

NEW CHURCH MISCELLANIES;

OR,

ESSAYS

ECCLESIASTICAL, DOCTRINAL AND ETHICAL,

BY GEORGE BUSH.

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## CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
THE PRIESTHOOD AND THE KINGSHIP, - - - - -	5
PREACHING, - - - - -	69
THE MINISTRY, - - - - -	82
THE N. J. MAGAZINE AND THE N. C. MINISTRY, - -	103
N. C. ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNMENT, - - - -	120
A TRAINED AND PROFESSIONAL CLERGY, - - - -	146
THE PARTY OF ORDER AND THE PARTY OF LIBERTY, - -	157
APHORISMS ON SLAVERY AND ABOLITION, - - - -	165
PSEUDO-SPIRITUALISM, - - - - -	239
SLEEP, - - - - -	289
THE N. C. SYSTEM REFERABLE SOLELY TO A DIVINE ORIGIN,	314
SWEDENBORG AND PAUL, - - - - -	369

## PSEUDO-SPIRITUALISM.

[N. C. Repository, July to December, 1852.]

- 1.—The Philosophy of Spiritual Intercourse ; being an Explanation of Modern Mysteries. By Andrew Jackson Davis. New York : Fowlers & Wells. 1851.
- 2.—The Great Harmonia. Vol. III. The Seer. By Andrew Jackson Davis. Boston : Mussey. 1852.
- 3.—History of the strange Sounds or Rappings, heard in Rochester and Western New York, and usually called the Mysterious Noises, which are supposed by many to be the Communications from the Spiritual World ; together with all the Explanation that can as yet be given of the Matter. Rochester : D. M. Dewey. 1850.
- 4.—The Signs of the Times ; comprising a History of the Spirit Rappings in Cincinnati and other Places ; with Notes of Clairvoyant Revelments. By Wm. T. Coggshall. Cincinnati : Bagley & Freeman. 1851.
- 5.—Elements of Spiritual Philosophy ; being an Exposition of Interior Principles. Written by Spirits of the Sixth Circle ; R. P. Ambler, Medium. New York : R. P. Ambler. 1852.
- 6.—Familiar Spirits, and Spiritual Manifestations ; being a Series of Articles by E. P. Supposed Dr. Enoch Pond, Professor in the Bangor Theological Seminary. Together with a Reply, by Veriphilos Credens. Boston : Bela Marsh. 1852.
- 7.—Voices from the Spirit World ; being Communications from many Spirits, by the hand of Isaac Post, Medium. Rochester : 1852.
- 8.—Light from the Spirit World ; comprising a series of Articles on the condition of Spirits, and Development of Mind in the rudimental and second Spheres. Being written wholly by the control of Spirits, without Volition or Will by the Medium, or any Thought or Care in regard to the Matter presented by his Hand. C. Hammond, Medium. Rochester : 1852.
- 9.—The Pilgrimage of Thomas Paine, and others, to the Seventh Circle in the Spirit World. Rev. Charles Hammond, Medium. Rochester : Dewey. 1852.
- 10.—Lectures on Spiritualism ; being a Series of Lectures on the Phenomena and Philosophy of Development, Individualism, Spirit,

- Immortality, Mesmerism, Clairvoyance, Spiritual Manifestations, Christianity, and Progress. By J. Tiffany. Cleveland, Ohio. 1852.
- 11.—Philosophy of Modern Miracles, or the Relations of Spiritual Causes to Physical Effects; with especial reference to the Developments at Bridgeport, Conn., and elsewhere. By a "Dweller in the Temple." New York. 1850.
  - 12.—An Exposition and Explanation of the Modern Manifestations; comprising the Rappings, Movements, Writing Mediums, and various other Phenomena connected therewith; with extracts from different writers, of remarkable Instances of Presentiment, Prophecy, Visions, Clairvoyance, &c. &c. By Benjamin Franklin Cooley, the great Psychologist, and Independent Clairvoyant. Springfield, Mass. 1852.
  - 13.—Spiritual Philosopher (subsequently the Spirit World), devoted to the Exposition of Nature, Physical, Spiritual, and Divine, and to communications from the Spirit World. A weekly paper, edited by La Roy Sunderland. Boston. 1850-1. (Discontinued.)
  - 14.—The Shekinah; a Quarterly Review, devoted to the Emancipation of Mind; the Elucidation of Vital, Mental, and Spiritual Phenomena, and the Progress of Man. Conducted by S. B. Brittan. Nos. 1, 2, 3. Bridgeport. Conn. 1852.
  - 15.—The Spirit Messenger; a Semi-monthly Magazine, devoted to Spiritual Science, the Elucidation of Truth, and the Progress of Mind. Edited by the Spirits of the Sixth Circle; R. P. Ambler, Medium. Springfield, Mass., and New York. 1851-2.
  - 16.—Spiritual Telegraph; devoted to the Illustration of Spiritual Intercourse. Published weekly by Charles Partridge. New York. 1852.
  - 17.—The Crisis; devoted to building up the Lord's Church in true Life, Doctrine, and Order. A semi-monthly paper, edited by Rev. Henry Weller. Laporte, Ind. 1852.
  - 18.—Disclosures from the Interior, and Superior Care for Mortals. A semi-monthly paper, dictated by Apostles, Prophets, and other Spirits. Auburn, N. Y. 1851.
  - 19.—Spiritual and Moral Instructor. Semi-monthly. Auburn, N. Y. 1851. (Discontinued.)
  - 20.—History of the Origin of All Things, including the History of Man, from his Creation to his Finality, but not to his End. Written by God's holy Spirits, through an earthly Medium, L. M. Arnold, of Poughkeepsie, N. Y. Printed at his expense, published by direction of the Spirits, and, in God's will, submitted to a holy and searching Criticism from every earnest Seeker after Truth. For sale by all Booksellers who desire to forward the Work of God's Redemption of man from Ignorance, Fear, and torturing Doubt. Amen. In the year of God's grace, 1852.



- 21.—Observations on the Theological Mystery ; the Harmonial Philosophy, and Spirit Rappings ; with an Appendix concerning Freemasonry. By the Author of " Millennial Institutions and the Seventh Seal." Hartford, Conn. 1851.
- 22.—Open Intercourse with the Spiritual World ; its Dangers, and the Cautions which they naturally suggest. By B. F. Barrett. Boston. 1845.
- 23.—A History of the recent Developments in Spiritual Manifestations in the city of Philadelphia ; by a Member of the first Circle, instituted in the month of October, 1850. Philadelphia : G. S. Harris. 1851.
- 24.—Spiritual Instructions, received at one of the Circles formed in Philadelphia for the purpose of investigating the Philosophy of Spiritual Intercourse. Published for the benefit of the Harmonial Benevolent Association. Philadelphia : A. Comfort. 1852.
- 25.—Spiritual Experience of Mrs. Lorin P. Platt, of Newtown, Conn., with Spiritual Impressions annexed. Written while subjected to the Influence of a Circle of Spirits, with directions to publish to the World. New Haven : H. B. Benham. 1852.
- 26.—Mental Alchemy : A Treatise on the Mind, Nervous System, Psychology, Magnetism, Mesmerism, and Diseases. In twelve chapters. By B. Brown Williams, M. D. New York : Fowlers & Wells. 1852.
- 27.—The Approaching Crisis ; being a review of Dr. Bushnell's recent Lectures on Supernaturalism. By Andrew Jackson Davis. New York : Redfield, and others. 1852.
- 28.—An Exposition of the Views respecting the principal Facts, Causes, and Peculiarities involved in Spirit Manifestations ; together with interesting Phenomena, Statements, and Communications. By Adin Ballou. Boston : B. Marsh. 1852.
- 29.—Philosophy of Mysterious Agents, Human and Mundane ; or the Dynamic Laws and Relations of Man ; embracing the Natural Philosophy of Phenomena, styled " Spiritual Manifestations." By E. C. Rogers. In Five Numbers. No. I. Boston : Redding & Co. 1852.

It will surprise us if a large portion of our readers is *not* surprised at the above array of works recently accumulated in the department of Spiritualism so called. They cannot well but wonder that a new literature, if not a new science, has sprung into being with those singular physical developments that, within a few years, have so startled the repose of a sensuous scepticism, by bringing the world of spirits into close proximity with

the world of matter. It is mainly with the view of making our readers acquainted with the fact of these numerous issues of the press, bearing upon the so-termed spiritual manifestations, that we have cited the above long roll of titles. We have no design of a formal review, or a specific account of the contents of any of them. They are of various value, from zero upwards and downwards. Admitting the authenticity of the narratives, it would be difficult to conceive anything more intrinsically trifling and insipid than the communications professedly derived from many of these tenants of the higher spheres. If such a thing as "spiritual twaddle" could be predicated or imagined of the spiritual world, we should have no farther to seek for the appropriate term by which to characterize a large portion of these ghostly utterances. Of others of them we should be bound in justice to give a somewhat more favorable character. But of none of them can we say that they are of any special importance to any; while to the man of the New Church, they are, the very best of them, mere lispings, babblings, and badinage. That oracles of more moment are sometimes uttered in private circles we are inclined to believe; but taking the published documents as a specimen, we can say of them little else than that "it needed no ghost to tell us that."

The subject, however, with all its abatements, is one of curious interest, and worthy the reflections and remarks which we purpose to bestow upon it. It is one which is pressing itself upon the attention of the public with great urgency at the present time, and from its bordering so closely upon the domain of the New Church, comes very legitimately within its survey. We are aware that there is in many quarters a strong impression that the man of the New Church is to keep himself entirely aloof from all contact with these phenomena; that he cannot approach them even for the purpose of investigation, without contracting a soil upon the purity of his spirit, or giving countenance to magical and diabolical proceedings; and that, therefore, our true motto is,

“Touch not, taste not, handle not.” “O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united.” For ourselves, however, we are but little troubled with scruples on this head. We recognize an astounding marvel in these spiritual manifestations, amply deserving the study of every enlightened mind. Nor do we know anything in the drift of the New Church teachings which would forbid the examination of natural or supernatural phenomena, because we might thereby stumble a weak brother or sister. It is only by becoming thoroughly acquainted with the manifestations in all their phases that we shall be best enabled to detect and expose their falsities and evils. To one who has paid much attention to the subject, nothing is more obvious than that Swedenborg figures largely in the alleged communications from the world of spirits. He is often referred to as a highly advanced spirit, sojourning in some of the supernal spheres, and a great master in all the mysteries of spirit-lore, but still so presented to view, as greatly to mislead those who have been hitherto strangers to his true character and his real mission. The mirror by which he is reflected in these revelations is one of such a waving and rugged surface that the image is awfully distorted. So far then as it is proper to correct erroneous impressions on this score, in behalf of the interests of the New Church, so far we think it incumbent on the advocate of our truths to acquaint himself with the phases of this singular demonstration. In like manner, if anything of a confirmatory character is to be drawn from this source, we know of thing to prevent our drawing it. It is from motives of this nature that we have given considerable attention to the subject, not as a pupil sitting at the feet of rapping Gamaliels, but as a judge deciding upon the evidence and bearing of a peculiar order of physical facts. Our present object is to state in brief some of the results of our inquisition; and

1. We have become satisfied of the reality of the phenomena; that is to say, that they are not the product

of fraud, collusion, legerdemain, or human contrivance of any kind. We are convinced that they are of a veritably preternatural origin. No theory of slight-of-hand or slight-of-foot will account for all the facts which are daily and hourly occurring in nearly every part of the country. To say nothing of the rigid scrutiny to which the whole matter has been subjected in the presence of the most intelligent and competent committees; nothing of the vast multiplication of mediums over the land, of many of whom the suspicion of trickery could not for a moment be entertained; what more incredible than that little children, in some cases, of not more than two or three years of age, should become parties to a stupendous scheme of deception, extended and ramified in a thousand directions, from one end of the Union to the other? What, again, shall be thought of the fact of which we are personally cognizant, that communications have been made in the Hebrew, Arabic, Sanscrit, and other languages; and that, too, under circumstances which absolutely forbid the supposition of any other than supernatural agency? We regard it, in fact, as entirely impossible to evade the proof that there are certain organizations or temperaments which enable those that possess them to become mediums of intelligent intercourse between the natural and spiritual planes of existence, and that such intercourse is daily being had in hundreds of circles formed for the purpose among all classes of the community.

2. The fact of these manifestations is in itself a very wonderful fact. We speak more especially of the table-knocking or table-tipping phenomena. Those attending the writing mediums are less impressive, as it is easier to refer them, in part at least, to a merely natural origin. One cannot be quite sure that the mind of the medium does not govern the responses. But to sit with a company around a table, and to have an undoubting assurance that there is an invisible power producing the mysterious sounds or motions, and to have the clearest evidence also of intelligence as well as power—to put inter-



rogations, and have them distinctly and pertinently answered by a presence veiled from mortal view—to have the signal call for the alphabet given, and sentence after sentence slowly spelt out, indicating a perfect knowledge of the conversation going on in the circle, and interposing pertinent remarks, counsels, cautions, denials, qualifications, confirmations, informations, as the case may require, and yet the senses taking no cognizance of any persons speaking besides those who you are sure do not speak—all this, it must be confessed, is marvellous exceedingly when compared with the hitherto established course of human experience. We know, indeed, that this mode of manifestation by the rapping, or rocking, or removal of tables, not only stumbles faith, but provokes ridicule, with the mass of worldly men, as something utterly beneath the dignity of the dwellers of the spiritual spheres. Even those who ordinarily evince but precious little solicitude as to the estimate which may be formed of spirits, of their occupation, enjoyments, or ruling springs of action, become exceedingly jealous of their good repute and worthy proceedings when such a mode of physical agency is attributed to them. They seem to think it as much beneath their dignity to *move* tables, as it was deemed unbecoming to the chosen twelve in the primitive Christian church to “*serve* tables.” But it is certainly a very appropriate inquiry whether, supposing that a physical demonstration of any kind were to be made, what more convenient or satisfactory method could be adopted for the purpose. If such demonstrations be made in a house, and not out of doors, it would seem that *some* articles of furniture would be brought into requisition, and we think it would be difficult to suggest anything more suitable for the nonce than tables. The great fact to be established in the matter is the fact that spirits do really communicate with men on earth. The intrinsic nature of the oracles uttered is something of less moment. They may be true or false, but the great point is whether they *are* at all. There is no species of information to be derived from the supernal

abodes of so much importance to the world as the bare fact that spirits do and can communicate; and this fact could not well be established by any other than evidence addressed to the outward senses, especially with a world immersed in sensuous thought. The chosen mode, therefore, is probably as appropriate as any that could be adopted, considering the prevalent states of those for whom they are providentially designed.

So far as the simple *modus operandi* of the agency is concerned in producing the mysterious sounds, and acting upon material substances, we are forced to admit that it is difficult to find anything in the writings of Swedenborg which affords an adequate solution of the problem. It appears to be a form of spiritual agency with which he was not made acquainted, and which may possibly be at this day as great a novelty in the world of spirits as in our own. But, however this may be, it is certain, we think, that in the other department of the manifestations, the intelligence that receives and responds to the various interrogatories proposed, the New Church does shed a flood of light upon the subject. It acquaints us with the fact that the world unseen is peopled with myriads of spirits, who, being in fallacies and falsities themselves, cannot for this reason be reliable mediums of truth to others. Not that *every thing* which emanates from them is necessarily evil and false, for there is evidently a mixture of the good and the true in their communications; but what we would say is, that their reports and responses cannot be relied upon, just as we would say of a mendacious man, in this world, that though he might sometimes tell the truth, yet still he was not a reliable man. So of these "rapping spirits;" though sometimes true, they very frequently give information that is utterly delusive and false, and he who confides in them is sadly in danger of being grievously misled.

Now the Newchurchman by being forewarned is forearmed on this head. He has been instructed in the fact, not only that we are every moment surrounded by and embosomed in the midst of countless thousands of intel-

ligent beings, but that these beings having all passed from the earth into the spiritual sphere, are there distinguished by the dominant character which they bore in the body, and that consequently in proportion to the degree of falsity and evil that had obtained ascendancy during their earthly sojourn is the prevalence of the same principles in the sphere to which they were now transferred. Such a man, therefore, will be on his guard against giving heed to these alleged oracles from the other world. "In vain is the net spread in sight of any bird." Although he is willing to admit the fact of the opening of some kind of intercourse at the present day between the outer and the inner spheres, yet he will not commit himself to the information thence derived, because he is taught to believe that falsity is the rule and truth the exception in all such communications. Viewed in the light of the New Church, these so called "manifestations" assume a character very different from that in which they would be apt to be regarded by minds less instructed in the laws and workings of the spiritual world. The intelligent man of the New Dispensation, while he concedes the spiritual origin of these revelations—spiritual, we mean, as contradistinguished from physical—cannot yet but tremble at the results which may flow from them. The danger in his estimate, arises from the likelihood of their being made an oracle for the information of mankind on the great truths pertaining to the other world, and a guide to duty and action in this. The thing is so astounding—it is a phenomenon so far superior, at first blush, to the tame revelation recorded in a book—it carries with it an air so imposing and authentic, that we cannot wonder that, with the worldly and the sensual, it should have a tendency to supersede all other modes of revelation, and to throw the Divine Word, with all its sacred dicta and hallowed associations, into the background. If such a one obtains a response from a spirit relative to any important point proposed, what more natural than that he should rest in it as conclusive, notwithstanding it should, perchance, go



directly counter to Holy Writ. Will he not be prone to say, "I have a higher authority than that of any written record. I have a voice direct from the spirit-world itself. Is not this the head-quarters of truth? Do I need any other Urim and Thummim than this? The Bible and Swedenborg may do for those who are aware of no brighter light; but they belong to another and a by-gone or by-going Dispensation. A new era is being ushered in. A 'purer ray serene' is beaming from the inner heavenly sanctuary upon the outer earthly court, and I, for one, am prepared to rejoice in its coming—the coming of a day which shall dispel the brooding shadows of the long night that has preceded."

This is the danger which we apprehend—and it is one which calls for wise words of counsel from all those who have been taught in some good measure to discriminate between the spirit of truth and the spirit of error—the two spirits that are now abroad in the earth. The needed antidote to the bane, we are persuaded, is to be found in the disclosures of the New Church, and in them alone. The man of that church is upon a plane from which he can look down upon the whole field of development below. Judged himself by nothing inferior, he judges all by virtue of his position. As, therefore, he is for the most part exempt from the perils that are imminent over others, so he has but little *personal* interest in any abnormal manifestations of this nature; for what has he to gain by them? As to new information from the spiritual world, new light cast upon its facts and laws, he smiles at the idea of accessions to his knowledge from this source. And as to the general claims and assumptions of the New Church, he sees quite as little ground for indebtedness as in anything else. He needs no confirmation from this source of the truths of the New dispensation, or of the mission of its herald. Suppose ever so emphatic a response to assure him that Swedenborg was a faithful legate of heaven, and that all that he has promulgated in the name of the Lord is true. What then? How much would this add to his present convictions on

this score? Does he not believe all this already, and upon much higher authority—that of rational and moral evidence? Is he not conscious that his faith is founded upon principles inlaid in the very ground-work of his being? But suppose, on the other hand, the rapping response should deny this, and declare that Swedenborg had merely given forth the vagaries of his own brain as celestial verities? Would this have any effect upon him? Would he not at once pronounce it a lie, and adjudge that spirit to hell, the abode of lies, and of the father of lies? And suppose that rappings as loud as the seven thunders of the Apocalypse should be heard in confirmation of the denial, would he not still brand it as an infernal falsity?

It is not then, we repeat, the man of the New Church who is likely to be harmed, as he certainly will not be benefited, by this form of spiritual manifestation. It is another class entirely who bid fair to become victims to delusions from this source—a class composed of those who are addicted to a so-called spiritualism, which might as well be termed marvel-mongering, and who are yet so little principled in genuine truth as to be unable to discriminate between what bears the stamp of heaven, and what is marked with the impress of the pit. Such persons encountering an order of phenomena so novel, so strange, and yet sustained by such an overwhelming array of proof, are easily led to yield to them an unbounded credence. The developments come in such plausible guise, they urge and insinuate themselves with such a mighty power of persuasion, that nothing is more natural than that the natural man should be taken captive by them. The resisting force in his mind is not adequate to stem the torrent of subtle influences which from this quarter pour themselves in upon him.

For this reason we are compelled, therefore, to regard this whole order of phenomena as likely to prove the occasion of one of the most solemn and momentous trials or probations that has ever befallen the human race; and as the thing bids fair to spread and to engulf the credu-

lity of thousands, we cannot but apply to all such as keep aloof from the peril, the words of the Lord to the Church of Philadelphia :—" Because thou has kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." Nor is it a suggestion of slight import in this connexion that in matters of this kind where men abandon themselves to those lights which "lead to bewilder and dazzle to blind," the Lord himself may "choose their delusions," or, in other words, so order the issues of His Providence that those who are prompted to forsake His guidance shall be borne onward in a stream of phantasies wearing so much the garb of truth that they shall be "snared and taken, and shall fall backward." A judicial lot shall be theirs.

"Hear the just law, the judgment of the skies;  
He that hates truth shall be the dupe of lies,  
And he that will be cheated to the last,  
Delusions strong as hell shall hold him fast."

This is in strict accordance with the tenor of the Holy Word as communicated to the Prophet Ezekiel :

"And the word of the Lord came unto me saying, Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face; should I be inquired of at all by them? Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God: Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; *I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols*; that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols."

Idols, in the spiritual sense, are false doctrines or pre-conceived notions derived from man's self-intelligence, and we have here the fearful intimation that according to these pre-adopted falsities will be the responses palmed upon him.

There is, therefore, but one point of view in which the New Churchman can look with complacency upon these

abnormal outbreaks from the world of spirits—and that is as affording a species of proof of the existence of a peopled world of intelligence by which we are constantly surrounded, that shall stimulate curiosity to explore the writings of the New Church, and thus open a door of entrance to its sublime truths and its genuine goods. It is in the New Church alone that we see an ark of safety to the poor souls that are otherwise in danger of being swallowed up in the floods and maelstroms of delusion that are now yawning for victims.

In the admission above made, of the reality of the phenomena embraced under the general head of “spirit manifestations”—in conceding that they are not the product of fraud, collusion, legerdemain, or human contrivance of any kind—that they are of a veritable preternatural (we do not say *supernatural*) origin; we do not consider ourselves as precluded from admitting, at the same time, that some of these phenomena are intrinsically susceptible of solution on merely natural principles. As the forms of these manifestations exhibit a vast variety, it is certainly possible that some of them may be due to causes short of spiritual agency, or, in other words, short of the agency of disembodied spirits. There may be laws of man’s physical or psychical economy, or of both combined, of which we have been hitherto ignorant, capable of producing *some* of the effects that are witnessed in these developments. There may be, for ought we know, unconscious emanations and operations of the hidden dynamics of our being that have all the semblance of effects produced by the conscious volition of an intelligent spirit. This, we say, *may* be the fact, although we are not aware that any adequate proof has been adduced that it *is* so, and we have ourselves witnessed numerous experiments that could not, by any possibility, be accounted for on this hypothesis. But even granting it to be true, it is a question whether it does not involve principles and powers in solving the phenomena which tax credulity quite as much as their reference to purely spiritual agents. The unconscious



projection of electrical currents from the brain of sufficient force to move heavy tables, and to move them too, in such a way, as to respond negatively or affirmatively, to questions proposed, many of them mental questions, is certainly a phenomenon that staggers the conception about as much as the direct reference of the effects to the action of spirits that have left the flesh. Yet if any one imagines that he saves the credit of his philosophy by this mode of explanation, and finds the ground of the facts sufficiently covered by it, we at least shall not disturb him in the easy-chair repose of his theory.

But it is not a solution that satisfies us. We are disposed, or rather forced, to fall back on the theory of intelligent spiritual agency exerted by dwellers within the veil, through peculiar human organizations, upon material substances in the natural world. Still, no one who receives the teachings of the New Church will believe that such effects are produced by spirits without the intermediation of certain latent powers by which the spiritual acts upon the natural world. On this head the language of Swedenborg is very express :

"Man derives to himself, *from the inmost principles of nature*, a medium between what is spiritual and what is natural. . . . Hereby also spirits and angels can be adjoined and conjoined to the human race ; for there is conjunction, and where there is conjunction, there must be also a medium ; that there is such a medium the angels know, but whereas it is *from the inmost principles of nature*, and the expressions of all languages are from its ultimates, it can only be described by things abstract."—*Concern. Div. Wis.* VIII.

These "inmost principles of nature" are undoubtedly such imponderables as electricity, magnetism, the Odic force of Reichenbach, &c., without which we have no reason to suppose that spirits ever attempt to operate upon matter. We have probably an allusion to the same subtle elements in the following paragraphs :

"Every man after death puts off the natural, which he had from the mother, and retains the spiritual, which he had from the father, together with a kind of border (or circumambient accretion) *from the purest things of nature*, around it ; but this border, with those who come into heaven, is below, and the spiritual above, but that border with those

who come into hell, is above and the spiritual below. Thence it is that a man-angel speaks from heaven, thus what is good and true ; but that a man-devil speaks from hell, while from his heart, and, as it were, from heaven, while from his mouth ; he does this abroad, but that at home."—*T. C. R.* 103.

"The natural mind of man consists both of spiritual and natural substances ; from its spiritual substances, thought is produced, but not from its natural substances, the latter substances recede, when a man dies, but not the spiritual substances ; hence, the same mind, after death, when a man becomes a spirit or angel, remains in a form like what it had in the world. The natural substances of that mind, which, as has been said, recede by death, constitute the cutaneous covering of the spiritual body of spirits and angels ; by means of this covering, which is taken from the natural world, their spiritual bodies subsist ; for the natural is the ultimate continent ; hence, there is no spirit or angel, who was not born a man."—*D. L. & W.* 257.

From these extracts it appears that spirits in the other life are still connected by a subtle bond with the natural world, and it is a fair inference that it is by means of this connecting medium that the physical effects manifested in so many quarters at the present day are produced. As to the precise *mode* in which the effects take place, it may not be possible for us at present to determine it, nor can we, perhaps, fully assure ourselves that it is not a comparatively recent discovery with spirits themselves.

It will be observed, however, that in the passage from the *T. C. R.* there is something peculiarly significant in what is said of the relative position or seat of these "natural substances" in the good and the evil. In the former they are below, i. e., subjected and subordinate to the spiritual, while in the latter the order is reversed, and evil spirits in consequence have more facility in coming in contact with the natural sphere than have the good. It seems also to be implied that on this account whatever communications are made by spirits of this class have externally the guise of truth, while, at the same time, the prompting source within is in association with hell. We are not entirely certain of having rightly construed this passage, but our impression is strong that,

duly apprehended, it discloses some very important information bearing upon the subject before us. On this subject our object now is to state, in continuance, the result of our investigations, and we accordingly remark:

3. That these alleged spiritual communications not only do not impart any important truth, but they abound with the grossest falsities. We should perhaps do injustice to the "circles," and their invisible presidents, to say that the staple of their communications was made up of positive errors, for the main material, as far as we have observed, consists of little more than a vein of vapid truisms, or a kind of sentimental moralizing, with a marvellously scanty infusion of new ideas, and with next to no element at all of spiritual power or even attraction. But, beside this, we do find every now and then the peering forth of direct and palpable falsities, which, however, are not so easy of detection, except to one conversant with the revelations vouchsafed to the man of the New Church. Of this class are the representations almost invariably made respecting Swedenborg and his revelations. With scarcely an exception that has ever come to our knowledge, they speak substantially the language of the following extract, professing to be a communication from his spirit through a medium in which "he recognizes a reflecting mirror of his inmost thoughts."

"I wish to say to the world that the writings which were published while I was yet an inhabitant of earth, contain many important errors, while they reveal much important truth; that the beauties of the celestial world were unknown to my imprisoned spirit as they are now presented to my view; that the sweetness and purity which pervade all the glorious mansions of eternal life, were entirely unappreciated by the writer of many books; that the grandeur and sublimity of the expanding heavens—the happiness and refinement which are breathed into the deepest heart of the soul—the brightness and attraction which call the spirit ever onward and upward, were wholly lost to the darkened mind which once groped amid the shadows of theological error. But in the transition which has taken place in my position, and the transformation which has passed over my entire being, are the influences which have introduced me to a loftier eminence of spiritual life—a nobler expansion of the interior vision, and a more truthful conception of celestial realities. Hence I am now prepared to speak



of those things at present, which I could not have comprehended while in the body; and hence I now discover the use, the benefit, and the blessing of spiritual manifestations as I could not have done in my connection with the earthly form.

"The spirit wishes to say that he is pleased to unfold to the world the knowledge which he has obtained, and that he can assure the individuals whom he may address, that the revealments which are now made by him are reliable in the most literal sense. He has seen that the world has looked at the manifestations of spiritual presence with emotions of blind and almost stupid wonderment: that it has regarded every occurrence of this character as necessarily opposed to the established laws of Nature and utterly inconsistent with the revelations of former ages; that the beauty of spiritual truth has thus been overlooked and despised in the uncontrolled devotion to human creeds, and that the blessings which such truth is adapted to bring to the earth-bound soul have been disregarded and rejected. In this dark and repelling atmosphere, where doubt, and, fear, and ignorance are constantly making their gloom felt by the soul, I would introduce some small portion of spiritual light that the eyes of the spirit may not be entirely destitute of that soothing and invigorating element which it so really needs."—*Spirit Messenger*, Feb., 1852.

"If thou art he, alas, how fallen!" To say nothing of the absurd intimation that the brightness and attraction of heaven were wholly lost to his darkened mind while "groping amid the shadows of theological error"—that is, during his abode on earth—how ridiculous the idea that the vigorous and massive sense of the great hierophant should ever lapse down to such puling mawkishness as we read in this paragraph. If a counterfeit presentment is to be recognized in the case, the personation is a miserable failure, and the spirits above must have a very poor opinion of the discernment of the spirits on the earth to suppose that they could be misled by such abortive mimicry.

The following excerpt from the vision of Judge Edmonds, published in the *Shekinah* (No. III.) comes into the same category. After relating the appearance to him of Wm. Penn and Sir Isaac Newton, he proceeds:

"Swedenborg then appeared and said to me that in his revelations of what he had seen, he was right and truthful and to be relied upon, but not in the theory which he had built upon them; and especially

he mentioned his doctrine of correspondences, and his attempt to reconcile his revelations with the popular religion of his day. And he said, as the Bible contained many important and valuable truths, yet being written in and for an unprogressing age, it contained errors and imperfections; so his theological writings contained many valuable truths, as well as some errors, produced by his desire to reconcile the truths which were unfolded to him with the prevailing theology of his age. He bade us beware of his errors, to receive as true his revelations, but discard his theories, and instead of them to appeal to our own understandings for the inferences to be drawn from the truths he had developed."

We should feel for ourselves great difficulty to condense into the same compass the same amount of false statement—due to the spirits of course, if they uttered it—which we encounter in these few lines. In the first place, the distinction here adverted to between Swedenborg's "revelations" and his "theories" is totally gratuitous and groundless. He has built no theories upon his asserted facts. He does not deal in theories. The mission intrusted to him was of a nature to forbid the introduction of any speculations of his own. What Judge Edmonds would call "theories," are among the authoritative announcements which he makes of the laws and principles that prevail in the Lord's universe, and he states them as facts and not as inferences. Again, it is impossible that he should have said anything that would imply the unsoundness of his doctrine of correspondences in any respect, for this is the grand theme of his revelations, which the Judge says we are to receive. The doctrine of correspondences is the discovery to the world of the relation subsisting between the natural and the spiritual spheres, and without this discovery, Swedenborg's revelations might as well not have been. If Judge E. had been at all adequately acquainted with Swedenborg's works he would have been able at once to brand such an insinuation as an outrageous falsity. Once more, it is a falsity equally gross that Swedenborg sought to reconcile his revelations with the popular theology of his age. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Never was there a more emphatic repudiation, a

more point-blank disclaimer, of an erroneous system of dogmas than he has proclaimed to all generations of men. Let any intelligent man acquaint himself with what Swedenborg has taught on the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, Redemption, Regeneration, the Word, Faith, Charity, Good Works, Freewill, Repentance, Heaven and Hell, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, &c., and then pronounce whether he was a man "to trim his way to seek love"—whether he has any where shown a temporizing and conciliating policy, as if desirous to keep in favor with the ruling theology, while at the same time he was consciously uttering truths which went directly to overthrow the entire system of the old schools. We have high respect for Judge E. in his judicial capacity, and we should like to have his keen power of analysis brought to bear from the bench upon such a tissue of fallacies as seems to have been imposed upon him in this visionary fabrication.

We have cited the above as specimens of their class. *Ex hoc disce omnes*, and their name is legion. These wonderful revelators from the "sixth circle" downwards, are perpetually prating of the errors of Swedenborg's writings, and yet they take good care never to specify or hint what they are, so that the charge can be directly and distinctly met. It would seem beyond question that these communicating spirits, as a general fact, have some special reasons for dealing in disparaging insinuations in regard to Swedenborg, while at the same time, as if not to shock too severely the estimate in which they know he is held, they interlard their discourses with patronising compliments which would create an impression that he is still, with all his faults, a *Magnus Apollo* to them also, as he is to many that are, as they say, "yet in the form."

But it is not simply the person of Swedenborg which many of their reports misrepresent; his doctrines also are discredited, as far as can be done by the inculcation of doctrines directly the reverse of his.

Among the most striking phenomena connected with



the spirit manifestations is the linguistic writing of which some engraved specimens are to be seen in the "Shekinah" edited by Mr. Brittan. Sentences and paragraphs in Hebrew, Arabic, Sanscrit were mysteriously penned on paper, parchment, books, and even upon the walls of the room in which the medium lodged.

The history of this curious affair will be more interesting from the annexed correspondence respecting it, consisting of a letter from E. P. Fowler, the medium, and of one from ourself, written in compliance with a request from Mr. Brittan the Editor of the Shekinah. As the manuscript was submitted to our inspection, we had no objection to state the matters of fact which had come to our knowledge. We assume thereby no patronage of the marvel, which we choose to let stand or fall by its own merits.

*Editor of the Shekinah:*

DEAR SIR:—In pursuance of your request to communicate the facts of my experience, which relate to the origin of the writings, I submit the following brief statement: On the night of the 21st of November, 1851, while sleeping alone in the third story of the house, I was awakened about one o'clock, by sounds of footsteps in my room. Looking up, I saw five men, some of them dressed in ancient costume, walking about and conversing together. Some of them spoke with me, and among other things told me not to be frightened, that they would not harm me, &c. I attempted to rise, however, to go down stairs, but found that my limbs were paralyzed. These strange visitants remained with me about three hours, and finally disappeared while going toward a window, and when within about two feet of it. They did not open the window. During the succeeding night, and at about the same hour, I was again awakened in a similar manner, and saw several persons in my room. Some of those who were there on the previous night were present with others whom I had never seen before. One of them had what appeared to be a box about eighteen inches square, and some nine inches high; it seemed to contain electrical apparatus. They placed the box on the table, and then electrical emanations, like currents of light of different colors, were seen issuing from the box. One of the company placed a piece of paper, pen and ink on the lid of this box. The luminous currents now centered around the pen, which was immediately taken up and dipped in the ink, and without the application of any other force or instrument, so far as I could perceive, the pen was made to move across the paper

and a communication was made which I have since learned was in the Hebrew language. This information I received from Prof. Bush, to whom the writings were submitted for translation, and whose letter addressed to you will accompany this statement. Soon after three o'clock, my companions left me as they had done the previous night, taking the box with them. During the time they were in my apartment, I was in possession of my natural senses, and not only saw *them*, but the furniture in the room, by means of the illumination which their presence caused; and I also heard the clock strike, and carriages passing in the street.

I have since witnessed many similar occurrences in which writing, said to be in the Hebrew, Arabic, Bengalee, and other languages, have, in like manner, been executed in my room. I only speak of the facts as disclosed to my senses: of the several languages referred to I know nothing.

Yours truly,

E. P. F.

NEW-YORK, March 26, 1852.

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MR. BRITTAN—*Dear Sir*: In compliance with your request, I willingly make a statement respecting the several communications in Hebrew, Arabic, Bengalee, &c., which have been submitted to my inspection. In doing so you of course understand that I speak merely as the witness of certain facts, and not as the partisan advocate of any theory by which these and similar facts may be attempted to be accounted for.

The first of these manuscripts was in Hebrew, containing a few verses from the last chapter of the Prophet Daniel. This was correctly written, with the exception of several apparently arbitrary omissions, and one rather violent transposition of a word from an upper to a lower line. The next was from the book of Joel (Ch. ii. 23–27,) and was also correctly written, with one or two trifling errors, of such a nature, however, as would be very unlikely to be made either by one who understood the language, or by one who should undertake to transcribe the passage mechanically from Hebrew.

The other specimens were in the Hebrew, Arabic, and Bengalee languages, to which I may add a paragraph in French, written underneath the Bengalee, and apparently a translation of it. As this was from Joel ii. 28, 29, it could easily be verified by recurrence to a Bengalee version of the Scriptures in the library of the American Bible Society. The sentences in the Arabic character were also ascertained to be mostly translations of a few verses from the Arabic portion of the Scriptures. One of them, however, I am informed, was alleged by the spirits to be a quotation or translation of some lines from Pope. But how this is to be understood I know not.

The style of the manuscript is very peculiar. Whoever were the penmen, the act of writing seems to have been preceded by some preliminary flourishes of a very singular and zigzag appearance, com-

mencing at or near the top of the page, and connecting with the first word of the script. In the case of one of the Arabic extracts, there were traces over the paper, which indicated that the pen for some reason was not raised during the writing; besides which the lines run diagonally across the sheet, and were followed by an imperfect sentence in English, terminating in the Arabic word signifying *end*. Altogether the specimens are of an extraordinary character, such as I cannot well convey by any verbal description.

As to the origin of the documents, I am not yet prepared to express an opinion. They come proximately from the hands of Mr. E. P. Fowler, a young gentleman with whom I had previously no acquaintance, but who, since I have become acquainted with him, does not at all impress me as one who would knowingly practice deception on others, however he might by possibility be imposed upon himself. He certainly has no knowledge of the above languages, nor do I think it likely that he is leagued in collusion with any one who has. A man who is versed in these ancient and oriental tongues, would be, I think, but little prone to lend himself as a party to a pitiful scheme of imposture. It must, indeed, be admitted to be possible that Mr. Fowler may himself have copied the extracts from printed books, but I can only say for myself that, from internal evidence, and from a multitude of collateral circumstances, I am perfectly satisfied that he never did it. But my conviction on this score will, of course, have very little weight with others, which, however, is a point of small consequence with me. In like manner, I am equally confident that he, though the medium on the occasion, had, consciously, nothing to do with a Hebrew communication which was spelled out to me in the presence of a circle of very respectable gentlemen, not one of whom, beside myself, had any knowledge of that language. In the present case the only alternative solution that occurs to me is, that it was either an unconscious feat of somnambulism, or that it was the veritable work of spirits, effected by some spiritual-natural dynamics in the manner he describes. Which is most probable, or what is more probable than either, your readers must decide for themselves.

Very respectfully yours, &c.,

G. BUSH.

NEW-YORK, March 27, 1852.

Now it must be admitted that this is a most extraordinary occurrence, view it how we may. It is marvellous if the writing was effected by spirits—marvellous if by young Fowler while in a somnabulic state—and marvellous not a little if executed by him in a waking and conscious state, inasmuch as his tastes, habits, pursuits, are all entirely foreign to oriental studies; and the following letter recently published in the "Spiritual Telegraph"

contains statements which go to render that supposition extremely incredible.

S. B. BRITTAN—*Dear Sir*: I have been solicited by a mutual friend to send you a concise statement of my experience, as connected with some mysterious writings which have occurred in my room, a *fac simile* of one of which appeared in No. 9 of the Spiritual Telegraph. I comply with the request, though in contrariety to my inclinations, which would prompt me to shrink from any publicity.

The original paper containing the autographs I found upon my table, about three o'clock one afternoon on my return from business; the paper used being a sheet of drawing-paper, which was incidentally left on my table, and which I am sure was blank when I left my room in the forenoon. The succeeding autographical manuscript, a representation of which was published, was executed in my room on a piece of parchment, left on my table, by direction of the spirits, for that purpose. This was written on during the night, while I was in my room asleep. I would add that many of the signatures on the parchment were entirely strange to me, having never seen them before.

I have also had several specimens of various oriental languages, written in my room, on paper, which I could identify as my own, though the languages were unknown to me. These have been written on, both when I have been in my room, and when I have been absent. Several of the languages referred to I had never seen prior to my acquaintance with them through these mystical manuscripts, and of course did not know what they were, until I had submitted them to a linguist, who read them with facility.

The first one which I received was, as I am informed through the kindness of Professor Bush, a quotation from the Old Testament, written in Hebrew. The execution of this occurred about three o'clock in the afternoon, soon after I had returned from my business. I was alone in my room, when, through the sounds which then occurred in my presence, I was requested to leave the room for the space of five minutes, during which interval they—"spirits"—promised an attempt to write. I obeyed their request, and went into a room below, where sat my sister. I told her what had transpired, and at the expiration of five minutes we both ascended to my room. Instead of finding, as we had conjectured we should, some directions written in English, we discovered this Hebrew quotation, the ink on the paper being still unabsorbed, although after experiments proved that the ink of a hand heavier than that in which the Hebrew was written, would, on the same kind of paper, invariably dry in from two to three minutes' time.

That these writings have not been imposed upon me, I know, because I have *seen some of them written*. I have seen them written in the day time as well as in the night; and that I was in no "abnormal



magnetic state," I infer from the fact that my consciousness of the circumstances of outward life remained unimpaired. The ringing of fire-bells, moving of engines, the tolling of the bells at the ferry, the paddling of the boat's wheels, and various other noises common to the city, were no less distinctly heard than at other times.

That these writings were not perpetrated by myself I have many strong proofs. First: I had never seen any specimens of the languages in which most of the manuscripts were written, and even to the present date, I have seen no other specimens of one or two of the languages used. Second: That power which has communicated to us in our circle, through the rappings and lifting of tables, professes to have performed this writing also.

That these rappings and lifting are not the results of an "abnormal magnetic state," I have reason to suppose from the fact that manifestations have been made in our circle in the light, palpable to the various senses of *all* present, which by far surpassed in point of power the capability of any one in the circle. But if this, too, with all the rest, is but a fancy, a dream, then is my whole life but a dream—a very *real* dream—and not altogether poetical in its course.

Had I time and disposition, I might relate facts sufficient to fill a volume in relation to this matter, the majority of which would favor none other than the spiritual theory; but as I am no literary character, I will here leave the matter to the numerous others who are, and whose facts are doubtless as much to the point as my own.

Yours truly,

E. P. FOWLER.

NEW-YORK, Aug., 1852.

In this connection we may introduce from the same paper the following extract from an extended statement of facts relative to these occurrences, bearing the signatures of the respected gentlemen composing the circle, to the truth of which, as far as we are concerned, we can bear decided testimony. We were not a member of the circle, but attended simply on invitation to that effect purporting to come from the spirits themselves.

"During the session on the 19th of January, 1852, the spirits signified their desire to make a communication in Hebrew. Mr. Partridge asked who should call the alphabet, and received the answer, '*the only one present who understands it*—GEORGE BUSH.' Professor Bush thereupon proceeded to repeat the Hebrew alphabet, and a communication in that language was received."

In addition to the above we may remark that we have in our possession an octagon-shaped pitcher, of Liverpool

ware, the outside of which is covered with Arabic and Hebrew words, written according to Mr. Fowler's statement while he was asleep at night. It was filled with water, a bouquet of flowers put into it, and in the evening placed upon the table of his apartment by his sister, and that with no other design than marks a thousand little acts of female taste and courtesy. In the morning the flat compartments of the pitcher were written over crosswise in the characters above mentioned. The legend, however, is not composed of sentences making a coherent sense, but apparently of detached words or combinations of letters, some of them more than once repeated. The Hebrew for God occurs, as also the phrase in the second Psalm, translated—*They have taken counsel together*. There is also our own name—*lbsh, lebush, for Bush*, in the Hebrew character.

Our object in adverting to these facts is, to state some of the grounds on which we are constrained to yield an undoubting credence to the reality and preternatural origin of these singular manifestations. To multitudes of our readers we have no doubt this will be the last solution they would ever think of giving to the facts in question, and their incredulity on this head we have no disposition to disturb. It cannot be expected that they should feel the force of the evidence that weighs with us, neither can they say that they should not have felt it, as we have, under the same circumstances; that is to say, they are not prepared, on good grounds, to declare our conclusions on the subject unwarranted or unsound. They cannot say but that they would have adopted the same conclusion from the same premises.

But we go the extent of our concessions when we admit the reality of the phenomena in the sense above defined. In an estimate of the intrinsic character of the communications made, and of the practical bearing of the whole affair, we differ *in toto* from most of those who have devoted themselves to the culture of this form of spiritualism so called. Our reasons for this we purpose to give in what follows.

It may not be at once obvious with what propriety our present heading is retained after the concessions we have already made as to the reality and the spiritual origin of the phenomena in question. *Pseudo-Spiritualism* denotes a spiritualism that is *false*, and it may be asked how this epithet can apply to an order of occurrences admitted to be from a veritable spiritual source? It would doubtless be less easy to show the congruity of the appellation with the facts on any other ground than on that of the New Church. Guided by the light of that church, we learn that true spiritualism does not consist in dealing with spiritual things as contradistinguished from natural or physical, but in the opening of the spiritual degree of the mind, and in a course of life, thought, and affection accordant with its principles and dictates. It is indeed to be admitted that the term spiritual not unfrequently occurs in the former sense, especially when used interchangeably with *substantial* as distinguished from *material*. In this sense a man after death is not a natural, but a spiritual man, though still perfectly organized, and having a marked resemblance to the natural man of the flesh. But with men in the natural world translated spirits have no open or sensible communication. They see no longer those of the natural, but those of the spiritual world, and "the reason," says our illumined author, "why they now see the latter, and not the former, is because they are no longer natural men, but *spiritual* or *substantial*; and a spiritual or *substantial* man sees a spiritual or substantial man, as a natural or material man sees a natural or material man, but not *vice versa*, on account of the difference between what is substantial and what is material."—*C. L.* 31. In another connexion he makes the following distinction: "The reason why such representatives exist in the spiritual world, is because in that world there are spiritual things *interior* and *exterior*: *interior* spiritual things are those that relate to affection, and to thought thence derived, or to the intelligence of truth and the wisdom of good; and *exterior* spiritual things are so created by the Lord, that they may clothe or invest *interior* spiritual things, and when these are clothed or invested,



then there exists such forms as are in the natural world, in which, therefore, *interior* spiritual things ultimately terminate, and in which they ultimately exist.”—*A. E.* 582. Here it is clear that the term *spiritual* is applied to denote the substances existing in the spiritual world, in and through which, as representatives and correspondences, interior spiritual principles of thought and affection manifest themselves. This exterior spirituality is of course of a much lower grade than the interior with which it is contrasted.

Now it is in the latter sense—the sense of interior—that the term is dominantly used in the writings of our author; and as our aim is to present a New Church estimate of the general subject, we shall not scruple to quote freely whatever may subserve that end. Nothing is more obvious than that the devotees of these manifestations claim to be spiritualists *par excellence* and our purpose is to submit these claims to the test. We shall perhaps find reason in the end to doubt whether those pretensions have any adequate ground to rest upon; which is but saying, in other words, that the application of the term *pseudo, false*, in this connection, will fully justify itself in the result. The following paragraphs will be seen to be to the point.

“What the spiritual is in respect to the natural, is further to be told in a few words, because the most of those who are in the Christian world, are ignorant what the spiritual is, insomuch that when they hear the expression, they hesitate, and say with themselves that no one knows what spiritual means. The spiritual with man is, in its essence, the very affection of good and truth for the sake of good and truth, and not for the sake of self; also the affection of what is just and equitable for the sake of what is just and equitable, and not for the sake of self; when man from these feels in himself delight and pleasantness, and still more if he feels satisfaction and blessedness, this with him is spiritual, which does not come from the natural world, but from the spiritual, or from heaven, that is, through heaven from the Lord. This then, is the spiritual which, when it reigns with man, affects, and, as it were, tinges everything which he thinks, which he wills and which he acts, and causes that the things thought, and from the will acted, partake of the spiritual, until they also at length become spiritual with him, when he passes out of the natural world into the spiritual. In a word, the affec-

tion of charity and faith, that is, of good and truth, with the delight and pleasantness and still more the satisfaction and blessedness thence, which are felt interiorly with man, and make him a truly Christian man, is the spiritual. That most people in the Christian world are ignorant what is meant by the spiritual, is because they make faith the essential of the church, and not charity : hence, inasmuch as those few, who are solicitous about faith, think little, if anything, concerning charity, and know little, if anything, what charity is, there is no knowledge, neither is there perception of the affection which is of charity, and he who is not in the affection of charity, cannot in any wise know what is spiritual ; so it is especially at this day, when scarcely any one has charity, because it is the last time of the Church. But it is to be known, that the spiritual in the common [or general] sense, signifies the affection both of good and of truth whence heaven is called the spiritual world, and the internal sense of the Word the spiritual sense ; but specifically what is of the affection of good is called celestial ; and what is of the affection of truth is called spiritual.”—*A. C.* 5639.

“It may be expedient briefly to explain how the case is with good in which are truths ; he who knows the formation of good from truths, knows the veriest arcana of heaven, for he knows the arcana of the formation of man anew, that is, of the formation of heaven or the Lord’s kingdom with him : all christian good, or spiritual good hath in it the truths of faith, for the quality of that good is from the truths which are of faith ; the good which hath not its quality from the truths of faith, is not christian good, but is natural good, which doth not give eternal life ; the reason is, because natural good hath in it only natural life, which life is not unlike the life of beasts, for they also are in good when they are tame ; but beasts cannot receive spiritual life ; hence it is evident that spiritual life is only acquired by the truths of faith. This life, viz., spiritual life, is first acquired by knowing the truths which are of faith, afterwards by acknowledging them, and at length by believing them ; when they are only known, they are then as it were in the door, when they are acknowledged they are then in the outer court, but when they are believed they are then in the bed-chamber, thus they go from the exteriors towards the interiors successively ; in the interior man is the good, which continually flows in from the Lord, and there conjoins itself with truths, and makes them to be faith, and next to be charity ; this good attracts truths to itself, for it is a desire to them, that by them it may procure to itself a quality, and thereby exist.”—*A. C.* 8772.

“The man who is principled in spiritual good, is a moral man, and a civil man ; and the man who is not principled in spiritual good is neither a moral nor a civil man, but only appears to be so ; though he appears to be so both to himself and also to others. The reason why a man who is not spiritual, can still think, and thence discourse rationally, like a spiritual man, is, because the understanding of man is capable of being elevated into the light of heaven, which is truth, and of seeing

by that light ; but it is possible for the will of man not to be elevated in like manner into the heat of heaven, which is love, and act under its influence. Hence it is that truth and love do not make a one with man, unless it be spiritual : hence also it is that man can exercise his faculty of speech ; this likewise forms a ground of distinction between man and beast. It is owing to the understanding being capable of elevation to heaven without an elevation of the will at the same time that man has the capacity of being reformed, and of becoming spiritual : but he never is reformed and rendered spiritual until the will is elevated also. By virtue of this faculty, enjoyed by the understanding above that of the will, man is capable of thinking rationally, and thence of discoursing rationally, like one that is spiritual, whatsoever be his nature and quality, even though he be principled in evil : nevertheless, it does not hence follow that he is rational ; and the reason is because the understanding does not lead the will, but the will the understanding, the latter only teaching and pointing out the way : and so long as the will is not, with the understanding, in heaven, the man is not spiritual, and consequently not rational : for when he is left to his own will, or to his own love, then he rejects the rational conclusions of his understanding concerning God, concerning heaven, and concerning eternal life ; and assumes in their place such conclusions as are in agreement with the love of his will, and calls them rational."—*Doc. of Life*, 14, 15.

" From these considerations it results, that there does not appertain to man the smallest portion of truth, only so far as he is principled in good ; consequently not the smallest portion of faith, only so far as it is conjoined with life. There may be such a thing as thought, respecting the truth of some particular proposition, in the understanding ; but there cannot be acknowledgment amounting to faith, unless there be consent in the will. Thus do faith and life go hand in hand. Hence, then, it is evident, that so far as any one shuns evils as sins, so far he has faith, and is spiritual."—*Ib.* 52.

From all this we can hardly fail to perceive what is implied by one's being a truly spiritual man. He is one who is imbued with genuine truths, and those truths he is continually intent upon reducing to life, which is in effect converting them into good. The simple belief that there is a spiritual world, the abode of spirits disembodied of clay, and that they are enabled, through physical agencies to communicate with the inhabitants of earth, does by no means necessarily constitute a genuine spirituality in any one. So far from this, it is rather a peculiar phasis of naturalism, for the mere knowledge of spiritual existence, however profound its arcana, does not of itself as-



cend higher than the natural degree. Nor do we feel disposed to qualify this language in view of the fact that many of this school take a decided stand against the materialism and sensualism of the age, contrasting it with the more elevated and sublimated tone of their own sentiments. For in all this there may still be no more than the workings of the natural man.

Undoubtedly a charge of some seriousness is involved in this position, and it is incumbent upon us to make it good by a direct appeal to the uttered oracles which pass current in the school of the *soi disant* spiritualists of the present day. From a tolerably familiar acquaintance with the issues of the press referring themselves to this origin, we are satisfied that, as a general fact, they are utterly wide of the truth on a variety of points which the Newchurchman is taught to regard as all important among the elements which go to constitute a genuine spirituality. It will, we trust, be distinctly understood that in uttering ourselves on the subject under consideration our standpoint is that of the Church of the New Jerusalem. We take for granted the entire truth of its revelations, and cherish not the least scruple in making them the standard by which everything of a professedly spiritual nature is to be tried. We foresee of course, that this will be charged as a gratuitous assumption—that the demand will be superciliously made, what grounds we have for yielding such implicit deference to the authority of Swedenborg—that palpable insinuations of bigotry and sectarianism will be thrown out—but all this moves us not. We are not penning a controversial article. We are not urging the claims of a rival revelation. We are not seeking to make converts of those whose delusions we are aiming to expose. We know too well the strength of that self-derived intelligence which fortifies them against doubt, to suppose that our position will gain the slightest respect in their minds. In fact we do not write for them. We do not expect them to read our strictures, and therefore pay no attention to their foreseen objections. We write for those who sympathise with us in a perfect



assurance of the solidity of the ground on which we stand—who know, on this head, what no others can know who have not shared their investigations. We would fain present to them, if possible, the data on which an adequate judgment is to be formed of a remarkable class of facts and a deplorable train of consequences which are widely passing under their eyes. Our researches may have put documents and deductions in our way which have never occurred to them, and which they would still value. It is their behoof that we consult in the discussion. We would furnish them with materials for forming an enlightened judgment themselves, and at the same time enable them to withstand the tendency of the times to mix up these strange phenomena with the teachings and tidings of the New Dispensation, as if every species of spiritual or psychical abnormalism were to find a home in its bosom. Let this, then, be our apology, or rather our reason, for the positive tone which speaks out in the whole drift of our remarks. We are addressing those who do not require that we should be perpetually laying down or laying open the foundations of our faith.

1. At the head of all the falsities which emanate from this source, is the denial of our Lord's true and essential divinity. With scarcely an exception that has come to our knowledge, the genuine doctrine of the incarnation is denied or ignored, and Christ is represented as merely a noble specimen of humanity, the *deliciæ generis humani*, the appointed medium through whom some impressive ideas of the divine perfections might be most effectually conveyed. The view, at the highest, is simply humanitarian. An exalted and model manhood is the *ne plus ultra* of its ascription to Him whom the Christian is taught to recognize as the veritable Jehovah tabernacling for a season in human flesh, and then dissolving again, so to speak, into the essential Godhead, so that he now exists solely in his Divine Human nature, no longer separated from the Father. How vast the contrast between this and the Christology of the so-styled spiritualists will be evident from the following extracts from their publi-

cations. It will be borne in mind, we trust, that we are giving the *ipsissima verba* of the spirits through their chosen mediums.

“ It was this profound interest and intense excitement among the people which gave birth to the idea that Christ was a super-human and divine personage, and which originally produced the present prevailing opinion that he was, in a strict and literal sense, the Son of God. Spirits perceive the true relation which this remarkable individual sustained to the human race, and they see that he was in every sense a MAN—a man more perfect, more harmoniously constituted, and more richly endowed than others, but still a human being. They perceive the mission which this person was selected to perform on earth, and they see that he was chosen and employed as a great medium for the illustration of spiritual power and the transmission of spiritual truth. They perceive, also, the true agency by which the miraculous works, which astonished the people, were performed, and they see that in every instance of superhuman power—in every work which the people could not reconcile with established laws, there dwelt the superintending and ever active energy of the angel-world. Thus were all the miracles which Christ performed during his residence in the body to be attributed to the direct and special influence, not of God, but of spiritual beings who lingered ever near to minister through him to the spiritual wants of man; and in the whole life and ministry of this individual, may the children of men read the evidences of heavenly power and the interposition of angelic spirits, which have been already, and will be in a still higher degree, manifested to the present age.”—*Spirit Messenger*, p. 94.

“ Jesus Christ came into the world to be a savior of sinners. He was not God manifested in the flesh, neither was he the son of God in a literal sense, but by adoption and grace; and in that sense he was indeed the beloved Son of God. But the question may arise in your mind, how can he be a savior of sinners if you look on him in that light? We will try to explain in a few words to you what the meaning of savior is. St. James in his epistle says, that he that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins. And can you call that man any thing else but a savior, who is willing to give up every comfort and become a gazing stock, and meet the scorn and reproach, and the contempt and sneers of a gainsaying world, and who is willing even to be persecuted to death if he can only persuade sinners to forsake their evil ways and turn to God. We would refer you to the history of by-gone ages. Do you not read in the Bible that God raised up saviors and sent them among the Jews? And in every age of the world has not God raised up men whose only object was to save souls? And is not he who devotes his time, his talents, and his all to the salvation of his fellow



man, a savior? Was not Noah, the preacher of righteousness, a savior? Did he not try, year after year, with tears and entreaties, to persuade his fellow-men to turn to God? And many are now high in glory whom he was instrumental of saving. And did not Jonah prove himself to be a savior to Nineveh, when the city of Nineveh was devoted to destruction, unless they listened to the warning voice of the prophet."—*Creation of the World and Life of Christ, dictated by the Spirit of Wilbraham*, p. 40.

"At the appointed time Christ was born; but he was not begotten by the Holy Ghost, neither did the power of the Highest overshadow her, only as it overshadows all who walk before him with a perfect heart. He was the natural son of Joseph and Mary. The account that is given of the conception of Christ in the New Testament is blasphemous; and then to teach men that it is the word of God is a sin of no small magnitude. Is it a small matter to throw such insults on the God of spotless purity? Is it nothing to throw such insults on the glorious character of the beneficent Creator of mankind? As spirits who seek your good, we beseech you to grope in darkness no longer, but open your eyes to the truth. It would be no interest to glorified spirits to deceive you. If you could see with what willingness they leave their bright abodes of unutterable glory, and descend to earth amidst its filth and corruption, in order that its inhabitants may be delivered from the cruel bondage of error and superstition, and in order that the glorious character of God may be rightly understood, you would at once banish all your fears."—*Id.* p. 45.

"You need not persuade yourself that Christ possessed something that it is impossible for you to possess, for if you do you are mistaken; for Christ was nothing more than a man. If your life was in accordance with the doctrines he taught, you might enjoy the same blessings, If you denied yourself in the same manner that he did, and fasted, and prayed, and mourned, and wept, and exerted yourself as he did. In short, if you possessed the heartfelt piety and disinterested benevolence that he possessed, you might work miracles the same as he did, for God is the same in all ages of the world. Christ was enabled to work his miracles through the power of the spirit of his heavenly Father. It was not because he was God manifest in the flesh, or because he was begotten by the Holy Ghost. No, it was because he led a life of spotless purity from the cradle to the grave. He was spotless, innocent, and pure, and free from every stain."—*Id.* p. 67.

These extracts are mostly from a work which bears on its title that it is "to be read as for eternity," but what special claim it has to this solemn style of reading may be inferred from the fact, that it is said to be composed

"by the spirits of *Swedenborg*, Wilbraham, Stuart, and Lovell." We are well aware that multitudes of those who think highly of the "manifestations" would by no means subscribe to the bald blasphemies which stand forth on nearly every page of this work, nor do we intend to impute them to all the school, but we are confident we do them no wrong in the assertion that, as a general fact, the tenet of the Lord's essential divinity is decidedly repudiated in their ranks. Now that the prevalent denial on this head is inconsistent with a genuine spiritualism is evident from what follows:

"The reason why by the name of the Lord in the Word is primarily understood the acknowledgment of the Divine in his Human Principle, is, because all things of love and faith are thence derived; for the divine goods which are of love, and the divine truths which are of faith, proceed from no other source than from the Lord alone; and those things cannot flow into man, unless he thinks of the Divine Principle of the Lord at the same time that he thinks of his Human; nor is his Divine Principle separate from the Human, but is in the Human. I can assert from all my experience concerning the spiritual world, that no one is principled in the goods of love, and the truths of faith, but he who thinks of the Divine Principle of the Lord in union with his Human, *as also that no one is spiritual*, or an angel, but he who had been grounded in that thought and acknowledgment while in the world. Man ought to be conjoined to the Divine Principle in his faith and love, in order that he may be saved, and all conjunction is with the Lord; and to be conjoined only to his Human Principle, and not at the same time to his Divine, is not conjunction, for the Divine Principle saves, but not the human without the Divine."—*A. E.* 135.

Abundant intimations to the same effect might be cited from the same source, which, although they will be of little weight with those whom they mostly concern, will not fail to be decisive with the man of the church. He cannot begin to conceive of a truly spiritual man who stumbles at this stumbling-stone of the absolute and essential Deityship of the Lord the Saviour.

2. An utterly disparaging estimate, if not a contemptuous rejection of the Divine Word, as communicated in the Sacred Scriptures, is another distinctive mark of the school in question. Taking, for the most part, their cue from Davis, the grand Coryphæus and mystagogue in



the lengthening line of Seers and Mediums, they look upon nature as the only authoritative revelation.\* Upon

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\* We give in this connexion an extract from Mr. Arnold, of Poughkeepsie, purporting to come from "God's high and holy spirit, Jesus Christ, formerly of Nazareth," and whom a recent writer in the "Shekinah" dignifies with the denomination of "Joshua the Seer, commonly known as Jesus of Nazareth;" forasmuch as "Joshua" in Hebrew is rendered "Jesus" in Greek, while the aim of the writer, in taking away the peculiarity of the title, is to degrade him to the level of mere ordinary humanity. It will be seen from the extract that a very grave rebuke is read out to poor, Davis and that he is decidedly put upon his penitentials. As the spirit that rules in Davisism is directly at variance with the spirit that rules in Arnoldism, we will not hazard our neutrality by undertaking to act the umpire between them. We may, however, hint a fear that there is too much ground for the spirits' intimation of a backsliding in Davis.

"I called myself John, in the beginning of this chapter, not because that was my name in the body, but because my servant John, acted for me in writing the Book of Revelation, and united with me in explaining now, what then he did not fully understand. Besides, he is a high son of God, being in the Sixth circle, of the Sixth sphere. He is a noble spirit, who delights to serve God, and who did reveal himself to my clairvoyant spirit, Davis, when he was submissive to the directions he received as a clairvoyant, and was content to follow them, without ambition or sordid desires. But his unity with him ceased, when Davis left the control of himself to men of other motives, and it can never be renewed whilst he continues in his present state of rebellion. It is true, that I permit him to write many truths, and that I allow spirits in the first, second, and third spheres to influence, or direct him, but they are not allowed to declare, even all they know of me, to him; because he rebels against my authority, and seeks to elevate wisdom above love, and will above action. The only way for him to become a truthful medium, is to return to the subjection he was first in to the Divine John; and he can only do that by returning to the state from which he departed when he left my servant, Livingston's, management. Because, in that management, he was kept in subjection to the interior, and holy directions he received in his clairvoyant and unconscious state. Whereas, since, he has been used in the will of those around him, until he was permitted to use himself in his own will. His impressions have been overruled to be a benefit, and a foundation for belief to many. They have been so guided as to be the means of releasing many from bondage to tradition, and from worship of idols of flesh; which men have delighted to worship, ever since the foundation of the error, or heresy, which was laid in the apostolic times, referred to in my relation through John the Divine. This will surprise many who have almost begun to worship Davis, and others, who have honored him as a guide. Many spiritual believers, too, will say, how can it be that he is wrong, when so many spirits have by outward declarations, through rappings, and writings, asserted that his works were in the main, true; and, that believers or inquirers should read them. This was because the works of Davis lead the mind to repose on itself, and



this string the faithful are perpetually harping. The all-sufficiency of the light of nature to meet the religious yearnings and aspirations of the soul is a point of most confident assertion, and whatever is deficient here is made up in the direct communications from the supernal spheres, which, as emanating from the fountain-head of truth, are of course entitled to serve a *supersedeas* upon the old worn-out and by-gone teachings of Moses and the Prophets, of Christ and the Apostles. The ordinary style of descanting upon this subject may be seen from the following specimen :

“ For long ages in the past, mankind have received the Bible with the most profound and solemn reverence. They have looked upon it as a book which is intrinsically holy, every word and sentence of which are the result of a direct influx from the Divine Mind, and therefore authoritative in the most literal and unlimited sense. So far has this reverence for the Bible extended, that individuals whose reason and judgment were not sufficiently blinded to receive all its teachings, have been denominated infidels and heretics, and have been treated as the vilest sinners, by those whose faith in the writings of this book has rendered them professedly holy. The Bible has thus been made the standard, immoveable and fixed, for all thought and action, with reference to subjects of morals or religion. This has been regarded as *the* book which God has given to the world as an expression of his will, and as a revelation of the destiny which he has designed for his creatures. In this, it has been supposed, is contained the records of truth which are unmarred and unsullied by any admixture of earthly error, and have their original source in the great vortex of life and love, which exists in the inconceivable depths of space. According to the profound, but bigoted emotions of the religionists in reference to this book, the minister of the temple has made this a basis for the delivery of lengthy sermons and tedious prayers ; and in correspondence with the

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disencumber it of prejudice, and leave it in a fit state to receive further revelation. It is a great step gained, when the mind, in the body, is prepared to receive with favor, higher and further revelation. This is the proper effect of Davis' book ; and I can assure all that no believer in the Bible, as founded on revelation, has ever been led out of that belief, by anything that Davis has written ; no believer in the efficacy of prayer has ever ceased to believe in it, or refrained from it, because he has declared it cannot move or affect the Deity.”—*History of the Origin of All Things*, p. 63.

We suspect the spirit has rather too charitable an opinion of the work in question on this latter score. At any rate, if it has not produced the effect asserted, it is owing to no lack of tendency in his volume to do it.

commands which are enjoined, the people attend to the external forms of worship, communion, and baptism, as the means of saving their souls from hell. The superstitions which belong to the past have thus been brought into the sphere of the present age, and the mass are willing to be bound and crushed by those burdening chains which have been placed upon the minds and hearts of all past generations."—*Ambler's Spiritual Teacher*, p. 39.

"As a consequence of this view of the subject which has been gradually fastened upon the human mind, the Bible has been set up as an authority ; it has been appealed to as a true and reliable standard of thought on all subjects which pertain to the interests of man—and has been leaned upon as an infallible statement of truth which requires the most implicit and unreasoning confidence, in view of the most terrible penalty which is attached to a want of faith in its divine origin."—*Id.* p. 41.

"The reverence for the Bible which has been the ruling sentiment of human hearts—which has cramped and restricted all the free and noble faculties of the soul, has had its sway upon the earth for ages past, and it is now time that this should be removed for the introduction of a principle which is more worthy of the dignity of man, and more consonant with the design of God. It has been seen by the inhabitants of the Spirit-world, that the authority of the Bible has been the chief and prominent source of all bigotry and superstition ; it has been seen that this has been the prolific fountain of all the sects and creeds which have cast their darkening shadow upon the face of humanity ; it has been seen that this is the primary cause of all the narrow-mindedness, all the contraction of thought, and all the blind devotion to human systems of faith, which have been, and are still, conspicuous features of the world's history."—*Id.* p. 42.

"What has been the real effect of the authority with which this book has been endowed ? The spirits have seen this influence and this effect, and they will answer the inquiry which they have made. They have seen that, through the devotion which has been paid to the supposed word of God, the reason of man has been left unexercised and unexpanded : they have seen that, from this cause, all the most exalted powers of the soul have remained weak and unimproved ; and they have seen that in consequence of a rigid adherence to the standard presented in the popular oracles of faith, the soul has been restricted to the narrow limits of creeds which bear no assimilation with the all-expanding truths of the Universe, and no relation to the bright realities of Heaven. Thus the influence and effect which have flowed from the authority of the Bible have been of the most deleterious character, tending to degrade rather than to elevate, to confine rather than to expand, and to crush and destroy rather than to ennoble and save."—*Id.* pp. 43, 44.

Having by this summary process put an extinguisher on the Bible as a veritable and authoritative revelation from God, the "spirits" proceed, in the plentitude of their condescension, to point, as with index-finger, to that truer, purer, more reliable revelation which forms the theme of so much eulogy and glorification on the part of their earthly disciples.

"But there is a revelation of the Divine Mind—there is a word of God, which is superior to all that finite minds can impart or conceive; and this is a revelation which must be regarded with the reverence which is true and just; it is a revelation which will call forth the inherent energies of the soul in the direction of its Divine Author. The revelation to which the spirits here refer, is the Creation which has been introduced into being through the action of the Supreme Intelligence;—it is the Universe which is the natural and untranslated expression of the Infinite Mind. No rational individual can doubt that this is the real and infallible production of the Deity; and no mind which will exercise the powers of which it is possessed, can be disposed to deny that the scriptures of earth and heaven are the only true and direct revelation which has ever been given to his intelligent children."—*Id.* p. 51.

The apotheosis of nature is here complete. The Universe and its Author are made to change places, and the Bible goes into abeyance forever. Its pages may answer for lining trunks and handboxes, but as a vehicle of heavenly truth they are of no further account.

How remote is this from the estimate which the man of the New Church is taught to form of the written Word will be apparent from the following paragraphs:

"The Lord is present and in conjunction with man through the Word, seeing that the Lord is the Word, and, as it were, converses in it with man, because the Lord is Divine Truth itself, and the Word is Divine Truth also. From hence it plainly appears that the Lord is present with man, and in conjunction with him, according to his understanding of the Word: for according to it, man has truth, and from thence faith, and also love, and thence life."—*D. C. S. S.* 78.

"All science and doctrine of good and truth is derived from the Word. The natural man may indeed know, and also perceive, what is good and true, but only natural and civil good and truth; he cannot know what spiritual good and truth is, for the knowledge of this can only come from revelation, or from the Word."—*A. C.* 3768.



“ Without the Word no one would have any knowledge of God, or of Heaven, or Hell, or of a life after death, and much less of the Lord. But there are persons who insist, and confirm themselves in the opinion that man, without the Word, might know the existence of a God, and likewise of heaven and hell, with other points which the Word teaches, and who by that means, derogate from the authority and holiness of the Word, if not with their mouth, yet in their heart; and it would not be proper to reason with such persons from the Word, but from the natural light of reason, for they do not believe the Word but themselves.”

He then institutes a course of powerful argument founded upon the dictates of natural reason, going to show the absolute necessity of a written revelation to impart any just knowledge of spiritual and divine things. See the Treatise entitled “ *The Doctrine of the N. J. concerning the Sacred Scriptures*,” 115. In the same vein are the following passages from other portions of the writings.

“ By not cursing God is signified not to blaspheme Truth Divine, and by not execrating the prince is signified not to blaspheme the doctrine of truth. Truth Divine is the Word, and the doctrine of the Church is truth thence derived. It is allowed briefly to say how the case is with the blasphemation of Truth Divine. Truth Divine is the Word and is doctrine derived from the Word; they who deny these things in heart, blaspheme, although with the mouth they praise the Word and preach it. In the denial lies concealed the blasphemy, which also bursts forth when they are left to themselves and think, especially in the other life, for their hearts speak, things external being removed. They who blaspheme or deny the Word, are incapable of receiving anything of the truth and good of faith, for the Word teaches that the Lord is, that heaven and hell are, that there is a life after death, that faith and charity are, and several other things, which without the Word or revelation would not be at all known; wherefore they who deny the Word, are incapable of receiving anything which the Word teaches, for when they read it or hear it, a negative principle occurs, which either extinguishes truth, or turns it into what is false. Wherefore with the man of the Church the first of all principles is to believe the Word, and this is the primary principle with him who is in the truth of faith and the good of charity; but with those who are in the evils of self-love and the love of the world, the primary principle is not to believe the Word, for they reject it instantly when they think about it, and they also blaspheme it. If a man saw how great blasphemies against the Word appertain to those who are in the evils of the above loves, and what is the quality of



those blasphemies, he would be struck with horror : the man himself, during his abode in the world, does not know it, because they lie concealed behind the ideas of the active thought, which passes off into speech with men ; nevertheless they are revealed in the other life, and appear dreadful."—*A. C.* 9222.

So in the exposition of the Apocalypse where it is said of the New Jerusalem that it had no need of the light of the sun or the moon, but that the glory of God doth lighten it, it is said that,

"This signifies that the men of that church will not be principled in self-love and self-derived intelligence, and thence in natural light alone, but in spiritual light, by virtue of the Divine Truth of the Word derived from the Lord alone."—*A. R.* 919.

By the glory of God is signified the Word in its divine light. By its light is signified the Divine Truth therein, for this is meant by light in the Word."—*A. R.* 897.

This, then, is the light by which the men of the New Church are to walk, and they at least may be expected to rate at its true value that deceitful and sophistical *lumen*,

"Which leads to bewilder, and dazzles to blind."

Assuredly no one can adopt those specious rationalistic fallacies, of which we have given such striking specimens above, without turning his back upon the splendor of the Celestial City, and plunging himself into the darkness, mists, and mazes of a philosophy as remote from truth as is hell from heaven. Indeed, the tendency of this self-vaunting naturalism, in its contemptuous estimate of revelation, is clearly depicted in what is said of the lot of its votaries in the other life.

"There are some who, in the life of the body, had despised the Word, and some who, by a ludicrous application of Scripture phrases in common discourse, had abused it ; some, too, who had imagined the Word to be of no consequence but to keep the vulgar in awe ; some who had blasphemed the Word, and some who had profaned it. The lot of these in the other life is miserable ; of every one according to the quality and degree of his contempt, derision, blasphemy, and profana-

tion. For the Word is esteemed so holy in the heavens, that it is, as it were, heaven to those that dwell there; wherefore, as in the other life, there is a communion of the thoughts of all, it is not possible for such spirits to be in company with the angels, but they are separated." --A. C. 1878.

This of course will be scouted as idle babbling by all those who pay homage to the more reliable rapping, tipping, and writing communications vouchsafed in modern times to mortals; but those for whom we are inditing these suggestions will read it with other eyes. "He that hath a dream let him tell a dream; but he that hath my word, let him declare my word." "What is the chaff to the wheat?"

We had proposed, at the outset, to prosecute the subject before us under a variety of other heads, showing up the falsities of the Spiritual School—the New Philosophy—the Harmonial Brotherhood—or whatever else it may be called—as it respects the Eternity of the Hells, the Doctrine of Progression, and several other items which figure largely in the general system. But we find to our regret that such inroads on our available space have been already made that we must of necessity forego our original plan, as we are unwilling to carry over any series of articles to the next volume, which we would commence with "clean papers." Some few remarks on the general theme will conclude the whole.

Our admission of the truth of the phenomenon, i. e., the truth of its spiritual origin, has been very explicit. We know not how to question the evidence that spirits do in fact communicate sensibly with men, nor would we detract aught from the magnitude of the marvel. Indeed, we esteem it as *par excellence* the most astounding event of the present era. We regard it as altogether worthy the attention and investigation of every intelligent mind, provided such minds shall not prefer, as no doubt many in the New Church will, to take the main facts upon testimony, and not trouble themselves with a scrutiny which can add little or nothing to their present convictions. While the laws of psychology prepare them



to admit substantially the great averments on this head, the laws of order, as they apprehend them, put a veto upon *their* being enrolled even into a committee of inquiry relative to the fact, or the mode of the manifestations. With this estimate of the matter, we are strongly inclined to side, notwithstanding we have embraced every convenient opportunity to investigate thoroughly the phenomena for ourselves. We have, through the courtesy of friends, witnessed it under the most auspicious circumstances, and in its most favorable phases. Many of the communications to which we have listened have been of a very interesting character, and none have given token of being prompted by a decidedly evil or malign class of spirits. On the contrary, their enunciations have for the most part savored of kindness, benevolence, *bienfeasance*, and, as far as we could judge, truth. But then we have never allowed ourselves to interrogate them relative to religious doctrines. We could not bring ourselves to do in act what would imply that we admitted for a moment the existence of any higher standard of truth than we had always recourse to in the revelations of the Word and of the New Church. Whatever their response on this head, it would have no appreciable effect upon our prior convictions. If it agreed with them, it would not strengthen our assurance; if it conflicted with them, it would not weaken it. What motive, then, could we have for consulting such an oracle on such a subject? "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, there is no light in them."

And here it is that we put our finger upon the peccant point of the whole system of pseudo-spiritualism. The devotees of the Rappings, as a general fact, have no experience of such scruples as we have now alluded to. When these ultra-mundane responses rush in like a flood, there seems to be no Spirit of the Lord to lift up a standard against them. They are received, for the most part, as valid oracles—as the voice of truth from its inner sanctuary—and the result is that they are suffered to

supersede every other form of revelation, and carry away the faith captive to their most anti-christian dicta. It is this effect that we are more especially prompted to deplore in connection with the "manifestations." It is not that the "spirits" discourse nothing but falsities, for they do doubtless say many isolated good and true things; but it is the fearful ascendancy which they are allowed to gain over the minds of their votaries, and which goes so far to neutralize all the better results that might otherwise follow from a marvel so astounding to the natural and the worldly mind as the fact of intercourse being actually opened between the visible and the invisible spheres. It is mournful to think of simple and well-disposed souls being so grievously deluded by the claim to a pure and elevated spiritualism, when in fact the very first rudiments of such a spiritualism are wanting. Look over the multitudinous array of "peeping" and "muttering" pamphlets, professing to be laden with the burdens of the supernal spheres, and where do you find, amidst all their canting exhortations to "harmony," and a certain species of *goodishness*, the utterance of one single remark that goes to lay open the intrinsic nature of good, to show its distinction from, and yet its relation to, truth, or one gleam of light thrown upon the process of regeneration? For ourselves we have sought it in vain, as also in vain a circle where this was felt to be any particular desideratum. Instead of the vigorous and life-stirring dogmas of the New Dispensation which instruct men precisely in what they need, and how and where to obtain it, we are treated from this source with page after page *ad nauseam* of the most puling and maudlin sentimentalism, of which the following are fair specimens.

"*From the Spirit of a Mother to her Son.*—MY DEAR SON,—If you want to progress you must let your mind dwell upon the beauties of nature, and of the spirit home. The contemplation of the works of the Almighty fills the mind with high and lofty thoughts, well suited to an immortal being of his creation. The spirit home is full of happiness; all are happy. None of God's creatures are doomed to be miserable, but to enjoy all the happiness they are capable of doing. This is especially the case with man. While he is on the earth he has to endure some



trouble and pain, but this is only for a short season, and during that time it is intermingled with a much greater proportion of happiness. After the mortal body is cast off, all misery and pain are cast off too. After this transition takes place, the spirit is introduced into a delightful home, surrounded by sweet and soothing influences, and is drawn up into communion with those that are more developed, and consequently higher in the spirit-home than they. It is thus taught and developed by the most pleasant means, and progresses from circle to circle. All progress—none remain where they enter—all have the same chance there. There are no drawbacks, no temptations to lure them from the right path—progression is sure and easy. Now let your mind dwell on these truths, and expand our influence, and you will enjoy much more pure happiness than you have ever yet enjoyed.”—*Hist. of Rec. Develop. in Philadelphia*, p. 64.

“*To a Gentleman from his Brother.*—MY DEAR BROTHER,—Your mind was so favorably inclined when you came in that you had not much difficulty in believing that you were surrounded by dear and beloved friends, who were anxious to communicate with you, and unfold to you new truths. Did mankind only know the beauty and harmony of the spirit home, they would not allow their minds to dwell so much on the things of the earth, but lift them up in holy contemplation of that lovely place. You cannot conceive of its beauties, much less of the infinite and lovely character of its Divine Creator. Man has debased him, and brought him lower than himself, by giving attributes to an infinite degree that should not be possessed in a finite degree. Let not your mind look upon him in this light, but in a far higher and more glorious one. You can form no idea of our happiness; words cannot express it. This glorious destiny is prepared for all men without exception; none are to be excluded, all shall be happy. Those who do not develop themselves while on earth, must see that they have not treasured their time as they should have done before. They must enter a lower circle than they need otherwise have done, and be properly taught and developed by those more advanced. Now will you not pay attention to these words, and prepare yourself for an abode in the higher circle immediately upon leaving the earth. Done.”—*Id.* p. 65.

“*From the Spirit of a Sister in answer to the question, ‘Is she dead?’*—No, I am not dead, but live in a more glorious life. O! we are all happy in the spirit home. My dear sister, I am happy to have an opportunity to communicate with you. I have long wished to manifest myself to you, but your condition has not been such as to permit such sweet communion with you. Your idea of the spirit after it leaves its tenement of clay is wrong; such is the fact with most people. Mortals, with their unassisted mental perceptions, cannot understand about the existence of the spirit after it bursts its prison door and soars away in immortal life. Did you understand the laws of progression that govern the development of the immortal spirit, you would live, while

on earth, so as to develop all the higher and holier attributes of the mind. Our mission is to teach mankind this, among other important lessons, concerning their life in a physical and spiritual existence. Man lives for a high and noble purpose. He was created in the image of God—his spirit is an emanation from God. God is with man: though he tramples all that is good beneath him for a time, yet the good within him at times will triumph over his carnal nature. None are so far lost in wrong doing but they will be developed in a slow degree, if but little in life, the more to be developed in the spirit home. Your cold selfish forms, your cold sectarianism, hinders your progress in spiritual development, and is the cause of much wrong doing among men. God is love—love one another, cultivate harmonious relations among you, and you will reap a rich reward in the peace and happiness that will increase among you. Dear sister, think of what I communicate to you, and do not reject it because it is new to you. It is in accordance with the laws which God in his wisdom has established for the more rapid progress of the human family towards a higher spiritual condition. Done.”—*Id.* p. 66.

Whole volumes of such sickly stuff as this have doubtless been indited within the last three years, and the same staple bids fair, from present omens, to be stretched out to the “crack of doom.” If any one would see it in its perfection, let him consult the “Spiritual Messenger” of R. P. Ambler, whose pages are a model on the score of diluted inanity. *Ecce signum.*

“Love is the chosen and effectual purifier of man;—it is that which reaches down to the deep source of action, and clears the fountain from which the streams go forth. In vain has the Church hurled its anathemas upon the sinner; in vain has it robed the destiny of man in a veil of blackness, and made wild terror the instrument of repentance; for with all the thunders of almighty ire, with all the picturings of dark despair, the saint and sinner sleep alike, and smile in mockery at the tragic scene. The world now needs a more gentle ministry. It needs to be warmed and subdued by that attractive influence which shines in the sun and lights the stars. It needs to feel in its heart the power of that celestial love, which is the angel of the Supreme Divinity. Think not that such a principle as this is weak—that it cannot reach to the sinful, the degraded, and the lost. It is in this world of sin that Love has its work to do. Far away over the wastes of human life—down among the hiding-places of the guilty—far down where the tear of human sympathy is seldom shed, shall its blessed power extend; and wherever the fallen victims of crime may dwell—wherever the struggling soul may strive with the tempter—wherever the chains of habit have bound and burdened the heart—wherever sin, and guilt, and wretchedness exist—where tears have flowed and sighs are breathed,

there shall it perform its mission. Yes; it shall go forth where no other power can reach, gaining its silent victories in a sanctuary where sword and flame may never enter. Lo! the accents of love are breathed, and the poor wanderer, whose heart has been long chilled with indifference, turns and smiles; those accents come again to the tempted, and even while raising the cup of death to his lips, the trembling hand is stayed, and a noble purpose is born within his heart; and then, once more, that voice of love falls upon the ear of the criminal—it speaks to him who has heard before but the sound of scorn—to him who has been deserted, despised, and hardened in his sin; and behold! there, in those clanking chains, and amid the dungeon's gloom, that strong heart is melted, and he weeps. Oh! sweet angel of Love! thou art the chosen minister of Heaven—thy breathing tones find their echo in the inmost heart, where the image of God can never be effaced.”—*Spirit Messenger*, p. 155.

If it were not profane to suppose that among the numerous upper and nether “spheres” of which these rapping “revelments” (vocal most uncouth!) speak, there were a Boarding School Misses’ sphere, we should have no farther to seek for the source of the inspiration of scores of paragraphs like the above.

On the whole, it can hardly fail, we think, to be apparent to a Newchurchman that we have in these unique and marvellous manifestations an order of phenomena with which he can cherish but precious little sympathy, except by proving recreant to principles which, as a Newchurchman, he cannot but regard as immovable as the pillars of the universe. He may, if he pleases, investigate the facts as he would any other class of scientifics, in order to pronounce a more intelligent judgment upon the subject, should his opinion be demanded. To this he will often find himself exhorted. “Investigate—open the mind to evidence—be loyal to truth.” Well, and suppose he *has* investigated, and that his mind is fully made up—suppose that he admits freely the supernatural character of the marvel. What then? What more has he to do with it? What uses can it subserve to him? He may never himself have received or witnessed a false communication; but judging the tree by its fruits, what conclusion can he reach but that, be the spirits good or bad, the emanations which come forth from them are not,



as a general fact, entitled to credit. In the department of natural things he cannot repose confidence in their statements any farther than as they are confirmed by other evidence drawn from other sources. In the region of spiritual matters, what light can they afford him of any value which he has not already? Would he set their credibility above that of the illuminated seer of the New Church? When he finds, for instance, these ghostly revelators saying from the other world, as they usually do, that they saw their lifeless bodies reposing on their beds, surrounded by weeping friends, and that, too, in a few moments after their dissolution, how much will this weigh against the positive declaration of Swedenborg, that the spiritual can take no direct and immediate cognizance of the material, any more than the material does of the spiritual—that there must be some intervening medium, psychologically adapted, through whose eyes the objects of earth can be seen? What, moreover, can he think of the reliability of communications which so generally—we do not say universally—lead the “circles” to deny the supreme divinity of Jesus, to reject the Bible-Word as the grand authoritative embodiment of Divine Truth, to scout the eternity, not to say, in many cases, the existence of the hells, to ignore the necessity of regeneration, and to inculcate a system of ethics which makes little or no account of the relations of genuine charity to genuine truth? That these are actually the characteristics of the spiritualism—if we may use the misnomer—which we are now subjecting to review—that its whole literature is leavened with them—it is impossible to deny. That exceptional cases occur we are free to admit; but that we have not libelled the system and the “circles” we have the strongest assurance. And now what were whole ship-loads of such trash compared with the one single paragraph from the luminous pen of Swedenborg which we here insert?

*“In what degree a mediate revelation, which is effected by means of the Word, is preferable to an immediate revelation, which is effected by means of spirits.—It is generally believed that man might be more enlightened,*



and become more wise, if an immediate revelation was granted him by means of converse with spirits and angels ; but the reverse is the case. Illustration by means of the Word is effected by an interior way, whereas, illustration by means of an immediate revelation, is effected by an exterior way. The interior way is by the will into the understanding, the exterior way is by the hearing into the understanding. Man, by means of the Word, is illustrated by the Lord, in proportion as his will is in good ; but man by hearing may be instructed, and, as it were, illustrated, although his will is in evil, and what enters into the understanding in a man, whose will is in evil, is not within the man but without him, and is only in his memory and not in his life, and what is without man and not in his life, is gradually separated, if not before, nevertheless after death ; for the will, which is in evil, either casts it out or suffocates it, or falsifies and profanes it ; for the will constitutes the life of man, and continually acts upon the understanding, and regards as extraneous what is derived into the understanding from the memory. On the contrary, the understanding does not act on the will, but it only teaches in what manner the will should act : wherefore if a man knew from heaven whatever is known to the angels, or if he knew whatever is contained in the Word, and moreover all that is contained in the doctrines of the church, which the fathers have written and councils declared, and his will remains in evil, nevertheless, after death, such a man would be regarded as one who knows nothing, because he does not will what he knows ; and whereas evil hates truth in this case, the man himself casts out truths, and in the room thereof adopts such falses as are in agreement with the evil of his will. Moreover permission is not granted to any spirit nor to any angel to teach any man on this earth in divine truths, but the Lord himself teaches every one by means of the Word, and the man is taught in proportion as he receives good from the Lord in his will, and he receives good in the same proportion as he flees evils as sins ; every man also is in a society of spirits as to his affections, and as to his thoughts thence derived, in which society his mind is, as it were, present with them : wherefore spirits speaking with man, speak from his affections, and according to them.

“ A man cannot converse with other spirits unless the societies in which he is be first removed, which cannot be done except by a reformation of his will ; because every man is in society with spirits who are in the same religion with himself, wherefore, when the spirits converse with him, they confirm whatever a man has made a part of his religion ; consequently, enthusiastic spirits confirm whatever is of enthusiasm with man ; Quaker spirits confirm whatever is of Quakerism ; Moravian spirits whatever is of Moravianism, and so forth. Hence proceed confirmations of the false which can never be extirpated. From this it appears, that mediate revelation, which is effected by means of the Word, is preferable to immediate revelation, which is effected by means of spirits. As to what regards myself, it was not allowed to take anything from the dictate of any spirit, or from the dictate of any angel, but from the dictate of the Lord alone.”—*Con. Sac.*

*Scrip. from Experience, pt. II.*

We have now completed our task, and know not that we shall ever have occasion to revert to it. We are well aware that our views on the subject will impinge somewhat gratingly upon the theories and the feelings of several personal friends whom we are truly sorry to offend, if offence does indeed come of it. Our remarks will undoubtedly savor to them of a narrowness of spirit, of a "sectarian bigotry," from which they had hoped us fairly quit. From such we must bespeak all the charity they may have it in their power to bestow. We trust they will perceive that our object is simply to expose what we conscientiously regard as a pernicious system of *pseudo-spiritualism*. We have endeavored to strip it of its specious disguises, and by presenting it in contrast with a spiritualism which is pure and true—which is from the Lord, and leads to the Lord—to persuade the man of the New Church to abjure all fellowship with it, and to fall back upon those surer oracles which were graciously designed as "a lamp to our feet and a guide to our path."

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#### THE LAW AND THE TESTIMONY *versus* THE FAMILIAR SPIRITS AND THE WIZARDS.

[N. C. Repository, February, 1853.]

"AND WHEN THEY SHALL SAY UNTO YOU, SEEK UNTO THEM THAT HAVE FAMILIAR SPIRITS, AND UNTO WIZARDS THAT PEEP, AND THAT MUTTER : SHOULD NOT A PEOPLE SEEK UNTO THEIR GOD ? FOR THE LIVING TO THE DEAD ?

"TO THE LAW AND TO THE TESTIMONY : IF THEY SPEAK NOT ACCORDING TO THIS WORD, IT IS BECAUSE THERE IS NO LIGHT IN THEM."—Is. viii. 19, 20.

EVENTS transpiring at this day, and which will readily suggest themselves to the reader, render the juxtaposition of things in these two verses quite remarkable. The bane and the antidote are here presented side by side.