

THE  
TELEGRAPH'S ANSWER,

TO

REV. ASA MAHAN.  
FIRST PRESIDENT OF CLEVELAND UNIVERSITY.

BY

S. B. BRITTAN.

"STRIKE BUT HEAR."



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# MAHAN'S MODERN MYSTERIES.\*

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

THE reputed social, scientific, and religious position of Rev. A. Mahan, First President of Cleveland University, had prepared us to anticipate from his pen a work of decided interest and power. With the *name* we had long associated our ideal of the *man*, which ascribed to him superior natural endowments, liberal culture, and a degree of ingenuousness and logical acumen which are certainly no where discoverable in the volume before us. Entertaining our first impressions respecting the author, and learning that his book was in press, we ventured to indulge the agreeable expectation that the claims of the spiritual facts and philosophy were soon to be tried by one whom nature, education, and "the

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\* MODERN MYSTERIES EXPLAINED AND EXPOSED. In four parts. I. Clairvoyant Revelations of A. J. Davis ; II. Phenomena of Spiritualism Explained and Exposed ; III. Evidence that the Bible is given by Inspiration of the Spirit of God, as Compared with the Evidence that these Manifestations are from the Spirits of Men ; IV. Clairvoyant Revelations of Emanuel Swedenborg. By Rev. A. Mahan, First President of Cleveland University. Boston : published by John P. Jewett and Company.

means of grace" had thoroughly qualified for the task. The prospect, though dim and uncertain, was full of novelty and encouragement; for since the time when there was a "Richmond in the field," no independent and magnanimous champion of popular materialism had appeared undisguised before the people. True, the Spiritualists had, from time to time, been introduced to a number of curious automatic machines in human shape, all of which were ascertained to possess *the mysterious instinct of knowing which way the wind blows*, and a self-adjusting power to spread themselves, more or less as occasion requires, whenever the popular breeze is in the right direction. Inspired and moved by this same invisible agency, many learned and unlearned pretenders to a knowledge of occult forces, abruptly appeared in the polemical arena, and challenged the whole spiritual world to meet them! But the innumerable angels and spirits of the Universe did not appear to think that the occasion demanded their immediate presence with the whole "artillery of heaven," and so they kept about their business, leaving those inflated souls to amuse themselves, to feed on their own empty speculations, and to shame even monkeydom by their fantastic tricks.

But at length those who once relished this kind of fare began to be dissatisfied, and the most erratic and reckless opposer seemed to feel the need of something more substantial than the air he had himself corrupted. Even skepticism could not long subsist on that, and hold its own. The opposition had a chill and was unable to be out much. Knowing that it was daily becoming more feeble and might ignobly perish for want of suitable nourishment, we were not inclined to complain if, in one way or another, its most pressing necessities were to be supplied at our expense. Indeed it was a satisfaction to reflect that the opposition had at least one man of more liberal and substantial resources, who was really able and willing to offer the public a respectable entertainment, even though *we* might be dissected to serve the guests at his table.

The late work by Prof. Mahan has disappointed our reasonable expectations, and it will require but a cursory examination to satisfy the critical reader that the author is out of his appropriate sphere. In reasoning against the spiritual theory of the manifestations, he generally assumes his premises without proof and against probability, and at the same time his method of reaching a conclusion suggests the idea of substituting locomotion for logic. The author puts forth the most chimerical notions with as much confidence as philosophers assert axiomatic principles. Indeed, the book abounds in arrogant assumptions, and the most transparent sophistry. Almost every page reveals the author's want of careful observation in the department of Spiritual Science, while his knowledge of the psychological laws, which underlie the most significant phenomena, is manifestly superficial.

We should certainly be pleased to pause here, but a more serious objection yet remains to be stated. Professor Mahan is equally unscrupulous in his methods, whether the opinion of an individual, or his reputation, is to be disposed of. His limited information rarely prevents or restrains the expression of his judgment. Whether treating of principles or men, his dogmatic philosophy admits no doubtful issues. All his conclusions are *irresistible*. Even when his knowledge of the subject under consideration is extremely limited, he often preserves the same confident manner and imperious tone. The well-known attributes of an individual are disregarded, the incidents of personal history overlooked, and the testimony of responsible witnesses is set aside as wholly unnecessary in forming a righteous judgment of his real character and peculiar claims. The first part of the author's work, wherein he essays to canvass the personal claims of A. J. Davis and the principles of his "Nature's Divine Revelations," will be found to justify these remarks. Even the beggar in the parable, who depended on the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, was not more in need of respectable cloth-

ing and wholesome viands, than this writer is of genuine facts and reliable information—in this part of his work—and what is still more surprising, he seems unconscious of his poverty. Prof. Mahan may be a gentleman of liberal scientific attainments, for aught we know to the contrary. However, he has not been able to render his learning available in this case; and if Nature ever designed him for an expositor of her subtile mysteries, her purpose has been signally defeated. As a pretended explanation of spiritual phenomena, the claims of his book are simply preposterous. The author himself may, for the present, be held in higher estimation than those who preceded him in the hazardous experiment of writing on a subject which they did not understand; but it is only because he is a fresh sacrifice at the shrine of popular ignorance and prejudice. Being the last to break his devoted head beneath the unyielding walls of the Spiritual Zion, he may hope to be remembered until the advent of his successor.

## CHAPTER II.

## MR. DAVIS AND HIS REVELATIONS.

We design to limit the present Review to a brief discussion of the general ideas and positions which Prof. Mahan assumes in the first and second parts of his book, wherein he considers the Revelations of A. J. Davis, and attempts to explain and expose the phenomena of Modern Spiritualism. The remaining portions, in which he examines the claims of the Bible to Divine inspiration, and analyzes the clairvoyant revelations of Emanuel Swedenborg, we shall probably have to leave unnoticed.

We do not propose an exposition or defense of the principles comprehended in "Nature's Divine Revelations." There are ideas which appear to the present writer to be fundamental in the philosophy of that book, which we have never believed, and can not now accept. But it is not necessary to defend its cardinal principles and doctrines; we need not so much as accept a single idea it contains, in order to perceive its significance and value as evidence in behalf of Spiritualism. Our author takes a very narrow view of the whole subject. He views the wonderful experience of Mr. Davis and his remarkable Revelations, not in the calm light of a rational philosophy, but as a violent partizan or an intolerant dogmatist might be expected to regard them. He even denounces, by implication, the passive instrument through which the Revelations were communicated, as guilty of "imposture before the world," in the simple act of unconsciously giving them utterance. He assumes this illiberal and untenable position in the first paragraph following the preface to the book. A brief extract will suffice to show the author's

position, and also to expose the arrogance, ignorance and injustice which disfigure no inconsiderable portion of the volume. We copy from page 1 :

When any new and very gross absurdity ~~is~~ commended to public regard, men of real science, theologians especially, pass it by, under the impression that should they expose the imposition, they would appear to the public in the repulsive light of "answering a fool according to his folly." It is this fear, we think, rather than a prudent regard to the public welfare, which has shielded modern "Spirit revelations" from that degree of scientific scrutiny requisite to unmask the imposture before the world. Whatever may be thought of the subject in general, the writings of the individual whose name stands at the head of this article seem to demand a critical examination.

Here *all modern media* for "*Spirit-revelations*" are virtually charged with *imposture* ; but as the chapter under review is especially devoted to Mr. Davis and his first book, we shall give our own observations a similar direction and bearing. The writer of this review was personally well acquainted with Mr. Davis long before the latter commenced dictating the Revelations. Being on familiar terms with him and his principal associates during the very time he was thus employed, and having been present as a witness on several occasions during the progressive unfolding of the work, we are doubtless better qualified to speak with confidence than Prof. Mahan, whose very positive *assertions* are contradicted by our own positive *knowledge*. During the delivery of "Nature's Divine Revelations," Mr. Davis was profoundly entranced, and so far removed from the sphere of outward consciousness as to be temporarily absolved from the obligations of the earth-life. At that time his states were preëminently distinct. It is true that the impressions derived from the realities of the inner life, have since progressively descended to the external memory, and have thus, in a good degree, become incorporated with the ordinary powers and possessions of his mind. But in Mr. Davis' early experience there was no such blending of the two states. In the ordinary condition he was untaught, destitute of extraordinary



gifts, and totally unable to converse on any literary, scientific or other important subject. But the trance measurably released the spirit from its mortal restraints, and gave him the key to vast treasures of knowledge. So clear and comprehensive was his vision, that neither distance nor the most solid substances appeared to offer any barrier to his observations. The essential principles and uses, and the technical nomenclature of many arts and sciences, were at his command. Of all these things his mind, in its outward relations, was uninformed. Of course, in his state of waking consciousness he was no more accountable for what had been uttered during the trance, than the reader is responsible for his dreams or for unconsciously talking in his sleep.

The Revelations which Prof. Mahan undertakes to review in the book before us, are far more remarkable than any of the recent works of Mr. Davis ; and yet, as has been observed, they were spoken before time had developed his manhood, or his faculties had been roused to action by intercourse with the world. At that time his habits were extremely simple ; we often saw him under the most trying circumstances, and yet he manifested extraordinary gentleness and forbearance. All his acts were apparently unstudied, and on every occasion he exhibited the artlessness and spontaneity of a child. He was alike indifferent to fame and the advantages of a commanding social position. The little circle of his thoughts was comprehended within the narrow limits of his youthful experience and observation, save when some hand, visible or invisible, was laid upon him, and he was borne away in Spirit to the wider spheres of his interior life. Of these early revelations we may affirm that they were prompted by no *mercenary motive* on the part of the medium. A single fact is worth a thousand conjectures, and one will suffice to settle this point forever, in the mind of the candid reader. As soon as the work in question was completed, and while it remained in manuscript, Mr. Davis made a donation to a personal friend of his entire interest in the same. He has never had any worldly concern in

the sale of the work. The book has passed through twelve editions in this country, and has been republished in England, and yet we believe, that up to this very hour, all the pecuniary advantage which Mr. Davis has derived from its publication has not amounted to a single shilling.

In the light of the facts just presented, Prof. Mahan will find it extremely difficult to justify the imputation of imposture, at least so far as the implied charge rests on the origin of these or any similar revelations. To constitute a man an impostor, three things are especially necessary. 1. He must assume a character not his own. 2. He must be conscious of what he is doing at the time. 3. It must be his object to practice deception. Admitting the general correctness of this definition, it is easy to perceive that the Revelations of A. J. Davis contain about as much evidence of imposture as the growth of his hair or the beating of his pulse. We may further add, in this connection, that the trance mediums for Spirit-intercourse are equally irresponsible. Many of them are totally unable to resist the powers which come to them from the invisible and unknown realms. They are, therefore, no more guilty of imposture than those who unexpectedly take cold or "catch the measles." Whoever asserts that they are, not only perverts the English language, but he libels humanity without a cause.

Respecting the intrinsic character of "Nature's Divine Revelations," we have a word to offer. They certainly contain much important truth that must serve to enlarge the reader's conceptions of Nature, to quicken the mental faculties, and to inspire the heart with deeper human sympathies. We also find many things which do not admit of demonstration by any one of our recognized methods of testing the truth of a proposition, while some things are *positively erroneous* in statement, and of questionable tendency. Similar elements enter into the composition of all books, so far as our knowledge extends. It is not our purpose to attempt a further illustration of the truth embodied in

the Revelations ; nor shall we seek a solution of their doubtful problems ; and, least of all, are we disposed to sanction the errors they contain, by so much as an implied indorsement. Mr. Davis himself, we venture to presume, will never defend them. What, then, can Prof. Mahan reasonably hope to accomplish by proving, what no one pretends to deny, viz., that the Revelations contain some important errors ? (What Revelations do not ?) Yet our author seems to imagine, that if he can only find a few false facts (?) or scientific, theological, and historical errors, they will serve at once to neutralize *the truth* in the book, and to dissipate its legitimate claims forever. To such absurd conclusions does theological dogmatism lead its willing victims ! It must have a revelation to which Reason and Nature are subservient or it will have none at all. The conscious manhood, and the divine attributes in man, are all of less account in its estimation, than the mere records and relics of an ancient inspired life. The orthodox classification of sacred books admits of no reasonable discrimination. It makes one broad distinction and recognizes no intermediate degrees. It virtually assumes that any book which claims to be a revelation is either all God's word, or it is literally a device of Satan. Thus do men pervert their natural instincts and the God-given attribute of reason. And while they invest the dead letter of the Jewish and Christian Revelations with a Divine, unerring authority, they seem anxious to *choke* the spirit of a living inspiration.

Prof. Mahan assumes that the Revelations of Mr. Davis claim a similar authority over the human mind. We are told that because the Seer is "impressed," others are required to believe. *It is not so.* On the contrary, this is a gross misrepresentation of the whole spirit and purpose of the book. We quote from the first and last paragraphs of the "OPENING ADDRESS TO THE WORLD :—"

**BRETHREN :** Fear not, for Error is mortal and can not live, and Truth is immortal and can not die ! Duty demands serious analysis and in-

vestigation of all conspicuous subjects. Truth may be found in the following Revelation : if so, *Nature* must be the standard by which all men may judge whether the truths therein contained are pure, practical and elevating. Inasmuch as all terrestrial creations are the spontaneous productions of the Divine mind, no truth is lessened by disbelief--no error is made true because the learned received it as such. Nothing can be changed that is unchangeable, by man or his actions. Then press onward! Exercise your choicest gift, which is *Reason*—and fear no corruption from truth, though new ; and expect no good from error, though long believed. \* \* \* \*

Your duty is to *search* ; and after searching, ask *Nature* and your own superior judgments how much practical truth there is herein revealed. In doing this, you will display the dignity of your natures, perform your highest duty, receive the most unbounded interior approbation, and obtain MENTAL HAPPINESS.—See *Nature's Divine Revelations*.

The despot whose word is law is not accustomed to explain the principles of his government, much less is he disposed to recognize, in the subject, the right to approve or to disapprove of his administration. The man who vainly supposes that he is competent to teach absolute truth, utters his *ipse dixit* and retires. But no such spirit pervades the Revelations. Throughout the volume the reasoning faculties are everywhere addressed ; facts are stated, principles are discussed, reasons are assigned and objections anticipated ; and the reader is exhorted to subject every theory, hypothesis, philosophy, sect, creed and institution, and all books to the ordeal of a calm and searching investigation.

Spiritualism is chiefly concerned with the extraordinary psychological facts developed in the life of Mr. Davis, rather than in the contents of his books. Whether truth or error predominates in the latter is a consideration of secondary importance, as it regards the question of our immortality and the nature of the soul's life. But *his experience* is a lucid revelation of the most significant and sublime truths. It demonstrates that there is an inner and more perfect life, wherein the lusts of the flesh are sublimated or forgotten, the senses quickened and spiritualized, and the mind immeasurably expanded and exalted.

During the last six years we have been less familiar with Mr. Davis than formerly. How far the powers of this world, which lead most men astray, may have modified his disposition and character, we can not so positively affirm. Suffice it to say, that no act of his recent or his future life can blot out his experience or render his revelations an imposture. A critical examination of his life might possibly disclose some of the imperfections which are so conspicuous in his reviews. But if we are to discredit the truth because men make mistakes, who will hereafter honor Moses, David, Solomon, or St. Peter? The question which regards the psychical experience of Mr. Davis, and its importance to Spiritualism, must be decided at last by an appeal to facts which no one will presume to deny. In the attempt to decide such a question, by assailing *the man*, our author justly forfeits his claims to the character of a scientific investigator. No *moral* issue, founded on specific acts of his subsequent life, or deriving their existence from improbable rumors in Ohio or elsewhere, can influence the final decision.\* Mortals may err, but no man has ever uttered a great thought or performed one God-like deed in vain. What if great men have fallen from high places, and the pure in heart have been corrupted; the laws of Nature are immutable and God is true. The very bones of the ancient philosophers, poets, seers and prophets were long since reduced to impalpable dust; no friend weeps over their ruined and forgotten sepulchers, but the truth that was spoken can never die.†

\* We refer to the statement in Prof. Mahan's book that Mr. Davis, in the course of a lecture at Cleveland, suddenly paused, and pretending to go into an interior state, read, as he affirmed, from a manuscript in the possession of Horace Mann. Our author claims that this was a false pretense, and that Mr. Davis copied said paragraph from a report of Mr. Mann's lecture, which had previously appeared in the *New York Tribune*. We know not whether the real facts accord with this statement, since the Professor neglects to call the witnesses.

† The reader is requested to see Appendix A.

are not dependent upon external sanction in any sphere, but are inward realities that make good their just claims. Minds, of whose external history in the earth-form there is no record,

### CHAPTER III.

#### SIX FALSE PROPOSITIONS.

It was intimated at the beginning of the last Chapter that we should be under the necessity of adopting a somewhat summary method in treating the claims of this work. Agreeably to our first intention, we will now pursue our examination of the author's general ideas and fundamental positions, rather than occupy our time and space with a discussion of particular incidents and statements. This book certainly contains some interesting facts, for which, however, the author is chiefly indebted to other sources than his personal experience and observation. The false logic with which he attempts to hold them together is undoubtedly his own; but as a cement for the disjointed parts of his theory, it is about as good as common sand. It may be wise to demolish even a new edifice when the foundations are ascertained to be insecure, or the superstructure to be loosely put together. Moreover, when such a work is to be performed, it may be well—provided the materials are really valuable—to begin at the top, and remove each brick or block separately, and with care; but if, on the contrary, the elements of which the structure is composed are intrinsically of little value, or if they have been *spoiled* by the bad taste and unskillful hands of the builder, it is not advisable to waste time by a slow process. Prof. Mahan's crazy superstructure threatens to fall of itself, even before we have

time to strike a blow at its foundation.\* If it should tumble down and bury the proprietor in the ruins, those who have, in this case, endorsed for him, may console themselves with the reflection, that the materials he has either used or wasted will afford better security in any other shape.

At the very opening of the Second Part, Professor Mahan displays the same supercilious manner and dogmatic spirit which were observed to characterize the preceding portion of his work. We venture to predict that all intelligent and candid skeptics will condemn the book on this ground. The author's attempts to keep in the company of scientific men, and to forestall their opinions, are more amusing than successful. Indeed, he appears totally destitute of a scientific perception or appreciation of either the phenomena or the laws which have been developed in the course of the spiritual movement. We have not even a respectable apology for a calm and logical discussion of the essential facts and principles whereon the legitimate claims of Spiritualism securely repose; nor have we anything like a philosophical inquiry into the nature and capacities of the mundane agents to which such facts are referred in this book. But we have instead a tolerable statement of the author's opinions and prejudices; an

\* The author under review may thank those whose opinions and purposes he has misrepresented, for whatever most favors the success of his book. In this region the sales have been chiefly confined to Spiritualists. It is now two months since the work was published; and yet, up to last Saturday (September 29th) D. Appleton & Co., second only to the Harpers among the publishers and booksellers of this city, had retailed only *three copies*! Stringer & Townsend, extensive dealers in miscellaneous books, at 222 Broadway, had not sold a single copy at the close of last week, as we were personally assured by Mr. Townsend himself. These facts are deeply significant, and certain authors and publishers will perhaps be able to interpret them after a few more experiments. Some, even now, may be disposed to infer that the very people who oppose Spiritualism, either question the ability or the sincerity of those who are ambitious to write it down.

unskillful evasion of the real grounds of the argument, together with a vast amount of dogmatism on points which no really scientific man professes to have demonstrated.

I quote the leading paragraph in Part II. It is a fair index to that portion of the volume, at the same time it is a most unscrupulous and unpardonable perversion of the real character and objects of Spiritualism.

The tendency of human depravity, in all ages, has been to supplant the worship of "the incorruptible God" by that of "corruptible man, and birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." "In these last days," this same principle is being carried out, by attempting to substitute for the revelations of the spirit of this "incorruptible God," those of pretended spirits of corruptible men. No revelations which descend to us from this professed mission of "the spirits," lay claim to any higher origin. A revelation coming from the bosom and heart of infinity and perfection, absolutely adapted, in all respects, to meet perfectly the spiritual necessities of universal humanity, and revealing in its own nature and intrinsic adaptations, as well as in its external evidences, the clearest possible indications of its origin from no other cause than the spirit of God, is, if the mission of "the spirits" attains its end, to be supplanted by pretended revelations of the spirits of men, revelations as discordant in themselves as the jargon of Babel, having no adaptations to the necessities of humanity, in any form, physical intellectual, or moral, and which are totally wanting, as we expect to show, in any positive claims to any connection whatever with any real spirits in "the spirit land," much less with those whose honest intention is to reveal nothing but the truth.

In this single paragraph no less than six distinct points are boldly assumed, not one of which is demonstrated in the whole book. This will more clearly appear if the author's assumptions are reduced to their proper form in an equal number of definite propositions, thus :

I. It is proposed [by Spiritualists, if we are to credit what this writer distinctly implies,] to substitute the revelations of "corruptible men" for those of "the incorruptible God."



II. We have in the Bible *a perfect revelation*, which in all respects is perfectly adapted to the necessities of every man.

III. The Scriptures as a whole emanated "from the heart of Infinity"—"from the spirit of God."

IV. All the revelations contained in the Bible are to be "supplanted, if the mission of the Spirits attains its end."

V. The modern revelations "have no adaptations to the necessities of humanity, in any form, physical, intellectual or moral."

VI. The current manifestations "are totally wanting . . . in any positive claims to any connection whatever with any real Spirits in the Spirit-land."

The Reverend author is now fairly mounted on his own beast. On one side he bears his Creed, Ancient Authorities, Theological Dogmas, and Sacred Relics, while on the other, as we shall see hereafter, he has suspended the Odylic Force, Mesmerism, "Imagination, the principle of Conjecture or Guessing, and Clairvoyance," together with whatever else is unknown and incomprehensible, including his own arguments. Thus mounted and balanced, and armed with invisible weapons and terrors unheard of by the ancient equestrian order, he sallies forth. In this rash attempt to ride over our reason, and the common senses of men, he fairly rivals the renowned John Gilpin in his reckless haste and daring. Mark how he leaps to final issues, like some fearless cavalier in the grand steeple chase! He neither pauses nor turns aside when there are obstacles in the way. Indeed, as logical objections impose no restraints on fancy and locomotion, it follows that *there are no obstacles* when one has resolved to reach the goal by such means. Speaking seriously, and without a figure, I may observe, that the foregoing propositions are obviously all embodied in the author's first paragraph on the "mission of the Spirits." Moreover, they are all presumed to be true and to be *self-evident*; and yet, not one of them is fairly sus-

tained in this volume; not one of them can be logically vindicated. They are manifestly all *untrue*, and I know of no writer against Spiritualism who has asserted a greater number of false propositions in one paragraph, or one who has more signally failed in his attempts to defend them.

The unfounded assumptions of the learned President might be left precisely where they are, consistently with the righteous demands of the occasion. I should certainly be justified in passing them without further comment, inasmuch as they are unsupported by such a measure of evidence as is absolutely essential to their credibility. But being in a yielding mood to-day, and feeling a willingness to do more than the circumstances positively require, I will undertake to show that the several propositions comprehended in the paragraph from the Professor's book, are all essentially false.

I. It is virtually assumed that the Spiritualists as a body are determined to substitute the modern revelations of men for other revelations, which are declared to be "of God." This strange assumption has no better foundation than the author's own imagination. No rational Spiritualist ever thought of *substituting* the modern revelations for any other God-given word, any more than he thinks of his own dinner to-day as a substitute for what his father ate before he was born. He only wants to receive his own portion in due season, as the fathers did. The world is welcome to preserve a record of all its revelations. They are among the most vital elements in the history of successive eras and dispensations. But the Spiritualist may not know how to subsist comfortably, and to grow strong and beautiful on *the mere history of bread*, whether temporal or spiritual. We are positively neither disposed to reject nor to undervalue any demonstration of spiritual presence and power. My own conclusions respecting the origin, nature, and tendency of such manifestations, are determined by *their intrinsic character*, with little deference to particular times, seasons, localities or

persons. Why should we regard these things, or indulge a special preference where none is indicated by the Divine economy? To the truly spiritual man, all time is sacred; all occasions are determined by the same universal Providence; all places are consecrated by the Divine presence; and all men are the children of one common Father. Moreover, if we assert the Divine Omnipresence, we express more than at first appears. In that assertion we also comprehend this truth, viz: *the powers and forces of the Spirit World are universally diffused, and may, therefore, be operative here and elsewhere, throughout all time and space.* The spiritual states of men do not depend on their local positions. Hell may be inside of one's threshold; and we know that Heaven is much less than three feet from each one of us—it is close to the most abandoned outcast from human society. John saw its portals opened in an Island which is now a rendezvous for pirates. If the Great Spirit is here, his ministers are also present; the Spirit World is all around us, and we may confidently expect signs, admonitions, and other forms of instruction from that world. But they are not offered as a substitute for the revelations of any other time or people. On the contrary, we demand for the inspiration of both ancient and modern times, and for the spiritual experiences of all ages and nations, an impartial examination and a rational judgment.

II. The Bible is *not*, "in all respects," a perfect revelation. On the contrary, it is fraught with numerous *imperfections*. Every biblical critic and theological student, who knows half as much as he professes to, must know that all such claims are utterly preposterous. All that the Bible contains has come to us through the instrumentality of fallible men, who never were perfect whilst on earth, but often erred in thought, word and deed. Moreover, the ancient revelations are embodied in the language of mortals, which is not sufficiently flexible, cogent or comprehensive to express even the deepest emotions and the loftiest thoughts of men, who claim no infallible or Divine inspiration.

The imperfections which belong to these channels or mediums of communication determine what is communicated, at least with respect to *form* and *degree*. But this is not all. The Bible does not even pretend to reveal truth on all subjects, nor does it disclose all the truth respecting any one subject of which it treats. It is therefore incomplete—*imperfect*. Jesus of Nazareth commenced teaching when he was twelve years old, but in about one hour we can read all that is left to us of his sayings; a few pages contain the record of the Acts of the Apostles; Paul, Peter, John, James and Jude, have between them left twenty-one brief epistles, addressed to the churches and their personal friends. But we have not yet told the whole truth. Of all the discourses delivered by the Apostles throughout the entire period of their ministry—some of them preached over thirty years—we have not so much as a complete report of a single sermon by any one of them. The few fragments that have come down to us, including the Sermon on the Mount, and other discourses by the Master, probably would not occupy more space than the last President's Message.

For the foregoing reasons, and many others which might be adduced were it necessary, we are authorized to say that no such perfect revelation exists. If these broken fragments of a great feast, originally spread for the Jews, contain all that we and mankind at large are capable of receiving—if they constitute a *full and perfect Revelation*—it inevitably follows that the Apostles labored a long time to little or no purpose, and that their successors in the ministry, for a period of nearly two thousand years, might have been more wisely employed. Nor is this all; if this Revelation is, in all respects, *perfectly adapted to the necessities of every man*, why have so many men been unable to receive it—why have they not been converted? The truth is, some men, like Thomas, require ocular demonstration, and they are now receiving what they most need. The *fact* that thousands, with the Bible in their hands, have been utterly faithless, and have

lived and died without hope, proves that the Bible is not equally well suited to the demands of every phase of mind, and hence that *it is not perfectly adapted to the necessities of every man.*

III. The assumption that the canonical Scriptures all emanated "from the Spirit of God," in any other than that universal sense wherein all things are said to proceed from him, is grossly absurd and entirely indefensible. With many significant and sublime facts, prophecies and revelations, it contains much that is merely historical, and for which no "*ab extra* Spirit-cause," or Divine inspiration, is either claimed by the authors themselves, or required by the necessities of the case.

IV. The idea that new and veritable disclosures in any department of human inquiry are likely to "supplant" any previously revealed *truth*, is a stupid fallacy, begotten and cherished by men who have no real confidence in the truth itself. The enemies of progress have long been accustomed to raise the alarm whenever a new discovery has been announced to the world. Ever and anon some hireling cries *wolf!* some folks are frightened, but there is no harm done. According to these false prophets, the word of God, true Religion, and our *eternal Life* are always on the point of being lost, or of coming to an untimely end. The Copernican system was opposed to the Bible; Geology fell out with Moses; Phrenology undertook to disprove the doctrine of moral agency and accountability; the use of anodynes in fevers, and of chloroform in obstetrics and dental surgery, was at war with the Divine Providence which causes pain; and, finally, all the mischief which the aforesaid devices of the devil have not done already, is now to be accomplished, "*if the mission of the Spirits attains its end.*" Such ridiculous bugbears may enable Prof. Mahan to excite the fears of small children, and a few clerical old ladies who reside in the rural districts and live on theological dry toast; but he surely will not disturb the equanimity of sensible men and women, unless they lose their patience in contemplating the author's fallacies and follies. When

an author in the middle of the nineteenth century, who has been President of a University, stoops to make such an appeal to the fears of the weak, and the prejudices of the ignorant, he should not presume to dishonor Science by using her name and wardrobe to dignify the farce. But we are happy to know that the truth will outlive the apprehensions of its most timid friends and foes. No life-preservers, salamander safes, or policies of insurance are required to preserve its existence, for the fire can not burn it nor the floods drown it. Further, it is not necessary to get the truth *patented*, because not a single truth, recognized in any age of the world, can be superseded by any subsequent discovery. We are greater than our accidents, and all men are destined to outlive their errors in this world or some other.

"Truth crushed to earth shall rise again,  
The eternal years of God are hers."

V. The assumption contained in the fifth proposition is proved to be false by numerous facts and witnesses. Our present references will be *general*, but should Prof. Mahan require particular examples, embodying names, localities, and circumstances, they will be furnished hereafter. For our present purpose the following summary statement will suffice. 1. Diseased persons who were regarded as incurable by ordinary professional modes, have been restored to health. 2. Many individuals have been mysteriously admonished of approaching danger; several having been taken up bodily, or otherwise suddenly moved out of the way of impending destruction. 3. Others, being spiritually influenced, have avoided collisions on railroads, explosions, shipwrecks and various disasters by land and sea. 4. Dishonest debtors have been compelled to leave home, and to travel hundreds of miles in search of those whom they had defrauded; and they have been *forced* to cancel the claims of their creditors. 5. Men who were formerly addicted to profanity, gambling, intemperance, tobacco chewing, and other vicious or injurious practices, have been arrested and reformed. 6. Bar rooms have

been closed by the direction of Spirits, and the proprietors have been induced to abandon the traffic in intoxicating liquors. 7 Unprincipled men and lewd women have been developed as mediums, or otherwise assured of the presence of Spirits, and by this means have been taken from houses of prostitution and led forth into the walks of virtuous society. 8. Persons while under spiritual influence have been mysteriously moved and guided into strange places, where they have found others ready to perish with hunger, cold, or from some other cause; and such persons have been saved from further suffering—perhaps from death—by the timely discovery of their situation. 9. Many ignorant persons have been educated by spiritual interposition and influence, and have thus become acquainted with the facts and laws of material and spiritual existences. 10. Hundreds of so-called infidels have been converted to a belief in revealed religion. 11. Those who once found room to work within a sort of seven-by-nine system of faith and philosophy, have at length been taught by Spirits that the world is all outside of them, and that heaven and earth contain many things not dreamed of in their old faiths and philosophies. 12. Thousands who, some time since, were sorrowful and without hope in the world, now rejoice with joy unspeakable in the assurance of a happy immortality. Every part of the preceding statement is strictly true, and can be triumphantly vindicated by a reference to particular examples. Are they demanded? Whether Spiritualism has any “adaptations to the necessities of humanity, in any form, physical, intellectual or moral,” is now left to the reader’s decision.

VI. There is nothing in the sixth proposition so conspicuous as the overweening confidence of the author. He boldly asserts that *the manifestations are totally wanting in any positive claims to a relation with departed Spirits*. Among those who have examined the facts, and weighed the reasons, which illustrate the principles and support the claims of Spiritualism, at least nine out of every ten persons have arrived at a very different

conclusion. Not less significant is the fact, that among those who openly acknowledge the claims of the phenomena to a spiritual origin, are many men who have as much learning and sagacity as Professor Mahan, and who have been far more thorough in their investigations. Men of extensive acquirements, who think profoundly on all other subjects, who classify facts with scientific precision and order, who scrutinize and estimate the value of human testimony with uncommon care and severity, have at last been overwhelmed with conviction, and forced, against their temporal interests and the prejudices of education, to refer these mysterious phenomena to a foreign, intelligent and spiritual agency. We have only to add in this connection, that a more intimate personal acquaintance with the occult powers of the Spiritual World and the inner life, will probably, at some future time, lead our author to the same conclusion.



## CHAPTER IV.

## THE AUTHOR'S "TEST PRINCIPLES" EXAMINED.

IN this chapter it is our purpose to review the several propositions by which Professor Mahan proceeds to try the claims of the Manifestations to a spiritual origin. He is somewhat methodical in his general manner of treating the subject, but his perception of natural causes and metaphysical distinctions is confused and unreliable; his statements are often ambiguous, and his reasoning illogical; while his conclusions are, for the most part, carelessly and abruptly drawn. In his estimate of the phenomena, he neither follows ontological principles, nor does he strictly respect the dogmatic authority of the speculative, scholastic theology. He exhibits a desire to preserve friendly relations with the world and accredited science, on the one hand, and the church and popular divinity on the other. These counter attractions keep him about as far from Heaven as he is from *terra firma*. To determine the nature and source of the phenomena, he proposes to apply his own arbitrary rules, which are neither clearly expressed nor understood. This is a complete inversion of the true order. The facts of Spiritualism are not to be tried by the standard of this or that man's opinions, nor can we reasonably expect to determine their source and significance by a vague statement which, at best, is but the sepulcher of an idea.

With this brief introduction, let us proceed, *seriatim*, in the examination of the author's "test principles." That the reader

may as far as possible perceive and comprehend the grounds of his argument, we will quote in full, and in their proper order, the several propositions which constitute his platform.

I. No facts occurring in the world around us, are to be referred to any supernatural or *ab extra* Spirit-causes whatever, which facts can be accurately accounted for by a reference to causes known to exist in this mundane sphere.

It is difficult to infer the author's intention, or his real position from this statement. He talks about natural, supernatural and spiritual things, in such a vague way that we are left without any definite conception of his idea or purpose. He speaks from a *cloud*, and leaves us to guess where he is and what he is there for. A dark, crooked and unfrequented path may be quite as safe as any other, if the traveler finds it necessary, above all things, to elude pursuit and to escape observation. There is certainly no approach toward the light in the foregoing statement, and for the present we are left to *feel* after the author in the dark. His first proposition is quite too indefinite, as it appears to the philosophical mind, either to serve the author's purpose, or to convey any distinct impression of his meaning. He uses terms so loosely, that scarcely a single idea is precisely expressed. How many things, for example, the Professor is disposed to include in "this mundane sphere," we know not; the province of natural law is nowhere defined; and the *ab extra* Spirit-causes—*such are allowed to exist in foreign parts, but not permitted to show themselves about here*—are neither named, numbered, nor located. This leaves us ample room to conjecture what we please, but as this wide field is not yet "fenced in," we can scarcely hope to confine the proprietor to his own premises, though we may venture on the experiment.

The last part of the proposition under review may be supposed to materially modify what precedes it; but the qualifying clause, probably, was not designed to limit the general scope

and purpose of the whole, so much as it obscures the meaning. If we are right, number one of the author's "test principles" may be more clearly expressed thus: *None of the phenomena cognizable by the senses, as exercised through corporeal organs, are to be referred to supernatural causes, or to any spiritual agency superior to the unintelligent forces of the natural world, and the powers of the human mind in its mundane relations.* Nature, in these days, has become a powerful institution, especially since the advent of Odyle. Nevertheless, our author manifestly believes that Nature has limits somewhere—that certain things which men attempt to conceive of or talk about, may reasonably be supposed to transcend the capacity of what are usually denominated natural forces, and hence are to be comprehended in the writer's realm of the "*supernatural.*" He does not pretend to deny that certain *ab extra* Spirit-causes do exist, but he totally rejects the idea that they produce any such mysterious effects as are now constantly occurring on the natural plane of our existence. It is true that such causes were once operative within "this mundane sphere." In primeval ages God ruled the world; wonders were performed by ministering Spirits and Angels, and men were inspired from supersensual and divine sources. But, according to this professed Christian philosopher, no facts in these days are to be referred to *ab extra* Spirit-causes. All such causes have done operating in this region. The Spiritual Powers have leave to retire, and busy themselves in shaping the embryotic forms of new systems, and in training the adolescent worlds that are not yet qualified to take care of themselves. As for *this world*, it is supposed to be able to go alone; the children of men can inspire themselves now, or go without inspiration, and Nature is so far developed as to work the greatest wonders without extra force or spirit—*without God!*

Thus far, if our author's Theism does not attempt to limit the Divine existence to the past, it aims ostensibly to circumscribe his

present dominion. Prof. Mahan is chiefly disposed to venerate the God of history and tradition. He doubtless believes that the Deity we read of had *directly* something to do with the government of the natural world, at one time ; but that for all practical purposes he was long since virtually superseded. It is no mistake of ours that the enemies of Spiritualism entertain such irrational and irreverent ideas of the Supreme Being and his administration. But we are deeply surprised that men claiming the authority of a Divine commission to expound the spiritual mysteries of Judaism and Christianity, can for a moment imagine that nature and man are not constantly dependent on superior and more Spiritual Powers. If they are not, what does this author mean by the Providence that "*controls natural law?*" and pray what, in his judgment, is the use of prayer ?

But let us pursue this point in our inquiry a little further. If men cater for the enemies of truth, in the name of Philosophy, and under the garb of Religion, we desire to know precisely where they stand, and what they are doing. The world has a right to see them in their true position. Now, where is this author, with respect to his real views of natural and spiritual things ? Does he comprehend in his idea of Nature all that is positively essential to the being and preservation, the orderly operation and harmonic development, of the entire economy of physical existence ? If he *does* include so much, then *Nature and God are essentially ONE in his philosophy, and the author himself is a Pantheist*. If, however, his definition of Nature comprehends *less* than this—more especially if it only includes the forms, functions and relations of external objects, the conclusion is irresistible that a *supra-mundane, intelligent, and Divine power—an ab extra Spirit-agency, is constantly required and universally exercised throughout every department of the natural world*. Indeed, without this perpetual infusion of spiritual principles into physical forms, all things would die. The light of each

central sun would be extinguished ; vast systems of worlds, like withered leaves and untimely fruits, would shrivel and fall, and all space became one boundless sepulchre !

II. No facts are to be referred to any *particular* supernatural, or *ab extra* Spirit-cause, unless they are of such a nature, that they can be accounted for upon no other supposition.

Here the writer again recognizes the distinction between the natural and supernatural, but does not attempt to define their respective limits. This proposition suggests an important question, and the answer seems likely to reduce our author's second "test principle" to something less than a cipher, so far as it is presumed to be adapted to his present purpose. Now, this is the question : "Is the human soul or Spirit comprehended in Nature ? Does it appropriately belong to the department of *natural things* ? or, is it *supernatural* ? For all the purposes of this criticism, we are quite indifferent respecting the decision. Our reverend friend may answer *ad libitum*. He may assign the human Spirit a place in either one or the other of the two great departments of Being—we care not which—and he will be equally sure to expose the fallacy of the second principle in the foundation of his argument. If he is pleased to decide that the Spirit in man belongs to the *supernatural creation*, he will therein recognize the presence and action, "in this mundane sphere," of beings gifted with supernatural powers ; and accordingly, he must admit that the operations of the human Spirit, through the body and on the objective forms and substances of the natural world, are so many illustrations of a power that is above Nature. This point in our argument may be briefly comprehended and clearly illustrated by the following brief syllogism :

1. Men are known to possess and exercise in this world—in a greater or less degree—certain occult powers, supersensual percep-

tions, and "Spiritual gifts," which demonstrate their relation to a transmundane existence.

2. Man, in his interior or spiritual nature, is supernaturally endowed and instructed.

3. Admitting the truth of the foregoing propositions, it necessarily follows that many things which men are accustomed to do and to experience, during the continuance of the life on earth, may be properly referred to what our author denominates supernatural or *ab extra* Spirit-causes.

On the contrary, if it be affirmed in answer to our question, that the human Spirit is more properly included in the *natural creation*, it will plainly appear, that in referring certain occult phenomena to the agency of human beings, in a spiritual state, *we do not* refer such phenomena to *supernatural*, or *ab extra* Spirit-causes. This, also, will admit of a syllogistic demonstration, thus :

1. Men have souls or Spirits in this world, and are capable of exercising, under a variety of circumstances, the mysterious powers of the spiritual and immortal nature.

2. The human soul belongs to the *natural creation*.

3. Therefore, in referring the mysterious phenomena of our time to the Spirits of men, *we assign natural causes for their occurrence*.

Now, President Mahan will not attempt to question the truth of the first or major proposition in either of the foregoing examples. Indeed, a large portion of his book is essentially devoted to an illustration of the idea we have thus briefly expressed. The second or minor proposition *must be accepted* in one case or the other, for the obvious reason that the human Spirit is necessarily either natural or supernatural. Finally, if the first and second propositions be admitted, the acceptance of the third—the *conclusion, is rendered inevitable*.

III. When particular causes are known to exist, all effects within and

around us are to be attributed to such causes, effects *resembling* and *analogous* to those known to proceed from such causes, effects especially which occur in circumstances where such causes may be reasonably supposed to be present.

The objectionable features of this proposition are so well disguised that the statement appears fair at first sight; but on reflection, we discover that it is rather specious than sound. Effects are the outward signs or sensible expressions of their specific causes. Subtile elements and silent forces are thus revealed to us in the pictorial illustrations of a wide-spread natural symbolism. The fallacy in the foregoing proposition consists in the assumption that *similar effects* proceed from the *same causes*. It is important to observe that similar effects do not indicate the presence of *identical* but of *analogous* causes. What if a large proportion of the spiritual phenomena *resemble*, in some of their essential features and aspects, other facts—already ascertained to depend on mortal agency, or on the dynamics of imponderable substances. This is precisely what we might reasonably expect to find, inasmuch as all material and spiritual creations are intimately connected with each other, and co-related to the same Infinite First Cause. But when we enter the wide sphere of subordinate causes, and their specific effects, we find them innumerable and infinitely diversified. And here it is only by a close observation of the several particulars wherein they are either similar or dissimilar, that we are enabled to make a scientific classification, and to trace outward and sensible phenomena to their interior and invisible laws.

It is well known that the facts of Spiritualism are plainly distinguished from those which more appropriately belong to the department of physical science. Moreover they have so many peculiar and striking characteristics, that they were at first almost universally rejected, without so much as a respectful notice. Especially did the scientific classes and the clergy not only dispute the real facts, but *they boldly denied the possibility of their*

*occurrence.* Professor Mahan knows this perfectly well, and yet he assumes that such facts are easily accounted for without going beyond the sphere of external nature, and the unaided operations of the human mind on earth. If they are, indeed, so extremely *natural* (using the word with the usual limitations), why have they encountered such a general and determined opposition? Are the people generally, including our teachers of science, art, literature, morals and religion, so sadly perverted that they can not recognize the normal manifestations of natural principles? Nay, we can not believe this. The human faculties are essentially adapted to the perception and comprehension of natural facts and laws. The truth is, the spiritual phenomena embrace a number of distinct classes of facts, each of which will admit of a precise description. Not one of these has been satisfactorily accounted for by those who have attempted to theorize on material grounds. Very few among the theorists have possessed either the ability to reason, or the disposition to be just. They have thought that Nature was out of order; they have vainly presumed to revise her laws by their scientific and theological standards; and—as if determined to rival the heathen in folly and absurdity—they have even insisted on referring the facts to “some *undiscovered* law of Nature, as the superstitious Athenians blindly consecrated a temple to the worship of “the unknown God.”

IV. Even those facts for the occurrence of which no mundane causes at present known, can be assigned, are not to be attributed to any *ab extra* causes whatever, or to the agency of disembodied spirits, when such facts are similar and analogous, in their essential characteristics, to other facts which once appeared equally mysterious and unaccountable on any mundane hypothesis, but for which science subsequently discovered actual mundane causes. Such facts manifestly lie in the track of scientific discovery, and we must suppose them to be the result of mundane causes, which are yet to be discovered, though at present unknown to us.

The position of our author, so far as it is defined in his fourth



test proposition, is a most singular one for a Christian minister to occupy. He assumes that if any new facts occur, the causes of which are as yet unknown, we must pertinaciously resist all attempts to refer them to spiritual sources, so long as we can trace a distinct analogy between them and any other facts which have been accounted for on purely natural principles. They may differ from all merely physical phenomena in many essential particulars. On the other hand, these facts may conform in all respects to the known characteristics of certain intelligent beings, whom we have long and intimately known, and to whom they plainly manifest the relation of effects to causes; but we are required to reject all such claims. The author says, "Such facts manifestly lie in the track of scientific discovery, and we must suppose them to be the result of mundane causes, which are yet to be discovered." The "unknown cause" may claim to be a Spirit, and talk to us as friend with friend; it may take hold of the great forces of material nature, and suspend the consequences of their action; it may exhibit a mysterious insight into the secrets of the dead; it may paralyze our mortal bodies, leaving them apparently lifeless, and at the same time bear our unshackled spirits upward and away into the "heaven of heavens;" it may dissipate the midnight darkness, and even come visibly to us in human and angelic forms, clothed with the immortal splendors of their deathless estate. All this have thousands experienced; and yet, Rev. Professor Mahan would have them reject the evidence of their own senses, and uproot, from their inmost souls, a conviction that is strong and deep as the love of life. According to this author, it is most important for us to purge our souls of all that we know of heaven, of our immortal life, and of spiritual and divine natures. This done, only one thing remains. *We must all wait patiently to discover "mundane causes,"* having dismissed the radiant throng from our presence with less ceremony than is due to mortals.

V. To establish the claims of Spiritualism, its advocates must show,

(1.) that the facts which they adduce are wholly dissimilar and unanalogous, in their essential characteristics, to any facts resulting from any mundane causes, and (2.) that the occurrence and characteristics of these facts can be accounted for, but upon one exclusive hypothesis, the agency of disembodied Spirits. If similar and analogous facts do arise from purely mundane causes, it is a violation of all the laws and principles of science and common sense, to attribute these phenomena to any *ab extra* cause whatever.

This whole statement is utterly preposterous. In order to sustain the claims of Spiritualism, we certainly *can not* be required to show that the facts are in no way analagous to any other facts that ever occurred on earth, and were found to have been produced by unspiritual causes. The author's assumption that this is properly demanded at our hands is absurd to the last degree. There is an obvious analogy between the phenomena of animal and vegetable life. Now, if we are disposed to insist on the reality of animal existence, must we first *prove that animals are in all respects unlike plants, and that they in no way resemble anything else in God's creation!* We presume not. In fact, should any man seriously offer such a suggestion, among men of ordinary intelligence, he would be laughed at. And yet the first President of Cleveland University gravely proposes what is still more repugnant to reason. He would not only have us prove that different genera have no likeness; but he insists that there shall be no resemblance in the phenomena produced by beings of the same genus and species. According to our author, *the Spirits of departed men must say and do things which are "wholly dissimilar and unanalogous, in their essential characteristics," to any thing that men were ever known to say or do before, or we have no evidence that they are Spirits or men at all!* And such is the false philosophy and slipshod logic which Spiritualism encounters in Theological Seminaries and Universities! Precisely here, on the very ground of the author's objection, may the claims of Spiritualism stand unmoved forever. *It is because the Spirits say and do so many things that clearly display their individual*

*habits of thought and action, and illustrate the attributes and incidents of their life on earth, that we are forced to acknowledge their presence and to respect their claims.*

Our author concludes his statement of "test principles" with the following brief paragraph, in which he complacently assures us that they are all correct and unanswerable.

The validity of these principles will be universally recognized as self-evident. Their applicability, as fundamental tests of truth, to our present inquiries, is equally manifest and undeniable. Their validity has been universally acknowledged by Christians, in reference to all miraculous attestations of the claims of Christianity to a Divine origin and authority.

On the several propositions discussed in this chapter, Professor Mahan founds his argument. In an important sense they constitute *the law* by which this mock trial of Spiritualism is regulated. These are the "principles" which are said to "be universally recognized as self-evident." Is it not rather "self-evident" that *they are all false*? If "their validity has been universally acknowledged by Christians," it follows that a cordial acceptance of these principles "as fundamental tests of truth" is one of the conspicuous signs whereby Christians may hereafter be known and distinguished. But if what this christian divine says of all Christians be true, we must express our unfeigned regret that they are weak in faith as they are deficient in good sense. We have only a word more at this time. So long as such principles are employed in testing our faith and, consequently, our claims to discipleship, we must be resigned to occupy a place with those whose reason and moral courage have rendered them infidel.

## CHAPTER V.

## ELECTRO-PHYSIOLOGICAL INQUIRIES AND DISCOVERIES.

THAT the reader may form a just estimate of President Mahan's assumptions respecting the alleged existence and transcendent powers of a newly-discovered imponderable agent, to which he ascribes the amazing phenomena of our time, we will briefly refer to the curious researches and important discoveries of several modern philosophers. Among the various departments of scientific inquiry, that which comprehends the laws of vital motion, sensation, and thought, is, perhaps, of paramount importance, inasmuch as it most intimately concerns the nature and preservation of human health and life. Critical observation and profound thought are indispensable to success in this department, and it must be confessed that few persons in this country have attempted the investigation in a scientific spirit. The subject has, however, engaged some of the noblest minds in Europe, but its greatest problems still remain unsolved.

In the latter part of the last century, Galvani, a distinguished anatomist and physiologist of the Bologna school, and the celebrated Italian philosopher Volta, made numerous experiments with a view to illustrate the influence of *galvanic electricity* on the nerves and muscles of certain animals. The former discovered this agent, and the latter invented instruments for generating it, and directing it to scientific and other practical purposes. On this account the agent itself has been generally known as *galvanism*, and the instruments as *Voltaic apparatus*. It was especially in the

autumn of 1786, that Galvani's experiments in producing muscular contractions by electrical currents, began to assume a profound significance. In 1791 he published his celebrated Commentary, which produced an intense commotion among physicians, physiologists, and philosophers throughout all Europe, and led to much speculation respecting the origin of nervous diseases, and the nature of the vital principle. But as metallic rods and other instruments had been employed in Galvani's experiments, Volta contended that the phenomena did not result from the presence of animal electricity, but that the muscular contractions were caused by a heterogeneous combination of metallic substances. To meet this objection, Galvani pursued his experiments until he obtained the same results without the intervention of metals, and thus demonstrated, apparently at least, the existence of animal electricity and its probable agency in all vital phenomena.

A bitter controversy ensued ; Volta seemed likely to subvert the claims of his rival, when Humboldt published his work, entitled "Experiments on Stimulated Nervous and Muscular Fibers," etc., in which he favored the position of Galvani. At length, near the close of 1799, the Italian philosopher made the discovery of the *Voltaic battery*, which secured for his opinions a rapid triumph. Nothing further appeared in support of Galvani's theory of animal electricity, save an essay by his nephew Aldini, wherein the author recorded the results of many useless experiments, and attempted to appropriate to himself the honor of his uncle's discoveries. Aldini's work was published in French, in 1804, after which no particular attention was paid to the subject for nearly a quarter of a century. In 1827, Nobili made a grand improvement in the galvanometer, and demonstrated more clearly than his predecessors had done, the existence of the electro-magnetic current in the frog. Matteucci experimented on the frog and the torpedo, and soon attracted more general attention to these phenomena. His observations furnished a starting-point for Emil du Bois-Reymond, of the Berlin Academy, who constructed still

more perfect apparatus which enabled him to discover not only the muscular current in the inferior animals, but *in the living Man*. The variation of the current by *volition*, in the act of muscular contraction, was also clearly demonstrated by the experiments of du Bois-Reymond, who described his *modus operandi* and the specific results, in a letter to Baron Humboldt, and in a paper communicated to the French Academy.\* These results have been further corroborated by the experiments and observations of Alfred Smee of London and others, and *they plainly show that an electro-motive power pervades the nerves and muscles of all animal bodies*.† This agent is continually disengaged or evolved in the subtle processes of vital chemism, and we have valid reasons for the opinion that *it is the chief agent in all muscular motion and sensation*.

#### OBSERVATIONS AND EXPERIMENTS IN ANIMAL MAGNETISM.

Phenomena of a very different kind, yet manifestly depending more or less on the distribution and modified action of the same vital motive power—in other words, on the electro-magnetic conditions of the several organs—attracted the attention of other minds, and led to curious and important discoveries. As early as 1774, F. Antoine Mesmer, a member of the Medical Faculty of Vienna, succeeded not only in reducing the novel processes and mysterious results of Animal Magnetism to something like a scientific formula, but in his own extensive practice he found numerous opportunities to test its value as an auxiliary of medicine. The success of Mesmer, and the singular power of this new remedial agent excited, among the Faculty of Paris, a spirit of jealousy and resentment, which was soon manifested through the Royal Medical Academy. An arbitrary decree was issued, declaring the use of Animal Magnetism unprofessional and injurious, and making *expulsion* from that institution the penalty for

\* *Annales de Chimie et de Physique*, 3<sup>e</sup> Série, t. xxx.

† See Dr. du Bois-Reymond, "On Animal Electricity;" also, Smee's "Electro-Biology."

advocating its claims. In 1784 the committee appointed by the French Academy to examine the subject, having failed to see, feel, taste, smell, measure or weigh the subtle, miracle-working fluid which Mesmer had supposed to exist, reported that there was no such thing as Animal Magnetism. But the facts continued to occur, and to command attention in different parts of Europe. Cuvier, Laplace, Humboldt, Coleridge, Dugald Stewart and many other distinguished names, became identified with the new science. In 1831 its claims to a place among the accredited sciences were duly acknowledged in the report of the scientific commission appointed, if we mistake not, in 1825. Skepticism reluctantly gave up the ghost. The invisible pain-destroying agent was admitted into the hospitals of Paris and London, and a Professorship of Animal Magnetism was established in the Medical College of Berlin.\*

Several noted experimenters and authors appeared in different parts of Europe, and the phenomena of the magnetic state were widely and critically observed. Rev. Chauncy Hare Townshend, of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, pursued the subject experimentally with great earnestness, and finally published his work, entitled "Facts in Mesmerism," about the beginning of 1840. During his investigations he had an opportunity to witness the effects of the magnetic process on many persons in England, also at Rome, Naples, and elsewhere; and among his subjects were Signor Ranieri the historian, Professor Agassis, and other eminent persons. But there were others in this field who are not to be forgotten. For nearly forty years M. Deleuze, a French practitioner and a most conscientious man, was engaged in the experimental illustration of the powers and uses of Animal Magnetism. Deleuze confined

\* The discoveries of Mesmer, and his dexterous use of the mysterious power, gave him an enviable position, and a commanding influence. He had many distinguished pupils in Paris, received large sums for his course of instruction, and was professionally employed by the principal nobles at the Court of Louis XVI.

his experiments, with rare exceptions, to invalids, and the results of his protracted experience have been given to the public. Several other authors have likewise placed us under obligations for important contributions to the sum of scientific and popular information on this interesting subject. Georget, in a treatise entitled "*Physiologie du Système Nerveux*," mentions the result of certain experiments in this species of magnetism, by which he seemed to impart some new properties to water. When highly sensitive persons tasted the water, they could readily distinguish it from that which had not been subjected to the process. M. Foissac manipulated liquids in a similar manner, and Paul Villagrând, a somnambulist, would at once detect the presence of the magnetic influence by the sense of taste. M. Bertrand and others effected cures by the use of magnetized water, and M. Mialle, who at one time could find no repose on account of some painful indisposition, assures us that a piece of magnetized glass, which he placed on his chest—on retiring for the night—had the effect to greatly modify his symptoms, and to induce the presence of

"Tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy Sleep."\*

Among the practical operators in Animal Magnetism and the earnest defenders of its claims, the Baron Dupotet, Dr. Elliotson and Dr. Ashburner have long been distinguished. But no man has made a more beneficent use of this agent than Dr. James Esdaile, who was employed in a professional capacity by the British East India Company. His unrivaled success among the people of Bengal, is doubtless, in a great measure, to be ascribed to his own personal energy, superior skill in his profession, and to the benevolent impulses and aspirations of his heart. Dr. Esdaile found the natives of that country extremely susceptible to this magnetic influence, and in his efforts to meliorate their condition he permitted no occasion to pass unimproved. *In the brief*

\* See Dr. Alphonse Teste's *Manuel Pratique de Magnétisme Animal*. London edition, p. 208—210.



*period of eight months, no less than seventy-three surgical operations were performed on persons in the magnetic trance. Notwithstanding many of these operations were extremely difficult, and such as are usually attended with intense pain, Dr. Esdaile's patients were all the while in an unconscious state, and of course incapable of suffering. Indeed, so effectually were his subjects bound, that not a nerve quivered under the knife, nor was a single muscle convulsed by the burning iron in the process of actual cautery. The coma in some cases continued for hours after the operation was completed, and when the patient awoke he was generally free from pain and oblivious of what had transpired.\**

CLEAR SIGHT AS DEVELOPED BY MAGNETIC CONDITIONS.

Persons in a magnetic state frequently become *clairvoyant*, so that their vision is not limited by darkness, distance, nor the density of material forms and substances. In the course of my own investigation of the subject, many striking illustrations of this singular faculty have occurred. Indeed the writer has long been familiar with the diversified physical and mental phenomena which usually accompany the magnetic states of the human system, and might draw from the records of personal experience and observation—during a somewhat protracted course of experiment—many of the most remarkable facts in Animal Magnetism and Clairvoyance. Those in whom this inward and more spiritual sight is thus developed—(numerous cases admit of our testing the *reality* of the phenomenon)—often profess to discern Spirits, and to converse with the inhabitants of the invisible world. Cahagnet in his “Secrets of the Life to Come,”† has embodied the results of his inquiries respecting the condition of human beings in the immortal state. He employed “Eight Ecstatic Somnambulists,” through whose instrumentality, if the media may be trusted,

\* See “Mesmerism in India, and its practical application in Surgery and Medicine ;” by James Esdaile, M. D.

† Published by Partridge and Brittan.

he had interviews with no less than thirty-six deceased persons. In this country similar phenomena now daily occur, and the present writer has witnessed many facts quite as extraordinary as those described by Cahagnet.\* In this country clear-seeing somnambulists are becoming quite numerous. With occasional exceptions they profess to hold free and direct intercourse with the Spirit World, and it is certain that they often communicate the names, describe personal appearances, and otherwise exhibit the distinctive peculiarities, of departed human beings whom they had never known on earth. We have listened to some thrilling narratives embracing particular circumstances and incidents in the lives of individuals, and witnessed illustrations of descriptive portraiture through media who had no knowledge of the persons they described, which were alike remarkable for vigorous delineation and strict fidelity to the attributes and events of personal character and history.

#### BARON VON REICHENBACH'S DISCOVERIES.

The phenomena observed by Mesmer have been clearly verified and illustrated by his successors in both hemispheres; and though the speculations of the former concerning the existence of an universal fluid, were regarded as improbable and visionary, they led the way to important scientific discoveries. Baron Von Reichenbach has comprehended in the account of his "Physico-Physiological Researches," etc., an immense number of curious and significant facts, illustrative of our relations to the material

\* It is worthy of observation that Deleuze, from his investigations, was led to the conclusion that among the mysterious developments of animal magnetism is the opening of a channel of communication with departed human beings. We here cite his testimony on this point :

"What magnetism rigorously demonstrates is the spirituality of the Soul and its immortality; also, that souls departed from the body can in certain cases put themselves in communication with living beings, and convey to them their sentiments. The study of the phenomena of somnambulism is, in this respect, more important than in that of curing diseases."

forms and subtile agents of the outer world, and at the same time deeply suggestive of what lies beyond the sphere of sensuous observation. The relations of electricity, magnetism, and light, to the phenomena of vital motion and sensation, are no where else more fully illustrated than in the learned Baron's experiments. The peculiar force known to reside in magnets and crystals was brought to bear on the different organs of somnambules and other highly impressible persons. It was observed that the most sensitive subjects could distinctly feel the influence of a crystal, a magnet, or a man at a distance, or through a solid wall ; thus demonstrating the presence of some subtile medium by which the living organization is, independently of intervening objects, connected with similar forms, and doubtless with *all forms* in the natural world. Some of his subjects could perceive the influence of the heavenly bodies on the brain and other organs, and distinguish between the action of the several planets and their satellites (including the moon) and that of the sun and the different constellations.

Particular observations were also made with respect to another class of facts. Allusion is made to the *luminous emanations* from human bodies, from magnets, crystals, and various other objects, animate and inanimate, which were rendered visible or otherwise apparent to the senses of impressible subjects. The magnetic or (to use the author's own term) the *Odic* lights, were distinctly perceived whenever the experiments were conducted in dark rooms ; and the observations of the sensitives are minutely recorded in the Baron's most interesting and instructive book. We can not here even trace the author's general method in his experiments, much less can we pause to cite particular examples. A very summary statement must serve the writer's purpose on the present occasion. Von Reichenbach, in the course of his experiments, ascertained the magneto-physiological effects produced on his subjects by not less than six hundred different forms and combinations of matter. More than sixty persons, of all

ranks and conditions, and of various degrees of susceptibility were employed during the course of experiment, and the investigation was conducted throughout in a cautious and scientific manner.\*

In this rapid general survey of a great subject, the writer has briefly sketched the history of the researches and discoveries in Animal Electricity, Animal Magnetism, Clairvoyance, etc., concluding with a succinct statement of the Baron Von Reichenbach's experiments. In what do these discoveries consist? We answer briefly:

1. The investigators in Animal Electricity have demonstrated that this agent is disengaged in all the chemical changes which occur in the living body; that men and animals have a sort of voltaic mechanism, and exhibit an organic adaptation to electrical laws; that electric currents accompany muscular contractions, and hence, that all vital motion and sensation (probably) depend on the presence and action of electrical forces.

2. In the department of Animal Magnetism, it has been observed, that a skillful operator may control, in other persons, the agent on which muscular motion, sensation, and even thought, are made to depend. All this is absolutely demonstrated by the facts. The subject may be so profoundly entranced as to remain for hours, and even whole days, in a death-like coma. All the avenues leading from the soul to the great Macrocosm may be sealed up, and so effectually guarded that no impression can be transmitted from the external world to the internal Spirit. The strongest light will not contract the pupil

\* For a complete refutation of President Mahan's assumptions respecting the alleged capabilities of the odic force (?) and the nature of its phenomenal appearances, the reader is recommended to peruse the work here referred to, entitled

"Physico-Physiological Researches in the Dynamics of Magnetism, Electricity, Heat, Light, Crystallization, and Chemism, in their relation to Vital Force" By Baron Charles von Reichenbach. Complete from the German second edition. With the addition of a Preface and Critical Notes, by John Ashburner, M. D. Second American Edition. New York: Published by Partridge and Brittan.

of the eye ; nor will the loudest thunder and the heaviest artillery make any impression on the auditory nerve. The other organs of sense and the nerves of motion are equally useless during this temporary paralysis. The unconscious sleeper does not fear the elements, and his flesh will neither crawl from knives nor escharotics.

3. In other magnetic conditions of the system, sensation is intensified to a remarkable degree. There is an exquisite susceptibility to impressions from invisible and higher sources. The subject may awake on the spiritual plane of his being. When this occurs, the most sublimated forms of matter, the minutest objects, and those most remote—all of which are invisible to ordinary observers, are rendered essentially present and tangible. The forms of things become *transparent*, while their essences are even more conspicuous than common earth. To such persons the very Heavens are opened, and the Angels stand unveiled in their presence.

These are the natural and scientific approaches to the spiritual citadel which several authors, including President Mahan, have of late so rudely assaulted. The application of the foregoing discoveries and observations, to the present issue, will engage our attention in the succeeding chapter.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE PRESIDENT'S AGENT BROUGHT TO TRIAL.

MANY of the phenomena referred by careless observers to the agency of departed Spirits, have doubtless originated within the sphere of mundane existence. Other facts occur along the confines of visible and invisible worlds, which it would be difficult to trace with any degree of certainty, to their specific causes. We have no disposition to dogmatize respecting the origin of such phenomena. Only those enthusiastic converts, who have vastly more zeal than knowledge, feel qualified to express a decisive judgment in such cases. In some phases of the Manifestations, the most acute and philosophical observer is often puzzled in his attempts to find and to follow the chain of causation. The faculties of the human mind, and their relations to things visible and invisible, and the forms and forces of the material and spiritual worlds, are so complex that he may be at a loss to decide whether the images that dance before his vision are earthly or immortal creations. This, however, is true of only an inconsiderable portion of what intelligent persons denominate Spiritual Manifestations, while nothing can be more obvious to the enlightened and impartial observer, than the ultramundane origin of many of the most important facts. The difficulty referred to appears to be inseparable from the nature of the subject. The human spirit is the same in all its essential attributes, whether in or out of the corporeal form; and it must be obvious that the phenomenal manifestations of the soul, in its separate states, can not be altogether dissimilar. Especially will

the resemblance be most apparent wherever the physical and spiritual conditions of being are in the closest proximity. The higher and lower spheres of existence, like the different kingdoms in Nature, flow into each other by almost imperceptible gradations, and meeting like the confluent waters of two seas, are scarcely distinguishable. For these and other reasons heretofore expressed, we shall have little to do with the minutiae of our author's statements and citations. We have adopted a more summary method ; and if it shall appear from the present examination that his general principles are essentially *false*, and his chief agent altogether *imaginary* or *impotent*, his pretended exposition must be regarded as a complete failure.

The history of the developments in Animal Electricity and Animal Magnetism—the subject of the preceding chapter—revealed none of the more mysterious powers and purposes which are now so widely and clearly displayed in the Spiritual Manifestations. It is true that electro-magnetic phenomena, as exhibited in Man and the inferior animals, are variously modified by the Life-principle, and, in a greater or less degree, subject to our control ; but in no case do they indicate the presence of a foreign intelligence, or disclose a single attribute of personality, that can not be directly traced to the visible and conscious human operator. But our limited power over these great natural forces entirely depends on a knowledge of their laws, and an intelligent adaptation of conducting and non-conducting substances, to the ends we have in view. By no other means can we direct their movements or resist their action. Science, stretching her rod toward the midnight sky, disarms the Tempest, and the burning bolts descend silently into the earth. The subtile element is variously employed in the elegant and useful arts, but it has no capacity to do business on its own account. It is a swift *courier*, but it can neither think nor read the papers. It originates no intelligence. It may *carry* the news—that is all it can do, even with our assistance. It does not speak at the Farmer's club, and

is not known among inventive Mechanics, or as a member of the learned professions. It does not practice medicine; it never wrote an Epic, and can not preach the gospel of immortality with sufficient power to convert a skeptic. It has no conscious soul, nor is it endowed with a single attribute that exclusively belongs to the plane of sentient existence.

The philosophers referred to in our last Chapter were surrounded, in the course of their experiments, by such instruments and conditions as are best fitted to develop the various forms of electric, magnetic, and odic phenomena; but it is worthy of observation, that nothing occurred in their presence—as *a direct result* of the operation of the agents referred to—which a man of common discernment could not at once distinguish from the more important facts in Spiritualism. One fact is especially worthy of notice. In all their experience, *the electricity and magnetism of animal bodies were never known to develop any mechanical force outside of the organization, whereby a single inanimate object was moved.* The electricity in Galvani's frogs did not upset the furniture in his apartment, nor record his observations in electro-physiology. Volta's batteries were never known to dance the polka, or to walk about the room, when they were charged; and we can not confidently affirm that a single electrical eel ever slipped through Matteucci's fingers. Moreover, the subjects of Mesmer, Townshend, Deleuze, Esdaile, Dupotet and others, were never carried bodily up to the ceiling; the Baron did not discover "the rappings," and the tables at Castle Reisenberg were never charged with disorderly conduct. But why not? What could have prevented the occurrence of such phenomena, when the conditions supposed to be necessary to their development were arranged with so much care? Electricity, Magnetism and Odyle—if such an agent really exists—all belong to the natural world, and of course are not to be included in the list of recent inventions. Now, if the combined action of these agents be sufficient to produce the phenomena we ascribe to Spirits, why did not the same



or similar illustrations of power and intelligence occur at Bologna, Berlin and Vienna? Were the peculiar powers of these great material agents nearly all *latent* until modern Spiritualism attracted public attention? And is this rapid development of natural forces the result of natural law? Perhaps American electricity and republican magnetism are stronger than any other; or, it may be, that *Odyle*, having escaped from the unnatural restraints of Austrian despotism, has just ventured to assert its high prerogatives. Seriously, Electricity and Magnetism are essentially and phenomenally the same the world over, and, it may be, that *Od Force* has no real existence, here or elsewhere. On this point we are disposed to be in earnest.

#### IS ODYLE A FORCE OR A FICTION?

In a former chapter we examined our author's "test principles," and found them to be unphilosophical and false. Having also briefly reviewed the developments which illustrate the relations of electricity and magnetism to physiological and psychological phenomena, we are now ready to look after the one great wonder-working agent, to whose mysterious powers all the "modern miracles" are unhesitatingly referred. In the opinion of President Mahan, and several other teachers, the *Odylic Force* is the principal agent from which all present inspiration and modern miracle-working directly proceed. This is "the unknown god" of popular Materialism, in whose sanctuary our author is one of the chief priests. Before we accept the bold and startling assumptions of one who thus deliriously strikes at Reason and his own hopes of Heaven, we must know whether this newly-discovered magnetic and crystallic divinity has an objective existence. It would be preposterous to refer the current phenomena to an *imaginary agent*. The facts themselves are *tangible things*, and the rational mind, in seeking for appropriate causes, will not be satisfied with doubtful postulates. *First prove that the agent really exists*; when that is done it will be time to consider the

nature and extent of its powers. A man of common sense will not be likely to believe that the earth is supported by a huge *turtle*, until he is first satisfied that *there is a turtle* of adequate size and sufficient strength to serve in this important capacity. He may not stop to ask what the beast stands on, or from what source he derives his nourishment; but he will wait to hear the testimony of one man at least who has been near enough to see the animal's shell, and to ascertain his precise relation to "this mundane sphere." In the absence of any reliable information to the contrary, we may still entertain the idea that a power above us—revealed in the attractions of heavenly bodies—sustains and upholds the vast economy of the natural world. That Power has numerous agents, visible and invisible; but hitherto it has not been made plain that Od Force is one of them. Professor Mahan never observed any of the odylic phenomena, and even the Baron himself was not sure that he discovered anything of the kind. Yet, with a presumption as irrational and profane as it is unqualified, our author asserts its existence as a distinct imponderable element, and a stupendous force in Nature. This is not all. He makes Odyle "speak with tongues," "prophecy," look through solid walls, discover the secrets of "the dead," and heal the sick "by the laying on of hands." Thus our Christian friend virtually presumes that the new force has already superseded, in spiritual and divine offices and functions, the Holy Spirit and the Angels of Heaven. To us the god of Od Force waits to be revealed, and we are obliged to depend for the present on a Divine Providence—*acting through natural laws and an angelic ministry*—to shift the scenes in this great theater of human hopes and achievements.

We have already observed that *the existence of the Odylic Force is not yet demonstrated*, and we may further remark that the demonstration is not likely to be given in our day. The phenomena observed by Von Reichenbach afford no decisive evidence on this point; nor did the learned Baron ever pretend

to have settled the question to his own satisfaction. He was far too modest, enlightened, and conscientious to assume what his unscrupulous successors—who have never so much as witnessed the repetition of one of his experiments—so dogmatically assert. We will here copy from the “Dynamics of Magnetism,” etc., what the Baron himself says, respecting the agent to which he gave the name Od or Odyle. The following extract is from page 175 :

Whether now this natural force extending over the Universe is a totally new, or a hitherto hidden modification of a known one, or whether it is a complication of some of the already known, in a still uncomprehended collocation—*this*, and much else of importance *that still remains in question*, I leave untouched for the present.

The Baron does not attempt to dispose of this matter in the succeeding portions of his treatise, but farther on, page 233, his inability to decide this fundamental question is again frankly and emphatically declared in the following explicit terms :

Whether Magnetism, Diamagnetism, and Od, shall one day prove *identical*, or solid distinctions shall remain between them, is a question of which *the solution appears to me to lie at present at a considerable distance*.\*

These extracts render it obvious that the alleged discoverer of the Odic Force, was never satisfied that he had made such a discovery, or indeed that any other imponderable than those previously recognized had been disclosed in the course of his experiments. The phenomena ascribed to Odyle were such as did not appear to conform to the known laws of electricity and magnetism. But animal life, voluntary motion, sensation and thought, all modify the action of these agents, and greatly diversify their phenomenal manifestations. Moreover, the Baron was not very

\* The Baron Charles Von Reichenbach, from whose work these passages are extracted, is the only author of any eminence who has pursued the subject experimentally, or otherwise, to any purpose. He is the alleged discoverer of the new force (?) and gave it the *odd* name it bears.

familiar with the developments in Animal Magnetism, and i certainly would not be difficult to account for many of his facts without admitting the existence of the agent to which he doubt- ingly refers them. We hardly need seek for other agents more subtile and powerful than electricity and magnetism, so long as these are universally diffused, and capable of producing the most stupendous results. With respect to the mysterious illumina- tions, it may be observed, that in the animal economy a process not unlike combustion is perpetually going on. Life, in a most essential sense, is a *fire* which radiates both heat and light. The luminous phenomena which highly sensitive persons per- ceive around all animal and human forms, may, therefore, natu- rally result from the gradual but constant combustion within them. It is well known that phosphureted hydrogen is disen- gaged in the processes of animal life, and that all material forms, the globe itself, and the great atmospheric ocean, are surrounded and pervaded by subtile elements, which, in certain states of material combination, naturally develop the phenomena of light and heat. Whether the luminous emanations referred to result from merely physical processes, or are influenced by the powers of thought and volition, it remains to be demonstrated that a newly discovered agent or force, hitherto unknown to science, is really concerned in their production.

President Mahan appears to regard his work as a scientific exposition of the Spiritual phenomena, but it is not probable that others will acknowledge its high pretensions. Science can not stand on vague conjectures or doubtful probabilities ; it must repose on the substantial foundation of demonstrated realities. Those, therefore, who presume to teach in the name of science must offer something better than speculative theories, and ex- positions founded on uncertain premises, and depending for their validity on agents and forces not yet known to exist, save in the human imagination. If they have nothing more tangible than their own airy fancies, or unwarrantable inferences from discov-

eries, heard of but not comprehended—they can have no valid right to a respectful hearing as teachers of positive knowledge. The author under review, in his pretended explanation, depends first and chiefly, as we have shown, on an agent that is not known *to be* in this world or any other. On this account the *savans* may be disposed to delay their recognition of his claims as a philosopher, until they can discover some *odd* force that will hold his arguments together, and sustain his vague and unfounded assumptions. In the meantime the President is worthy of a good place among those castle-builders whose logic is less reliable than our dreams.

#### REAL AND REPUTED POWERS OF ODYLE.

But suppose we admit, for the sake of the argument, that Odyle is a *fact* rather than a fiction; what, then, is it capable of doing? We can not pause here to trace its real or imaginary relations to all the phases of spiritual phenomena; nor is this either necessary or desirable. However, among the more important facts of the movement we will select, for our present purpose, the general class familiarly known as “*physical manifestations*.” This class comprehends the illustrations of what appears to be a spiritual agency exhibited in the mysterious movements of ponderable bodies. As Professor Mahan refers such phenomena to the Odic Force, we will institute a comparison, showing the nature of the accredited facts, and the insufficiency of the alleged cause to account for their occurrence. It is very well known that bodies weighing several hundred pounds are moved by an invisible power that is often well nigh irresistible; sometimes it is so violent and destructive, as to excite serious apprehensions; and yet, if we may judge from the results of the Baron’s experiments, the impalpable currents of this gentle and noiseless *aura* would scarcely ruffle the plumage of a turtle-dove. His experiments abundantly show that the odic flames are harmless as the glowworm’s light, and all the forces of this agent

might dance on the face of a waveless pool and not ripple its surface in a thousand years.

Again, smaller bodies are frequently hurled with remarkable force across the room, and with a momentum as great as if they were thrown from the right hand of a strong man. Let any one throw a ball a distance of fifty yards, and he will find that less than *ten seconds* are required for its passage. The invisible powers make things move with an equal or greater momentum. Now, how does it happen that the objects thus moved, far transcend in the rapidity of their motion, the greatest possible speed of the Od Force. That agent could never travel that distance, by the most frequented routes in Austria, in much less than *thirty seconds*, as will be perceived from the following brief statement, which is copied from the Baron's book, page 236 :

*"The transmission of Od in the best CONDUCTORS, as in metallic wires, goes on SLOWLY—twenty to forty seconds are required for a wire fifty yards long. Electricity traverses a million times longer space in immeasurably shorter time."*

Here is a difficult problem for Professor Mahan to solve. *Can an object move three times as fast as the motive power that propels it?* If it can not do this, the Baron's Od Force will never enable us to account for those mysterious movements of ponderable bodies, which so frequently occur in the presence of Spirit-mediums. According to the statement of Von Reichenbach, *thirty seconds* is the average time which Od requires by the best conductors, to go fifty yards. At this rate *it would travel one mile in something over a quarter of an hour!* A fast trotting horse would make the same distance—on a good road—in *two minutes and thirty-eight seconds*. Thus it appears that Odyle under the most favorable circumstances, gets over the ground *about as fast as an ox team!* And this is the agent (remember it may not exist at all) to which our author refers the modern miracles of strength and speed, and the still more "spiritual gifts" which were once reverently ascribed to a Divine source.

If President Mahan ever read the Baron's book, his time was manifestly thrown away. He betrays a lamentable ignorance of its contents. In his service, the Odic Force is made to perform a thousand impossibilities. So long as the Baron kept the creature shut up in the oppressive atmosphere of Vienna, its powers were extremely limited; but since its emigration to this country, its transcendent achievements have excited general attention and surprise. Under the tuition of our old friend, Dr. Richmond, it soon learned to "pump," "throw corn and cartridge boxes," and to get up "earthquakes;"\* Dr. Rogers improved its style as an author, cultivated its manners, and helped it to prophesy agreeably to natural laws and scientific principles; Brother Beecher sent it to the devil to mend its morals; but still finding it convenient to complete its education in Ohio, Odyle at length graduated at the Cleveland University, and received more degrees than the venerable President himself. Verily, the Odic Force of Von Reichenbach has quite lost its identity since our American sciolists have taken up the subject, and assayed to explain its phenomena and laws.

\* See Brittan and Richmond's Discussion.

## CHAPTER VII.

## THE AUTHOR TRIED BY HIS OWN PRINCIPLES.

FOR five years the Odic Force has been employed as a *pack-horse* to bear the most oppressive burdens, consisting of all strange, unknown and unaccountable things. During this period it has been subject to many masters, not one of whom has graduated his ideas and demands by the inherent capabilities of this agent. Most of the time the mysterious force (?) has been engaged by certain learned doctors and divines, who have depended on it to remove the Spiritual Manifestations out of their way, at the hazard of subverting, at the same time, the foundations of all revealed religion. President Mahan coerced this agent into his service, ostensibly for this purpose. On all occasions he has urged it to the performance of utter impossibilities, and has made it work among men more miracles of intelligence and power in five years than all the angels in Heaven have performed in fifteen centuries! In Austria Odyle was allowed to take its own course, and to move with great circumspection *at the rate of nearly four miles an hour*. In fact, it could only travel at that rate when it had no load, and there were no obstacles in the way. But in this country it has been made to move, comparatively speaking, enormous masses of dense matter,\* and even to go all the way from Massachusetts to Georgia and deliver a mes-

\* See the statement of Prof. David A. Wells of the Cambridge Laboratory, and others, which originally appeared in the *Springfield Republican*. Our author has copied this statement at length, into the work under review. (Pages 112—14.)



sage, in less than one hour.\* Indeed, ever since the gentle creature "came over" it has been constantly overloaded or driven beyond its utmost speed. This was especially the case at Jefferson and Cleveland, O., where Odyle was first bridled and spurred by Dr. Richmond, and at last loosely harnessed by our author to his crude and improbable speculations.

The views and efforts of the opposition have hitherto combined the greatest conceivable contrarieties. Each succeeding theory and hypothesis—generated where all doubts and infidelities are conceived and born—has been accepted for the time, and many skeptics have evinced a capacity to believe almost anything but the simple truth. In controverting their shallow pretences, and in characterizing the intrinsic nature and prevailing modes of the opposition, we of course earnestly desire to use dignified illustrations, such as best accord with the nature of our sublime Philosophy; but they are not, in all cases, well adapted to the time and the subject. In order to find appropriate illustrations, we are sometimes forced to descend from the sanctuary of Religion, the halls of Science, and the temples of Art, to scenes and objects of inferior interest and dignity. The opposition to Spiritualism never has been suggestive of great things. Whoever has observed the movements of our modern theologians and pseudo-philosophers, in their treatment of the subject, has perhaps been reminded of a *cotillion party*. Some skillful hand plays many tunes on the same instrument, while the others "balance," "cross over," and "hands all round," with a view to the fellowship of

\* On the evening of Feb. 2d, 1852, an invisible agent, claiming to be the spirit of Louisa McFarland, purported to be present at a circle convened in Lowell, Mass., and promised to convey a message, consisting of nineteen words, to Georgia. In less than one hour an invisible presence claiming to be Louisa, actually delivered that communication *verbatim* to a circle convened in the village of Atalanta, Ga. (See Brittan and Richmond's discussion, p. 289—90.) Also, consider several thousand well authenticated facts of a similar character, which have occurred in presence of reliable witnesses.

both science and theology. This may be a very pleasant amusement, and useful withal, provided one is familiar with *the figures*; but our author seems to have made an awkward blunder in his first performance—he tripped Moses and Aaron, stepped on the Apostles' toes, and excited unusual consternation among the brethren.\*

Let us see how the application of our author's principles will operate on the miracles of Moses. In the Jewish Scriptures we have an extraordinary account of the wonders alleged to have preceded the exodus of the Israelites. According to the record, the Egyptians were visited with many grievous plagues, owing to the oppressive conduct of their king, and his obstinate refusal to release the captive Hebrews. It is said that the miracles in Egypt were performed through the instrumentality or mediumship of Moses and Aaron. The reader is presumed to be familiar with the biblical history, and I need not therefore occupy space with extracts, but will briefly allude to such portions of the record as are material to the present elucidation. It was during an audience with Pharaoh that Aaron cast down his rod before the king, and it was transformed into a serpent. Thus the great trial of the occult powers of the Hebrews and the Egyptians commenced. The magicians were sent for, and they did the same thing "with their enchantments," every man's rod becoming a serpent. It is true that Aaron obtained an immediate advantage by causing his serpent to swallow all the others. The

\* It appears from information derived from several public and private sources, that some time last Spring, Prof. Mahan delivered a lecture in Cincinnati, introductory to a course, in which he admitted the facts in Spiritualism, and announced his second lecture for the ensuing evening. It is alleged that on the following day the clergy assembled for the purpose of a private interview with the lecturer, respecting his position. Those clerical advisers thought it *unsafe* for the President to continue his course, *if he must admit the facts*—his mode of explaining them might not satisfy the people. Acting on the suggestions of those who thought it expedient to *deny the facts*, our author went home, and the audience, on the second night *did likewise*.

magicians, however, successfully imitated Moses in turning the waters of Egypt into blood, destroying the fishes, and in producing innumerable frogs. But in the effort to bring forth *lice* the magicians failed, after which they seem to have retired from the contest, leaving to Moses the undisputed possession of the field.

The preceding statement is sufficiently explicit for our purpose, and we may now apply the "test principles." Prof. Mahan insists that *no* mysterious phenomena "are to be referred to any supernatural or *ab extra* Spirit cause," which *resemble* other phenomena that are known to proceed from natural or mundane causes. It appears from the original record that the Egyptians produced serpents and frogs; they also turned water into blood, and destroyed the fishes—all by the intervention of certain magic arts. So many of Moses' miracles must, therefore, be ascribed to magic. Thus far, our author's "test principles" make a mere magician of the great Hebrew. But what of the other wonders which were not paralleled by the Egyptians? Of these it may be truthfully asserted that the magicians left most of them *untried*. What might or might not have resulted from a series of experiments under favorable circumstances, we are hardly qualified to judge. The fact that they brought forth frogs seems, at least, to afford presumptive evidence that they might also have produced flies and locusts, unless it can be shown that it requires more power to create the latter than the former, which certainly does not appear from the nature of the case.

But we need not call Philosophy to our aid, since the President has already disposed of the balance of Moses' miracles. He assures us most emphatically, that if any facts really occur that are "unaccountable on any mundane hypothesis," such facts "are not to be attributed to any *ab extra* causes whatever." How, then, are they to be disposed of? Here is Prof. Mahan's answer, as published in his book, (page 39.)

"Such facts manifestly lie in the track of scientific discovery, and we must suppose them to be the result of mundane causes which are yet to be

*discovered, though at present unknown to us.*" (The italicising is our own.)

This covers all the miracles that were remaining on hand, and leaves nothing further to be done at present. By the decision of the President, as many miracles as were successfully imitated by the magicians, are appropriately referred to *magic*; *all others are ordered to lie on the table until we discover the mundane causes.*" In the meantime, it is made to appear that if the Jewish law-giver knew what he was about, he was preëminently skilled in *natural magic*, but he must be regarded as an impostor, so far as he assumed to act under Divine authority. If Moses survives this application of the "test principles" it will naturally be inferred that he is immortal.

In the further application of the "test-principles" to the spiritual phenomena of the Bible, we shall avoid entering into unnecessary details which might occupy the reader's time, and our space, to little or no purpose. It will be sufficient if we select several *classes* of the more important facts, and briefly show that the acknowledgment of their spiritual origin is incompatible with our author's position. If their claims are utterly demolished, or essentially impaired by *the principles*, the President is responsible for the damages. If our "blind guides" are determined to stumble over the facts that "lie in the track of scientific discovery," they must abide the consequences. Experimenting with the motive powers is ever attended with danger, especially to new beginners, and original enterprises are liable to fail for want of adequate encouragement. This is all the more likely to occur if the business be "extra hazardous." Manufacturing and vending theological torpedoes to blow up modern Orthodoxy, and to explode the ancient miracles, is certainly a novel enterprise for a Christian minister, which seems to be fraught with extensive mischief.

The Scripture writers record many remarkable examples of the operation of mysterious agents in moving ponderable bodies. Elisha caused the iron to swim; a Spirit or Angel rolled the

stone away from the door of the sepulcher of Jesus; an angel from the Invisible World shook the dungeon walls at Philippi, opened the doors, and released the prisoners; and the author of the Acts of the Apostles distinctly implies that Philip of Cæsarea was spirited away from Gaza, and carried bodily to Azotus. Did Od Force take on angelic forms and do all those things? Are we to believe that it diminished the specific gravity of iron, and caused it to float over Jordan? Did that gentle agent, that had not the power to disturb the wings of an Austrian fly, move heavy bolts and bars, and even produce an earthquake in Macedonia? And, finally, did Odyle transform itself into an aerial chariot for the Cæsarean deacon, and then draw itself and a passenger a distance of thirty miles? All this and more is virtually assumed by the President. Bodies, probably much heavier than the stone at the sepulcher (that was rolled by one man) are now moved. In this city *seven or eight hundred pounds* have been moved by the invisible powers, in presence of a number of our most intelligent citizens. Our author insists that these things are now done by the transcendent powers of Od. It will be readily conceded, that if Odyle has any real existence, *it is a mundane agent*. What, then, shall be said of the "analagous facts" just cited from the Jewish and Christian Scriptures? Here is what the author under review says, in his fifth test proposition:

If similar and analogous facts do arise from purely mundane causes, it is a violation of all the laws and principles of science and common-sense, to attribute these phenomena to any *ab extra* cause whatever.

But Odyle, acting under Prof. Mahan's instructions, may shed some light on the *luminous phenomena* of the Bible. Moses saw a bush burn, but it was not consumed; a pillar of fire appeared to all Israel, as they journeyed through the wilderness by night; Peter's prison was mysteriously illuminated; Paul saw "a light above the brightness of the sun, shining round about him;" and while Peter was preaching to an immense congregation, "there appeared unto them cloven tongues *like as*

*of fire*, and it sat upon each of them." Similar phenomena now frequently occur. Mysterious lights shoot like brilliant meteors through many private apartments; rooms are gradually illuminated at midnight; while flame-like emanations play over the heads of mediums and others. According to President Mahan these phenomena primarily and proximately depend on Odyle. He insists that a mundane cause has been discovered. Odyle being a natural agent, has probably existed ever since Nature was instituted. It was, therefore, on hand in season to have been presented at the meeting on the day of Pentecost, and might have appeared to Moses. One point, at least, seems to be definitely settled. The "test principles," will not allow us to refer those ancient wonders to any other cause. Please notice what the author affirms in his fourth fundamental proposition.

Even those facts for the occurrence of which no mundane causes at present known, can be assigned, are not to be attributed to any *ab extra* causes whatever, or to the agency of disembodied Spirits, when such facts are *similar and analogous* in their essential characteristics, to other facts *for which science discovered actual mundane causes*.

Thus the erudite Professor puts his extinguisher on the spiritual lights of the former dispensations, while with a serious seeming—more ludicrous far than any ordinary burlesque—he labors with great apparent sincerity and earnestness to vindicate the claims of Revelation!

We learn from the New Testament that many persons in the first century were subject to the influence of ignorant, disorderly and "dumb spirits," and that it was a part of the business of the early Christian teachers to cast out the "unclean spirits." It is well known that some persons are influenced in like manner at the present time. Now, if Odyle occasions such mischief in these days, may it not also have been similarly employed in former ages? If a mere natural agent can personate a demon, or "play the evil one" for the Americans, it is quite probable that the same agent appeared in that character before the Jews.

The author of "Modern Mysteries Explained and Exposed" vindicates the propriety of this conclusion. He insists that Science has discovered "mundane causes" for the modern phenomena; also that "*it contradicts the principles of science and common sense to refer any analogous facts to any supernatural or ab extra Spirit-cause whatever.*"

While Peter was preaching a mysterious gift was imparted to those who listened, and the strangers assembled from among many different nations "began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." Christians profess to believe that the startling and wonderful phenomena on that occasion resulted from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the multitude. But the modern media for Spiritual Intercourse frequently speak and write in languages to them unknown, the examples of this class being numerous and the facts undeniable. One author admits that such facts occur, and the following brief extract from his book (pages 291—2) will show how they are disposed of:

Some mediums speak and write in languages with which they are totally unacquainted. Now we affirm in general that no argument can be legitimately deduced from such facts—their reality being admitted—in favor of Spiritualism, for the obvious reason that precisely similar facts occur from known mundane causes. Here, as we have already observed, lies the great error of Spiritualists in all their facts and reasonings. They have entirely overlooked the fundamental and undeniable principle, that they must adduce facts which never result from the action of exclusively mundane causes, before they can infer, as even probable, the conclusion of an *ab extra* Spirit-agency in the production of any phenomena. . . .

This arrogant assumption that Spirits after leaving the body, must think and act as they never thought and acted before, we have already refuted in the Fourth Chapter of our Review. In this connection it is only necessary to call the reader's attention to the peculiar position of the Rev. Professor. He strenuously insists that such facts as we have just noticed, do now proceed from "known mundane causes," and that we can not, therefore,

"infer, as even probable, the conclusion of an *ab extra* Spirit-agency in the production of any phenomena" of a similar character. Thus the Spirit that descended and moved the "devout men, out of every nation under heaven," on the day of Pentacost *is cast out* by a modern Christian divine!

It is unnecessary to pursue the subject further. The foregoing remarks, by way of application, will suffice to show that President Mahan, Odyle, and the "test principles," are equally fatal to the just claims of all the spiritual facts in the Bible. Science is also maltreated. The author refers the greatest contrarieties in physical and mental phenomena, to the same natural cause, and then intimates somewhat distinctly, that his heterogeneous conglomeration is rather a scientific affair.

The present writer has been accustomed to speak plainly of popular theological errors, to scrutinize the pretensions of religious teachers, and to subject all dogmas, creeds, rituals, and philosophies to a fair and fearless ordeal. But the great essential facts and principles of Inspiration, and the revelation of occult, Spiritual and Divine Powers, in the production of various extraordinary phenomena—usually characterized as miraculous—he has ever defended from a deep religious conviction. That such revelations were made to the Jews and early Christians, I have never doubted. Indeed, I deem it to be irrational and absurd to refer such facts, as have been cited from the ancient Scriptures, to mere human and mundane agents. In my judgment they are disclosures from the Invisible World. If I do not take *the letter* of the record as an infallible authority, or credit the superficial and contradictory exegeses of modern divines. I nevertheless most cordially admit the trans-mundane origin of many of the Jewish and Christian mysteries.

President Mahan has aimed a daring blow at the very foundations of the Church, and has done more to discredit and dishonor the claims of revealed Religion than any Infidel author of modern times. You can readily excuse the person who accident



tally knocks you over, but what shall we think of the individual who, while he is your honored guest, deliberately removes the underpinning of your house, and permits it to tumble down over your own head? This is what our author has done, or is trying to do, for his brethren in the Church! They begin to see it, and will yet feel obliged to the reviewer for repelling this disguised but dangerous assault on the faith of the Christian world.

## CHAPTER VIII

## RECAPITULATION.—CONCLUSION.

IN bringing this Review to a close, it is thought that a brief recapitulation may assist the reader's memory, and thus enable the mind to comprehend in one view the ground we have occupied. In this chapter, however, we shall not refer to the specific points discussed, but merely to the general ideas and prominent phases of the subject.

CHAPTER I—II. After referring, by way of introduction, to the egotism and weakness of the opposition generally, and to the arrogance and sophistry of our author in particular, we proceeded, in the Second Chapter, to consider the implied charge that the modern media for Spiritual Intercourse are all *impostors*. The essential elements of what constitutes imposture, and the general characteristics of the media were briefly designated and defined. From this examination and comparison it did not appear that the latter were characterized by the attributes of the former; but rather that our genuine Spirit-media are as sincere and truthful as any other class of citizens—not even excepting the very devout opposers of the New Reformation. In the first part of Prof. Mahan's book, Mr. Davis and his "Nature's Divine Revelations" are unfairly and rudely assailed; hence, in the corresponding portion of our Review, particular reference was made to the early life and extraordinary powers of Mr. Davis; and also to the intrinsic character and spirit of the Revelations. By a dispassionate appeal to actual facts the charge of imposture was refuted, and the obvious injustice of its author fairly exposed. Moreover, it was observed that nothing is done to overthrow

Spiritualism by trying to prove that Mr. D. or some other man *is not perfect*, and that the revelations of Spirit-media contain *errors*, since Spiritualists do not believe that there *are* any infallible men or revelations. Will our clerical friends, therefore, please to save themselves any further labors in this direction? We certainly have no idea that the *absolute truth* can be embodied in human language; much less do we imagine that the best part of it has already been stereotyped and sold for two dollars.

CHAPTER III.—In the Third Chapter we took up, successively, six of the author's propositions, relating to questions of fundamental importance in the present controversy between Spiritualists and their opposers. These were in substance as follows:—1. It is the purpose of Spiritualists to *substitute* the modern for the ancient revelations; 2. The Bible is a perfect revelation; 3. The canonical Scriptures all emanated in an especial manner, from the Infinite Spirit; 4. The peculiar mission of the Spirits is to supplant the Bible; 5. The modern revelations are not adapted to the necessities of humanity in any possible sense; 6. We have not the least evidence that the current manifestations sustain any relation whatever to the Spirit-world. On these points the author's assumptions were severally examined, compared with the real facts, and proved to be groundless inventions, without so much as a respectable appearance to recommend them to favor.

CHAPTER IV.—President Mahan's "test principles," comprehended in five separate propositions, were reviewed in our Fourth Chapter. The author of the propositions declares that they are "universally recognized as self-evident;" on the contrary, the present writer undertook to prove that they are all indefinite, ambiguous, and false. It now remains for the candid reader to decide whether the truth or the error of the propositions referred to, is most conspicuous.

CHAPTER V.—A brief historical account of the discoveries in Animal Magnetism and Animal Electricity, from the time of

Mesmer, Galvani, and Volta occupied our attention in the Fifth Chapter. Respecting the nature of the magnetic phenomena it clearly appeared, from the results obtained by Dr. Esdaile and in a greater or less degree by all other experimenters, that *sensation* may be controlled, increased, diminished, and even wholly suspended by the magnetizer ; also that clear sight and the perception of spiritual beings are among the incidental developments of the magnetic sleep. The observations of Cahagnet and the experiments of Baron Von Reichenbach were noticed in this connection, and the Chapter concluded with a brief analysis and suggestions respecting the nature and import of the essential facts. It was the chief object, in this part of our work to ascertain whether the scientific discoveries in these departments afford any warrant for the assumption that the Spiritual Manifestations proceed from Animal Electricity, Vital Magnetism, or the Odic Force.

CHAPTER VI.—In this part of our Review it was shown that the agents referred to in Chapter Five had never been known to produce any of the more extraordinary results which are now ascribed to the presence and powers of departed Spirits. The essential laws and phenomenal manifestations of those material agents were briefly considered ; the facts in Spiritualism were observed to violate those laws, and to immeasurably transcend the capabilities of mere physical forces and the powers of the human mind in its earthly relations. Respecting the Odic Force it was made to appear, as well from the explicit testimony of Baron Von Reichenbach himself as from the intrinsic nature of the phenomena, that *we have no positive knowledge of the existence of any such agent* ; and that all the facts observed by the Baron may ultimately be ascertained to result from various mental and material combinations, and the modified electro-magnetic states and relations of the system. Upon the presumption that Odyle is a *distinct agent* in Nature, it was proved, rather clearer than ordinary daylight, that the phenomena ascribed to it

transcend its utmost capacity, by a degree that admits of no comparison.

CHAPTER VII.—With a view to a still plainer exhibition of the material and infidel tendencies of Prof. Mahan's book we next proceeded—Chapter Seven—to apply his “test principles,” and his principal agent, to the mysterious phenomena of the Jewish and Christian Revelations. From this experiment it was made manifest, either that the spiritual claims of that book are a stupendous fiction, or that the author may be one of the “blind guides.” Indeed it must be sufficiently obvious to every person of ordinary discernment, that Prof. Mahan virtually destroys the foundations of his own theology, at the same time he strikes with inconsiderate and reckless haste—under the influence of a blind, misguided zeal—at the revelations of all ages and nations, including Christianity, which is thus “crucified afresh and put to an open shame” in the very presence and the home of its professed disciples.

It was not without considerable hesitation and strong feelings of reluctance—from a growing distaste for this kind of labor—that we commenced our strictures on the President's book. But having undertaken the labor of the Review, the writer has not felt at liberty to diminish the force of what he had to say by that morbid love of excessive gentleness which has sometimes made stronger minds feeble in their most labored efforts. It has been our earnest desire to honor the truth and to be just to the author. It was the writer's object, as previously intimated, to show that President Mahan's fundamental principles and positions are *unstable and false*, and that his chief agent is *unreal or impotent*. If all this is made manifest, it is enough, and our purpose is accomplished. His particular facts, specific statements, and special pleading in “petty causes,” may pass for what they are worth. The author's principal securities having failed, his small note must of course be taken at a heavy discount, and indeed if taken at all will need to be indorsed this side of the state of Ohio.

In the concluding portion of his book the author reviews Swedenborg and discusses, at considerable length, the claims of the Bible to Divine inspiration and authority. It was never our intention to follow him through the third and fourth parts of his work. So far as their contents are intrinsically opposed to the just claims of a rational and spiritual philosophy, we feel assured that the author's object will not be realized, but that his labors will prove ineffectual. His argument for the Scriptures might have influenced some minds had it not been preceded by the argument against Spiritualism, which is sufficient to neutralize the influence of all that he has ever spoken or written to vindicate the truth of inspiration, whether ancient or modern. It is strange that just at this crisis, when the old Materialism was ready to perish, without so much as the hope of a resurrection to mitigate the severity of the last struggle, our Reverend friend should come to rescue the dying. Yet such is the fact. He summons from silent and unknown retreats, a thousand infidels ; all skeptics and doubters and many reckless and profane men, who want no angelic watchers to scrutinize their conduct, come up from their cold, oblivious abodes. He arms them all with new and more formidable weapons, and sends them forth to strangle a new-born faith ; to battle against Revelation, and to crush the world's fresh hopes. Will they not contend bravely with such a chief at their head ? Not only does he put weapons in the hands of his soldiers and teach them to use the same, but he also strikes the first and the fiercest blow.

I see a broken Altar whereon the fires are partially extinguished. Truth stands at some distance, with veiled and averted face. A long muscular arm is thrust out from beneath the altar ; it moves irregularly, and stabs at the fair, immovable form with a strange abnormal energy. And now, the man whose right arm was used to strike the blow comes forth from under the broken altar ; he stands erect, and speaks for the Bible, for inspiration, and for miracles. He reverently uncovers his head when he refers to

Moses and the Prophets, and bows obsequiously before the effigies of the Apostles. That man defends Revelation! For some reason I am impressed to say, that such a defense, at this time, and from such a champion, will do as much for Revelation as a coat of varnish would have done to mend the walls of Sevastopol when the bombardment was over—*it will cause the ruins to shine*. The scene changes. The Angel of a new dispensation approaches the broken altar to rekindle the waning fires. The radiant form stands uncovered in the presence of the man whose mission is to defend Revelation. The fair creature is glowing with the beauty of young life, and the freshness of the Spiritual Eden is on her cheek. The man with the long muscular arm looks sternly as he approaches the bright messenger. He strikes down the living form; and while the dust from his sandals stains the polished brow and the sinless bosom, he goes forth to galvanize the dead bodies of his remote ancestors!





# Appendix.

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## APPENDIX A.

### LETTER FROM ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS.

WE publish below an interesting letter from Mr. A. J. Davis, elicited, as the reader will perceive, by a recent private interview between the writer and the Editor of this paper. Our meeting was fortuitous, and the conversation related chiefly to a charge contained in President Mahan's late work, and to which reference was made in a note appended to the second chapter of our Review of the President's book. Mr. Davis gives a frank and satisfactory explanation of the circumstance which constitutes the flimsy and yielding foundation of this libelous charge. The temper of his reply is in striking contrast with the spirit exhibited by his Reverend assailant, and *the uncircumcised in heart* might even suspect that the latter had relapsed into infidelity, whilst the former had "put on Christ." The subjoined letter is the calm utterance of one who stands firmly on what he conceives to be the principles of Nature; and while he respires in the atmosphere of natural freedom, he counts all mortal frailties and human transactions—which determined for the individual his personal

reputation and present position—as ephemeral circumstances, in themselves insignificant and powerless before the Truth.

BROOKLYN, October 16, 1855.

TO S. B. BRITTAN :

*My Esteemed Friend*—From our private conversation last evening, relative to the recent publication against the spiritual origin of “Modern Mysteries,” by Pres. Mahan, I gathered a *thought* which, still lingering with me this morning, has attained sufficient importance to prompt the writing of this letter.

In justice to myself as a man, and not less to my many friends, you think I should take some notice of, and explain a *circumstance* reported by Mahan—a statement involving a question of personal veracity, which, so far as his influence as an honorable man extends, may be believed to my individual disadvantage, and thus retard the advancement important principles.

The sentiments and expressions employed by Pres. Mahan, in the report referred to, compel me to believe that he obtained his charge of “deliberate” imposition from remarks in a Cleveland paper, (the *Herald*) which, because of its many insufficient and unscrupulous allegations against Spiritualism and its receivers, deserved, as I then thought, and still think, not to be honored with a single line of rebuke or vindication from parties thus assailed. The charge is in brief, (as already stated by you in the first chapter of your able Review) that while delivering a public address in Cleveland, I suddenly stopt, went into one of my favorite states of abstraction, and then “professed to the audience to have a vision” of Horace Mann’s lecture on “Woman;” that I then delivered a “spirit-stirring paragraph,” which, being ended, was pronounced by a gentleman in the auditory to be *verbatim* from a condensed reported of a speech published in a recent *New York Tribune*. Pres. Mahan seems to urge the newspaper reports as facts, because “they have never been contradicted or explained by Davis or his friends.”

[We omit such portions of Mr. Davis’ letter as are non-essential to the completeness of his explanation.—S. B. B.]

But to my explanation. It is true that I was delivering a course of lectures in Cleveland. My subject was one which concerned the sexes equally—being a definition of their relative positions in the order of creation. It is also true that, while in the midst of my subject, I hesitated, and remarked “that it would be interesting to know what a public teacher, like Horace Mann, had to say on the rights of women

and relation of the sexes." (The audience, as well as I, knew that Mr. Mann was announced to lecture soon on that subject.) Hence, there was nothing irrelevant or marvelous in alluding to him, or to what he might teach on that question. It is likewise true that I stood quiet for a few moments—during which I obtained (by *impression*, not by clairvoyance) what I understand to be an abstart of Mr. Mann's views. In a few brief detached sentences, I gave the audience my impressions—saying: "Such I receive as a correct rendering of his sentiments, but whether right or wrong, those who will hear Mr. Mann's lecture may determine." Whereupon a gentleman arose and affirmed that he had read substantially the same in the *New York Tribune*. President Mahan says that I was "taken all aback by such an announcement." The truth is just the contrary, for I was gratified; feeling that my impression was more accurate than I expected to get in the excitement of a public assembly.

Now, you see, my friend, that I made no profession of reading the lecture by "vision," nor did I attach any importance to that psychological transaction. But the *Cleveland Herald* reported a foolish account of my "pretensions," "attempts," "mistakes," etc.; and because I did not bestir myself to correct a bit of prejudicial gossip, this President Mahan considers it a settled fact, implying "deliberate" imposition, and sufficient to overthrow a series of clairvoyant disclosures which pertain to my past history. This attack I have valued as of no practical consequence, and will be disregarded by every careful reader of President Mahan. His work is a materialistic house, built with timbers hewn by other hands, decorated with

" Rich windows that exclude the light,  
And passages that lead to nothing."

In closing, allow me again to urge the conviction that the Harmonial Philosophy is a matter resting upon no personal idiosyncracies or local attestation. It is founded on the Laws of Nature—aiming at the harmonization of the *Individual* first, and the reconstruction of *Society* upon natural principles. You may rest, therefore, my friend, with my assurance, that all the time, talent and tongue expended upon me as an individual Teacher of this Philosophy, will be as ammunition wasted on the open air. Because the friends of the Harmonial Brotherhood (which begins on earth, and ramifies through infinite spheres,) acknowledge no authority save NATURE and no Gospel which can not be read unmistakably on the divine Constitution of Things. And I shall not complain, even if I shall stand first in the battle; and be the *fulcrum* on which

the *lever* of REASON may operate upon the foundations of ignorance and superstition.

I am your friend,

A. J. DAVIS.

OUR EXPLANATION.—On recurring to the second chapter of our Review of Professor Mahan's book, we find that our language, in reply to the author's attack on Mr. Davis, was not sufficiently guarded or explicit, and that certain expressions in the last paragraph of that chapter, may cause other persons to misapprehend the nature of our feelings and intentions. It was observed that we had formerly known Mr. Davis intimately, and as an uncorrupted child of Nature; that we had been less familiar with him during the last six years, and could not positively affirm how far, if at all, the powers of this world, which lead most men astray might also have modified his disposition and character.

Now, it should be added, as an all-sufficient reason why we have been less familiar or late, that whereas Mr. Davis was formerly a member of our own family circle, for the last six years our paths with respect to local relations have diverged, our residences have been in different cities, and, during a great portion of the time, in different *States*, so that our opportunities for personal intercourse have been necessarily circumscribed. Of course we do not presume to assert precisely what any man is doing, at a given time, unless we are present to witness his deportment; but in our former remarks, *we had no reference to any particular transaction in the life of Mr. Davis, save the one referred to by Professor Mahan*, which the foregoing letter explains, as clearly as it verifies what we said of his accuser at the commencement of our Review, viz:—that Professor Mahan is equally unscrupulous in his methods, whether the opinion of an individual or his reputation is to be disposed of.

## APPENDIX B.

To indicate the general estimate of President Mahan's labors we have concluded to embody in this publication some extracts from the notices which have appeared in the public journals. In the New York *Daily Times*, which certainly will not be accused of any undue partiality for Spiritualism, the following notice appeared :

Rev. A. Mahan, first president of Cleveland University, has published a volume on "Spiritualism," which he calls *Modern Mysteries Explained and Exposed*. To us Spiritualism has always been a mystery—but Mr. Mahan's explanation and exposition leave it a mystery still. We have vainly endeavored to understand what his own views are. He talks of the "Odylic Force," as accounting for all the Spirit phenomena, but supposing that we decline accepting this Odylic Force, on his word, (i. e. refuse his *petitio principii*,) where is his argument? Mr. Mahan claims to have "now satisfactorily explained" the mystery that has hitherto hung around the manifestations of Spiritualism, and to have produced "a work which would stand the most rigid test of criticism." We sigh for some means of explaining the explanation, and we do not attempt rigid or any other criticism on a book which we find it impossible to understand. By the way, Mr. Mahan, who quotes the lines commencing :

" Within that awful volume lies  
The mysteries of mysteries,"

as having been *written* by Byron in a blank leaf of his pocket Bible, is apparently ignorant that they were *composed* by Scott, and introduced by him into one of the *Waverley Novels*—*The Abbot*, we believe.

From an editorial notice which appeared in the Springfield (Mass.) *Republican* we extract the following:

That Spiritualism is becoming a power in the religious world, is evident from the production of this formidable volume against it—for-

midable, at least, in size—but in its tendency and effects it is a perfect godsend to Spiritualists. President Mahan admits the facts that occur in what is called spiritual intercourse, and attributes them, not to Satanic agency, but to a polar or odyllic force, a certain mysterious something, not in the smallest degree made appreciable by any number of Greek names that may be given to it. The same unknown force he considers the source of clairvoyance, premonition, witchcraft, and other like unsolved riddles of human experience.

From Putnam's Monthly, for October, 1855 :

**MODERN MYSTERIES EXPLAINED AND EXPOSED.**—Dr. Mahan, of Ohio, has undertaken to give the finishing blow to the theories of the Spiritualists, as those people call themselves who ascribe the curious phenomena of rappings, etc., to an ultra-mundane origin. He requires nearly five hundred closely printed pages to do it in, but when the reader gets to the end of them, he feels that some light has been thrown upon the subject, or upon particular branches of it, but that as a whole, the matter remains quite as involved as it was before.

It will be perceived that the Newburyport *Herald*, from which we extract the following notice, takes the same view respecting the material and infidel tendencies of Prof. Mahan's book that we have expressed in our Review :

**MODERN MYSTERIES EXPLAINED AND EXPOSED.**—Such is the attractive title of a 466 page book, by Rev. A. Mahan, President of the Cleveland University, that has been presented to us for a notice. Who has it for sale in this section we can't say ; but if anybody sells it for what the paper was worth before printed, they will wrong the purchaser. We have scarcely met with a more superficial, irrational and baseless production in our wanderings among printed documents.

We have no love for what they call Spiritualism. It is a phenomenon that has always been known in some degree, but more especially shows itself now, from causes that we do not care to "explain or expose." If the revelations can be connected with Spirits, they might serve the purpose of convincing infidels of spiritual existences separate from physical matter, but what they say or do, if they be Spirits, is not of great importance beyond, since their revelations are often false, come from what source they may, and hence form no basis for faith or action. If we were left to judge of their being produced by Spirits from the volume before us, we should certainly conclude that they were. He

admits as facts all that believers claim—that substances can be moved without direct visible contact—that raps may be had, distinct and audible ; and that intelligent answers may be obtained to verbal or mental questions. The whole ground assumed he yields, and then attempts an explanation. What is that ?

To a great extent President Mahan here repeats what has been as well stated a hundred times before ; and finally he comes to the grand secret of the matter—it is all caused by the “Odylic Force,” which he says is a well known cause that may produce all these effects. Now certainly all ought to be satisfied ; the mystery is exposed ; it is the Odylic Force ! But, hark you, what is this Odylic Force ? To get rid of one mystery we have another ; we have thrown in as a positive entity, what philosophers have not acknowledged to exist. If five years ago they had asserted that tables were tipping, and chairs dancing, and people reading the thoughts we had never uttered, by an Odylic Force, President Mahan would have laughed at it, as most people will now. This explanation doubly confounds us. But suppose we admit the existence of this Odylic Force, and admit the phenomena, and attribute it to that force ; what do we then but acknowledge that by it, while in the body, one man’s spirit can communicate with another, independent of all physical organizations ? That is what President Mahan says. But if that be the case, why can’t they just as well communicate together out of the body by this same force ? And what have you then but what is claimed by these Spiritualists, who sit and talk with the dead by the hour ? We repeat, then, that Mr. Mahan, in this very work, has admitted all that his opponents could ask ; and if this theory spreads and obtains converts, and his orthodox ideas come into bad repute, he may thank himself, and when the Church wants to try anybody for treason to their creed, they may put him into the prisoner’s box, and his own writings will be evidence against him.

The *New Church Herald*, which is opposed to Modern Spiritualism, expresses its opinion of the book as follows :

This book, to which we have already briefly referred, scarcely deserves a notice favorable or otherwise. For loud sounding but shallow pretense, we have seldom seen its equal. The writer is evidently treating upon subjects that he has not diligently studied, determining the merits of books that he has never read, and discussing doctrines about which he knows little or nothing.

PROF. BUSH in his *Repository* thus briefly and fitly characterizes the book :

It is on the whole an extremely impotent, though sufficiently malicious, assault, in which it is evident he has read next to nothing of the writings, but takes his objections second-hand from the prior works of Pond and Woods, at the same time utterly ignoring the replies that have been made to them—always a gross violation of the laws of fair controversy.



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