upon what is his authority based with his scholars? Let him be a teacher of French, or German, or anything. Plainly not in their capacity to sit in judgment on his teaching, for they are supposed to be ignorant and unable to decide whether his teaching be true or false. *His authority rests not upon the truth he utters, but upon our belief that he will utter truth.* And this belief arises from the proof we have of his competence and veracity. We drink in his instructions from our faith in him, based upon the credentials which he brings of his qualifications. *The faith is reasonable, yet is no longer reason.* It has become trust. Still we do not absolutely surrender our reasons to the teacher. If he states any thing contradictory to our reason, we reject it. If he states what we previously knew, we receive it as confirmatory of our own knowledge. All disputed questions, and questions above us, we refer to the teacher for *his* DECISION, which binds us so long as we are his scholars. And if we have proof of the infallible capacity and truthfulness of the teacher, these would bind us absolutely.

These points we proceed to draw out more at length under our second head, the design of which we stated to be, to indicate the true relation which Christ and the human reason respectively have to revelation.

And first, it is true we cannot believe anything contradictory to any principles of reason. Did Christ demand it, this would be a sufficient proof against his claims. We could not, in the very nature of our minds, believe God himself, if he declared that there was no essential difference between right and wrong, or if he denied any of the first truths of our reason. But Christ demands no such thing. It is clear that the reason could not, and should not, submit to any such asserted authority, from any source whatever. Thus far the infidels are right; but it touches not in the least the points at issue: for there may be truths not *contradictory* to reason, which are yet *above* it.

Second, it is true that truth coincident with reason, or which, when presented to the reason, is immediately per-

ceived to be true, *does not need any other authority*. If Shakspeare presents to me an idea which commends itself to my judgment, as a truth not seen before, I need no authority to induce me to believe it. My reason at once responds to it. And so when Christ utters the golden rule, I need not his authority as a ground of belief. For my reason says it is true. Thus far, too, the infidels are right; but neither does this touch the point at issue: for there may be truths which are the subjects of debate, and upon which the human reason, perplexed and bewildered, only pronounces contradictory opinions, and there may be truths also entirely beyond its sphere, which are yet of the utmost importance, and which may be brought into it by the Son of God.

Therefore, thirdly, in relation to all those subjects with which the human reason is bewildered, even in the sphere of its own observation, Christ is an authoritative teacher, and we are bound to submit all our perplexities to his divine decisions. It is absurd to tell us that such an appeal to a Divine Judge, who understands, with the infallibility of Deity, all the perplexing and disputed questions about which the human reason wrangles so much, is impossible in the nature of the case. No greater absurdity could be conceived. Of course Christ, if he is proved to be what he claimed to be, can decide all these questions WITH AN AUTHORITY BINDING OUR FINITE THINKINGS.

And, fourthly, in relation to all those truths entirely beyond the sphere of the human reason, Christ is an authoritative teacher. It is folly to assert that a Divine Being may not teach us truths, in relation to spiritual interests, which otherwise we could not know, and which we are bound to believe, as revealed by a superhuman teacher. Of course such a teacher must have authority to command our assent to all such truths, and we have no right, after receiving the basis of thought, to proceed to speculate with our foolish reasonings against the revelations which he makes to us. The doctrines of atonement, the way to be saved, regeneration, incarnation, trinity, divine influence, decrees, the resurrection, the general judgment, heaven and hell, and their kindred doctrines, come under this head. Indeed, nearly all the truths of the Scriptures are here contained.

And now summing up these four heads in brief, *a divine teacher, having proved to the satisfaction of the human reason his divine mission, can claim authority over it in relation to all truths concerning which there is strife or debate, and also in relation to all truths above the sphere of the human mind, provided he says nothing contradictory to the first principles of reason.*

Christ, therefore, may claim authority. He may, he should, be enthroned over the human reason. To his decisions our judgments and experiences should humbly bow. They should seek, with earnest purpose, for the real meaning of the DECISIONS of Christ, and having found them, they should seek no further.

CHAPTER VI.

1. That the authority of the apostles is not equal to that of Jesus.
 2. That the apostles come in conflict with each other.
 3. Objections to the literary character of the Bible.
 4. Difficulty in Romans 12: 20.
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We cluster together several objections, as they were presented to us in a conversation some time since, and present the answers to them, in the conversational form in which they were first given.

CONVERSATION.

It was in one of the places of summer resort, in the hall of the establishment, as the guests had just passed from dinner, that I overheard a gentleman of much learning speaking to several ladies near by, of the Christian religion, in such a manner as to excite their surprise and sorrow; which they spontaneously expressed. "The Bible," said he, "is destined to be very thoroughly sifted, and to be found to be very different from what it is supposed. Taken as a whole, its claims to inspiration are unfounded. It is not, by any means, the marvel, as a literary production, which some have supposed. Many figures are in bad taste, even disgusting to the refined mind. The simple story of Christ is touching, sublime, undoubtedly divine. This, and this only, I can

receive, while the accounts in which it is contained I take for what they are worth, and look upon the epistles as of no more value than any other writings upon theologic subjects."

"But," said I, breaking in here, as he turned half way towards me, so that it would appear quite natural for me to say a word, "if you believe the simple narrative of Jesus, how can you avoid believing his apostles? For did not Jesus very plainly and repeatedly commission his apostles to establish his church, and to explain and teach his truth? What do you make of that sublime transaction, when 'he breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained?'"* Is not here plainly the power of preaching his truth and establishing his church, implying necessarily in itself all divine inspiration, needful to the work? Otherwise you must take the interpretation of the Roman Church, which includes this and much more. And again, when he gave unto Peter the power of the keys, which may have been at the same time, or a repetition of the same authority, 'I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.'† This same power he gives in another place to all the disciples.‡ Do not these passages give the same authority to their preaching of truth, as to Christ's?"

"Yet,—," commenced he, breaking in at this point.

"Hold!" said I, "till I have finished my citation of texts. In the verse immediately preceding the one I first cited, Jesus says to his disciples, 'As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you,' so that they plainly stand in his place as revealers of divine truth. Thus, too, in Matthew, he directs them, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'§ So in Acts, Jesus

* John 20 : 22, 23.

† Matthew 16 : 19.
§ Matthew 28 : 18—20.

‡ Matthew 18 : 18.

is related to have said, at the parting scene of the ascension, 'Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.'* Having thus commissioned them as his representatives, he promises them supernatural aid, as in the passage, you remember, where he tells them to take no thought what they should speak. 'For,' says he, 'I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist.'† And in another place he promises them 'the Spirit of truth'‡ to dwell within them. And further on, he declares the work of that Spirit, 'When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth,' 'and he will show you things to come.'§ In coincidence with this the apostle Paul declares, 'God hath revealed unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.'"

"What a mass of texts you are citing," cried my friend; "I had not supposed there were so many."

"Hold one moment," said I, "for I am not through by any means. I hope to make it clear to you that if Jesus is to be believed, his apostles certainly are, and whatever has apostolic sanction."

"I acknowledge you are in a fair way of doing so, though I have a thought to suggest, when you will give me time to slip it in edgewise."

"All in due time. In another place, Jesus tells the apostles that the Holy Spirit will 'teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them.'|| And again he declares, as if they were clothed with his entire authority, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.'¶ So he says, 'He that receiveth you, receiveth me.'** Now, then, I submit to you whether I have not proved that if you receive Jesus, you must give heed to his apostles."

"Well! now," said my friend, "you have come to a

* Acts 1: 8.

§ John 16: 13.

† Luke 21: 14, 15.

|| John 14: 26.

** Matthew 10: 40.

‡ John 14: 17.

¶ John 13: 20.

breathing place, and I will just inquire, whether, if we suppose the apostolic doctrine to conflict with that of Jesus, which you are to believe?"

"It does not conflict in any instance," replied I; "on the contrary, the germs of the whole doctrine of the apostles are found in the teachings of the Saviour."

"Where, for instance, the doctrine of the atonement, as argued by Paul in Hebrews?"

"In the words, 'I came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give my life as a ransom for many.' 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.'* So in another place Jesus said to his disciples, 'The Son of man *must* suffer many things; and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests and scribes, and be killed.'† How much he said upon this occasion, we cannot tell, but doubtless enough to convey the impression that there was some peculiar value to his sufferings; else they would not have noted it. Another saying of his we have preserved for us. When speaking of his power to prevent his capture and crucifixion, he adds, 'How then shall the scriptures be fulfilled that thus *it must be*?'‡ as if a peculiar necessity existed for his crucifixion. So after his resurrection he addresses the two disciples going to Emmaus, upon the subject of his sufferings, 'beginning at Moses and all the prophets,' and expounding 'the scriptures' 'concerning himself.' We have suffered a great loss in losing the record of this conversation, but it was doubtless on themes so high and above the comprehension of the apostles at that time, that they could not recall it, and the Holy Ghost deemed it best to inspire the apostles to reveal the same truths in the epistles."

"It is evident," said my friend, "that at the most, these passages only contain the germ of subsequent revelations. But I question even this. They may, to be sure, mean what you say, and they may mean otherwise. They may be dark

* John 3: 14, 16.

† Mark 8: 31; Matthew 17: 22, 23.
‡ Matthew 26: 54.

intimations of the truth of atonement, or they may be differently interpreted."

"Very well, this is all I want; it is all which the nature of the case admits: you would not expect that Jesus would unfold an entire theologic system, before his disciples were prepared to receive it, or before his ascension and the descent of the Spirit. Only allow that these passages *may be* the germs of the apostolic teaching, and I need no more, when I consider the commission given to the apostles by the Saviour, 'to bind on earth and in heaven,' to be morally certain that *they are*."

"Then you believe that apostolic teaching never conflicts with that of Jesus. Perhaps you are right, but you must admit that apostles differed with each other, as where Paul 'withstood Peter to the face because he was to be blamed.' I have often considered this a great and unsurmountable difficulty in the way of admitting their inspiration."

"If you turn to the passage,* you will find that the difference here was upon a matter of conduct, not of doctrine, and while Jesus promised his apostles inspiration, he did not promise them perfection. Indeed, the point of Paul's reproof is that Peter did not live up to his doctrine. For both agreed that 'a man is not justified by the works of the law,' and all the apostles had in council decided† that the Jewish customs were not binding, Peter himself having made a speech in the council, to this effect. Yet, notwithstanding this, Peter, at Antioch, 'before that certain came from James, did eat with the Gentiles: but *when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him.*'"

"Thank you for the explanation, for it has really troubled me very much. Your position is indeed the safest, but there are many things which oppress my mind. The friends of the Bible,—and I am one as much as any,—the indiscreet friends of the Bible have pressed the matter of inspiration and superhuman excellence, perhaps, too far. Take, for instance, what they say about its literary character. Don't you think so, now?"

* Gal. 2: 11.

† Acts 15

"I was surprised, I assure you, in hearing your allusions to that subject with the ladies just now. I had supposed, that among the learned it was admitted, that as a literary production, the Bible was unrivalled."

"I think not; there are, to be sure, some remarkable passages; as some of the Psalms of David, and some strains in the prophecies, and many of the sayings of the Saviour; but taken as a whole, we cannot thus speak of it. It has been overestimated. There are many disgusting images, much that is tedious and dull, and a general want of rhetorical finish in the narratives, and of system and force throughout."

"But may not the images of which you speak, have been wholly inoffensive and even beautifully expressive to an oriental ear? We must judge of the Bible by the age in which it was written."

"Oh, to be sure, if you are willing to take that ground; but many claim for the Bible a superiority for all ages."

"So do I; and although we must, of course, expect to find in so old a book, some images which the progress of society will not value as they were valued at first, yet taken as a whole, I think the Bible has wonderfully, and even miraculously, not only in its principles, but even in its imagery and mode of expression, shown itself adapted to all ages. Take the twenty-third Psalm, 'The Lord is my shepherd,' and where can devotion find such a medium of holy expression? Even the dying Webster, one of the intellectual giants of our own times, felt the inexpressible beauty of these words of 'the sweet singer of Israel,' in his dying hour, and took them as the language of his own heart. So with thousands of the greatest of men, the language of the Bible has been felt to be adapted, more than any other, to the devout aspirations of the soul. Is it not very strange that so ancient a book should contain within itself model forms of devotion and holy feeling for all ages? Does Greek literature, or any other, furnish anything like it? How, then, can we account for it in the Hebrew, arising in the bosom of a nation comparatively uncultivated?"

"True, very true, you speak rightly; it is wonderful, even miraculous; it constitutes to my mind the highest proof of the inspiration of the Old Testament. I made exceptions

for these wonderful portions of the Bible ; I am speaking of it as an entire book."

" You know, I am sure, that the greatest rhetoricians and thinkers have considered the Bible the most remarkable book in literature ; I might deluge you with authorities. Sir William Jones's remark is very familiar, Locke's, Newton's, the illustrations of Longinus."

" Far from me be it to place myself in opposition to them ; but they spoke rather of particular portions, not of the Bible as a whole. Longinus instanced the wonderful sentence, ' Let there be light, and light was.' I admit the sublimity of that."

" Longinus, too, you remember, alludes to the writings of Paul."

" Perhaps so, but his epistles are evidently written with little regard to rhetorical rules ; witness his long parentheses, causing him sometimes to lose track of his subject, and start upon another."

" This very fault arose from the greatest of virtues in a writer, having a mind full of thought. There is wonderful vigor and strength in Paul's writings. So there is beautiful simplicity in the narratives of the gospels."

" If the writers of the Bible had been cultivated rhetoricians, I think we should find their writings more powerful. To illustrate my meaning, see the force with which great painters have depicted New Testament scenes. Compare Raphael's Transfiguration with the narrative of the transfiguration. Now a great writer should paint a picture like a painter."

" But the narrative of the transfiguration is very beautiful. Do you remember ? let us get a Bible and read it."

" No, I remember, it is very beautiful, but not equal to the painting."

" I have heard faults found with the painting."

" Oh, by whom ? It seemed to me the very inspiration of genius when I looked upon it."

" Doubtless it is a high achievement of genius. Yet there are faults, the grouping in the foreground, for example."

" By placing the hand below the eye, you can cut off that."

"So by a proper mode of looking at the Scriptures, you can remove all those defects which arise from its adaptation to a past age."

"Well, to be sure; and yet the vividness of Raphael's pictures would give great power to a book like the Bible."

"Do you think a book of pictures, even most highly executed, as highly as Raphael's, would exert the influence the written Bible does?"

"You are hardly fair."

"I know it, — I will not press the matter: but may we not account for the peculiar impression made upon your mind by Raphael's picture, in comparison with Matthew's description, from the fact that you have seen the picture but once during your whole life, whereas you have read the description a thousand times. A fair comparison would be to take one who had never either seen the picture or read the Bible before, and take his judgment. We have accounts of those who have been lost in amazement, upon reading the Scriptures for the first time at a mature age. But recently a friend of mine conversed with Jenny Goldschmidt, upon this subject. 'Oh' said she, 'when I first read the Bible, I was completely charmed with its marvellous adaptation to my soul. There was a living beauty, which I had found in no other book. It was when I was upon the stage, in the full blaze of worldly success, with crowded houses and vociferous applause. I felt a want within, which this outward fame could not meet. I had not had a religious education, and knew not what I wanted. A dear friend with me was a Christian, and she gave me the Bible. I read with wonder and love. What a precious book it is.' Such, in substance, were her words, and we have accounts of others. You must give up your idea that the Bible is not a remarkable book."

"I do not say it is not a remarkable book."

"Besides, if it had been written so as to be adapted, by its artistic form, only for scholars like yourself, would it have been adapted to the world? Take, for instance, the Socratic method of Plato: do you think such continuous intermingling and bewildering of question and answer would have been well?"

"Oh no, it is a wonderful book indeed. I only say that,

taken as a whole, it is not uniformly of a high literary order. There are some things of the very first merit; but it is folly to claim this for everything."

"I begin to understand you, and think we do not disagree much. You were only too wholesale in your first method of statement. I do not attempt to prove—for I do not deem it necessary, to sustain the literary excellence of the Bible—that the genealogies are as sublime as the prophecies of Isaiah, or the histories of the kings as beautiful as the beatitudes, or the account of the Mosaic rites as devotional as the Lord's prayer. Yet this I believe,—that the Bible contains within itself the very highest specimens of every elegant species of composition, and in this, as a literary treasure, is the most wonderful book that the world knows."

"By softening a few expressions, without essential modification, I think I should agree with you. My views are floating and crude. I am the victim of skeptical suggestions, and express myself unguardedly, perhaps. But really, the authors of these works were so illiterate, men whom you and I would not choose as literary or social associates, how can their writings be so extraordinary?"

"I think Paul and Luke and John were men of a liberal culture, with whom every scholar would esteem it a pleasure to associate, even as literary men simply. But with all, as Christian men, if we have the true spirit of Christ, we should love to associate. But they wrote by inspiration, and hence the power of their works. They had, too, most marvellous thoughts and facts to record; and so, 'having something to say, said it,' and were necessarily full of strength in their writings. That Christ should choose his apostles from among fishermen is accordant with his great design of elevating the masses of the world, whom previously all systems of philosophy and religion had neglected."

"You will admit that the gospels are not written upon any regular system; events and times are jumbled together without order. Hence the work of the harmonists."

"In recalling such a life as the life of Jesus, it is no wonder that every thing was not remembered in the precise order of time. The writers were left to exercise their own gifts up to a certain point, "the Holy Spirit guiding them

into all truth" only, not arranging their records for them. I see no difficulty of any moment in this. What we want is the truth."

"Certainly ; I only objected this to their literary merit."

"But we came to an agreement on this point,—I agreeing to allow that every portion of the Bible was not equally meritorious, and that some parts had no peculiar merit as literary compositions, and you agreeing to allow that the Bible contained some of the best specimens of literature, in its highest departments."

"Well ! so we did, and there is the exact truth. And now, (come, don't go,) let me ask you a single question, which has troubled me much. What do you make of that passage in Romans, 'If thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink : for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.' Is not a malicious form of revenge inculcated there ? 'In so doing thou shalt make him the more wretched'—can it mean that ? It seems to me that one in a proper state of mind would be very cautious in his kind deeds to an enemy, lest he should offend him, and not rejoice that he can 'heap coals of fire on his head.'"

"You do not get the sense of the passage at all. You are right in your view of the sentiment you suppose it teaches ; it is fiendish. But no such sentiment is conveyed. The very succeeding verse explains its meaning : 'Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good : ' do not let the wrong-doing of an enemy make you to hate him, and so, nourishing your worst passions, make you a worse man, 'overcoming you ; ' but returning good for his evil, in a true Christian spirit, exert a good influence upon him, attracting him to goodness, 'overcoming his evil.' This verse is epexegetical of the one preceding, 'in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head ; ' that is, thou shalt melt him down into a good man."

"The passage is certainly capable of that meaning, and I am obliged to you for the interpretation."

"Not only is it capable of this meaning, but in the connection it is capable of no other. For not only the succeeding verse explains it, but the preceding one absolutely, and in so many words, forbids your interpretation : 'Dearly

beloved, avenge not yourselves ; but rather give place unto wrath : for it is written, Vengeance is mine ; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him,' and so on."

"But does not the passage occur elsewhere?"

"Only in Proverbs, where it stands disconnected, and is capable of this rendering. Indeed, this passage in Romans proves the meaning of the one in Proverbs."

"Yes, yes ! you have greatly relieved my mind on this point. I must see you again."

CHAPTER VII.

MIRACLES IMPOSSIBLE, AND IMPOSSIBLE TO PROVE THEM.

THE argument of David Hume has been resurrected to serve the purposes of the new infidelity. There is a plausibility in it, which renders it a fit instrument for entangling many minds in the meshes of unbelief. In its day it was answered over and over again; but now, while the ingenious sophistry of its reasoning is made to permeate the land, no answer follows in its train, as an antidote to its ravages. As Mr. Davis states it, a miracle is in itself an impossible thing, as being against the laws of nature, which are immutable. "Nothing can occur," he says, "in the vast empire of universal creation, opposed to or transcending the principles of nature." He repeats this a multitude of times, seeming to find in it matter for a revelation whenever he is run ashore. Hume himself never pushed his argument to such an extreme. He was too great a philosopher to declare that a miracle, or a violation of the visible order of nature, is impossible in the nature of things. He only said that it was impossible to *prove* a miracle by human testimony, because it was more likely that men would lie than that the uniform order of nature would be violated.

To this it is a sufficient answer, that if God has a great purpose to accomplish by working miracles, there is a probability that he will do so; and that a divine revelation to a blinded race like man, is a purpose sufficiently great to induce him to interfere in the course of his ordinary laws. Under such circumstances, the inherent improbability of miracles is removed, and they become probable events. Tes-

timony, therefore, to their taking place, which if there were no good reason for them would not be admissible, becomes now conclusive. It is not more likely that men would *lie*, for no motive, than that God should work miracles to authenticate a divine revelation. On the contrary, the working miracles *for such a purpose*, is not improbable at all, but highly probable, whereas the lying without motive and against motive, is very improbable. So much for Hume's argument.

Davis now goes further, borrowing it from Dr. Strauss, both of whom assume it without argument or proof; and he tells us, not that it is impossible to prove a miracle, but that a miracle itself is an impossibility. No philosopher would ever have said that. Just as if the visible laws of nature, open to our limited observation, were of course the limitations of divine power. God can, if he pleases, introduce a new law into his universe at any time, something entirely different from anything of which we can have any present conception; otherwise you limit the idea of God. To say that what we see about us exhausts the Divine Mind, is simply absurd. Or if you say, as Mr. Davis in some places seems to intimate, that whatever new law God introduces must accord with the *principles* of the present system, *so that we can judge of it*, you fall into an absurdity equally great, for you make yourself the judge of the possibilities of the Divine Omnipotence. No logical process can declare in any way what God can or cannot do.

The only questions in respect to miracles are, a question of probability, and a question of fact. Would Jehovah be likely to work miracles for *such* an end? Has he done so? But if Mr. Davis still retreats from the force of the argument, and maintains that he does not mean the visible laws, which are open to our sight in the uniform course of the world, but the great invisible, immutable laws, known only to Jehovah, then I answer, *in this sense*, I grant nothing can be against "the laws of nature," which, as now defined, are only the interior counsels of God. But this position of the argument against miracles *is the most absurd of all*. To tell us that a miracle is impossible, because nothing can occur transcending the interior counsels of God, is either to say

nothing to the purpose, or to assume to know the interior counsels of God, which, on the other hand, I may safely assume Mr. Davis does not know.

If, finally, to avoid the argument, Mr. Davis takes refuge, as he more than once does, in some pantheistic conception of God, even here the argument is as fallacious as ever. For if you suppose *the universe* to be God, a miracle, or a violation of the visible order of nature, is still possible, and may be developed out of the Infinite All, whether it be only a *seeming* contradiction to present laws or a real one. You can no more grasp the infinite deep of this pantheistic deity, this great soul of the world, or, as Davis speaks, this "Great Positive Mind," than you can the Jehovah of the Christian. Else you limit the Deity by the measures of your understanding, and so destroy the main argument for pantheism, that the idea of personality limits the Deity.

On any supposition a miracle is possible, and it is possible to prove it.

CHAPTER VIII.

MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE SAME AS MODERN PHENOMENA.

THE turnings and windings of infidelity upon itself form a curious portion of its history. Little desirous of consistency, skeptics wield arguments against Christianity which directly destroy each other. Thus, while with one breath they tell us that miracles are impossible in the nature of things, with the next they assert that these new manifestations are genuine miracles, equal, if not superior, to those recorded in the gospels. On this new ground they willingly allow that the record of the writers is truthful, and that the miracles occurred, but that they were nothing more than we now see every day, such as table tippings, mesmeric cures, and spirit rappings.

Now to all this I answer, First, let it be particularly noted, that this position acknowledges the truthfulness of the gospels, and admits the miracles as facts. This is very important, for it shows a conquest of Christianity, when its opponents, at the very first opportunity they can get to admit the authenticity of its records, while still they can deny its divine authority, do cheerfully admit it. It proves that the argument for the historic credibility of the sacred writings pinches them close, since they retire from this position as soon as it is possible to assume another. It proves, moreover, that they are more anxious to oppose Christianity than to obtain the truth.

Second. This endeavor to parallel the Christian miracles by those of mesmerists and wonder-workers is no new thing in the world. Christianity in its very earliest ages passed through this struggle, and came off victorious. Many people, when they hear of the phenomena of our

times, turn pale for Christianity, as if some more powerful enemy than ever before, had taken the field against it. We remember how it sent a shudder over us, when first we heard it. But there is no occasion for this. Precisely the same antagonism of wonderful workings was adduced against our holy religion in its earliest days.* Even in the Old Testament times, the magicians of Egypt, "with their enchantments," equalled several miracles of Moses. And we are distinctly told in the New, of Simon Magus and those who burned their books of curious arts in the presence of the apostles. Moreover, it is upon record that the infidels of the first centuries made the greatest use of this argument, claiming that the Christian miracles were the product of magic. It is, therefore, no new thing with which Christianity has now to contend. There was something in the accompaniments of the Christian miracles which gave them the victory over their antagonists, and this something has not been lost.

Third. It is a great blunder which the skeptics make, that the defenders of Christianity ever depend upon miracles as proof, apart from their moral quality, or that this is their main argument and strength.

No writer upon the Christian evidences maintains that miracles, simply, apart from all moral quality, can demonstrate any religion. It is as they come in connection with high and holy truth, like that in the Bible, and with a divine and perfect life like that of Jesus, that they have their value. Human nature, indeed, demands miraculous proof for a divine revelation. Nor would it receive any revelation without such proof. But then one of its criteria of the miracles themselves is, their moral connections. The internal and external argument blend in the human mind as proof of Christianity. They cannot be severed.

Nor is the argument of Christianity mainly dependent upon miracles. The internal evidence satisfies the majority of Christian believers, giving credibility to the miracles themselves, and filling the soul with an experience of the divine reality of the word of God.

* See "Ta Daimonion, by Traverse Oldfield," in which this is clearly shown, and the ancient authorities referred to.

But, Fourth, THEIR NEW PRETENDED MIRACLES DO NOT PARALLEL THE CHRISTIAN MIRACLES. As truly as the magicians in the days of Moses gave up the conflict with the power of God, so must their new magicians retire in defeat.

For, (1.) Consider the general contrast between the two. In the Christian miracles there were no table tipplings, no spirit rappings, no writing mediums, no ghostly seeing of departed spirits, no mysterious touches, no circles of influence, no raising of men into the air, no marvellous signs whatever. Christ refused distinctly to enter at all into this whole region of the simply marvellous, for it was unworthy the majestic dignity of his sublime person. He would not give "a sign from heaven." It is not remarkable, that while there is in general this great divergence from the Christian miracles, there should be here and there some points of resemblance. There was in the miracles of the magicians.

(2.) Many of the miracles of Jesus in the relief of human suffering were performed simply by a word, without any intermediate agent. This is not true of any of their miracles.

(3.) They were all performed *immediately*, which, as Mr. Davis allows, is inconsistent with their being the results of medicinal and mesmeric treatment. (See Revelations, p. 512.)

(4.) All were healed whom Jesus attempted to heal; a characteristic which of itself places his miracles above the category of human skill. It is no wonder that faith and rest may at times give wonderful efficacy to mesmeric passes. But it is a divine wonder that by a *single word, immediately*, ALL whom Jesus would restore, were healed of their diseases.

(5.) Another very great distinction between the miracles of the gospel and these modern pretenders, is that Jesus wrought them, and declared that it was not by any human power, but that they should be received as attestations that he was sent of God. His character, so spotless and so pure that all infidels admire it, is sufficient evidence that what he said was true. In this our manifestations bear no analogy. They do not cluster around such a divine life.

(6.) In the same way, the internal purity of the doctrines of the Bible, to confirm which the miracles were given, makes a heaven-wide difference between them and the follies of our day.

(7.) No mesmerist, nor medium, nor all together, can begin to prevent a series of wonderful works that can bear comparison with those of Christ. When one of these men cures a multitude of people by a word, restores instant sight to those born blind, causes the deaf instantly to hear and the dumb to speak, cures the lunatic by a command, walks upon the water, raises the dead, and finally rises himself from the dead,—when all this, or a tithe of this, is done, we will examine the foundations of our faith, and not till then. But while nothing more than that which is now so much noised abroad takes place, which cannot begin to compare with the wonders wrought by the magicians of Egypt, we shall say of the miracles of Jesus, with the strongest assurance, “THIS IS THE FINGER OF GOD.”

CHAPTER IX.

GENERAL OBJECTIONS TO MIRACLES.

HERE I shall notice several objections presented by Mr. Davis in his Revelations.

1. "Although the apostles seriously believed in the miracles, they have not in all their writings intimated that these were designed as a confirmation of Christ's mission, nor do they represent him as ever making such a declaration." (Page 507.)

Ans. A most palpable denial of fact. See John 10: 36, 38; Matthew 11: 3-5; John 14: 11; John 10: 25; John 9: 3-5; Acts 2: 22; John 2: 11; Heb. 2: 3-4; John 20: 30-31; Acts 4: 33; Acts 17: 31.

2. "If the apostles were chosen to communicate the knowledge of those miracles and teachings of Christ to the world, would they not have drawn up a voluminous account of the miracles performed, such as would have flowed through all the channels of the Christian dispensation? And would not this account stand at the present day as a monumental evidence of a divine intention as connected with the display; of the absolute truth of the Christian religion, and also of the unequivocal knowledge of those who were eyewitnesses of the things related? Instead of this they make no announcement of any such intention of Christ, or of any such conviction in their own minds. In their writings in the New Testament, they relate the miracles as being acts merely incidental to their journeyings; and those performed by Christ were not regarded by any of the apostles, nor by

Christ himself, in any other light than as promiscuous and incidental occurrences of his life." (Page 509.)

Ans. First. Have not the apostles in the gospels given "an account of the miracles performed, such as flow through all the channels of the Christian dispensation?" To be sure they have.

Second. Christ and his apostles do distinctly announce that the miracles are proofs of the truth of the revelations they bring to the world. See all the passages adduced under the preceding head.

Third. Eye-witnesses relate the occurrences of the miracles. (See Luke 1: 2; 1 John 1: 1; 2 Peter 1: 16, etc.) In every point, then, this statement of Mr. Davis is a misrepresentation of facts.

3. "If the miracles had even been designed as a means by which the exalted character of his mission might be demonstrated, then would they have been performed under different circumstances, and at other times than when he was prompted by his own sympathy for the suffering and by their earnest solicitations for relief." (Page 507.)

Ans. Why? The very fact that the miracles were all works of benevolence administering to the relief of human infirmity, is a very strong confirmatory evidence that they were from God. Had they been wrought "under other circumstances," had they been "signs from heaven," mere wonders, there would have been an element of suspicion in them, for these are unworthy of Deity. In one of the apocryphal gospels there is an account of the standards of the Roman legions bowing to Christ as he passed through the ranks of soldiers, on his way to Pilate's judgment seat. Probably Mr. Davis would deem this a worthier miracle than raising Lazarus and restoring him to his disconsolate sisters. But it is evident that if such miracles were the miracles of the gospels, they could never have convinced the world, for, like the dancing of tables, they are unworthy of the Deity.

4. "The miracles as recorded in the New Testament are of such a nature as only to create *fear* and *marvellousness*. They are not represented in a manner becoming the object, and are void of that celestial dignity which they would be

expected to possess if they were of divine origin." (Page 511.)

Ans. How strange that within the compass of five pages Mr. Davis should cross his own track. In the objection just considered he counts the miracles unworthy of belief, as demonstrating Christianity, because prompted only by "sympathy for suffering and earnest solicitations for relief." Yet here he objects to them because they only create "*fear* and *marvellousness*." And is the element of "*fear*" in deeds of "*sympathy for suffering*?" Is the element of "*marvellousness only*" in responses to "*earnest solicitations for relief*" from the sick and sorrowing? To be sure there is the element of "*marvellousness*" in Christ's miracles, else they would not be miracles; but this is not the only element in such works of goodness, and that of "*fear*" cannot exist at all. Verily! what sort of miracles should Christ have wrought, if miracles of goodness called out by his every-day sympathies for suffering were not fitted to the purpose, and if miracles of "*fear and marvellousness only*" were even more unfit? Surely the miracles which he wrought as "*he went about doing good*," have in them a "*celestial dignity*," an "*intrinsic*" beauty, worthy of God.

5. "Belief in the miracles must cease with the cessation of evidence." (Page 511.)

Ans. Certainly it must; but when is the evidence of miracles to cease while we can trace an unbroken line of testimony back to the apostles, and can establish as a historical fact that the miracles were performed? If by the cessation of evidence is meant the cessation of miracles, his proposition is absurd; for if there were no cessation of miracles, there could be no miracles. Every-day matters are not miraculous.

6. "There has arisen a vast amount of misapprehension concerning the miracles, from the *style* of the written record. Matthew and all the other apostles record the cause and effect as occurring in rapid succession, almost simultaneously. Such expressions frequently occur as, — 'He laid his hands upon him, and he was healed.' So in all the cases mentioned of palsy, lameness, blindness, deafness, and other physical infirmities, cured by Jesus, the effect is related as

though it followed the cause *immediately*. All who are acquainted with physiological principles, and with the calm, gentle and energetic movements of the human organization, are persuaded, even positively convinced, that no cause can be brought to act so as to produce health as an *immediate* result, in case of any established disease. Therefore, notwithstanding the things recorded *were* performed, they were effected by causes agreeing with the nature of the human system; and the reestablishment of health which actually occurred was effected *gradually*, and by means adapted to the temperament of the individual and the nature of the disease." (Page 512.)

Ans. How marvellously Mr. Davis is able to grasp the idea of the Divine Omnipotence! This same method of reasoning occurs very often in this book of his, and may be said to be a staple argument with him. The assertion that God cannot do this and that is placed over against well-authenticated fact. Plainly the power of God can heal the sick by a word. "Physiological principles" are all under his control.

We have brought forward this objection not only to answer it, but also for the admission which it contains, that the miracles of the New Testament, *as described by the writers*, differ entirely from any other cases of cure which have ever occurred, not excepting the mesmeric miracles, which, however, Mr. Davis in another place claims to be exactly like Christ's, because sometimes he "*laid his hands on them and healed them.*" Observe; "*in all cases cured by Jesus the effect is represented as if it followed immediately.*" Not so with any cures wrought by mesmerism; for according to our author, *who was formerly a distinguished mesmeric doctor*, "no cause can be brought to act so as to produce health as an *immediate* result." Hence the miracles of Christ, if performed at all, were not performed by mesmeric power. But that they were performed we have the fullest historical testimony. This admission of Mr. Davis adds force to the argument in Chapter VIII.

CHAPTER X.

SIN.

THE new infidelity denies the existence of sin. It may use the word, but the thing signified has disappeared from its system. Thus Carlisle and Emerson, and other writers of their class, though never distinctly affirming that there is no blamable wrong, yet they so much dwell upon the misfortunes of man, as the creature of circumstances, as practically to disown the idea. But Mr. Davis declares it out and out, and in these words: "Sin, indeed, in the common acceptance of that term, does not really exist; but what is called sin is merely a misdirection of man's physical and spiritual powers, which generates unhappy consequences." (Revelations, p. 521.)

Now the Bible is indeed an absurd book if there is no such thing as sin. Its whole purpose is to provide a remedy for sin, and for sin "*as it is commonly understood.*" How strange it is that a term should grow up in language, with a "common acceptance," which has no true basis whatever! Where did we get the *word*, if there be no such *idea*? And where the *idea*, if there be no such thing? Brutes probably have no such idea, and we see not how beings who have been perfectly holy could have it. Where then did it come from? Surely from the bosom of truth; every man knows and feels that he is a blamable sinner. To one of these infidels who was dwelling upon the unfavorable circumstances under which some people were placed, and the influence of phrenological developments, with all the various arguments brought to prove that men are not sinners, we said, stopping him short in his argument, "*My dear friend, you*

know you are a sinner ; why undertake to darken counsel with words without knowledge ?" And he at once assented.

Doubtless there are difficulties in this question of sin. No human reason can decide upon the comparative guilt of one educated in crime, and another brought up to virtue. We leave this judgment to God. "Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Yet of this we are sure, there lives not the human being who has not the power and the conscience to know that he ought to do better than he does. And herein he is conscious of sin. There is in the heart of every man, a testimony to his guilt. Modern infidelity denies this. And this denial is the great centre of all its error. No sin,—no sin?—what need, then, of a remedy? Reader! are you ready to embrace a system which leaves out the whole question of human guilt,—the great question of the soul?

CHAPTER XI.

DEVELOPMENT.

EVER since the publication of "The Vestiges of Creation," the doctrine of Development has become a main doctrine of infidelity. The writer of that book did not intend to throw out of the universe a personal God, but his followers have done so. Uniting his doctrine with the pantheism of Spinoza, they have reduced the whole system of things to a great mechanism of cause and effect. But in doing so, they necessarily run counter to the truth, and so become involved in inextricable contradictions. To point out these contradictions in the book of Mr. Davis, is the object of the present chapter.

On page 508 of his Revelations he gives a full account of his theory upon this subject. He says, "It is perfectly clear that nothing *is* and nothing *can* be, but the Divine mind, which is the *Cause*, and the universe, which is the *Effect*. *Cause* and *Effect*, thus uniting and *harmonizing* in one sole System, it follows that whatever occurs in any of the innumerable departments of the universe, *must* occur by a *natural instigation*. Nothing, therefore, can occur in the vast empire of universal creation opposed to, or transcending the principles of nature. All things, then, whether organized or unorganized, developed or undeveloped, must be strictly and unequivocally NATURAL. If anything, therefore, *transcends* Nature or the natural movements of the Universe, it must be an effect of absolutely *nothing*. The term *supernatural*, then, indicating something *above* nature, is a solecism; and nothing is more distinct than the untruth

of the theological proposition, that miracles were accomplished by *supernatural* power; for that is clearly teaching that they originated from *nothing*, and consequently never existed."

Here, then, in this long quotation, in a confused manner, our author states most unequivocally his doctrine of development. God is the great central wheel, and the beings part of the machinery of the universe. Everything is reduced to a system of mechanics. But a theory of this kind is so absurd that it necessarily involves a contradiction. Thus Mr. Davis distinctly declares that there are things out of the line of this unvarying law of cause and effect.

"Many conditions which surrounded the first types of mankind were unfavorable to the proper unfolding of their mental faculties. The consequence was an improper tendency of those faculties and inclinations, which otherwise would have been perfect and righteous in their operations. From this youthful tenderness sprang all the gross and imaginative impressions, which are at the present day clothing the mind of mankind with a most unreal and unfortunate garment. *The first misdirection sprang from unfavorable conditions, and was connected WITH NO LAW, DESIGN, OR PRINCIPLE WHICH GOVERNS THE UNIVERSE.*" (Page 424.)

So too (page 425,) "What I mean by circumstances, then, are those contingent occurrences, which are entirely disconnected from Design or Law, being created and developed by man. And what I mean by external physical manifestations, are the unvarying effects and consequences of an interior divine and unchangeable cause."

Now, then, "*these circumstances, entirely disconnected from design or law, being created or developed by man,*" must of course be "*supernatural.*" That "misdirection" which "was connected with no law, design, or principle which governs the universe," must be "*supernatural.*" Sin, then, or, as Mr. Davis calls it, "misdirection," is a "creation" of man's "free will," being out of the great laws of "cause and effect," or being "*supernatural.*" And if so, then the divine plan of recovery, including miracles, and regeneration, and atonement, may be supernatural also. But if Mr. Davis rejects this position, which his own language forces upon him,

he is obliged to assume another, still more uncomfortable ; for if "misdirection" is the result of the divine will, as the cause, then is God the author of sin. He has "misdirected" the human family knowingly and wilfully. And with this theory, too, falls to the ground the whole argument of Mr. Davis against prophecy, the gist of which is thus stated in his conclusion, (page 425 :) "Therefore I am deeply impressed with the truthfulness of the proposition, that it is absolutely impossible for any being in this or any higher sphere, to be instructed concerning *evanescent contingencies*, so as to foretell their occurrence with certainty." For if there are no "*evanescent contingencies*," then everything may, of course, be the subject of prophecy.

CHAPTER XII.

MR. DAVIS'S ATTACK ON THEOLOGY.

It has been very common for skeptics in all ages to assail the great scheme of evangelical faith. In the profound mysteries of truth, it is easy for one who wishes to dwell in doubts, to pose his faith with startling questions, and to perplex his intellect with difficulties above its powers. Instead of trusting the soul to the divine truth revealed, and receiving the nutrition which resides therein, such souls prefer, as the aliment of their spiritual nature, to survey infinity from that point in which it always must baffle their highest efforts. "Who by searching can find out God, — can find out the Almighty unto perfection?"

Mr. Davis ushers in his attack upon theology with the following arrogant pretension, reminding us of Tom Paine's declaration, that he had gone through the forest of the Bible felling trees, which no efforts of the priests could make sprout again; and that the Bible would be destroyed in fifty years. "*And I would bespeak particular attention to this attack, because it may be that it will demolish the whole system, and leave nothing of it but a mass of disgusting rubbish.*" (Page 514.)

He commences his attack with the doctrine of original sin. "It represents man," he says, "as being originally pure as to his physical and spiritual nature, even as a flower from the bud of the divine creation; and that he possessed nearly all the characteristics of a celestial being, pure, spotless, unsophisticated. While thus existing, temptations were placed

before him, of so captivating a nature that he was unable to resist them. Oh! how unjust to charge the divine mind with creating man and endowing him with all the attributes of purity and goodness, and at the same time withholding from him a competency to resist temptation." (Page 514.)

Theology has never given such a caricature as this of the doctrine of our connection with our first parents. Even the most hyper-Calvinistic writers have strenuously denied that God was the author of sin, or that man was compelled to evil. However difficult may be the questions involved in this subject, and however dark or contradictory the theories of theological writers, there has ever been but one testimony as to the guilt and blameworthiness of sinners. Yet that there have been some absurd and even impious notions advanced on this subject by even good men and able thinkers, in the history of theology, it is not necessary to deny. It would be a miracle, if upon such obtruse questions, there should not have been many weak things said, in the early stages of theologic investigation. But shall we on this account forsake and caricature the great truth which lies at the bottom of all their reasonings, and which alone can claim an established place in theology, that God created man pure and holy, but that he, by the freedom of his own will, fell from his first estate, and that a great hereditary law of evil, which was essential to the best interests of the universe, has involved all of his descendants in his fall, yet not so that they will be held the least blameworthy for his acts, but only for their own free, voluntary choice? This doctrine, which is the real doctrine of Original Sin, is not involved in the difficulties which Mr. Davis would throw around it. Was it not right for God to create man pure and holy? Was it not right to endow him with free will, the highest and noblest endowment of our nature? Was it not right for him to institute the great hereditary laws of the world, involving necessarily in themselves hereditary laws of evil, provided the best interests of his universe required it, and provided he holds no one accountable in a moral sense, except for his own free acts? Surely there can be no objection to these points.

But how does Mr. Davis propose to remedy the difficulty, supposing it to be insurmountable by all our reasonings? Sin

is here in the world, call it "misdirection," "wrong," or whatever name you will. It *does* follow a hereditary law, as we see with our own eyes, in the case of the children of drunkards and villains. How does he account for it? Why, by denying free will altogether, all power in man to be the cause of his own wickedness, thus throwing it wholly back upon the Deity. And then to avoid this difficulty he divests the Deity of "free will" or personality — making him the soul of the world, the great central cause or moving wheel of this vast machinery; so that this whole scheme of things becomes at once reduced to a vast mechanism of blind law, working out unavoidable and unknowable results. Now how much better off is the human soul in this solution of the difficulty? Without moral power to resist evil, without a free Jehovah to superintend and guide the interests of virtue, where are we? In the midst of irresistible nature what hope or solace is there? Plainly this system is the darkest, most perplexing and intricate of any which can be devised. It was tried in France, and the moral nature died out under it. The same result will attend the experiment everywhere. For one to leave the orthodox theory on account of its difficulties, and take up with this, is as if one should turn aside from a grassy path to avoid the dampness of the morning dew, and plunge up to his neck, or over his head, in the slough of despond. Difficulties there must be to finite minds in religion, nor can they be avoided, for otherwise the finite can grasp the infinite.

Starting from the point that man was *compelled* to sin by his Maker, thus denying "free will," Mr. Davis proceeds, in the most blasphemous language, to ridicule the doctrine of Atonement, objecting to it, that it represents God himself as suffering to remove the sin which he had necessitated; that the innocent is declared to suffer for the guilty, and that God himself is represented as dying.

Ans. If sin has originated in the "free will" of man, then it certainly glorifies the love of God, that he should devise a plan for the return of his wandering creatures; God does not suffer for sins which he has necessitated.

The suffering of the innocent for the guilty is a very common thing, even in this world, where an innocent family often

bears the curse of a wicked father; and if the innocent voluntarily undertakes the suffering, for the sake of a higher good, there can be no objection to it on the score of justice. He who lays down his life for his country, in the hour of peril, would not think of accusing his country of injustice. The sufferings of Christ were not a punishment inflicted against His will, but voluntarily undergone, that the lost race might be brought back to God. As to the death of Deity, no one holds to it. The human nature suffered,—some would even say the Divine,—but none that God expired. Death is a relative idea, meaning only a change of state, and of course is not applicable to the Supreme nature. Mr. Davis, then, has failed in his blasphemy upon the atonement. When, too, we survey man as a free being, and the universe as filled with free intelligences, all the subjects of a vast moral government over which Jehovah rules, with the purpose of educating the final triumph of truth and goodness; the idea of atonement, or the great plan of divine love to uphold the authority of law, while it assists the struggles of the fallen, presenting justice and mercy united seeking to save, becomes the most precious and glorious conception of the soul. The language of the apostle, then, asserts its significance: "O! the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God." That there should be difficulty in apprehending this vast and wonderful work of Jehovah, is to be expected. Indeed, a system of theology which does away with all mysteries or difficulties, shows itself thereby unworthy of belief.

Having objected to the atonement, our author passes to the doctrine of Regeneration, upon which he certainly makes a great show of wisdom. The doctrine of Regeneration, he tells us, (page 517,) "is founded upon the assumption of *degeneration*, and therefore the doctrine is only an evanescent and unreal effect, proceeding from a cause equally unreal and unsubstantial. Regeneration is considered as an effect resulting from faith; the latter results from—it is impossible to tell *what!* And it is entirely useless to dwell upon a term containing no interior meaning, and which has generated, and will continue to do the same unless abandoned, every species of superstition and unrighteous thoughts."

Now, what have we here to answer but the flimsy assertion of one who evidently does not understand what he is writing about? If Mr. Davis is right in asserting that there is no "degeneration," then, of course, there is no room for regeneration. But if men are freely sinners against God, then they need the new birth. Faith is the result of regeneration, not regeneration of faith. Will any man in his senses tell us that the doctrines of regeneration and faith have a tendency to produce immorality?

Our author next passes to the doctrine of Faith, and thus discourses, (page 526.) "The reward for faith was to be a salvation—a saving, perhaps, from sin, from skepticism, from destruction by moral or physical death, or from an abode of suffering and wretchedness. Neither of these is distinctly mentioned; but whether it was to be a salvation from one or all of these calamities, it would be well to inquire. How is it possible for faith, by any natural process, to produce such an effect as is herein stated? The effect of faith is merely a tranquillity of mind, from which flow bright hopes and anticipations. Therefore faith cannot save from sin, or pain, or wretchedness, or moral or spiritual death. For the world to be saved from such direful evils, the laws of society and the arbitrary governments of nations must be changed, so as to coincide with the principles of Nature, with the constitution of man, and with all his physical and spiritual requirements."

To this it is necessary to reply, that the reward of faith, which is termed salvation, signifies deliverance from sin and its consequences, as is plainly stated in many passages. Now the relation of faith to the progress of holiness and the conquest of sin, is very philosophical. Faith is not, as Mr. Davis represents, "an involuntary assent of the judgment," whose effect "is *merely* a tranquillity of mind from which flow bright hopes and anticipations." Faith is a voluntary trust in the great objects of religious belief,—God the Father and Jesus Christ his Son. Or it is an influential, living belief of the truth, the choice and acts of the soul following the understanding. So that when Jesus is presented as the Saviour, teacher, model, ruler, the will and affections freely embrace him in all these relations, loving him as a

Saviour, believing him as a teacher, imitating him as a model, obeying him as a ruler. And so with every object of religious faith. All truth becomes, by true living faith, a power in the heart and life. This is very plainly the doctrine of the Scriptures. Indeed, according to reason, he has not a real faith in any truth, who does not follow that truth, wherever it may lead him.

Now, then, this being the nature of faith, it is easy to see the philosophical connection between it and holiness or salvation; for, 1. It makes the truth a power within, and the truth is the means of holiness. 2. It comes to the soul with God and the Saviour, the great sources of holiness. 3. It appropriates the entire assimilating power of the holy life of Jesus. 4. The work of atonement is divinely fitted to produce in the believer every grace of the Christian, repentance, love, charity, mercy, hope, good works; for there is a holy power in the thought, the Son of God died to save.

Turn, on the other hand, to the system proposed in opposition to this divine method, by Mr. Davis, which is, the "*changing the laws of society and the arbitrary government of nature.*" What philosophy is there in this method? Here is mere outward culture. No power of renovation is introduced within. This is to expect to change the character of a poisonous stream, by digging a new channel for its waters, or to endeavor to make a clock go by turning the hands on the dial, when the wheels are disarranged. He who would save man or the world by outward law, will find that he is working backward. We must go to the fountain head, and introduce a pure principle of action within the living soul, and then we shall find "salvation." As to the other kind of salvation, "deliverance from an abode of suffering and wretchedness," it is easy to see how a soul which is made holy, is naturally prepared for an eternal, happy home. And so the connection of faith with salvation, in both its meanings, is wholly rational and philosophical.

The attack of Mr. Davis, which he heralded as with the sound of a trumpet, is finished, — is nothing but "a mass of disgusting rubbish."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE attack upon the Pentateuch, as the production of Moses, was commenced by Hobbes, A. D. 1650. Up to that time, the writings had been received by universal consent as genuine; but since his time, the skeptics of all countries have denied that Moses was the author of the books which bear his name. The reason upon which they base their denial is, for the most part, a supposed insight into style, which, they say, could never have originated in that early age. Thus Mr. Davis, (page 435 :) "It is clear from *many expressions* in Genesis, that this book could not have been originated with Moses." About the time that the Mosaic books were assailed most virulently in Germany, a sort of epidemical madness had seized the learned scholars of that country, leading them to believe that not only in relation to the books of Scripture, but in relation to all other books claiming antiquity, Homer for example, peculiarities of style and expression were infallible tests of criticism. Hence they set their imaginations to work, and established dates and authors upon this ground. Numberless theories swarmed throughout Germany in respect to Homer and other classic writers, each one annihilating the other. But especially in reference to the Scriptures was this skepticism rampant. One of the leading scholars of Germany, distrusting this whole method of criticism, and wishing to submit it to a proper test, undertook the task of tripping up the entire learning of Germany upon a production of his own. He wrote a book imitating as far as possible the style

of the past, and, confiding the secret to a few friends, published it as a recently discovered manuscript, several centuries old, dating back to the early literature of Germany. The bait was swallowed. The scholars all with one voice pronounced it, from the style and "many expressions," undeniably an ancient book. It could not be modern. No writer could so successfully have imitated the early times. Thus cried out the men who pretended they could tell *from the style*, all about the ancient Scriptures, giving loose rein to skepticism over the entire field of inspiration. When the experiment had been tried long enough, the author of the pretended ancient writing avowed the whole trick, and came down upon his learned brethren with an irresistible logic. Strange to say, so thoroughly had they been humbugged, they denied with one voice the veracity of the author, and would fain have convinced him that although he knew he was the author, yet from the style it was impossible. Hence he absolutely was obliged to prove his own authorship.

Now a fact of this kind entirely disproves all the objections to Scripture resting upon conjectures as to style, and doing so, blots out with one stroke full half of the cavillings of the skeptical scholarship of Germany, and of course the same amount of infidel dribbling, borrowed from it, and re-dreamed in "*superior states*" among us.

The whole question of the genuineness of the Mosaic books is purely a historical one. Here is a book, revered by a nation as sacred, ascribed to its founder by all history, and never disputed till the folly of judging from style was introduced. There can be no question, therefore, that it is a genuine production of Moses.

But Mr. Davis is not satisfied with denying the genuineness of the Old Testament; he goes so far as to deny its religious character. He says, (p. 485,) it "pretends only to be a history of circumstances and events of the ages in which it was written." This, it appears to us, is very absurd ground to assume. Does not our author himself labor earnestly to prove, that the "pretensions" of the Old Testament to divine inspiration, are to be otherwise interpreted? It must be a wilful blunder for any one to say, even in a "*superior state*," where of course blunders are to be expected, that the Old Testament only "pretends to be a

history." Moses "believed he was inspired," (see Davis's Revelations, p. 441.) The entire theocracy was based upon divine superintendence. The sacrifices and rites were religious. The prophets claimed to speak in the name of Jehovah. Even the histories were impregnated with a theocratic idea, and they pointed to a Saviour to come. The Old Testament is clearly a religious book, if it is anything.

Again, Mr. Davis denies that there is any relation between the Old Testament and the New. He says that this supposed theologic connection is "purely imaginary," (page 491.) But that the Old Testament has a clear connection with the New is evident, first, from the fact that Christ, the central object of the New, is the great prophetic light of the Old, and sprang from the Jewish stock; second, that Christianity was engrafted upon Judaism, of course needing the history of Judaism for its explanation; third, Jesus and his apostles expressly quote the Old Testament as the basis of the New. Thus Jesus says, "Search the scriptures." Fourth, Paul, in Romans and Hebrews, dwells at length upon the relation of the two dispensations.

Mr. Davis argues that because there is nothing said about a New Testament in the Old, therefore there was no relation between the two; but this, it is evident, is a fallacious method of reasoning. There is, moreover, much said about the coming Messiah, the desire of all nations, implying the incompleteness of their economy. And this is as much as we could expect in the previous or first testament.

Our author goes still further, and even denies the divine character of the laws of Moses. He says, (page 488,) "Moreover, if the laws instituted by Moses had been of a celestial origin, then their effects would have absolutely corresponded. It is well to inquire with those who are familiar with the early ecclesiastical history of the world, whether such effects were universally experienced and manifested. If those laws originated in the vortex from which Nature sprang, then their effects would have been in accordance with the divinity of the *cause*, even as Nature unequivocally shows to be the case with herself. Again, if those laws were of *human* and *imperfect* origin, then their effects would manifest imperfection."

To all this we oppose the words of the same author, (page 440 :) The Mosaic code "*was the very best code* of moral and social laws that could possibly have been invented under the existing circumstances of those times, and the potency of those commandments has been exemplified in all subsequent ages." It is pertinent to inquire, How could a mere human lawgiver invent such a perfect system in its adaptation to the country and the times?

There remain objections to the Old Testament, two of which, concerning the imprecations, and the destruction of the Canaanites, we reserve for a separate consideration; and of the smaller ones we shall only present one specimen as an illustration of all. Mr. Davis thus discourses of the passage of the Red Sea: "The account of the passing of the hosts of Israel through the Red Sea on dry land is very truthful. But what is said concerning the causes which produced the separation of the waters, is entirely figurative, only expressing an external form of procedure, which Moses observed in praise to the origin of the impressions which led him onward, believing, as he did, that the Lord was the suggester. The passage of the Red Sea on dry land, the waters being on each side, was not only effected by the Israelites under Moses, but was accomplished before, and has been since Moses lived. For at that time the water had merely receded from the elevated portion of the sea bottom over which they crossed: for when the tide ebbed, this place, being a sandbar, was left dry, like a beach, and therefore it was possible to effect a safe passage across." (Page 447.)

This endeavor to explain the Mosaic account with rationalistic notions, is a decided failure. No man has shown better than Dr. Strauss, the most learned skeptic of the age, that all interpretations, which strive to twist these miraculous accounts into natural phenomena, are great folly. Yet this very endeavor on the part of infidels, proves that they had rather be able ingeniously to explain away the Scriptures, than to deny them altogether. And this proves that they do, after all, believe in their genuineness and authenticity.

In the case before us, if the account of Moses is "truthful," as Mr. Davis says, then his explanation cannot be. For "the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left," and "they went down into the midst of the sea." On his supposition, too, it is difficult to account for the return of the waters at the right time upon the Egyptians. If the secession of the tide, leaving a sandbar above the waters, was all which took place, the description in Exodus is very far from truthful. That there was something more than this, the belief of a nation, recorded in their sacred books, and handed down traditionally, is better evidence than the assertion of our author. Bonaparte, it is true, crossed upon the shallows, at some point at low tide, and came very near perishing upon returning by the rising of the tide; but this does not prove that the Israelites crossed in the same place and manner, and it is utter folly to adduce this in proof of such a supposition as Mr. Davis appears to do in a note.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CANAANITES.*

THE objection here raised has a threefold bearing, which has generally been overlooked in the answering of it, causing much confusion, and making the reply unsatisfactory. First, it denies to God the right of a sovereign, by which for good reasons he may remove his creatures from the world, as if it implied some incredible wrong, that God for sin should doom a nation to destruction. But this view of the matter is equally applicable to all the means by which the Infinite Father cuts short our days, to pestilence and famine, and all common diseases, as well as to war. This position is a very weak one, for there cannot be the shadow of a difficulty in the introduction of death into our world, which lies not as truly against every infidel system as against Christianity; and if not, then neither in the peculiar desolation which it sometimes makes. Second, it is claimed that the peculiar commands given to the Israelites, served to awaken vindictive and wicked feelings in their minds, and therefore they cannot be supposed of God. Not necessarily, we answer; for it must be understood, that the enthusiasm of the hosts of Israel was created and sustained against the idolatries of the land, and that the destruction of these, and the establishing the worship of the true God, were ever held up to view as the controlling motives, subordinating everything else to themselves. When our armies in the Revolution fought the bat-

* See an article in B. B. Edwards's *Life and Works*.

ties of freedom, could not good men pull the trigger of death, without vindictive feelings towards their enemies personally, but simply from a love of freedom? When the Huguenots defended their homes and pulpits from the invaders, in a bloody, civil war, was there necessarily in their warlike duties anything truly hostile to the Christian spirit? Could they not with true fervency pray for their enemies while they battled against the oppressors of their religion? So when the Israelites marched forth under the banner of the Living God to overthrow the dominions of the abominable gods of the Canaanites, whose deep defilement is almost past our thought, and to establish a pure and holy religion, — would not this high enthusiasm of their souls necessarily swallow up every other feeling? Would there be room for vindictiveness and malice, except against the idolatries and the sins? And is it not proved in their history, that this which we have supposed was really the case?

Read their triumphant songs, if you would see what feelings inspired their minds. Upon the overthrow of Pharaoh and his hosts, does the song of Moses breathe personal vindictiveness, or does it speak the glory of the God of Israel? Plainly the latter, (Exodus 15: 1 — 20.). Thus it commences: "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God — and I will prepare him a habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him."

And it closes thus:

"The Lord shall reign forever and ever."

Look, too, at the song of Deborah upon the occasion of her victory: (Judges 5.)

It commences:

"Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves. Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes: I, even I, will sing unto the Lord; I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel."

And thus it concludes:

"So let all *thine enemies* perish, O Lord: but let them that love thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."

And these words are connected with the blessing pronounced upon Jael, the wife of Heber, who drove the nail through the temple of Sisera. How clearly does it appear that not private revenge, but the glory of Jehovah and a religious enthusiasm, were the motives present to the hosts of Israel in the Canaanitish wars.

Third, the form of the commands to destroy the Canaanites is objected to as purporting to issue from God. The Israelites are directed "to destroy men, women, and children." I answer, If it is simply a matter of a form of words, rather than an intrinsic wrong, this is a question of language, and not of casuistry. How far was the language of that age mature? and was there anything in it to shock the moral instincts of that people? If the command itself was not wrong, as we have shown; if, as respects God, no objection can be brought to his removing his own creatures from the world; and if, as respects man, no evil moral result is generated in their hearts by being made the instruments of the divine chastisement,—then the bare form which the command assumes is surely of little consequence. We have vindicated the thing itself; we care little for its outer drapery.

Yet even this can be vindicated, if we bear in mind the inadequacy of language, owing to the defects in moral culture of the nations in that age of the world. God is not obliged to invent a language when he would make a revelation, but he must suit himself to the capacities of his creatures. He must take their language. And while it would be an unanswerable objection to any revelation, if it contained a sentiment which is discovered false by the moral instincts of a succeeding age, it is no objection, if the sentiments cannot be objected to, that they are conveyed in a language which the progress of ages has refined.

Now, that the commands to destroy the Canaanites are couched in language which, when compared with the usual expressions of that age with which the Israelites were familiar, would appear tame and spiritless, and so far refined as the language then would admit, can be easily shown by examples. In the very golden age of Latin literature, many

centuries after Moses, Catullus, a poet noted for the sweetness and delicacy of his sentiments, could sing the praises of Achilles, and find only admiration for the poetic beauty of his song, in language like this :

“ No hero excelled him in battle,
When the Phrygian rivers flowed with Trojan blood.
His excellent virtues and glorious deeds,
Even mothers confessed at the funerals of their children,
When they tore their hair in grief,
And looked despairingly to heaven.
For as the mower, cutting down the grass,
Strews the waving fields,
So did he cut down the bodies of Trojans,
With his hostile sword.
Moreover, the river Scamander
Will be a witness to his great virtues,
Which winding flows to the rapid Hellespont,
The course of which, being obstructed
By the slain carcasses of the dead,
Caused its deep waters to grow warm
With the mingled lifeblood of man.”

Supposing there was a psalm like this, — what would the infidels say ? Is it not a wonder that when such language was rife among the nations, the Old Testament has so little of it ? Now, undoubtedly the sentiment of Catullus is objectionable, in that his hero is a mere man of blood ; yet the peculiar cast of the language will illustrate all for which we have introduced it.

What then is our conclusion upon this objection, so often raised against the Scriptures ?

1. That it cannot be reasonably urged against the Scriptures, that God is represented as removing his creatures by death, either by war, pestilence, or famine.

2. That no more reasonably can it be urged that his commissioning the Israelites to execute his judgments against the awfully corrupt nations of Canaan, and establish the worship of the true God, and a pure religion, generated within their hearts, arose from vindictive personal feelings of revenge, since it is proved that as in the case of the Huguenots, and all who fight for liberty, the enthusiasm of the cause swallowed up all these.

3. That there is no reason whatever to object to the form of the divine command, if the command itself is vindicated: though the state of language at that period of the world's moral culture, amply justifies even the expressions which are used.

And now we ask in conclusion, Is it not true, that these commands, in respect to the Canaanites, as they occur in the Bible, never give trouble to the pious heart, till they are pointed out by the cunning craft of skepticism? They never shock the moral instincts till the intellect is bewildered. She "who knows and only knows her Bible true" would never think of any difficulty. To her, these commands would be only the righteous chastisements of an offended God for sin. And as the whole question is resolvable into a question of moral instincts, this fact should at once decide it.

CHAPTER XV.

THE IMPRECATIONS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.*

It is necessary to consider these, first in their substance, and second, in their form. The first question, then, is, What states of mind do really appear in the imprecations? Do these prayers for punishment upon the wicked imply personal vindictive feelings, or do they spring from a higher and purer source? I answer that these Scriptures may come under a threefold division.

1. Those which express the true and righteous feelings of sympathy for the wronged and oppressed, and indignation against the wrong-doer. A very large number of the imprecations come under this head. That there are such feelings, no one will deny whose sense of justice has not been blunted by the sentimental philosophy of the new infidelity, which sympathizes more with the wicked man, the robber, the oppressor, the murderer, than with the victims of his wickedness. Every deed of outrageous guilt immediately excites these sympathies in every good man's breast. No one can read the story of the death of Uncle Tom by the cruel lash of his murderers, without the uprising of the sense of justice within him, and a desire that the doers of the wrong should receive their merited punishment. Nor can any one peruse the account of the sufferings of the white slave in the Barbary States,†

* See Article in Life and Works of B. B. Edwards.

† See "White Slavery in the Barbary States," by Charles Sumner.

without feeling his blood boil with righteous indignation. When a foul deed of guilt is committed in a community, it is no crime for that people to be all on fire with a holy purpose, to detect and bring to justice the perpetrator.

Now, it would be easy to adduce a large number of the imprecations of the Scriptures, which would be admitted at once by all as coming under this class which we have described; but we choose, for the purpose of showing how far, by a fair interpretation, it may be extended, and how many of these seemingly harsh texts it may be made to cover, to take one of the most objectionable as an illustration. Let us then inquire into the real meaning of Psalms 109: 9, where, speaking of one of his adversaries, David prays: "Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow." This is a text often quoted by infidels, with a great show of triumph. Let us endeavor, then, to get at the real meaning of it, that we may see whether the sentiment which it contains is so abhorrent to the true feelings of the heart as at first it seems to be.

And here, first, observe the occasion of this Psalm. It is placed by the most learned scholars in their harmonies, after 1 Samuel 22: 3-19, which gives an account of the flight of David from Saul, to Mizpeh, and thence to the forest of Hareth. Here Doeg informs Saul that Ahimelech the priest had furnished David with food and the sword of Goliath the Philistine. Upon this, Saul sends for the priests, and in his anger commands their destruction. No Hebrew could be found to lift up his hand against the priests of God. But Doeg the Edomite, at the command of Saul, fell upon and slew eighty-five unarmed, innocent priests in cold blood. Then the king sends to Nob, the city of the priests, and slays all the people with the edge of the sword. Surely, here was an occasion to arouse the innate sense of justice from its very depths, and stir all the righteous indignation of the soul. What would be said now of such a ruthless massacre, by the spontaneous outbreking of the human heart all the world over? But if we can get into the position of the Israelites, we shall be still more shocked, if it is possible. The priests were sacred, anointed of God, above the reach of the hostile sword. They were protected

by the linen ephods which they wore. Yet here an Edomite, not a child of promise, dares to do the profane work; and this because they were the friends of David, who himself had received the anointing oil of the prophet, and whom Saul, although David had never done him harm, was wickedly pursuing, urged by his malicious jealousies. No wonder David was moved to invoke the judgment of God against such a man of blood and crime, as the perpetrator of this sacrilegious wrong. And such is the tenor of Psalm 109, from its beginning to its close. It has the fire and the living glow of Milton's admired sonnet, to which objection has never been made as showing the vindictiveness of the poet.

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold,
Even they who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans,
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient folds
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moan
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To Heaven. Their martyred blood and ashes sow
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant; that from them may grow
A hundred fold, who having learned thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe."

Second, observe that while David speaks in the first person in this Psalm, thus seeming to have a personal feeling of ill-will, yet it is clearly probable that it was not so. His sense of justice was aroused, and he gives utterance to a righteous indignation when he invokes divine punishment upon this enemy of God and man. Thus in the sixteenth and seventeenth verses of the Psalm, he gives the reasons of his imprecations. And what are they?

"Because that he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart. *As he loved cursing*, so let it come unto him; *as he delighted not in blessing*, so let it be far from him. *As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment*, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones."

What sentiments are these, but those of a righteous retribution? Where is personal vindictiveness? Cannot one feel a sense of injured justice against crime, and yet pray that the criminal, though not escaping from his merited punishment, may become a Christian? Ought not the wicked man to "eat of the fruit of his own doings, and be filled with his own devices?"

But it is asked, Why does David speak so much in the first person? as in the twentieth verse: "Let this be the reward of *mine adversaries* from the Lord, and of them that speak evil *against my soul*."

This is easily answered: The eighty-five priests were massacred upon his account. No wonder he took upon his own soul the terrible deed, as done against him. He felt himself anointed of God to be king, with all the feeling of Jewish sacredness. This peculiar sentiment he manifested in the beautiful incidents, where once and again he spared the life of Saul, which lay in his power, the Lord's anointed, thus showing not only the peculiar reverence he had for the person of the king, but also how little he was ruled by personal malice in his conduct. And who can suppose that he who thus forgave his enemy and spared his life, was a bitter hater? No: it was not malice which moved David to write this Psalm, but feeling himself to be the representative of God in the theocracy, as king to be, he assumed the wrongs of truth and righteousness, and in his own person invoked the just punishment of God upon its perpetrators.

Observe, thirdly, that the language he makes use of is the precise language denounced in the law of Moses against sin: "Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow." Now the whole real force of the difficulty lies in the form of the language, to which we shall have occasion to make another reply. Here, however, we allude to it only so far as it seems to interpret the sentiment. And we say, it does not imply any personal ill-will, because it was the language of the theocracy. It should be remembered, in the interpretation of the Old Testament, that the system revealed by Moses was sustained by earthly rewards and punishments, the early races in so early an age of the world, being better

governed by sensible things than by things invisible, so that when the Divine King supernaturally administered his law, by making the good things of this life his ministers, rewarding by fruitful fields, and wife, and children, and health, and "corn, wine and oil," and punishing by taking all these away,—the people by whom he would miraculously preserve the true religion in the world were the more surely held in their allegiance to his throne. Thus, as an example of the laws of Israel, in Exodus 22: 22–24, we have this one: "Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry: And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless."

Who will dare to say that this law given in that early period in the world's history, protecting the widow and the fatherless, is unworthy of God, or that the Great Ruler of the world has not the supreme right to annex the fearful penalty with which it is enforced? and especially if in that early age it was the only penalty of any avail. It was upon the great principle of equal justice that it was established; "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." He that afflicts the widow, his wife shall be a widow; or the fatherless, his children shall be fatherless.

Such was the law of the theocracy, with the spirit of which, the mind of David was deeply imbued. And he only therefore prayed that the very punishment threatened in the law of Moses should be brought down upon the wicked, when he wrote the Psalm before us. It is clear, therefore, that it does not necessarily imply in him any vindictive feelings, but only a sense of justice against the fearful crime which, on his account, Doeg the Edomite had committed. This Psalm of imprecations, therefore, is only an outbursting of the righteous indignation of the poet, against one of the foulest deeds of guilt which the annals of the world record.

We might go on to adduce other instances which range themselves under this first class, but having applied our scrutiny to one of the most difficult, we shall omit any

further reference, and proceed to the second class of imprecations, which are immediately theocratic in their whole idea, having reference to the glory of God and his kingdom.

It cannot admit of a question, that instead of being an objectionable, it is a noble enthusiasm, by which the soul is fired to uphold the good and the true, and to seek the destruction of the wicked and the false. Instances of illustration are not wanting. Mr. Edwards adduces very happily the uprising of the people of Holland to throw off the tyranny of the Duke of Aloa. When we are told that they shouted "Down with the oppressor, no truce with tyrants," every soul which has human sympathies, beats in joyful response. The inscription upon the monument of one of the regicides, has ever thrilled joyfully through the hearts of freemen; "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God," meaning, in that case, resistance unto blood. And who can object to the enthusiasm of the Poet of Israel in the captivity of Babylon in thus depicting in a pensive strain the sorrows of his people?

"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion.' How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." Who shall blame, we say, the enthusiasm of the poet, when after thus pouring forth his sympathetic sorrows for his country's woes, the Zion of God, he turns to speak of the oppressor, and cries out, in the depths of his feeling, "Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem: who said, 'Rase it, rase it, even to the foundations thereof.' O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed; happy shall he be that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us."

We hesitate not to say, that there cannot be a particle of objection to this imprecation, so far as we have presented it. And surely this shows us the real sentiment of the writer. Because two lines follow, which close the strain, we are not to misinterpret the entire previous song, but we are to interpret these lines according to the previous sentiment. There is no personal vindictiveness in the Psalm, but only a holy enthusiasm for the Zion of God. And when, therefore, moved by the fire within him, the poet continues, in the exaggerated *language of the times*, "Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones," we are not to interpret this as proving a bitter hate in his breast, but only as being the outbreathing of his feelings in the strongest language which he could command,—too strong indeed for our modern taste, but tame in comparison with the like imagery of those times.

A third class of imprecations are those which imply personal vindictiveness; but they are few, and nowhere in the Bible are they approved any more than the wicked deeds of good men.

Having thus considered the substance, we pass, secondly, to the form of the imprecations. And here we have already anticipated all which we wish to say. We would apply the same reasoning which we have applied to the command for the destruction of the Canaanites. Where, upon a fair interpretation, the sentiment of the imprecations does not imply any hate or ill-will, but a noble enthusiasm, and an indignant sense of wrong; if still some difficulty remains in the peculiar strength of the expressions, we would resolve it all into a form of language suggesting no such difficulty to the people of those times. If it is to the mere form of the language to which objection is made, and not to the sentiment, the difficulty is seeming only, and not real. If the poet had said, "Happy shall he be who leads on the forces of Israel to the overthrow of Edom," instead of "Happy shall he be who taketh and dasheth thy little ones against a stone," probably no question would have arisen. And yet the one expression evidently means no more than the other.

Indeed, all objections of this kind raised against the ancient Scriptures, are resolvable into objections simply to the forms of language, and amount to this,—that the sentiments of the Bible are made responsible for the want of refinement and advancement in the language of the times. How unjust is this!

CHAPTER XVI.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE objections which Mr. Davis brings against the New Testament, we shall present in his words, and answer in their order. We quote from the Revelations.

1. "The chief inquiries and the collection of facts relative to the life and deeds of Jesus were not made until many years after his death." (P. 569.) "The miracles, &c., were traditions from immediate followers, and are not related by eye-witnesses." (P. 570.)

Ans. "Yet those who wrote these things were perfectly honest, and were impelled only by a sense of duty and zeal to write their serious convictions." (P. 578, same book.) What shall we say, then, of Matthew, who professes to have been an active participant in all the matters which he relates of Luke, who speaks as "one having perfect understanding of these things from the very first," and of all the rest? "Tradition and hear-say," from such witnesses, many years after the event!

2. "At the Council of Toledo, A.D. 633, the canon was established as now. What right Constantine and the bishops assembled at Nice and Laodicea had to vote the book of Mark as canonical, is not very easily explained, inasmuch as many similar manuscripts and epistles were rejected and burned, according to the decision of their misdirected judgment." (Page 555.)

Ans. We do not rest our faith upon the action of any or all the councils. Even Dr. Strauss, the most learned of infidels, admits that the gospels were received in the church

within thirty years of the death of the apostle John. We believe we can trace them still further; but if we cannot, how would it be possible to deceive the whole church on the question of the apostolic authority of certain records, during so short a space of time? Why, tradition itself can almost overleap a period of thirty years without material injury to truth.

We deny that "similar manuscripts and epistles were rejected and burned" by any council. No apocryphal gospel has a tithe of the evidence. The internal evidence alone is sufficient to prove this statement, as any one may see by reading an apocryphal gospel.

3. "The New Testament was unread and unknown till the invention of printing, and without this would probably have sunk to oblivion." (Page 555.)

Ans. Six hundred and twenty-five Greek manuscripts of the New Testament now remain, dating back to the fifth century, and up to the thirteenth. That so many should have survived the progress of centuries is a decisive proof that a vast number existed in the early days. Besides, it is a well-established fact, that the New Testament was read every Sabbath day in every Christian Church in the primitive era. Mr. Davis admits that from the year 633 to the fourteenth century, portions of the Bible were copied into the German, Danish, and Saxon languages. Now it is known to have been translated into at least eleven different languages, and many of these were made long before the year 633, as is historically proved; and these languages were not confined to a limited portion of the globe, but ranged all the world over, from Gaul to Arabia and Ethiopia. The early preachers called upon their hearers to study the Bible. Chrysostom has left a testimony upon this point. So with Augustin, and others. The Bible, therefore, was widely read and known to the people in the primitive times. The Popish Church in the middle of the Dark Ages did indeed deny it to the laity. But it was still a widely read book. Every monastic library had it. And it was only for a short period that the popish interdict in its severity prevailed. And what if it did? A gem is no less precious because hidden for a while among rubbish.

4. Speaking of Mark's gospel, p. 532. — "It should be remembered that manuscripts written in those days were never copied, as writings are copied in modern days. So he alone possessed this record, and it was scarcely read or known to be existing by any other persons than those for whom it was immediately designed, until a long period after his death."

Ans. Because writings were not copied in the days of Mark, as writings are copied in modern days, by the press, it does not follow, as Mr. Davis would seem to intimate, that they were not copied at all, and that authors alone possessed their works. Books were published and circulated by the pen, as Cicero, Pliny, &c., &c. Many copies were made and disposed of, and libraries were formed, so that the records of Mark might have been greatly multiplied. And history tells us that it was, and was read in the churches under the sanction of the apostles from the first. Now, this allusion to the manner of writing ancient records seems very much like a wilful misrepresentation to blind the ignorant and the credulous. Could Mr. Davis blunder thus?

5. The two objections which follow, are raised especially against Mark's gospel, but are afterwards repeated against them all. "Mark never intimated that he desired or intended that the world at the nineteenth century should read his registered historical impressions."

Ans. Neither did Plato, Cicero, Homer, or Virgil. It is not the custom of authors to make such requests; we take it for granted that when a man has written a book, he wants it read, and by as many generations as possible.

6. "Nor was he (Mark) ever directed by Jesus to even write or publish them. Whence, then, this superstitious veneration for that which was never intended by those whom you love most, even Jesus and his apostles, to be thus superstitiously believed and sanctified by subsequent generations?"

Ans. Jesus did leave his apostles to found his church, promising them divine inspiration, as in the memorable words, when he breathed on them and said, "Receive ye

the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them ; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Proof upon this is unquestioned. Whatever records, then, these inspired apostles sanctioned as the mind of the Spirit, come to us with the authority both of inspiration and of Jesus. The book of Mark and the other books of the New Testament are clearly proved to have had this sanction. This is a historical question, and is proved by citations from the early writers up to the time of the apostles, as we claim, and to within thirty years of that time, as Dr. Strauss admits. We are safe enough, even on the latter supposition. Hence "Jesus and his apostles" did intend that we should believe and love the record of Mark and the other gospels ; not, indeed, "superstitiously," but rationally and truly.

The argument stands thus :

First. Jesus left his apostles to found his church, and promised them divine inspiration, so that the early church revered rightly the apostles as revealers of the divine will, — John 20: 22, 23 ; Matthew 16: 19 ; 18: 18 ; 28: 18, 20 ; Acts 1: 9 ; Luke 21: 14, 15 ; John 14: 17 ; John 16: 13, 15 ; John 14: 26 ; John 13: 20 ; Mark 10: 40.

Second. The books of the New Testament were all written by apostles, except Mark, and Luke, and Acts, which from the earliest times up to within thirty years of the death of John, as admitted by Dr. Strauss, and further still as proved to the satisfaction of those without infidel bias, had the sanction of the church as apostolic.

Third. Therefore the books of the New Testament are inspired records.

7. "If they were such good and honest men as they are represented to have been, would they not have been so pure and harmless in their dispositions as not to carry with them swords ? for it is very plain to every mind that swords and goodness have not a very close affinity." (Page 509.)

Ans. Page 578 of same book quoted just above. Mr. Davis says here they were "perfectly honest," and "impelled only by a sense of duty." They were then "good and

honest men," notwithstanding they had "two swords." These Christ pronounced "enough," and only prove that they had the right of self-defence, when unjustly attacked. These, however, they never used, except in the case of Peter, who impetuously acted wrongly, and was severely rebuked by Christ, with an injunction amounting almost to a prohibition of the use of the sword. Now we ask in all candor, is a man who thus contradictorily quibbles, worthy of regard?

8. "If those apostles were chosen, did they not become at once deeply interested?"

Ans. Interested in what? In the progress of a religion which they knew to be false, and which subjected them, *the silly impostors*, to ridicule, persecution, suffering and death? No; it is foolish to suppose the apostles impostors, or that they were interested in a selfish sense, for everything was against them. There cannot be a question of their disinterestedness.

9. "Paul's letters occupy and compose a large portion of the New Testament. On investigation of these letters, it appears plain that they never were intended or expected by Paul to be universally read. Not only is the internal evidence sufficient to warrant this conclusion, but the historical evidence is such as entirely to demonstrate its truth." (P. 569.)

Ans. Undoubtedly Paul wrote his letters to the several churches with specific reference to them. Whether he intended that we should ever read them is of little consequence. If they were the inspired teachings of an inspired apostle, to the churches in the early day, they will continue the same to all churches to the end of time. The contents of the epistles may be thus divided: 1. Doctrines; 2. General and universal precepts; 3. Specific directions for the individual churches. Of these the first two, doctrines and general duties, embracing the greatest portions of the epistles, are as truly adapted to us, as to the early believers. The third may have an application, under all circumstances similar to those under which the apostle addressed the several churches. So the entire epistles are practically applica-
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ble to us. The only questions, then, are, Was Paul an inspired apostle? Are his epistles inspired? — First. He claims to be an inspired teacher. 1 Cor. 9: 1–5; 2 Cor. 11: 5; 12: 11; Gal. 1: 1; Rom. 7: 1, 5; 1 Cor. 1: 17; 1 Tim. 1: 11, 12; Acts 26: 15, 18; 22: 10–15; 2 Cor. 5: 20; Gal. 1: 11, 12, 17; Acts 22: 15, 26; 1 Cor. 11: 23; 1 Cor. 2: 10, 12; 1 Cor. 2: 13; 2 Cor. 2: 9. It cannot be said that Paul made no claim to inspiration, if it is said of Mark, Luke, and John. Second. The proofs to substantiate these claims are of the highest order. (See Lyttleton on the Conversion of St. Paul.) This book was written by an infidel converted to Christianity, in the process of examining Paul's history. West, at the same time, a companion of Lyttleton, was converted by a careful examination of the Resurrection of Christ.

10. The apostle Paul "was familiar with the Grecian poets and philosophers, and from them received much of his sublime thoughts and rational philosophy." (Page 537.)

Ans. The writings of Paul are throughout instinct with a life and power vastly different from any of the Grecian philosophers. To any classical scholar, the intimation that Paul borrowed his doctrines from the philosophers of Greece is simply absurd. There is a broad line of distinction upon the great central truth of Christianity, sin and its remedy. That Paul was a thorough scholar of Greek literature we have every reason to suppose, and he uses his knowledge to illustrate and enforce Christian truth, as in the appeal to the Greek poet on Mars Hill. There is not, however, "a striking similarity of views and style" with the Grecian thinkers, but on the contrary a great and radical difference. Of course there must be points where all writers upon religious subjects will meet together, as they belong to the very axioms of truth.

11. "Jesus was a good man, a noble and unparalleled moral reformer, considering him as disconnected from all those unjust things that are in the New Testament recorded of him." (Page 565.)

Ans. What do you or the world know of Jesus, except from the record of the New Testament? How, then, can you admire the character of Jesus and reject the record of

it, and denounce the writers as untruthful? Will you accept the portrait and reject the painters? Were they fools or impostors, who could place such a character upon the records of history? If Jesus was supereminent in holiness of life, we know it from the New Testament. If "unjust things" are recorded of him, they have always entered into his character, and as it is, the world has admired it, infidels have admired it, and the human heart has shrunk back from such wonderful beauty and power. The character of Jesus proves the truth of the New Testament.

12. "Nothing could be more proper than the title of this book, which designates it as 'according to,' though not as written by, Matthew. They who prefixed this title were themselves doubtful as to its origin." (Page 523.)

Ans. Nothing can be more ridiculous than Mr. Davis's show of learning. The title of Matthew's gospel is precisely the same as that of the others. It must be remembered that the gospel is presented to us "according to" the narratives of four writers. The narrative of Matthew is only his presentation of it. But what does the title mean, if it does not mean that Matthew wrote the gospel? Robinson in his Greek Testament Lexicon gives an example of the use of the same phrase, as denoting authorship from Plato; "according to Pindar," or as Pindar says. So in Buttmann's Greek Grammar, page 412, the same interpretation is given, "according to Plato, or as Plato says." "Pleasures according to the body:" that is, pleasures of the body.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE REFERENCE TO THE PROPHECIES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

MR. DAVIS urges at great length, as an objection destroying the credibility of the New Testament gospels, that the writers, and especially Matthew, refer to passages in the prophecies as having their fulfilment in Christ, when it is evident that many of them have no immediate reference to him. Upon this point all the changes are rung, and an air of triumph is assumed. To this we reply,—It is true that Matthew and the other apostles often use the phrase “that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet,” when the words quoted from the Old Testament have no specific primary reference to Christ. But this phrase does not necessarily imply that the writer intended to declare that the passages quoted were prophecies of Christ. It may mean nothing more than that these passages may be appropriately applied to Christ, being analogous to the phrases we use, viz., “as an old writer hath well said.” An analogous method of applying language has just been presented to us. The last words of the dying Webster, “I still live,” evidently signify no more than what they literally imply. Yet they are universally regarded as covering a higher meaning, and as even prophetic of his future fame. What have we here but the true theory of the “double sense” of Scripture?

We subjoin the explanation which Prof. Stuart gives of these passages.* “Let us select an example which comprises in itself all the serious difficulties that can attend the

* Stuart's Hints on Prophecies, pp. 35—40.

subject in any part of the New Testament. In Matt. 2: 5, the writer refers to the flight of Joseph and Mary with the infant Jesus to Egypt, and their subsequent departure from that country in order to go again to Palestine. He appeals for confirmation of the fact that all these arrangements were under the guidance of a superintending power, to a passage in Hosea 11: 1, which says, 'When Israel was a child I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.' As written by the prophet, this is no part of a prediction, and is not designed to be one; but it is a simple declaration of a historical truth. Yet the evangelist says that when Jesus went down to Egypt, and was to be recalled from that country, all this was a fulfilment of what the prophet Hosea had said, in the passage just quoted. What, then, are the elements of this case, and of all others like unto it? Simply these, viz., That something transacted, done, performed in former days, or any event that happened, if it found an antitype or corresponding resemblance under the new dispensation, might be said to have a *plerosis*, i. e., a fulfilment. But who that ever has studied the New Testament references to the ancient Scriptures does not know that the words fulfilment and fulfil have a wide latitude of meaning? Anything which happened or was done in ancient times, and which for substance is repeated or takes place again in the new dispensation; anything later, which presents a lively resemblance to another and earlier thing,—may be, and often is spoken of as a *plerosis* of that earlier thing. It matters not, now, whether the word by strictly critical and classical usage would bear this latitude of sense; enough that such is New Testament usage.

"God often calls ancient Israel his child, his son, because he was a special object of his love. The Hebrews were exiles in the land of Egypt; they were delivered from that state by a special providence, and brought to Palestine, the promised land. Jesus, the beloved Son of God in a higher and nobler sense, was an exile in Egypt; he was delivered from this state and brought to Palestine, and all by a special providence. Angels interposed to accomplish his deliverance. Here, then, was a case, in which that Son of God in

whom he was well pleased was brought to Egypt, and out of Egypt, in a manner not unlike that recorded in ancient history. What happened in later times, happened in a higher and nobler sense than what happened in early times. And might it not be said, on this account, that there was in this case a plerosis? It is said; and why not justly said, and in a way full of meaning?

"In a way not unlike this last method of applying Old Testament Scriptures, we are accustomed continually to quote and apply maxims and sentiments from the classic writers, without even supposing that the passages which we quote were actual predictions. Like occurrences or exigencies call to mind ancient declarations or narrations respecting similar events or occurrences, and those declarations are therefore cited as applicable to the latter events. Thus, to introduce another conspicuous example, the sixty-ninth Psalm affords the means of a striking illustration. David here describes, in very vivid colors, the persecution of his enemies, deprecates their malignity, and predicts their overthrow. That his own personal enemies are here meant, and that David 'in propria persona' speaks, and for himself, is clear from the tenor of the composition. That David is originally and personally meant, and not Christ, is clear from Ps. 5: 5: 'O God, thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hidden from thee.' Could He 'who knew no sin' make such a confession? No; here is the proper and original David, and here in the context are his personal enemies. Yet in Ps. 5: 9, we find the expression: 'The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up;' and this is applied by the disciples to Jesus, when he drove from the temple the traffickers who profaned it, (John 2: 17.) So again in Ps. 5: 21, 'They gave me gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink,' which is applied to Jesus in John 19: 28, 29, and probably in Matthew 27: 34, 48, and Mark 15.

"John intimates that when the vinegar was given to Jesus on the cross, there was 'a fulfilment of the Scriptures:' and undoubtedly there was, in the sense already explained. There was an event like to that in ancient times. David's

bitter enemies persecuted him to greatest extremity. They 'gave him gall to eat and vinegar to drink;' not in the literal sense, probably, but in the figurative one. But the spiritual David was persecuted more bitterly still, even unto death. Literally, even, did they give him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall, (Matt. 27 : 34.) Here was a 'plerosis,' a filling up, a completing in a higher sense, of that which was done in ancient times. A more important personage was here concerned, and the passage of Scripture in Ps. 69 : 21, when applied to Jesus, stands forth as a most prominent and lively description of his sufferings. Once more in respect to this same Psalm, in Romans 11 : 19, Paul quotes verses 22 and 23 (with some little variation from the original) and applies them to the state of the Jews in his day, as descriptive of their blindness, stupidity and unbelief. Literally and originally the descriptions here were applied to David's enemies; but David's son, who is called Lord by his earthly ancestor (Matthew 22 : 45), applies them with still greater force to his own enemies.

"Nor is even this all the use which is made in the New Testament of this strikingly descriptive Psalm. Peter (Acts 1 : 20) applies to Judas the 25th verse: 'Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein.' He even adds, that the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of David, spake concerning Judas (verse 16), and apparently he means to include Ps. 69 : 25 in what was said; (see Acts 1 : 20.) In the same breath, Peter quotes another passage from Ps. 109 : 9, (which Psalm is altogether of the like tenor with Ps. 69,) which runs thus: 'His bishopric let another man take.' The fair question now is, Was Judas originally meant here? The tenor of both Psalms shows clearly that he was not. Yet David as king was beyond all reasonable doubt a type of king Messiah; and what is done in respect to the type, may, by the usage of the New Testament writers, be applied to the antitype. The Holy Ghost did truly speak that which is applicable to Judas, or which deeply concerns Judas, inasmuch as he hath, by the mouth of David, spoken respecting David's enemies what is exactly and highly descriptive of Judas' character and destiny.

“In all the New Testament there occur no cases of greater difficulty than those which have now been brought before the reader’s mind. He will bear us witness, then, that we are not disposed to avoid the question which such passages bring up, nor by any management to keep it out of sight. If he hesitates to explain the New Testament quotations as we have done, we can only solicit him to study thoroughly the whole subject of quotations, and then to take also into view the usual ancient and Jewish method of quoting and applying Scriptures, as exhibited in the Mischna, the Gemara, and the writings of the Rabbins. If he does not come to the same conclusion at last, which we have now developed, we can only say, that his views and his modes of reasoning must be exceedingly different from those which the great mass of well-informed interpreters have of late exhibited.”

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ABSOLUTE RELIGION.

A VERY popular form of objecting to Christianity as a system of truth, is to maintain that we need nothing but the absolute religion, or, as the skeptics define it, love to God and man. Hence by one blow the entire framework of the gospel as a mediatorial scheme is swept away. If we love God and man, we have no want for a Saviour or a Sanctifier, an atonement or a church, a Sabbath or a ministry. Thus the very basis of the gospel, the law, is made to overturn it. And there is great plausibility in the sound of all this, for who shall say anything against those who tell us "to love God and man?" Theodore Parker has said a great deal upon this point.

The answer to all this is very natural and easy. If man were a perfectly pure being, the religion called absolute would be all he would need. To holy angels a system of means like Christianity would be superfluous. We doubt even whether they have any conscious idea of love to God and man, as we have. They are spontaneous in their love, and have never investigated it as a subject of thought.

But to a fallen creature, to one who is lost in sin, the preaching of the absolute religion, or simply of law, would be of little value to him. The question with him is, not what he ought to be, but how he can become such a one? Like the Apostle Paul, a sinner who hears only the voice of the

law proclaiming "love God and man," finds himself condemned, lost, slain, but not ransomed, redeemed, made holy. "*When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.*"

A fallen being needs a mediatorial system, a Saviour to take him by the hand and wash away his guilt in his own blood;—to be to him a model of purity and holy living, and to teach him the truth; a Divine Spirit to renew the soul, and assist in its struggles after complete sanctification; prayer as a means of grace; the church, the ordinances and the ministry. No man can attain unto a true and holy love to God and man without these aids. This is amply proved by the lives of those who by the confession of the world have made the highest attainments in holiness. And besides, who needs any proof of a fact so obvious, that aids such as Christianity brings to the human soul in its struggles after perfection, must be of the highest value to it? Who would throw all these away?

CHAPTER XIX.

MISCELLANEOUS OBJECTIONS.

THAT we may give the reader a true idea of the character of the cavillings against the Scriptures, urged by Mr. Davis, we must not omit a selection from a large mass of similar materials, which otherwise would be deemed unworthy of notice.

Obj. 1. "In some pages in the Old Testament, which seem to be prophetical, and appear to correspond to that which actually did occur, the compilers occasionally changed the tense to make the prophecies appear more definite. Many instances might be shown in which the present tense has been changed to the past, and where the future tense is used both instead of the past and the present.

Answer. The scholarship of mesmeric states does not certainly teach a man Hebrew, nor does the "inspiration" of Mr. Davis hide the want of education. It would have been prudent in the gentleman to have read in his clair-voyant state, which it would have been easy to do, some Hebrew Grammar, — say Stuart, or Gesenius, or Nordheimer, — before giving an opinion upon the Hebrew tongue. There are but two tenses in the Hebrew, the preter and the future, and these are both used under different circumstances, with a variety of meanings. By a well-ascertained law of the language, the preter is used for the tenses named by us, as perfect, pluperfect, and present; and it is also often used for the future in its own tongue. So, interchangeably, the future is used for the present. In all the early languages nothing

is so illy defined as tense, the idea of time in its relation to thought being a very subtle one. But it is not difficult to fix the tense in most passages by the position and relation of the verb. "The compilers, therefore, of the Old Testament" (not the translators) did not do such a thing as interchange three tenses, since they had but two, nor could any temptation exist to alter these two, since they were frequently in the language used for each other.

Obj. 2. We will take another specimen of Mr. Davis's learning. "Terms have become greatly modified since language has become so copious and superfluous, and therefore what they mean now is not always what they meant originally." (P. 522.)

Answer. And so do you really mean to blind the argument by such a foolish subterfuge as this, as if we could not understand the New Testament because of the fluctuations of language? What shall we do, then, with Virgil and Cicero, and all ancient records, or with the classic productions of our own tongues? There is no such change in the Greek, but that its meaning can be apprehended. Scholars who have studied the language of the New Testament much more faithfully than this ignorant clairvoyant, agree almost to a man, in their lexicons of the New Testament, in all important respects.

Obj. 3. "It is well to analyze the term 'devil,' so that we may arrive at a more familiar acquaintance with his origin and disposition. This term is synonymous with Satan, which latter is derived from Shaitan. This originally signified almost nothing, but was generally used in a loose and unguarded manner, meaning spritely, godly man, deified spirit, disease, monomania, evil-doer, &c.," (p. 518 ;) and, page 519, "As the word Shaitan meant only a little more than nothing, certainly the deified, imaginary evil principle to which it is now applied cannot mean a great deal more."

Answer. From this display of learning upon the Hebrew word Shaitan, one would suppose that there must be some foundation for the folly here presented, and that Shaitan, in the primitive sense, probably meant a spectre, which, how-

ever, was far from being next to nothing to a Jew. Judge, then, of his surprise, when upon turning to Gesenius's Lexicon of the Hebrew, he would find the meaning to be "an adversary; e. g., in war, an enemy." From this primitive meaning the word came to denote "the evil spirit in the later theology of the Jews, who seduces men to evil." Nothing is said of the meaning Mr. Davis attaches to it, "sprite-ly, godly man, deified spirit, disease, monomania, evil-doer, &c." Had Mr. Davis used even his Webster's Quarto, if such a help is necessary to one who by magnetic power has promised the world an "incontestable encyclopedia" of all knowledge — (see p. 553, Revelations;) if he had used Webster, he would have found this definition, "Satan [Hebrew, an adversary.] The grand adversary," &c. So the Greek word "diabolos" signifies accuser, calumniator, (see Robinson's Test. Lex.) We conclude, then, that before we disbelieve the Bible doctrine of an evil spirit, we must have a better argument than the one before us.

Obj. 4. Speaking of the ascension of Christ, (page 522.) "It has been supposed that the composition constituting the body of Christ, might have undergone a process of refinement suitable to render an ascension possible. There could not have been such an accelerated process of refinement as to perfect any composition in three days."

Answer. What a wonderful knowledge this Mr. Davis must possess, thus to be able to declare what is capable to the power of Omnipotence. Clearly, no created mind can say that the body may not be prepared for ascension in "the twinkling of an eye," if God will.

Obj. 5. "It does not seem possible that any being possessing a very high degree of spiritual knowledge, could have uttered such a sentence as 'He that believeth not, shall be damned.' This declaration is contrary to the teachings of all laws of cause and effect." (Page 526.)

Ans. Does not he who refuses to believe and obey the laws of his spiritual existence, which are the laws of Christ, clearly put in operation a cause, whose effect will be ruin to his spiritual nature? The very principles of cause and effect declare the ruin of the sinner, and sustain the declar-

ation of Jesus. This is clearly the certain result, unless some intervening cause rescues him, and brings him under the control of the spiritual laws.

Obj. 6. "Why should the Jews be persecuted for crucifying Jesus, if indeed it was originally designed that the latter should thus suffer for the redemption of mankind?" (P. 521.)

Ans. Cannot God bring good out of evil? Were not Joseph's brethren to blame for selling him to Egypt?—yet was it not designed for good?

Obj. 7. Mr. Davis objects to a passage in John, because of what he calls "a little exaggeration." He says, "whatever is divine, strictly of celestial birth, must bear unexceptionable evidence of its divine origin." (P. 535.)

Ans. This objection is a very common one with infidels, and amounts to this,—that nothing is admissible within the bounds of inspiration which comes simply from the writer's mind, as if the Holy Ghost allowed no exercise of the natural powers. Such a view, however, is unnecessary to the belief of "a plenary inspiration of the Bible as a book of doctrine and duty." For the Spirit might superintend and guide all records of "heavenly things," while in certain matters, historic, scientific, and customary, the writers were left to the guidance of their own minds. Divine revelation has reference not to matters of science, or mere history, or customs, but to divine truth.

Obj. 8. Speaking of the Apocalypse, Mr. Davis says, "The book even forbids the erasure or interpolation of a single sentence, under the most imperative command, for a disobedience of which condemnation is denounced. Such a demand of itself removes from it all that celestial purity which should be expected to characterize a spiritual influx of heavenly truth; for the demand is strictly dogmatical, and unjustly imperative. This book ends the New Testament." (P. 544.)

Ans. Why should not "a divine influx of heavenly truth" be guarded from any, the least alteration? How can man better it? Besides, how does this objection of Mr. Davis

agree with the one just previous? In the above it is objected that a book cannot be divine which is not unexceptionable in its internal evidence. It must have nothing within it which can be amended. But here we are told that because the Apocalypse forbids "the erasure or interpolation of a single word," therefore it cannot be divine; that is, a divine book must permit exceptions, and of course must be "exceptionable." So that Mr. Davis objects to the Bible, 1st, That it is not unexceptionable; 2d, That it is unexceptionable. What a model reasoner he is!

Obj. 9. "The word Bible signifies simply a book. It is derived from the Greek *biblos*, which signifies the soft bark of a tree, upon which the ancients wrote their thoughts. To this was subsequently prefixed the word "holy," which term was employed by the Jews to denote excellence. Thus the term "Holy Bible" might be rendered "excellent soft bark," and then the world would understand its original signification." (P. 544.)

Remarks. Is not this a beautiful specimen of argumentation? Is this the man who pretends to be so ardently seeking for truth? Can such bitterness, such blasphemous folly, dwell in a candid mind? Do prophets from God speak thus? The shallowness of the reasoning is equalled only by the wickedness of the thought. Would the world understand the meaning of the twelve books of Virgil if it should be declared that they signify twelve specimens of "soft bark?" Yet the word "*liber*" is the same as "*biblos*." Mr. Davis knew that the words "Holy Bible" meant *pure book*, although the books of the ancients were written upon the bark of trees. How then could he, pretending to teach the world heavenly truth, stoop so low?

Obj. 10. "The elements and qualities contained in the Bible, or the germ of this great theological tree, are positively 'impure.'"

Remarks. How has the infidelity of our age gone ahead of the infidelity of the past! What sublime strides! Voltaire said that "the morality of the Scriptures astonished him." Every skeptic of the past has borne unwilling testimony to the immaculate purity of the word of God. But now

we are told that it is "positively impure." And in what? In the commandments which sum up the law, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself?" In the character of Christ, that holiest of all conceptions? In the idea of Jehovah, which was so awfully holy that the Jews dare not lisp his name? In the doctrines of the cross, which demand a struggle after complete holiness? O! could any heart but one bitterly opposed to Christianity as a vital element of power, permit himself to utter so great a folly and untruth? And is not one such sentence enough to destroy his credibility as a teacher with any reasonable mind?

CHAPTER XX.

CONVERSATION WITH A DOUBTER. THE WAY TO BELIEF.

THE individual with whom I had the conversation narrated in the Sixth Chapter, meeting me a few days after, we spontaneously took up the subject again; when, after a few general thoughts, I called his attention to the negative nature of skepticism, having no nutrition of truth for the spiritual being, and reminded him of what Carlisle had said, with too little of an evangelic significance indeed, of "the everlasting No, and "the everlasting Yes," and how we should endeavor to get upon some ground of belief in truth, when he stopped me and said:

"It is all true. I have felt deeply all which you assert, and it seems to me, the point from which we may start in our endeavors, IS THE RECOIL WHICH THE SOUL FEELS FROM THE SPOTLESS CHARACTER OF CHRIST."

"You have the very key to the gospel in your hands," replied I, overjoyed; "only follow out that truth to its legitimate consequences, and you cannot but come into a living union with the heart of evangelical religion."

"Do you think so? Well, at any rate, there is a point where I can make a stand and look around me. My soul shrinks back from the perfect excellence of Jesus, as if ashamed of its own imperfections. This is true."

"Is it not, then, also true, that you should seek in some way to become such a one that you may no more shrink away from, but love to commune with such adorable loveliness?"

"Certainly; [that is true. But how can this be accomplished?"

"To whom should you go with this question, but to the pure, perfect Being himself?—and what does he say to you?—'Come unto me,'—'Follow me.' Are not these directions such as you would expect? Where can you grow into the love of perfection, except in a union with the All-perfect?"

"Yes, but how go to Jesus, when my soul recoils from him?"

"With deeper repentance that such is the case, and with a humble faith in Him, that he will cleanse your soul by his atoning blood, according to his promises, and give you the assistance of the Divine Spirit to wash you from all its pollutions."

"And has he made such provision to fit the soul to commune with his spotless purity?"

"Surely, as in words like these: 'Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.' 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life;' 'Whosoever believeth on me, shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life;' 'He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit;' 'I will send the Comforter unto you, and when he is come, he shall convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not on me.' *There is your conviction.*"

"Yes: I shrink from the spotless purity of Jesus."

"Come then into the experience of his love and communion, according to his divine promises, and then you shall come into the very life of Christianity, and thus gain the highest insight into it as a system of truth; for 'he that doeth His will, shall know of the doctrine.'"

"I see you have already developed the doctrines of repentance and faith, and of Jesus as a Saviour, and of the Holy Spirit to assist our struggles after likeness to him."

"Yes: and you admitted the doctrine of sin and of holiness, and of the government of God, and that of prayer; and the culture of the Christian graces, or sanctification, follows as a matter of course. Then regeneration is implied in the

becoming fitted for the companionship of the holy Jesus ; for who, without the new birth, or the divine cleansing, is fitted for this ? ”

“ True, true ! But the more abstruse doctrines ? ”

“ Have you, then, in this all-perfect Immanuel, whose image of purity convinced of sin and caused your soul to tremble ; but whose promises of love and dying mercy draw you in repentance and faith to a near union with him, so that instead of trembling, you love and adore and become like him, through the divine aid of the Spirit he has promised ; — have you in this being a man only, or God manifest in the flesh ? ”

“ It must be above humanity, and if so, nothing less than God.”

“ And the Spirit, or the regeneration, is not that divine ? and have you not here the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, — the Moral Saviour, and the Sanctifier ? and does not your soul need them all, and need them all divine ? ”

“ But the mystery ? ”

“ Is only the mystery of the Infinite God. Can you grasp that ? Take the Divine Trinity as a revelation of the Absolute One whose being you cannot fathom, and therefore in whose being there may exist some great fact which to us, for the moral good of our souls, is best represented as a three-fold personality. Thus receive the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.”

“ And here it breaks upon me, how the doctrine of the atonement is the highest of all truth ; for in my recoil from the holy character of Jesus, I seem to feel the displeasure of my Heavenly Father, and my soul cries out for atoning blood.”

“ This has been the experience of sinful man in all ages of the world. For what else is signified in the sacrifices and offerings, but the instinctive want of an atoning Saviour, which moral necessity of the soul is a higher argument than all the subtleties of logic ? ”

“ You have led me into the very heart of the doctrines of Christianity. Would that they had a living hold upon me.”

"You give utterance to one of the strongest arguments for the religion of Jesus. No human soul can understand it, and not feel and know that a thorough practice of it, and life in it, would develop the highest and best traits of character, and carry the soul forward even to the perfection which Jesus himself attained. Where do you go, and where does all the world go for the highest examples of holy living? Paul, and Chrysostom, and Augustin, and Fenelon, and Thomas A Kempis, and Dede, and Baxter, and Bunyan, and Martyn, and Brainard, and Howard, and Clarkson, and Wilberforce, and Elizabeth Fry, were all Christians; — the most wicked of men will point you to these, or such as these, as the highest examples of true being."

"To be sure, Christianity has been very imperfectly exemplified in the practical life of its professors; yet it cannot be denied that the best specimens of humanity have been Christians."

"And why is it not the highest credential which any religion can bring as coming from Heaven, that it is adapted to carry forward the soul to the highest point of purity and excellence? The Christian religion presents the holy life of Jesus as the model of attainment, and Jesus himself offers his own atoning blood and the Divine Spirit to bring all who will, with true faith and hearty repentance trust in him, into his own likeness. Why, does he not thus as truly self-evidence his divine mission, as the sun his work by shining? How can any one distrust Jesus, when he says, "I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD?"

I AP 59

ERRATA.

Page 32—Line 17, after "is," insert "the subject of"

" 36—Line 17, read "vapid" for "rapid"

" 45—Line 11, read "inner" for "wiser"

" 67—Line 6, read "present" for "prevent"

" 82—Line 2 from bottom, insert "left" after "nothing" and place
an interrogation point at end of sentence.

" 83—Line 2, place 6 for 8.

" 91—Four lines from bottom, omit "arose from"

" 123—Line 17, insert "Governor," after "Moral".