

WHAT'S O'CLOCK?

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Modern Spiritual Manifestations:

ARE THEY IN ACCORDANCE

WITH

REASON AND PAST REVELATION?

"Where on the dial plate of this Nineteenth Century points most significantly the finger of God?"

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P R E F A C E.

THE author of this little pamphlet claims for it no particular merit as regards literary ability or depth of thought. The articles which constitute it were contributed by the writer to the New Orleans *Sunday Delta*, amid the pressure of an active business life. They were written principally to attract attention to, and induce an investigation of, the wonderful phenomena which are claimed as spiritual in their origin. The arguments advanced are of a simple character, and such as can be easily understood by the most ordinary mind.

At the suggestion of some friends of the writer, the series is presented in this connected form, with the sole desire that its influence, if it be for good, may be extended beyond the limits of the readers of the paper in which the articles first appeared.

The great fact most prominently impressed upon the mind of the writer is, that our age is eminently one of materialism. Skepticism as regards the reality of spirit life beyond the grave, had, until within the past few years of spiritual enlightenment, become almost universal. Minds otherwise highly intelligent, and capable of grasping in all their comprehensiveness the most intricate of the physical sciences, have not been free from this skepticism, and we behold them even now, exercising a dogmatic authority, and blindly opposing all claims to any present active manifestation of the existence of a spiritual world.

The faith which does exist as to the reality of a future life, is based solely upon evidence which has been handed down from ages past—evidence which is good in itself, and most significant when taken in connection with similar evidence of the present day; but as to the present, there hangs over the minds of men the black cloud of a total unbelief.

From evidence of the past, Faith builds an altar on which is inscribed, "God, and angels, and inspired truth, came down out of heaven thousands of years ago, and were visible to men but, as for any present visible or tangible existence of such things, or the possibility of it, we are unbelievers and infidels."

Thank God there is evidence now being rapidly unfolded which will soon obliterate the latter part of the above inscription, and in its place shall be seen in letters of living light, words that will tell of the absolute knowledge of an EVER ACTIVE PRESENT.

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WHAT'S O'CLOCK?

CHAPTER I.

POSITIVE or assumed facts, however they may violate our pre-conceived opinions, ought always to demand an attentive and patient investigation. We are apt to view the various phenomena of outward nature even, with feelings of indifference, and shut our eyes to the story they may tell, or the lessons they may teach. Centuries linked their circles of years together ere the song of the stars could be sung intelligibly by human lips. An apple fell from a tree, when, lo! a spark from the Divine mind illumined the hitherto dull mind of humanity, and the spiritual apple of truth, as regards the solar system, was born from the seeds of a keen observation. If, since the morning stars first sang together, every flash of lightning had been daguerreotyped and preserved upon the sky, the lines could scarcely have been distinguished when Franklin's mind read the story of their birth. And now, this element, which was once looked upon as a manifestation of God's wrath, has become a pathway for the thoughts of nations, and soon there will be "a girdle round the earth," the whole circuit of which our messengers shall run in *less* than "forty minutes."

And thus it is and ever has been with the human mind in reference to physical phenomena. The clock ticks loudly in our chamber, but it is unheard or unnoticed, because it is so common. Occasionally there comes to us a man with a heaven-illumined soul, who looks up and asks, "What's o'clock?" If such is the truth with regard to the phenomena of the physical, how much more justly and truly may it be said of the spiritual or inner life of man! After resting nearly two thousand years, and in our chambers of thought listening

day by day, to the clock set in motion by the Great Teacher, is it not time for all thinking minds to ask, "What's o'clock?"

"Watchman, tell us of the night,
What its signs of promise are!"

Nearly twenty centuries ago, a little child was born in an obscure place, in the land of Judea. His mother was the wife of a poor carpenter; very poor he must have been, for she gave birth to the child in a common manger. At the time of his birth, if we may believe the records, spiritual truths had nearly died out in the hearts of the people. They had become corrupt and wicked, and the Jewish Church, though outwardly prosperous and great, had become but the instrument of corruption and degradation to the people. So wedded was the Church with the national government, that no prophet or teacher, however great, could expect to be treated otherwise than with contumely and neglect. Even those who believed in the coming of Christ, did not anticipate in him any other than a temporal king and lawgiver, who would reign over Israel as kings had reigned before. The spiritual element in man had become deadened by governmental corruption, and when Christ began his teachings, although he uttered words and truths to his hearers which made "their hearts burn within them," still they were all looking for the time when he would be crowned their temporal king. This belief clung to his immediate followers even up to the time of his death, although he frequently told them his kingdom was not of this world. They could not understand that his coming was solely for a new dispensation of spiritual truths. The Jews believed, as many believe at this day, that the Church records contained all the truths which God would ever vouchsafe to man. Had they not Moses and Elias, David and Solomon, and other prophets of old? What need they for a new teacher? "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

He performed miracles, and they no doubt pronounced him a "humbug." He healed the sick, and cast out devils. "It was by the Prince of Devils he did these things," therefore crucify him! crucify him! And so it has ever been since the world began. No new and sublime truth has ever been given to man, that the old dogmatists have not cried out, "Humbug! crucify it! crucify it!" It was so in physical science with

Galileo, with Newton, with Franklin, with Fulton, and with hundreds of others.

And yet, in spite of all opposition, physical science has advanced with the stride of a giant. Instead of depending solely upon favorable gales to waft us across the waters, the genius of man has chained the giant steam-king, who, with his iron arms, throws aside the surly waves, and laughs in the face of the wind. Iron bands are placed along the land, and like a bird, we fly from point to point. Little wires are stretched across the continent, or sunk in the deep sea, and with the speed of thought, nation speaks unto nation, even in an audible voice. The astronomer gazes up into the "City of God" which is shown to him, and he walks its golden streets of harmony and beauty, and weighs every star in his scales of science. The geologist digs into the bowels of the earth, and almost robs Nature of the secret of its birth. And so all through the realms of science we see a constant progress. But how is it with regard to that inner life which we term the spiritual? Can we see in the minds of men any similar evidence of the world's progression? Are we further advanced to-day than yesterday? Is it not rather a too melancholy truth that the soul of man is fettered with the rusty chains of past ages—that "we grope among the dry bones of the past, and put the living generation into masquerade out of its faded wardrobe"? Let us not forget that "the sun shines to-day also; there is more wool and flax in the fields."

CHAPTER II.

WE have said that the world has ever been slow to recognize new truths, whether of a physical or spiritual nature, and that, notwithstanding the disposition of mankind to reject, and its indisposition to investigate, a marked and rapid progress has been made in physical science, especially within the last two centuries. The printing press, the steam engine, the electric telegraph, the sciences of astronomy and geology, are now freely acknowledged, by all devout minds, to have come from the highest source, even the Great Ruler of the Universe, and

not, as in their incipency they were supposed to be, the instigations or manifestations of the Evil One.

Although the idea has almost died out, yet it is again beginning to be recognized, that Jehovah is a *living* God, whose arm is as active and whose presence is as actual to-day as they were when the first violet opened its leaves to the sun which shone on the garden of paradise. Let us recognize fully this Presence, and ask in the earnestness of deep thought, where on the dial-plate of this nineteenth century points most significantly the finger of God?

Freedom in the investigation of physical science is now fully acknowledged, and its martyrs are heroes in history.

And now where shall we look for new triumphs, if it be not in the investigation of the inner life—the soul of man?

The soul of man! Who *can* fathom its mysteries? Who can point out its final destiny? What know we of the soul, except through its own manifestation in ourselves? Nothing—absolutely nothing. Then in ourselves must we look for that light—reflected light though it be—by which we may read the inner secret.

That man must be a doubter indeed, who denies the existence within himself of a life independent of that directly connected with his physical body, and which pre-supposes an existence beyond the grave. Ignorance or indifference, it is true, may deaden that belief, and man may live as though his three score years and ten completed the circle of his life.

To this doubter, if such there be, the question naturally arises, "What evidence is there that the grave is not my final resting-place?" The believing Christian will point him to the records of the past, and with a truly illumined soul, will repeat to him the recorded evidence of other men like himself, who lived centuries ago. He will tell him of the visions of the old prophets and sages, whose interior light enabled them to penetrate the spiritual heavens. He will tell him of the miracles of Christ and his Apostles, and the truth of immortality brought to light by the Great Teacher. But to the skeptical mind, this evidence of the past is not sufficient for conviction, and he naturally exclaims, "Give *me* the evidence." He says, "If Paul, and Jesus, and Moses, and Isaiah, saw and heard these things two or five thousand years ago, why cannot

I have evidence given to me? If man has a deathless soul, is it reasonable to believe that his spiritual life has become by ages so degraded that there can be no seer or prophet now?"

These pungent questions of the unbeliever are not insignificant, and it behooves the believer to look around him, and see if no answer can be given. He may well cry aloud, "O God, answer thou this unbeliever!"

Our object now will be to show that we are not without the evidence which the unbeliever asks for.

We are quite well aware of the opposition and ridicule which have attended, and which still attend, the investigation of the phenomena called spiritual manifestations. But opposition based upon ignorance, and ridicule which is the fool's weapon, should not deter us from a thorough examination of the evidence which these phenomena give of the existence of spirit-life beyond the grave, and the ability of the spirit to hold communion with us in the flesh.

Let us first premise that we are addressing Christian readers, those who believe in the records of the New Testament, and in the teachings of Christ and his immediate Apostles. We are also addressing that class of unbelievers who have no definite faith in the immortality of the soul. We shall endeavor to produce such arguments as shall reach both the Christian believer and the skeptic. It will be necessary, therefore, to examine a little into the evidence which the Bible gives us upon this subject, and then compare that evidence with what modern spiritualism claims to give.

It may seem an impertinent question, but we cannot avoid asking the unbeliever, Have you examined the Bible with an earnest desire to obtain the whole truth, to see what it says upon the subject of spirit communion? If you have, you cannot have failed to notice that the entire revelation of God rests on this very truth—the truth of spirit intercourse. God sent his holy angels to speak to man through the prophets. Jacob beheld angels ascending and descending; and the Saviour said, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascend and descend." Moses and Elias appeared to Jesus and others, and so cognizant was Peter of the fact, that he said, "Let us make here three tabernacles." St. Paul knew a man who was caught up into the heavens, and saw things

impossible for man to utter. Read the account of that mighty spiritual manifestation at the day of Pentecost, when to the Apostles and others there appeared "cloven tongues as of fire." "They spake with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." On the day of Pentecost, all nations and all tongues were gathered together, and in order that all might hear the truth, it was necessary that all languages should be spoken. The Apostles were enabled, by what is called a miracle, to speak all languages. "Some were amazed, and said, what meaneth this?" "Others mocked, and said, these men are full of new wine," insane or foolish. Peter said, "These men are not drunken, (foolish or crazy,) as ye suppose; but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." "For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to *all that are afar off*." The Bible bears record in many places of mediums having seen God. It is recorded that Moses, Aaron, Nadab, the seventy elders, and the nobles of the children of Israel, all saw God. But we think they were mistaken in supposing it was God whom they saw, for the Apostle John declares "That no man hath seen God at any time." And Paul says, "He dwelleth in the light, which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath nor can see." It was no doubt a spirit which they saw, and they deceived themselves, as John did in the isle of Patmos, when he saw the bright and happy spirit of one of his brethren, the prophets, who showed him those wonderful things recorded in Revelation, and with this belief he fell at his feet to worship him; but the angel forbade him, and proclaimed who he was, and told him to worship only God. If John could be thus mistaken, might not the mediums of the Old Testament in like manner have been mistaken, and only seen an angel or spirit, whom they thought at that period was God? It will be necessary, before closing this portion of our subject, to show that evil or ignorant spirits sometimes communicated through the purest and best mediums of old; and also, that some of the most sublime truths and communications ever given to man, and which form a part of the Bible, which all true Christians so much reverence, came through impure mediums.

The first instance which we shall notice is the command given to Abraham by a spirit which he thought was God, to offer up his son Isaac as a burnt offering. We will quote the text: "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham. And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Now, we believe that it was an evil or ignorant spirit that *tempted* Abraham, and not God. Can it be an attribute of Deity, that He should tempt one of His children to do evil? to commit murder? God's temptings are not on the side of evil; if they ever were, He would not be, as we know He is, all goodness. The Apostle James says: "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, *neither tempteth He any man.*"

An ignorant spirit, no doubt, spoke through the prophet Jonah, when he prophesied the destruction of Nineveh in forty days. The prophecy was not fulfilled.

Jeremiah was filled with joy when good spirits were with him and spoke through him, and would then sing praises to the Lord. On the other hand, when evil or deceptive spirits controlled him, he cursed the day he was born.

St. Paul, the Apostle, although he became a disciple of Jesus some time after the other Apostles, was not a whit behind them in spiritual gifts. He was permitted to see the Saviour and hear his voice long after his resurrection. He, in the spiritual state, was caught up into the third heavens, and paradise, and heard unspeakable words. Yet this medium, good and pure as he was, had, like all other mediums, to suffer the approach of evil or ignorant spirits at times.

And was not Jesus himself thus tempted and tried by an evil spirit? Has the servant become greater than his master?

In order to show that in Bible times, great truths and sublime communications have come through the mediumship of men who in their lives were not entirely pure, it is only necessary to mention the case of David, whose psalms and prayers will probably never be surpassed in beauty and sublimity.

CHAPTER III.

God's laws are immutable. "The same yesterday, to-day, and forever. In Him "there is no variableness nor shadow of turning." The same law which opened the petals of the first flower, and threw out its fragrance as an incense offering to its Great Author, still scatters those "day stars" along our pathway, and sweetens the south wind with their delicate and delicious aroma. The heavenly bodies which were breathed out by His creative power in the beginning, are still held in the hollow of His hand by the same law which first set them in motion. The same influence which now prompts the robin and the lark to sing their "matin hymns of worship," also prompted the first bird-song in the garden of paradise. The same may be said with regard to all the manifestations of Deity which we see around us in the natural world, from the chirping of a cricket, the growth of a blade of grass, to the revolving worlds above us, which are so miraculously balanced in their orbits. If this is true with regard to outward or physical nature—and that it is, who dares to question?—is it not absolutely unreasonable for an instant to doubt that the same laws now govern the spiritual element in man, which have ever governed it since man was first created?

The soul of man we believe to be an emanation from God, and must consequently be governed by His laws. His laws being unchangeable, it follows as a self-evident proposition, that what the soul of man has ever been capable of perceiving and knowing, it must be capable of perceiving and knowing now.

With this argument, we proceed with the discussion of the subject immediately under consideration: What identity, or similarity, is there between the spiritual manifestations of to-day, and those which we find in the Old Bible and the New Testament?

Let us examine this question with pure and upright intentions, and with an earnest desire to obtain the truth, knowing as we do that truth will ever triumph over error.

Among modern spiritual manifestations, there are, it is

true, many phenomena of which there is no mention made in the Bible. It will not be necessary for us at present to specially designate them, but only to say they are what are termed "physical manifestations," such as the moving of tables and other ponderable objects. These shall be particularly noticed and commented upon in a future chapter.

THE SEEING MEDIUM.—This particular phase of mediumship is one which has been more generally developed in the world throughout all ages, than any other immediately connected with the spiritual phenomena. "The discerning of spirits," which is especially noticed by St. Paul as one of the spiritual gifts, is a power which has been possessed by many persons in all ages and in all countries. Those who possess that power are what we call "Seeing Mediums." While in a trance, or interior state, their spiritual vision is opened, and they are enabled to see their friends and others in the spirit world as distinctly as if they were in the flesh. Numerous instances are recorded, where the seeing medium has been able to describe to others the appearance of spirits so minutely as readily to be recognized by parties present, although the medium was totally ignorant of and unacquainted with the individual before leaving the form. This phenomenon was common, long before the "modern spiritual manifestations" were dreamt of. Who that has stood much by the bedside of dying persons, cannot give evidence of a superior illumination on the part of the dying one? How common it is for the little child, whose mother has gone before it to the spirit land, before death has paralyzed its tongue, to stretch out its arms and exclaim, "O, mother! I am coming to you!" Or for it to describe its visions and say, "Oh! I see sister beckoning to me." Thousands of such or similar cases have been recorded, and they are occurring every day. No one will deny this statement.

The seeing medium not only sees the spirits of departed ones, but also has visions of beauty far surpassing the power of language to express. These visions penetrate the spiritual heavens, and in sublimity and signification equal the Apocalypse of John.

And now we ask if this phase of modern spiritualism, viz., spirit seeing, does not resemble in a very close and indisputable manner, what is recorded of persons mentioned in the

Bible, who saw visions of angels, &c. We think there is scarcely a particle of reason for denying that it does.

THE SPEAKING MEDIUM.—In the speaking medium we find so extraordinary a phenomenon that it is with us a matter of astonishment that the Christian world will remain so obstinately blind to its wonderful significance. Here is a fact, freely and fully acknowledged to be true in every particular by those who have at all examined the subject, and yet how silent remains the Christian teacher upon this extraordinary phenomenon of the human mind! Here is a man with an ordinary intellect, and with a common education, scarcely reaching mediocrity, who, in his normal state can scarcely speak a sentence correctly, or utter a thought, goes into a trance or interior state, and standing erect before a multitude of critical hearers, delivers a discourse, which for profundity of thought, sublimity of language, and electrifying eloquence, astonishes those hearers, and makes them believe indeed that inspiration is come again.

We have seen a young girl but sixteen years of age, with all the modesty of budding womanhood stamped upon her features, who, in her normal state, was only ordinarily intelligent, yet while in the trance or spiritual state she would stand before an audience of fifteen hundred persons for two hours, and answer abstruse questions in a manner which would puzzle the learned doctors to do after hours of intense thought.

Some speaking mediums—and there are many such—not only speak the language with which they are acquainted, but other languages. In other words, they have “the gift of tongues.” It is no uncommon thing for a medium, understanding only the English language, to write or speak the French, Spanish, Italian, Hebrew, Greek, and other languages. Can this be explained by any known laws of philosophy aside from the spiritual theory? If so, the miracle of Pentecost should no longer be regarded as remarkable. Do we not therefore see in the “speaking medium” a close similarity to those persons spoken of by Paul, as having “the gift of tongues”?

HEALING MEDIUMS.—Whatever may be the power which has produced the extraordinary cures which have been attributed by its believers to spiritual influence, it is certain that it is closely identified with “the gift of healing” spoken of by the

Apostle. We are led to believe, by what Paul says, that many of the believers in Christ possessed this gift. It is undeniable that many possess the gift of healing now, whose cures, if they had occurred in the time of the Apostles, would have been recorded as miracles. By a power claimed as spiritual, within the last five years, the blind have literally been made to see—the otherwise incurably lame have been made to walk—and persons whose cases have been pronounced by the doctors as incurable, have by spirit power been made well. Many of these cures of the blind, the lame, and the sick, have been made almost instantaneously, and without a particle of medicine, or any outward application, except simply the laying on of hands. If it were not against our purpose, we could give the names of persons now residing in this city, in whose families such cures have been performed.

We have thus mentioned three of the phases of the spiritual phenomena which appear to us identical with the "spiritual gifts" spoken of in the Bible. We might enlarge on this branch of the subject, and still further compare the other spiritual gifts, but we prefer to leave it with our readers to examine and judge for themselves.

And now a momentous question arises, which must address itself to every professor of Christianity. If, as we think we have clearly shown, these classes of the modern manifestations are identical with those which followed the teachings of Christ in the times of the Apostles, and which he said would surely follow the true teacher, have we in the Christian Church of the present day any sure evidence that we have the true gospel of Jesus preached to us from the pulpit? In speaking of his miracles, Christ distinctly says: "He that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also; and *greater* works than these shall he do." It is simply folly, to say that the age of miracles or spiritual manifestations became extinct with the death of the immediate Apostles of Christ, for history bears us out in the statement that those "gifts" of the Spirit remained active in the Church for several centuries after the death of Christ. We will only mention a few cases which may be gleaned from the history of the Church. We quote from an able article upon the subject by the Rev. Mr. Fishbough, of New York.

"The celebrated Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, who suffered martyrdom about the year 292, was said to be himself largely endowed with the gifts of the Spirit. He says: 'Wherefore he (Jesus Christ) being the only Son of God, by his name those that are indeed his disciples, receiving grace from him, do now perform to the benefit of other men, according as every one has received the gift from him; for some do cast out devils truly and effectually, others have foreknowledge of things future, and have visions, and the gift of prophesying; others by imposition of hands do restore the sick and heal all manner of diseases; and as we have already said, the dead are raised, and do service with us many years. But what shall I say? for it is not possible to reckon up the number of gifts, which the Church all the world over has received, and does exert every day, in the name of Jesus Christ crucified under Pontius Pilate. * * * Moreover, they now speak in all tongues even as St. Paul spake; even as we ourselves have heard many of the brethren that have the prophetic gifts in the Church, and who speak by the Spirit, in all languages, and profitably do make manifest the secrets of men's hearts, and openly publish the mysterious things of God.' A little after the time of Justin Martyr, viz., about the year 180, Athenagoras was commissioned by his Christian brethren to carry an apology to the Emperor of Rome. In this apology is given a clear description of what in our day would be called 'Speaking Mediums,' and which seem then to have abounded in the Church, under the name of prophets and prophetesses. 'I call them prophets,' said he, 'who being out of themselves and their own thoughts, did utter forth whatsoever by the impelling power of the Spirit he wrought in them; while the Divine operator served himself of them, or their organs, even as men do of a trumpet, blowing through it. Thus have we prophets for witnesses and affirmers of our faith; and is it not equal and worthy of human reason, O ye Emperors, to yield up our faith to the Spirit who moves the mouth of the prophets as his instruments?'"

The Rev. Mr. Fishbough mentions many other cases of a similar character, showing conclusively that the history of the early Christian Church, several centuries after Christ, is filled with the records of manifestations of "the gifts of the Spirit."

We will close this portion of our subject by quoting from an elaborate report made by the Rev. Charles Beecher, who was appointed by his church to investigate the "Spiritual Manifestations." He assumes the hypothesis that "spirits can only obtain access through prepared odyllic conditions;" that this was the mode of communication by the ancient prophets, and to substitute any other theory "cuts up by the roots large portions of the prophetic Scriptures;" and adds: "Whenever odyllic conditions are right, spirits can no more be repressed from communicating than water from jetting through the crevices of a dyke." Mr. Beecher concludes by saying:

"Whatever physiological law accounts for odyllic phenomena in all ages, will, in the end, inevitably carry itself through the Bible. Its prophecies, ecstasies, visions, trances, theophanies, and angelophanies are more or less tinged with

oddylic characteristics. The physiology, the anthropology of the Bible, is highly oddylic, and must be studied as such. As such it will be found to harmonize with the general principles of human experience in such matters in all ages. If a theory be adopted, everywhere else but in the Bible, excluding spiritual intervention by oddylic channels in toto, and accounting for everything physically, then will the covers of the Bible prove but pasteboard barriers. Such a theory will sweep its way through the Bible and its authority; its plenary inspirations will be annihilated."

CHAPTER IV.

"Think nought a trifle though it small appear;
Small sands the mountains, moments make the year."

How insignificant by itself appears the pearly dew-drop which hangs upon the blade of grass! And how powerless, too, it is! The rising sun drinks it as a libation, and in the atmosphere, it acts simply as a prism to make light beautiful. But make the conditions different, and we find in this little globule of water an element of power, more wonderful than the fabled magician's wand, for it brings the nations into closer proximity, and gives us the wings of Ariel, to fly o'er the land whithersoever our wishes tend. A single drop of water, oozing through the banks of a peaceful stream, is known to have been the progenitor of a mighty cataract. A single spark of fire struck from the cold flint may commence the conflagration of a city. A single word from a peasant's lips may electrify a nation, and change its destiny forever.

How unsafe, then is it, to view anything, no matter how small, as entirely unworthy of notice.

These comparisons may apply to what appear to some minds the insignificant phenomena of "Spiritual Manifestations." They may be but as a drop of water oozing through the banks of the peaceful stream of society; but we may, perchance in our day, yet hear the roar of a Niagara, the whisper of whose music, now heard in the distance, is inviting us to approach and behold the grandeur of its reality.

It will perhaps be well for us now to enumerate more particularly, the different classes of the phenomena claimed as spiritual in their origin. The Rev. Asa Mahan, who is an

opposer of the spiritual theory, admits as true the following phenomena:—

1. Facts of a purely physical character, such as the moving of tables, chairs, etc., movements which sometimes accord with the thoughts and suggestions of the inquirers.

2. Intelligent communications by means of rapping sounds, speaking and writing phenomena, which in many instances, to say the least, occur wholly independent of the direct conscious agency of the mediums, or of any other persons present.

3. Communications pertaining to subjects of which the mediums are profoundly ignorant, and yet found to be correct.

4. Correct communications pertaining to facts believed to be known only to the inquirer himself, and the particular spirit with whom he is professedly communicating.

5. Similar communications containing correct responses to purely mental questions.

6. "Communications conveying, in some instances, correct information in respect to facts unknown to the inquirer or any other person present." (*Modern Mysteries*, pp. 40, 41.)

To the above six classes, admitted to be true by Prof. Mahan, Mr. Joel Tiffany, an intelligent writer upon the subject, adds the following, which are equally undeniable and susceptible of proof:—

7. Speaking and writing in languages unknown to the medium, certain communications purporting to come from spirits unknown, which communications are significant and pertinent to the persons to whom they are addressed.

8. Writing without the agency of any physical human instrumentality, words, names, communications, etc., in the proper hand-writing of the individual whose spirit purports to be present.

9. Writing, as above, lengthy communications in the presence of the circle, with ten times the rapidity of any known human agency, which communications are legible, intelligent, and pertinent.

10. Drawing and painting in the same manner as well as through the hand of the medium, in an artistic and masterly manner, and doing it with the most unprecedented rapidity.

11. Playing upon musical instruments in the most exquisite style, without the medium's coming in physical contact with the keys or strings, and performing the most difficult pieces, with which the medium and others present are altogether unacquainted.

12. Seeing spirit-forms while they are performing the above manifestations.

13. Handling these spirit-forms.

14. Foretelling the happening of future events.

15. Healing diseases, causing the deaf to hear, the blind to see, and the lame to walk, &c. &c.

Prof. Mahan admits, the first six classes named are facts beyond dispute, "because on full investigation I am satisfied they occur, and that they cannot be truthfully denied." The

other classes enumerated by Mr. Tiffany have equal evidence to support their truth, as have the first six mentioned. In fact, their actuality is beyond dispute.

Let us examine more minutely into some of the different phases of the phenomena, and see what evidence there is that their origin is spiritual. We have already, in a previous chapter, partially noticed, so far as the necessary limits of these communications will admit, three classes of the phenomena, viz., seeing, speaking, and healing powers, as being more intimately identical with phenomena which have occurred in past ages. We now come to those classes of the manifestations which to some minds appear so insignificant and unworthy of notice. It will be safe, we think, to assume that if these manifestations occur at all—which is not disputed now, even by the opposers of spiritualism—whether their origin is spiritual or not, they are the result of natural laws, and all natural laws are the laws of God. How can any phenomena then, which manifest the existence of an unknown law of nature, be unworthy of notice or of investigation? Let those who sneer at the subject answer the question.

We sit in our chamber, and hear the clock mark the seconds of time by an audible tick. The hands upon the face of the clock indicate the hour and the minute. If we had never seen a clock before, reason would tell us there must be a power within the clock which makes the tick and guides the hands. We should examine and find that power.

We sit in our chamber and hear, also, distinct sounds upon the table beside us or upon the walls. We naturally ask what it means. The sounds continue now upon one article, and then upon another, until they begin to trouble us. The table beside us begins to move; the chairs and other articles of furniture follow the example of the table, and altogether seem to join in demanding from us some attention. In all these movements and sounds there appears to be some intelligence expressed. What does it mean? Is there an invisible power which is making these raps and movements? If so, let us try and find out what it is. The raps come distinctly, one, two, three, then stop; then rap again—one, two, three. Let us ask a question and see if it will answer by the raps. One rap shall indicate No; three raps Yes; five raps for us to call the alpha-

bet, so that this invisible intelligencer may spell out what it wants to say.

We ask, What power is it that is making these raps? Five distinct raps are given—a call for the alphabet. When we come to a certain letter, a rap indicates that, as the letter to be put down. We go on calling the alphabet until the following sentence is spelled out: “My dear father, I come here to send you a welcome from beyond the portals of the tomb! The grave, my dear father, need no longer be thought of with dread; the spirit still lives and retains its individuality after it leaves its earthly form. I am happy, and will talk with you again. Your son George.” This, coming unexpectedly, astonishes us. Other raps follow, which seem to be different in sound. We ask, Is this another spirit that wishes to communicate? Ans.—Yes.

Ques.—What is your name? Ans.—John Bowers.

Ques.—Where did you die? Ans.—I am not dead. I left the earthly form in Boston.

Ques.—How long have you been in the spirit world? Ans.—Three days.

Ques.—Did you ever know me while in the form? Ans.—No.

Ques.—Have you anything particular to communicate? Ans.—Yes. I want you to write to my dear wife, and tell her that I am not in the cold, dark grave. My spirit is free. I am with her often, and try to impress her with my presence. Our two little children, Ann and Charlie, are with me, and we are happy.

Ques.—What is your wife's name? Ans.—Caroline Bowers. We write to Boston, and find the above statements to be true.

We have given the above only as an example of the experience of thousands who have examined and tested the communications given through the raps. Communications through the tipping of a table are received pretty much in the same manner. We could give an account of very many tests which have occurred in our own experience, but our object is simply to urge others to investigate the subject, and they will find plenty of evidence to convince them of the reality of spiritual intercourse. Tests of spirit identity are given to the investigator in various ways. Very frequently they are given voluntarily by the spirit communicating, and in such a manner as to

preclude the idea that the information given is obtained from the mind of any person present. For instance, as is acknowledged by Prof. Mahan, in class No. 6 of his admissions, "Communications conveying in some instances, correct information in respect to facts, *unknown to the inquirer, or any other person present.*" We have seen a circle of at least a dozen persons, every one of whom, without a mistake occurring, have obtained tests in the following manner: Each person in turn asks the question, "Is there a spirit present that will communicate with me?" If the answer is yes, the inquirer then writes upon separate slips of paper the relationship of friends who have died, say father, mother, sister, brother, &c. Sometimes the number of slips written upon would be six, eight, or ten, as the case might be. These slips of paper containing the relationships are rolled up as closely as possible into little wads. The spirit is then requested to select one of the papers containing the relationship of the spirit. This is done by the person investigating taking up the wads one at a time until the tip of the table or rap indicates the right one. That one is laid aside by itself without opening it, the others thrown away. Then on other slips of paper are written names to correspond with the relationships previously written. These in the same manner are rolled into wads, and the spirit is requested to select the name to correspond with the relationship previously selected. This is done and laid with the other. Then from the ages of all the persons the age is selected. Then again the disease which caused death, then place of residence. Upon opening these five wads of paper they are found to agree; that is, the name with the relationship, age, disease, &c. In addition to this test of identity, we have frequently seen the medium, before those papers were opened, write, by a power not his own, a communication commencing by naming the relationship, and closing with the name, both name and relationship identical with those on the papers selected. Our readers must judge for themselves of the character of the above tests, where no mistake is made in going through a circle of at least twelve persons.

We must reserve for another chapter a continuation of this subject. We do not, however, feel it right to close this without stating that these manifestations, or some phase of them, may be witnessed by all who are so disposed, either by visiting some known medium, or, which is generally much

more desirable and satisfactory, by forming circles in your own family. It would be something quite unusual if upon sitting around a table a dozen nights, an hour each night, no manifestations occurred. Still it does in many cases require more sittings. Patience and perseverance are necessary, and with humble and prayerful hearts you will be able to hold converse with your friends in the spirit world.

CHAPTER V.

As long ago as the year 1716, the Wesley family (father of John Wesley, the founder of Methodism) were disturbed by sounds and rappings, with other occurrences, which in some respects equal, and in many resemble the modern "spiritual manifestations." Nine of that family testify to the truth of the statements, as well as others. This narrative may be found in a book called "Memoirs of the Wesley Family," by Adam Clark, LL.D., F.A.S., second edition, 1846. We would be glad, if we had room, to copy here the full narrative as drawn up by John Wesley, and published by him in the *Arminian Magazine*; also, the written statements of other members of the family. But we must content ourselves by giving a short extract only, which will, however, show the character of the manifestations:—

"A few nights after, my father and mother were just gone to bed, and the candle was taken away, when they heard three blows, and a second, and a third three, as it were with a large oaken staff struck upon a chest that stood by the bedside. My father immediately arose, put on his night-gown, and hearing great noises below, took the candle and went down; my mother walked by his side. As they went down the broad stairs, they heard as if a vessel full of silver was poured upon my mother's breast, and ran jingling down to her feet. Quickly after there was a sound as if a large iron ball was thrown among many bottles under the stairs; but nothing was hurt. Soon after, our large mastiff dog came and ran to shelter himself between them. While the disturbances continued he used to bark, and leap, and snap on one side and the other, and that frequently before any person in the room heard any noise at all. A little before my father and mother came into the hall, it seemed as if a very large coal was violently thrown upon the floor and dashed in pieces; but nothing was seen. My father then cried out, 'Sukey, do you not hear? All the pewter is thrown about the kitchen.' But when they looked, all the pewter stood in its place. There then was a loud knocking at the back door. My father opened it, but saw nothing. It was then at the fore door. He opened that, but it was still lost labor. After opening first the one then the other several times, he turned and went to bed. But the noises

were so violent all over the house, that they could not sleep till four in the morning."

The following is an extract from an account of one of the sisters to her brother Jack:—

"When five or six were sitting in the nursery together, a cradle would seem to be rocked in the room overhead, though no cradle had ever been there. One night I was sitting on the press bed, playing at cards with some of my sisters and Robert Brown. The bed on which my sister Nancy sat was lifted up with her on it. She leaped down from the bed. However, they persuaded her to sit down again, which she had scarce done, when it was again lifted up, several times successively, to a considerable height."

The manifestations continued in the Wesley family for several weeks, and in the case of one of the daughters, they no doubt continued through her lifetime, as she wrote to her brother and spoke of the manifestations as still occurring, thirty-four years after those recorded above.

That some of the family believed these manifestations to be made by spirits there is no question. Mrs. Wesley, writing to her son Samuel, says:—

"Though I am not one of those that will believe nothing supernatural, but am rather inclined to think there would be frequent intercourse between good spirits and us, did not our deep lapse into sensuality prevent it; yet, it was a great while ere I could credit anything of what the children reported concerning the noises, &c.; but, after hearing the noises and examining myself, I was entirely convinced that it was beyond the power of any human creature to make such strange and various noises."

But we must come down to the more modern manifestations which are claimed to be spiritual in their origin. It is now about nine years since the extraordinary manifestations first occurred in the Fox family, at Rochester, New York, and which were the means of inducing a minute and careful investigation into the phenomena now claimed as spiritual. It is unnecessary for us to relate the particulars of the phenomena which occurred at Rochester, as they have been so frequently given to the world through books and newspapers. Should any one desire to know the particulars of these manifestations, he will find a full history of them in a work by E. W. Capron, entitled "Modern Spiritualism; its Facts and Fanaticisms." The manifestations in the Fox family were, at first, of a most violent and extraordinary character; and not anticipating that any intelligence could be obtained from the unseen and mysterious power which caused the disturbances,

their violent character continued for some time. Finally, by accident, it was discovered that there was an intelligence connected with the noises, and when a system for communicating that intelligence was adopted, the more violent but not more extraordinary manifestations ceased. From that time forward up to the present, the belief in spiritual communion has increased with a rapidity more astonishing than any other movement ever known to the human mind. With an opposition unparalleled for its perseverance and its bitterness, it has moved onward with a momentum as resistless as it is overwhelming; and nothing now can stay its progress. Popes may issue their bulls against it; priests may denounce and discard it; newspaper writers may laugh at and ridicule it, and ignorance, clothed in the garb of a pharisaical church, may cry, Crucify it! crucify it! but its truth will remain as eternal as God.

Simultaneously with, or shortly after the extraordinary manifestations at Rochester, there occurred in the house of Rev. E. Phelps, at Stratford, Connecticut, probably the most remarkable phenomena that have ever taken place in the world. The undoubted high character and standing of the gentleman at whose house the manifestations occurred, and the number and reliability of the witnesses who testify to the reality of the facts, establish, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the manifestations were produced by some unseen and intelligent power. We are sorry that we cannot lay before our readers a minute account of those manifestations, but, occupying as they do, some forty pages of Capron's work, it will be almost impossible for us to convey more than a slight idea of their character. Without noticing the particulars of the commencement of the manifestations, we will make a few extracts from the account, which may give the reader a faint idea of their general character:—

"Dr. Phelps was not a believer in spiritual manifestations. He had never believed in the appearing of ghosts or departed spirits, warnings, or anything of that nature, and at the age of three score had never seen or heard anything connected with that class of phenomena. His idea was that most, if not all professed spiritual manifestations, if followed by strict scrutiny, might be accounted for on natural or known principles, or some physical means, which would disrobe them of the mysterious.

"On March 11th, 1850, the moving and throwing of furniture commenced. An umbrella standing at the end of the hall, leaped, without visible assistance, a

distance of at least twenty-five feet. Dr. Phelps saw the movement, and knows there was no perceptible agency by which the motion was produced. A bucket standing at the head of the stairs was thrown into the entry below. Smaller articles, such as nails, forks, knives, spoons, bits of tin, iron, and keys, were thrown from different directions, about the house. During the afternoon, Dr. and Mrs. Phelps had occasion to go to Bridgeport, a distance of some three miles. During their absence the shovel and tongs standing in the dining-room were thrown violently down the basement stairs, a piece of crape fastened to the knocker of the back door, and the mirrors in the front chambers covered with sheets and table-cloths, as is the custom in some parts of the country while a person lies dead in the house. The next morning, soon after the family were up, the same phenomena began again; knives, forks, spoons, blocks of wood, nails, &c., &c., were thrown from different directions, and with increased frequency. While the family were at dinner two Bibles and an Episcopal prayer-book were opened at different passages, chairs turned forward on the floor, two solar lamps placed on the floor, a hat and cap put one on each; nearly everything in the room had been moved, and in so short a time that it seems wholly inadmissible that any person about the house could have done it; besides, the whole household were in the dining-room, all seated at the table, except the servant, and she was employed waiting on the table.

"The throwing of various things occupied the afternoon. The articles thrown were picked up and placed upon the mantle, and between the hours of one and four o'clock the number amounted to forty-six; among which were nails, bits of tin, iron, keys, and small blocks, all of which were gathered from different parts of the house, most of them from closets on the second floor and the chambers. At one time, while Mr. M., a visitor, was standing near the centre of the room, a padlock, which was known to have been in the closet of the middle chamber, fell at his feet. In the evening of this day, just after some ladies had called, Dr. P.'s daughter returned to the parlor, it being between nine and ten o'clock, and an iron stand, in which stood the fire-shovel, tongs, and poker, leaped from the hearth, where it stood, into the middle of the floor, and rose up and beat the floor with a force that made a jar that could be felt and the sound heard in any part of the house. On March 16th, images, dressed in articles of clothing, were again seen. Soon after breakfast two or three images appeared in the middle chamber; soon again another, followed by another still, numbering in all eleven or twelve. They were formed of articles of clothing found about the house, stuffed to resemble the human figure. A lady's dress would be stuffed in some cases with a muff, again with a pillow, and sometimes with other dresses; a bonnet and shoes were aptly placed to complete the figure. These, on this occasion, all but one, represented females in the attitude of devotion, some having Bibles or prayer-books placed before them. It does not appear that any of these images were seen in the process of construction, or that the clothing, which was gathered from different localities, was seen in the act of moving. When persons entered the room everything was still, the clothing scattered about the floor, which, upon going in again within a few minutes, were found wrought into forms. The marked rapidity of their construction and the life-like appearance of them, seems to have been truly wonderful."

We could go on and copy page after page of the account of these manifestations, all equally wonderful and extremely various in their character, but we have given enough to hint

at their general character. As was the case in the Fox family, the manifestations were much less boisterous after the family consented to hold communication with them.

And now, we may be asked, what possible good to mankind can be expected from manifestations, allowing them to be from spirits, such as we have recorded above? Viewed by themselves and unconnected with the various phenomena which have since transpired, it would be a difficult question, and one which we should be loth to answer. But we have fortunately other premises on which to base our answer. We look back upon those manifestations at Rochester and Stratford, which so many intelligent persons had the opportunity of witnessing, as exhibiting phenomena which absolutely *compelled* an investigation into the causes. There was no escape from it. After having been bound for centuries with the galling chains of bigotry and creed-worship, the spiritual mind of man in America, had snapped asunder the bonds which bound it, and it was enabled to investigate the phenomena without fear of priestly inquisition, or a kingly prohibition. The result of that investigation is the establishment beyond dispute, of a truth, the importance of which cannot be measured by words, viz., the individual existence of man after the dissolution of the physical body, and his ability to hold communion with those in the flesh. This truth can now be *known* to all men, the evidence being *positive demonstration* instead of uncertain faith.

Since those manifestations at Rochester and Stratford, mediums for similar but less boisterous manifestations have been developed throughout the civilized world, but more particularly in the United States, and the phenomena have been, and are as various as wonderful. It would seem as if, when any theory, other than the spiritual, has been announced as explaining the phenomena, that new phases of the phenomena would arise in order to nullify that theory, and taking all the explanations which have been given, trying to account for the manifestations, and placing them side by side, they make a most ridiculous medley.

It will be impossible to enumerate or notice all the different varieties of manifestations which are now occurring daily; but we will give a few cases, which more particularly indicate an intelligence, independent of the medium or of any person present.

Miss Sarah Brooks, daughter of Lester Brooks, of Buffalo, is a medium through whom the spirits give most wonderful musical manifestations. The piano-forte is placed with the keys to the wall, and she stands either at the end or on that side opposite the keys. The music performed is unknown to her or any one present, and is produced in a most remarkable manner on the strings inside the instrument, where it would be impossible for the medium to reach them, were she so inclined. But the music also is of so extraordinary a character that no human being in the flesh could produce it. As described to us by an ear-witness, the music of ten grand pianofortes as ordinarily played upon, would not make the noise which is produced by this invisible power on one. "We were told through the alphabet that he would give us a 'steamship scene at sea.' We first heard the slight movement of the engine—then the unmistakable stroke of the piston—then the heavy labor of the engine—the peculiar noise of the steam—the creaking of the boat—the shock of the waves—the quivering, shaking of the boat—the opening and slamming of the iron doors of the furnaces—then a noise resembling the firing of cannon—and then a deafening, terrific crash like a collision with another vessel.' And all this is produced on a piano, and that, too, without any apparent injury to the instrument. Will President Mahan's odylic force explain the above? If so, very *odd* it is, and more mysterious than we consider spirit power to be.

One of Gov. Tallmadge's daughters was most remarkably developed by spirit power, as a musical medium. This the spirits had promised to do beforehand. At the time, she did not know a note of music, and had never played a tune upon the piano in her life. While sitting in the circle, she began to strike the table with her fingers, as if striking the keys of a piano. This reminded Gov. T. that he had been directed to place her at the piano. He did so, and she struck the keys boldly, and played Beethoven's Grand Waltz in a style that would do credit to one well advanced in music. She then played many familiar airs, such as Sweet Home, Bonnie Doon, Last Rose of Summer, &c. She then played an air entirely new, and sang it with words improvised or impressed for the occasion. Wonderful Odyle!

A friend of ours called upon us yesterday and rela-

ted the case of his little niece, who was developed as a medium *before she could read or write*. Her hand became controlled, and while she was in an unconscious state, she wrote a communication which at first could not be read, until, holding it up to a mirror, it was discovered that it was written backwards, and not only that, but it was signed with the name of her grandmother, and was a perfect fac-simile of her handwriting. Through this little child, her father became perfectly convinced of the reality of spirit communication. We again say, wonderful Odyle!

We must now close this branch of our subject. In future chapters, we will more particularly consider the various objections which have been raised against Spiritualism. Our object in these communications is solely the advancement of truth, and we trust that we have not uttered, and shall not in future utter, aught save what shall tend to its development.

CHAPTER VI.

It has always been considered a necessary qualification for the proper understanding of a subject, and a proper ability to intelligibly discuss it, that all the parties, whether on the affirmative or negative side of the question at issue, should first inform themselves by an honest and thorough investigation into the facts alleged. What should we think of a man who would undertake to discuss the science of Geology, who had not thoroughly informed himself upon the subject, and who could not discriminate between quartz and sandstone? Or of one who should attempt to disprove the Newtonian theory of the solar system, who knew not the multiplication table, or who had not eyes to see the stars? Such an one as the latter might deny that the sun was ever eclipsed by the moon's passing between us and the sun, and call that fact a humbug. But we should not be apt to crown such a man with laurels of wisdom. An ignorant man, unversed in the subject, might, with lusty lungs, and in very positive language, cry out, "Humbug! nonsense!" when told that a person in New York could, by the instrumentality of a little wire, and the element of electricity, send a message from there to New Orleans, be-

fore the earth revolves thus far on its axis; but his lusty lungs and positive denial would go but a little way towards annihilating the simple truth. Ignorance, therefore, we find to be but a sorry element on which to base an argument; and ridicule, in the hands of ignorance, proves but a fool's weapon, and in the end wounds only its user.

It is claimed by persons who profess to be well informed upon the subject, that there are, in the United States, over two millions of believers in the simple fact, that the spirits of persons who have dwelt upon the earth—friends and relatives of the believers—can and do communicate with us in the flesh, some by impression and spiritual direction, and others by positive, tangible, physical manifestation, thereby giving intelligible communications. It is claimed that all may know this truth, simply by a faithful, persevering and honest investigation into the phenomena which it exhibits. Now, this is either a truth or a falsehood. If it is a truth, no one will deny its immense importance to the world; for, if it is a truth, it is a spiritual truth, and its author must be the Father of all spirit. But if it is a falsehood, God grant, in His high wisdom, that it may be exposed, and that its poor, deluded believers may have their eyes opened to its falsity. If it is a delusion and a falsehood, it is becoming wide-spread throughout the world; and if its believers continue to increase as they have and are increasing, but a few years will elapse ere every family in this land, and in every land where free investigation is permitted, will be tinctured by its presence. Papers and periodicals advocating the truth of spirit communion, are rapidly increasing in all the nations wherever the subject has been examined. In the United States alone there are some twenty periodicals exclusively devoted to the advocacy of Spiritualism, and we hazard nothing in saying that, so far as literary ability and depth of reasoning are concerned, no other periodicals, in any land, will compare with these spiritual ones, to the latter's disadvantage. And as for books upon the subject, both in prose and poetry, within the last five years, we will venture to say that no subject has ever, in the same space of time, commanded such an array of talent; "it has presented to the public mind specimens of 'spiritual literature' unsurpassed in beauty of style and sentiment, and unequalled in profundity and sublimity of thought." These are bold statements, but they will be

found, upon a fair and careful examination, and an unbiased judgment, to be in every respect true.

If the power which produces these effects is evil, or a falsehood, we think it high time that it be looked into, and if possible its falsity exposed. But how has the subject, with very few exceptions, been treated by those whose duty it should be to carefully examine it? The pulpit, almost universally, has obstinately refused to faithfully investigate it, and while totally ignorant of its claims, has fulminated its "bulls" against it, and uttered its anathemas on all who dare to look into its merits. And the press, with a few honorable exceptions, either totally ignorant upon the subject or afraid to say aught in its favor, treat it either in the spirit of ridicule or denounce it as a vile humbug and unworthy of notice, except by fools and madmen. And this is done, too, while there is scarcely a newspaper in the land that has not one or more believers employed in its office. And what is the nature of the objections which are urged against the spiritual phenomena? They are of all shapes and hues, and if each objection could be represented by a man dressed in his appropriate garb, and all placed in juxtaposition, we question whether the company would pass muster in Coventry. But it will be our duty seriously to examine some of these objections and see if they have any foundation on which to rest.

The objection was repeatedly urged in the early history of the manifestations that they were produced by machinery, trickery or deception. But it is now only those who absolutely know nothing of the phenomena, or who will not accept the evidence of the most reliable witnesses, who offer any such objection. Therefore the only reply which we shall make to such is, devote adequate time to its examination, and the result must be, as it has been with all others, that the phenomena, whether spiritual or not, is certainly real. A person who has not and will not examine any subject may declare it a humbug, but is the evidence of such a party of any value? Is such a person capable of deciding? Certainly not.

The phenomena being admitted as occurring, and claiming to be spiritual, the first opposition to such a claim naturally comes from an unbelieving church, which professes to represent the religious element in man. And what is the character of that opposition? The religious teacher appeals to his God

for evidence to refute it, not through high and direct aspiration by prayer that his soul may be enlightened, but he takes the written word, which he deems infallible in every minute particular, and literally containing all truth; and, searching its pages, he finds among the laws given to the children of Israel, an express command that "there shall not be found among them one who consulteth familiar spirits." God having thus forbidden it to the children of Israel, he therefore argues the thing to be impossible. Now, to us it proves, if it proves anything, that there were and are spirits who could and can be consulted. To say that such a law, given to Israel, is still binding upon us, we fear will place us in an awkward position with regard to other laws promulgated at the same time. For if the law against spiritual intercourse is still in force now, other laws in the same code must be equally binding. Read those laws, which may be found in Deuteronomy, and see if they could be construed as intending to apply to all future ages. Here are a few:—

"If thy son be a stubborn, or a glutton, or a drunkard, thou shalt stone him to death." (Deut. 21 : 20, 21.) "Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woolen and linen together." (Deut. 22 : 11.) "Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself, but ye shall give it to a stranger." (Deut. 14 : 21.)

These laws, no reasonable person will contend are at all binding on us. And why, then, that which forbids spiritual communion? It was not intended to apply to any people except those to whom it was immediately given. This is evident from the Bible itself; for all along, from Deuteronomy to Revelation, we have accounts of consultations with spirits—of angels appearing and holding intercourse with men; and Paul tells us that these things—spiritual gifts—are to be desired, and that these manifestations are given to *every man* to profit.

This law in Deuteronomy we believe to be the only passage in the Bible which in any manner discourages communion with the spiritual world. And we find the command to be a very feeble one when applied to all after times.

It is said by its opposers, that Spiritualism tends to skepticism and a neglect of the Bible. This we unqualifiedly deny. It is quite true that spiritual intercourse has not developed any astounding evidence to corroborate the man-invented creeds and dogmas which appear to the Church more important than the simple precepts of Christ; but that it tends in the slightest

degree to invalidate the records of the Old and New Testament, or in the slightest degree promulgates doctrines which war against the true and pure teachings of Christ, we positively deny. On the contrary, it makes the Christian religion a real living fact, clothed in the beautiful garments which Christ gave it, of love, charity and benevolence, instead of a dead faith, decked with the gewgaws of pompous ceremonies, and the rattling shrouds of man-invented creeds. Will the belief, and the positive evidence that men can hold intercourse with the spirits of their departed friends, have a tendency to create a doubt of the soul's immortality? In the language of another,—

"Is it likely that one who has seen doors open and shut, heavy substances moved about, and a human body upborne, without mortal contrivance or effort, will believe less that Christ walked on the water; that an angel rolled away a great stone from the sepulchre; or that Peter was released from prison by a spirit? Because one has seen lights and appearances of flame, caused, as he verily believes, by spirits, will he have less faith that the angel of God manifested himself to Moses in a burning bush, or that tongues of fire sat on the Apostles at the great Spiritual manifestation of Pentecost? Shall one hear all manner of sounds, caused by spiritual agency, even to a thundering roar, which shakes the whole house, and therefore grow more skeptical about the thunders of Sinai, or the 'great noise, as of a mighty rushing wind,' and shaking of the house where the Apostles prayed? Shall one be convinced that spirits actually write on paper, wood and stone, with pencil, pen, &c., and therefore have less faith that a mighty angelic spirit inscribed the decalogue on tables of stone, and reached them forth out of a thick cloud to Moses? Will men, who are sure they have conversed with the spirits of departed friends for hours, therefore doubt whether Moses and Elias conversed with Jesus on the mount?"

Shall one be convinced that spirits can, with their own visible hands, write communications upon walls and tables, and therefore be more skeptical of the reality of the hand-writing on the wall at Belshazzar's feast? "Anti-Bible skepticism does not thrive on such nourishment. Neither does irreligion and immorality gain strength by the almost uniform religious, moral and reformatory communications made in connection with these manifestations."

Spiritualism claims that inspired truth, whether in the Bible or elsewhere, cannot be properly received and understood by any man, except by spiritual influx; that human reason alone is not sufficient to enable any one to rightly comprehend truths which come by inspiration; "that the idea communicated depends as much upon the perfection of the understanding of him who receives the communication, as of the one who makes it." Spiritualism, therefore, points out the only reliable way by

which all inspired truth can be understandingly received. The Bible is understood differently by different individuals. Different minds construe its meaning according to their own understanding, and really we have as many Bibles as there are various minds that construe it differently. The Bible is now undergoing revision, but after all, unless the revisors are infallible in their judgment, or inspired as were the original writers, we shall still be obliged to ask for "more light," to aid us in obtaining infallible truth from the Bible. When men properly understand this, "they will feel the necessity for the coming of the spirit of truth, which must abide forever, and which is as necessary for every individual who would know the things of the spirit to-day, as it was two thousand years ago."

CHAPTER VII.

IN continuation of the last chapter, which partially answered the objection that Spiritualism tends to skepticism, we would state the important fact that thousands upon thousands of individuals, who were classed as infidels, and who had no faith or belief in the soul's immortality, have been made to realize that belief through spiritual manifestations. And yet, astonishing as it may appear, one of the objections to these manifestations is, that they come to infidels; and that among spiritual believers may be found a large number who were of that class. Now, to us, this seems a significant and most potent argument in favor, instead of against the manifestations. Their expressed object being to convince man of his immortality, to whom should they come, if not to those who are or have been skeptics of that important truth? Thus Spiritualism is charged with making skeptics of believers, and believers of skeptics. It has been said, and from our own observation, we believe the statement to be true, that in the United States alone, over one hundred thousand persons have been converted from skepticism to a positive knowledge of the soul's immortality by Spiritualism, and a very large majority of those thus converted, have been also convinced of the truths of Christianity.

It is said by the opposers of Spiritualism, that if these manifestations are spiritual, it is the spirit of the Devil, or evil

spirits which produce them. This objection was very strongly urged in the lectures delivered in this city last year by Rt. Rev. Bishop Hopkins, of Vermont, and we were an attentive listener to his argument. He, like most other learned men who have added their weight of character against Spiritualism, freely acknowledged that he had not personally investigated the phenomena at all. But, being a bishop of the Church, he assumed the ability and responsibility of denouncing a thing, of which he personally knew nothing, as being from the Devil. At the commencement of these manifestations, some seven or eight years ago, Bishop H. lectured against them, assuming the ground that they were all a humbug or a delusion; but while refusing to examine them personally, he did dare to read a few books upon the subject, and he was, as we think, very easily convinced that the manifestations were really of spiritual origin. But it was the Arch-Fiend of man who had sent his emissaries to do his work of death to souls! He it was who had usurped supreme control over the souls of men, to press them into his service. In a word, hell had triumphed over heaven! God's power to do good through the instrumentality of his angels, which had been exhibited in ages past, had been annihilated, and Satan sat upon his throne an undisputed ruler over the world of spirits. We had always supposed the being called Satan was in every respect an evil spirit, and that all his deeds were evil. We always supposed him to be an enemy of truth in all shapes, and for any of his angels to do a good deed, or to hint at the truth, would consign them to a lower depth in the internal regions. But through these manifestations, what are he and his imps about? They are healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, and making the lame to walk. They come to the poor heart-broken mother, whose child has been laid in the cold dark grave, and cheer her wounded spirit with words of holy consolation, as from the lips of her dear child. They come to the husband, or the wife, whose companion has "gone before," and lighten the burden of daily toil, with the positive assurance that heaven is not a dream, and that in the spirit land they shall again be united, and life shall be immortal. They come to the hardened sinner, and with words of eloquence and beauty, urge him to leave the paths of sin and search for a higher end than the gratification of his lustful passions. They tell him that, low as he is in the

scale of spiritual development, the path to the celestial heavens is open for him to walk therein, through the beautiful law of progression. They come into the rich man's dwelling, and teach him lessons of charity and benevolence, and through their influence his eyes are opened to the miseries of the world about him, and he scatters blessings on those less favored than himself. They come into the cottage of the poor man, and he is made rich with the knowledge of celestial joys. In his daily labors, his heart is made glad with the knowledge that he has spirit friends always about him, to guard and to guide him. They come to the poor student, and his brain is quickened by their influence in his search for knowledge. They come to the poet, and inspiration drops in measured tones from his lip or pen, and visions of beauty, and truth, and holiness, are pictured upon his brain, and his ideas flow as from an exhaustless fountain. They come to the artist, and his pencil or his chisel is guided by other hands than his own, and the cold marble and the canvas are alive with the inspiration of genius. They come to all who faithfully seek the truth, and impart lessons of wisdom and goodness. Says one:—

“Seek not to gratify curiosity, but rather search for wisdom which will profit. Sit with holy thoughts, and have trust and confidence in your Creator's promises.”

Another says:—

“Strive by earnest and sincere prayer to keep all thoughts of evil from your mind.” “Resist evil and it will flee from you.” “Turn from evil and sin not.”

Still another says:—

“Discord cannot produce harmony, neither can hatred produce love, neither can revenge produce mercy; and as these things are nowhere in God's works visible, but their opposites, harmony, love and mercy, therefore are they the fruits of Deity, wherever or whenever found. All creation joins in a happy hymn of praise unto its Great First Cause, its kind and indulgent Creator, its loving and merciful Father. Happiness cometh only from goodness. He that hath light, yet preferreth darkness, stumbleth of himself, and cannot blame the light he will not use. Labor only for the glory of God, and he will feed thee of his own food, pay thee of his own pay, and give thee of his own rest when thy task is finished.”

And these things are of the Devil, quoth the preacher! Well, if the good man really thinks so, we cannot wonder so much at his representing God as a revengeful, wrathful being, who is ready to destroy his own children because they are not perfect.

But it may be said that we have given only a one-sided and

highly-colored statement of the influences which these manifestations produce. We deny that we have done so, viewing the whole subject by its general results. The facts of the case will bear us out in the statement, that the influences which the belief in spirit communion exerts upon the hearts and actions of its believers, tend in the highest degree towards developing a purer standard of morality than is generally recognized by the world. But we do not claim for spiritual manifestations anything like infallibility, nor for its believers perfection. To do so would only be manifesting ignorance of the frailty of human nature. There are many believers in spirit communion, whose hearts remain hard and apparently indifferent to the great importance of the truth. And many there are, who are only partial believers, who use Spiritualism as a cloak to cover up their many iniquities. So it has ever been with Christianity since it became a religion. But because of these imperfections of believers, it would be hard to condemn as untrue, either Christianity or Spiritualism. Christian opposers of Spiritualism should think of this. The arguments which are brought to bear against Spiritualism, representing the subject in a ridiculous or disgusting light, would have equal force if applied to Christianity, or any other subject. Is it fair, therefore, to adopt as a basis of opposition to Spiritualism, that style of argument which would not be received as applicable in the treatment of any other subject? We think not. And yet such is the course adopted every day by its opposers. If a spiritualist, or even a partial believer in the manifestations, commits any crime, or becomes insane and commits suicide, every paper in the land heralds it forth in big capitals, "Horrible Effects of Spiritualism." What if a believer in the Presbyterian church should commit the same act (and any exemption from such a supposition could not well be claimed), would it be considered fair or just to represent that act as the "horrible effects of the teachings of John Calvin," or the "horrible effects of Christianity"? Just think for a moment of the crimes that have been committed in the name of Christianity, and consider if it would be fair to use that as an argument against the sacred mission of Christ. Because through the instrumentality or influence of John Calvin, Servetus was burned at the stake, does that argue that such is the influence which comes from the pure teachings

of Jesus? We think it about time that such a position in argument should be repudiated in discussing the merits of Spiritualism also.

Another mode of endeavoring to ridicule the manifestations is, for some wiseacre to make his plans beforehand to deceive people upon the subject, by false manifestations, and then afterwards to announce that the whole thing is a humbug, and that he has done everything himself. And he flatters himself that his exhibition proves to a demonstration that all the manifestations are equally the result of deception. Because the thunder and the rattling of the hail at the theatre are produced by gongs and dried peas, therefore all thunder and hail are the results of the same causes. Wonderful and profound argument! And yet the enemies of Spiritualism read all such arguments, and swallow them down with the same satisfied delight that a child does pudding or strawberries and cream. Thus Folly presides in the courts of Wisdom, and her votaries clap their hands and laugh at the jingling of her bells!



CHAPTER VIII.

THE objection has been repeatedly urged that Spiritualism has filled, and is still filling our insane asylums with victims of its sad influences. The charge is simply a false one, for it is not founded upon facts. It does not even approach to the truth, as the statistics of the different insane asylums in the United States will bear us witness. That naturally excitable minds have, occasionally, become unbalanced by being too intensely absorbed in its investigation, we do not desire to deny. Such minds are liable to a similar unhealthy disturbance by coming in contact with any subject which may excite their attention, and which requires an action of the brain for its comprehension. That there is anything in Spiritualism, or what it develops, which has a peculiar tendency to produce insanity, we think we are justified in denying. We go further, and express the conviction that its tendency is just the reverse—that it has not only saved hundreds from insanity, but that many have been *cured* by its influences. We will

endeavor to illustrate these positions by a few remarks which are based upon well-attested facts.

It will be necessary for us to state, that though Spiritualism has not yet developed (and we trust it never will develop) any positive system of dogmatic theology, there is one truth which has been made manifest beyond contradiction, and that is the eternal, *progressive* development of the human soul. This position has been frequently assumed by able theologians in their discussions of the probable life of the soul hereafter, and the truth seems to be an instinct of our better nature. The Rev. Dr. Clark, Bishop of Rhode Island, in one of his sermons, says:

"Heaven will not be a monotony. All which belongs to our nature, that is not sensual and sinful, will there find free scope for its development. Nothing, then, which we here learn, is lost. No elevated taste is cultivated in vain. No healthy affection withers under the touch of death. There are strains of melody, and sights of beauty, and holy friendships, in the spiritual world. Everything which God has made on earth, and which man has left untouched by sin, is only a symbol of something grander and more resplendent, in reserve for the holy hereafter. What music will be heard in heaven! What prospects will charm the eye! What thoughts will be uttered there! What emotions will be enkindled there! What variety of employments, yet nothing servile, nothing selfish! In the second place we observe, that to the righteous the future will be a *constant and unending progress*. The law of this progress may be essentially the same as it is now, only it will operate under greatly improved conditions. We shall never reach a point where we shall stop and make no further advance; for then there would lie before us an eternity without occupation. The time will no doubt come when we shall look back upon all that we have acquired and done in this world, as we now regard the experiences of our earliest infancy, and we shall wonder that we thought ourselves so wise. We shall begin our life hereafter as we close it here."

Now, these doctrines are the doctrines of the present despised and stigmatized spiritualists. We embrace them all, every word. But we go further, and in our belief extend the limits of God's mercy to every one of his children. The reverend doctor seems to confine this prospect of eternal progress in the spiritual world to what he terms the "righteous." We believe that it is extended to every one of the children of the Eternal Father, and that no matter how degraded or sunk in iniquity one of His children may become in this world, there is still resting within him a spark of divinity which will enable him to rise from his degradation, and advance into the light celestial. We believe God to be supreme ruler over His universe, spiritual as well as physical; and His dominion over His creatures is one of pure, exhaustless, eternal love. We believe

that the degraded soul, and all souls, will in the spiritual world be brought to a knowledge of the limitless love of God for His children, and that this alone will be sufficient to open a way for their eternal progression.

It is not our intention to enter into the merits of the different systems of theology which have been and still are promulgated to the world, for they must stand or fall by a higher judgment than ours. But it is necessary for us, unpleasant as it may be, to give the views of some of the prominent theologians of the past and present day, as a contrast to those which Spiritualism professes to inculcate.

With two or three minor exceptions, the different sects of Christians of the present day, which claim the exclusive merit of being *evangelical*, insist upon certain conditions and belief as necessary in order to be saved. They mean by that, saved from an eternal hell. That no one can be saved without a supernatural regeneration, or sincere faith in the vicarious atonement, or valid reception of sacramental grace at the hands of a priest. There are also other conditions which it is unnecessary to enumerate. According to the views which the representative of the Calvinistic Church in this city is so eloquently and learnedly promulgating to his crowds of listeners, without a belief in the saving grace of the atonement, a man may be as pure in his outward and inner life as Jesus was: he may from his youth up have obeyed all the laws of God, and performed all his duties towards his brother man, yet he cannot be saved.

Cannot be saved! And from what? Let the theologians tell us. Recollect that these threatenings are to those who do not believe, whether in Christian or heathen lands.

Rugged old Tertullian revels with infernal glee over the contemplation of the sure damnation of the heathen. "At the greatest of all spectacles, the last and eternal judgment," he says, "how shall I admire, how laugh, how rejoice, how exult, when I behold so many proud monarchs groaning in the lowest abyss of darkness; so many magistrates liquifying in fiercer flames than they ever kindled against the Christians; so many sage philosophers blushing in red-hot fires with their deluded pupils; so many tragedians more tuneful in the expression of their own sufferings; so many dancers tripping more nimbly from anguish than ever before from applause!" Drexel,

preaching of Dives, exclaims: "Instead of a lofty bed of down on which he was wont to repose himself, he now lies frying in the flames; his sparkling wine and delicious dainties are taken from him; he is burnt up with thirst, and has nothing for his food but smoke and sulphur." Jeremy Taylor says in his discourse on the "Pains of Hell:" "We are amazed at the inhumanity of Phalaris, who roasted men in his brazen bull; this was joy in respect of that fire of hell which penetrates the very entrails without consuming them;" "husbands shall see their wives, parents shall see their children tormented before their eyes;" "the bodies of the damned shall be crowded together in hell like grapes in a wine-press, which press one another till they burst;" "every distinct sense and organ shall be assailed with its own appropriate and most exquisite sufferings." Christopher Love, belying his name, says of the damned, that "their cursings are their hymns, howlings their tunes, and blasphemies their ditties." Calvin writes: "Forever harassed with a dreadful tempest, they shall feel themselves torn asunder by an angry God, and transfixed and penetrated by mortal stings, terrified by the thunderbolts of God, and broken by the weight of his hand, so that to sink into any gulfs would be more tolerable than to stand for a moment in these terrors." A living divine, Dr. Gardner Spring, declares: "When the omnipotent and angry God, who has access to all the avenues of distress in the corporeal frame, and all the inlets to agony in the intellectual constitution, undertakes to punish, he will convince the universe that he does not gird himself for the work of retribution in vain;" "it will be a *glorious deed* when he who hung on Calvary, shall cast those who have trodden his blood under their feet, into the furnace of fire, where there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth."

The Rev. Dr. Palmer, of this city, in describing the wrath of God towards the sinner, expresses views in entire accordance with those quoted above.

We simply ask the reader to compare these views with those which are inculcated by the teachings of Spiritualism.

A short time since, a lady, residing in Vermont, who was a believer in the doctrines quoted above, suddenly lost by death an only son, about eighteen years of age. This son was a wild youth, whom no persuasion of hers could induce to a belief in the tenets of her Church. Before his death it was her constant

prayer that he might be converted and saved, sincerely believing that without that conversion his soul would be consumed by fire in everlasting hell. Is it a wonder, then, when she heard of his death, unconverted as he was, that she became a raving maniac? Is it not rather a wonder that every mother with such a belief is not made insane on losing an unconverted child? That they are not made so, can only be accounted for upon the supposition that these doctrines of the Church are not really and sincerely believed. Had this mother believed in Spiritualism, and been convinced that her son, though dead in trespasses and sins, was still under the divine protection of a loving Father; that his soul, sunk as it might be in the lowest depths of degradation, still retained within itself a spark which emanated from the Divine mind, and which could be made brighter and brighter through the beautiful law of progression, and by the all-embracing love of God, think you such a belief would have produced insanity? Another similar instance was recently related by the Rev. Mr. Bowles, of this city, of a young man who became incurably insane after embracing views similar to those quoted above; and thousands of other cases of insanity, produced by the same cause, could be mentioned, but our limits forbid. Nor is it necessary; and we leave it for our readers to judge, whether, in the absence of evidence to sustain the assertion, it is at all probable that a belief in Spiritualism has any peculiar tendency to produce insanity. We say again, the assertion that it does so is simply untrue. We fortunately have some statistics which authorize us, we think, to make this positive denial.

Report of Insane Asylum at Fulton, Mo., from November 27th, 1854, to November 27th, 1855:

From religious anxiety,	11
" loss of children,	3
" " wife and husband,	3—17
" Spiritual rapping,	4
	<hr/>
Balance in whole report, in favor of Spiritualism,	13
Balance between Religion and Spiritualism, in favor of Spiritualism,	7

Again: Reports of Insane Asylum at Jacksonville, Illinois, from November 3d, 1851, to November 27th, 1854:

From study of Scriptures and religious excitement,	23
" Spirit rapping,	7
	<hr/>
In favor of Spiritualism,	16

This report says:

"With the latter, the duration of insanity before admission into the hospital was from two weeks to eleven months, (only two of them over five weeks,) and at the date of the report all of them had *entirely recovered and been discharged*; while with the former the duration of insanity before admission was as follows: three of them from eight to eighteen years, four from one to three years, and the remaining sixteen from one week to six months—*seven of the twenty-three seemingly incurable.*"

Again: Report of Insane Asylum, Columbus, Ohio:

	1853.	1855.
Religious excitement,	32	13
Spirit rapping,	11	7
Domestic affliction,	13	42

At the Taunton (Massachusetts) Hospital, the principal cases of insanity in the patients admitted last year, 1856, are stated thus: from intemperance, 32; religious excitement, 5; "spirit rappings," 5. The report adds the important remark that, "In a very large part of the cases, it is found on inquiry that there is a hereditary tendency to insanity in the family to which the patient belongs."

The Worcester Hospital reports that 48 cases arose from ill health of various kinds; 24 from intemperance; 10 from jealousy; 9 from religious excitement; 5 from Spiritualism. Of the whole number of cases, 36 were hereditary, and 25 hereditary and periodical. The Superintendent (Dr. Bemis) appends the very significant statement that, "The popular excitements of the day have not brought to us so many patients as is generally believed by the community at large."

It will be seen by all the above reports that the number of insane produced by Spiritualism, is quite small in proportion to those produced by other causes. And taking into consideration the important fact that the number of believers in Spiritualism is increasing in a far greater ratio than any other religious class, and that it is a positive fact, since Spiritualism has become more generally known, say within the last five years, the number of insane, from all causes, has been gradually decreasing in all the asylums in the United States in proportion to the increase of population, it can hardly be said with truth that "our asylums are becoming crowded with the victims of that miserable delusion" Spiritualism. From our own observation, we do not hesitate to express the belief that where one person has been made insane, at least a dozen have been saved

from that dreadful malady by a belief in spirit communion. If Spiritualism is condemned because an insignificant few are made insane by becoming fanatical upon the subject, the same rule should apply to other causes also, and you must condemn love, all sects of Christians, reading and studying the Scriptures, all uses of money, and the thousand other indirect causes which, in themselves, may be as "pure as the ether which floats round the throne of the Almighty."

CHAPTER IX.

WE have endeavored, as fully as the limits of these communications will admit, to answer some of the more prominent objections which have been urged against Spiritualism and spirit communion. There are numerous other minor objections, some of which are undeserving of consideration, and others, in answer to which, a few words seem to be necessary.

It is said that these manifestations are produced by electricity, magnetism, odd force, or some other similar power. If the phenomena of Spiritualism were confined simply to the various physical manifestations, it certainly would not be unreasonable to endeavor to account for them by some one of the above agencies; but as the physical phase of the phenomena is comparatively nothing to the intelligence by which they are accompanied, to account for them by attributing them solely to physical laws, is advancing a claim for those laws a thousand fold more unreasonable than to admit them to be spiritual. Through these manifestations, highly intelligible communications are given, conveying facts which were before unknown to any person present. Now, in order to do this, the power which gives this information must be possessed of *intelligence*, which is an attribute of the spirit only. There must be a *mind* which possesses this intelligence, before it can be given out. This mind is not in any person present, for all are ignorant of the facts given. Where, then, is that mind? Has electricity a mind, or does it of itself possess intelligence? Bring in your electrical machine and charge it with that element to its utmost capacity, and will it talk to you, or in any manner convey to you a single intelligible word? You might as well ask

a stick or a stone to write to you, as to bid electricity or magnetism do any such thing. The power which exhibits this intelligence, (in many cases against the will or belief of the medium,) *always* insists, with a pertinacity which no opposition can nullify, that it is spirit power. And now we ask if it is more unreasonable to believe the evidence of the power itself, that these intelligent communications are given by rational, intelligent, reasoning spirits, than it is to believe they come from senseless, soulless electricity or magnetism? Through the magnetic telegraph you may, to be sure, receive a message from New York in a very few seconds, but can you do so unless there be an intelligent spirit in New York to send the message? Has the magnetic telegraph any ability within itself to talk to you?

The *odd force* of Prof. Mahan and others has proved equally unsatisfactory as accounting for the intelligence which is conveyed through the spiritual phenomena.

Are those persons, who are trying to account for all these phenomena by attributing them to causes other than spiritual, fully aware of the weapons which they are placing in the hands of the infidel? Should the unreasonable theory, unsustained as it is by a particle of evidence, predominate in the minds of men, that all these manifestations which millions are now witnessing, and which are claimed to be spiritual, are the simple results of physical laws, the same theory will sweep to oblivion all past evidence, including that of the Bible, that there is any such thing as spiritual life, that spiritual beings ever communicated with man, or that the soul is immortal. Materialism may then triumphantly build its altars in all the churches, and their spires, rising though they may till they touch the clouds, shall point only to vacancy, doubt, and despair.

Some, who have but partially investigated the subject, express the opinion that the intelligence exhibited through these manifestations is but the echo of the mind of some one present, or that it is produced by the will of the medium, or that of some one else upon the medium. This manner of accounting for the intelligence is not satisfactory, and a sufficient answer is given to it in the simple fact that, in a majority of cases, the intelligence given is totally unknown to the medium, and in very many cases unknown to any person present except the

power communicating, and only ascertained to be true by after inquiry. We have repeatedly seen questions answered by the spirit communicating, in a manner contradicting the opinion of the inquirer, and afterwards the answer found to be correct, and the questioner wrong in his opinion.

It is asked, "If these manifestations and communications are from spirits, why do we receive any that are useless, inconsistent, contradictory, or apparently evil or mischievous?" The question presupposes an absurdity in the assumption that spirits out of the body must of necessity be perfect in character and knowledge, and possessed of the attribute of omniscience. In accordance with the views of Bishop Clark, Spiritualism teaches that "we shall begin our life hereafter as we close it here. There is no such thing as separating the man from his character."

Man enters the Spiritual Spheres in accordance with the degree of development which his spirit has attained while in the flesh; consequently each spirit, when it is desirous to communicate, finds conditions which are in sympathy or *rapproch* with its peculiar development, and the nature of the communication of each spirit must assimilate to the degree of progress which the spirit has attained. Spirits, however, do not always find conditions exactly in harmony with themselves, and therefore it is difficult for them at times to convey what they wish to say, entirely unwarped by either the imperfection of the medium, or the unharmonious condition of the circle. Consequently, the high or low character of spiritual communications, or manifestations, governed as they are by the law of sympathy, depends more or less upon conditions incident to the character of the medium, or of the persons composing the circle. Very much depends also upon the spirit with which the subject is approached by the investigator. If a person treats the subject with ridicule, or with dogmatic contempt, he will most likely draw about him spirits of like character, and the communications he will get will be of a low order, or there may be no manifestations at all.

The unreliable character of communications which are sometimes given, it appears to us, teach a most significant lesson, and one which believers in Spiritualism should never lose sight of, and that is, there is no such thing as truth, which the mind and reason do not comprehend as such. What if the fact of

spirit communion were an undisputed truth in the world, and every communication from the spirit world were in every minute particular true and reliable in its character, what would be the result? The human mind would become dormant. There would be no necessity for its activity, and without activity there could be no development. Infallible truth, therefore, cannot come to any man except by inspiration, and consequently the *authority* of the past, or of the present, cannot give us truth, except in so far as it is confirmed by that inspiration. Spirits know this, and the lesson is therefore constantly being taught us, that the independence of the individual mind must ever be held sacred. The human reason is a God-given attribute to man, and in accordance with the development of that attribute by exercise, by inward aspirations, and by influx from the higher spheres of spiritual existence, will truth come as a messenger of light to the soul.

It is said by those who are prejudiced against investigating the claims of Spiritualism, that "we have no need of any further revelation in regard to the spirit world;" that "the Bible contains all that God has intended we should know;" and that "this spiritual intercourse is an unlawful prying into things with which we have no concern." It will hardly be expected of us, after what we have written in this and previous chapters, to give an extended reply to the above objections. We think they have all been fully answered. We have shown, we think, conclusively, that the phenomena of Spiritualism, or the higher phases of it at any rate, are not only not antagonistic to, but are in strict accordance and harmony with the teachings of, and the manifestations recorded in the Bible. We have shown that the manifestations, in their aggregate, tend to a higher development of the interior life, or soul of man. We have shown that the evils which have been charged against Spiritualism, are in the main without foundation. We have shown that all the objections urged against it, including the above, are equally applicable to Christianity; that the secret of these objections is discoverable in the undue reverence to the authority of the past, and the utter repudiation of the present, active, living principle of God's overruling providence. The prejudice which exists against the present revelation of new truths from the higher spheres, has always been characteristic of the living age, and was exhibited in Christ's

time, when the unbelieving Pharisee exclaimed, "We know that God spake unto Moses; but as for this fellow, we know not whence he is." It has been exhibited in all ages of the world, upon the revelation of any new truth, in science, philosophy, or religion; and the objection to the reception or application of any new truth, has always been to the ignorant or bigoted mind, that it "is an unlawful prying into things with which we have no concern." In illustration of this fact, we quote from an article in the *Scottish Review*:

"The establishment of the Royal Society was opposed, because it was asserted that experimental philosophy was subversive of the Christian faith," and the readers of Disraeli will remember the telescope and microscope were stigmatized as "atheistical inventions, which perverted our organ of sight, and made everything appear in a false light." So late as 1806, the Anti-Vaccination Society denounced the discovery of vaccination as "the cruel, despotic tyranny of forcing cow-pox misery on the innocent babes of the poor—a gross violation of religion, morality, law and humanity." It was denounced from the pulpit as "diabolical," as "tempting of God's providence, and therefore a heinous crime," as "an invention of Satan," a "daring and profane violation of our holy religion," a "wresting out of the hands of the Almighty the divine dispensation of Providence; and its abettors were charged with sorcery and atheism." When fanners were first introduced to assist in winnowing corn from the chaff, by producing artificial currents of air, it was argued that "winds were raised by God alone, and it was irreligious in man to attempt to raise wind for himself and by efforts of his own." One Scottish clergyman actually refused the holy communion to those of his parishioners who thus irreverently raised the "Devil's wind." Few of the readers of "Old Mortality" will forget honest Mause Headrigg's indignation, when it was proposed that her "son Cuddie should work in the barn wi' a new-fangled machine for dighting the corn frae the chaff, thus impiously thwarting the will of Divine Providence, by raising wind for your leddyship's ain particular use by human art, instead of soliciting it by prayer, or waiting patiently for whatever dispensation of wind, Providence was pleased to send upon the sheeling hill."

But enough. It is not necessary further to illustrate the fact, that "the world has ever been slow to recognize new truths." We find illustrations of it in our daily life. But we look for "a good time coming," when the shackles of bigotry and superstition will no longer bind the hearts and minds of men, and the spirit, freed from the galling chains of creed-worship and a dogmatic theology, will become enlarged in its sphere, and Love, Truth, Beauty, Holiness, and Progress, shall be the golden apples which all may pluck and eat from the everlasting tree of life.

CHAPTER X.

PREMISING that the reader has followed us thus far in our reasoning, is he not ready with us to ask the question, What's o'clock?

Ay, what's o'clock? Here we stand in the middle of the nineteenth century, with the innumerable beauties and mysteries of God's power, and His manifestations, encircling us about as with robes of living light. We look up into the pathway of the skies, and behold the wonders of His active presence, as visible as when He spoke creation into being. We dig down into the apparently dull earth, and behold, He is there!—into the deep sea, and we find His presence there also;—in every mote that floats in the sunbeam, in every blossom that smiles out its perfumed beauty to the passing breeze, in every wave that utters its anthem on the sea-beat coast, in every drop of water that hangs like a jewel on the dewy grass, in all the laws which govern the action of visible nature, in all the phenomena of active life which surround us, we behold the presence of the living God. And yet the soul of man asks for more. In its clayey tenement it is not content with the outward senses alone, but there is a constant longing from the interior for "more light! more light!" The intellect of man has expanded, until it has harnessed to its chariot of power the unwilling elements, and it rides through and over the nations with the pride of a conqueror. It speaks, and monarchs tremble at its power. The pen has in truth become mightier than the sword. No shield of Achilles can ward off its attack, no kingly frown can mar the beauty of its expression. It will yet beat the swords of war into plowshares, and the spears into pruning-hooks. And yet, with all this intellect, which may hold the whole world under its yoke, there is still a demand for something higher even than the revolution which it has provoked—some higher power, which shall guide the giant intellect into God's pathway, illumined by His spiritual presence. That power dwells in the full and natural development of the human soul, that interior life which is within and beyond the intellectual faculties, and which is intimately connected with the Divine Soul, from whence it originally sprang. This

power within the soul, to approach, by high development, the Great Source of light and truth, was first made manifest in the life and teachings of the Great Mediator, Jesus Christ, and by him taught to be an indwelling possession of every son of the Great Father. Christ taught that every man had within him that which could "work out his own salvation." We should be blind to the lights before us, not to believe, in its highest and fullest sense, that great and important truth. But how stands the Christian world now with regard to that truth? Is it not dead, absolutely dead? That Christianity which came down from God eighteen hundred years ago, has, in the Church of the present day, become well-nigh annihilated or superseded in its importance by man-invented creeds. Christ did not come from the Great Jehovah to tell us what we must or must not believe. He came to point out a way to us by which we could, each man for himself, attain that true light which cometh down out of heaven. Jesus said, "Believe in me," that is, go in the way which I have pointed out, and in the government of your life follow my example, "and the works that I do, ye shall do also; and greater works than these shall ye do."

In this established truth of a direct and positive communion with the higher spheres of spiritual existence, we feel that we have the true beacon light by which we shall be guided to a knowledge of the real Christianity of Christ.

We believe that the Christian world will, ere many years pass by, be compelled to acknowledge this great truth.

Although it is now pointed at with the finger of scorn and contempt by those who are wilfully ignorant of its true merits, still we think we can discover amid all this darkness of unbelief, occasional flashes of light which betoken the coming morn. Intelligent minds are rapidly beginning to loosen the chains of bigotry which have bound them so long, and as link by link of error falls from their fettered minds, their eyes begin to sparkle with a new lustre, and they see as with a new-given vision. God grant the day rapidly to approach when all eyes shall be able to see the light that shineth down from the Spiritual Heavens.

As an evidence that the truth of spirit communion is beginning to attract the respectful attention of the more liberal Christian teachers, we quote the following from the *Christian Inquirer* of February 28th, a New York Unitarian paper:—

"Though we are not believers in Spiritualism, technically so called, we regard this movement as an uprising of the human mind after something better than the existing faith of Christendom. It is the John the Baptist to a new advent. It is the morning star to a new reformation. Starved by the creeds and churches, that are neither in harmony with God's truth above nor with man's wants below, sick of worldliness and materialism, the very words, spirits, spiritualism, spiritual medium, come with a refreshing influence to the seared and arid heart of multitudes."

Also read the following, from the Boston *Christian Register* of April 4th. The editor says that the manifestations which he has witnessed

"are astounding often, and we have been perplexed exceedingly, though not convinced of their supernatural origin, for none has fathomed yet the depths of the natural in man's capacities. We would gladly believe—for we cannot feel our spiritual nature too deeply—and shrink from no investigation through superstitious scruples against seeing anything that is in God's creation.

"It seems to be saying the least that can be said, when we acknowledge that Spiritualism has done as much good as evil. It has excavated hundreds of fossil souls out of Sadducee materialism, and brought them up into the light of heaven. Whether the phenomena be natural or supernatural, they seem to imply a capacity above flesh and dust. Strange that a belief in our spiritual nature, or the acceptance of any facts that will strengthen that belief, should be so dreaded by teachers of religion! Are our good orthodox brethren afraid that men will be too sure of having immaterial souls? The gold is become dim indeed, and the most fine gold changed, when *spiritual* has become a word of evil omen in the ears of the churches!"

In a strong and ponderous sermon by Rev. Mr. Mayo, of Albany, lately preached on Theology in America, he sketches its gradual progress unto a more rational and liberal Christianity; and after indicating the favorable changes that have taken place within the Church, he points out, as more positive than those tendencies, three great movements outside of the ecclesiastical organizations, one of which is Spiritualism. He says:—

"But it is not as a body of people interested in mesmeric media, that this large religious denomination, numbering 3,000,000 of disciples, chiefly concerns the observer of American theology, but as an exhibition of the popular tendencies of thought on religion. Spiritualism is a natural awakening of the American masses to the doctrine of the Immortal Life taught by Jesus. The materialism of our society has brought the popular faith in immortality to a very low ebb; while the evangelical church has so caricatured the sublime idea by its doctrines of probation, judgment, heaven and hell, that the people have begun to feel this part of their religious belief slipping from them. The natural recoil from these influences has produced that outbreak of mingled fanaticism and piety which some mistake for a new gospel; yet all that a rational spiritualist believes of the future life and communion of souls, was taught by Jesus, and has been believed by spiritually-minded people for eighteen centuries. But we in America were getting

so far away from that sublime doctrine, in our life and theology, that human nature could endure it no longer, and by a great rebound, has shown how the soul of man needs the assurance of an endless existence.

"This great cry of the popular heart after a rational faith in immortality, will shiver numberless churches, and burst the bonds of many a man now enfolded in materialism, or petrified into theological marble. We shall learn out of it what it means in the 19th century to believe in the immortality of the soul; and it will be found that this doctrine will come to us fraught with vaster relations, suggesting larger duties, and elevating with nobler aspirations, than to the darkened masses of the early ages of heathenism or middle ages of Christianity."

This evidence of the character and influence of Spiritualism comes to us from intelligent persons who have not yet advanced far enough in their investigations to realize the truth that spirits do really communicate intelligibly with us at the present day. It is easy to discover, however, that such minds will not remain content without attaining the absolute truth of the matter. Their evidence that Spiritualism is doing good rather than harm, and that it appears to be but a simple expression of a great demand of the age for more light upon spiritual things, is significant and encouraging to the true believer.

Now, we who believe in this great truth, or rather *know* it to be true, have each a responsible duty to perform. Each one in his own sphere can do much towards encouraging attention to its investigation, and that duty must not remain unperformed. Let none of us who know this truth shrink from the responsibility which that knowledge imposes upon us. And may God, in his infinite mercy, guard the truth in all things, and keep it sacred in the hearts of his children.

Here must close this series of communications. It is a subject which no amount of writing can exhaust, and we feel that we have but touched upon the threshold of this great temple of truth. If what we have written shall cause any to become alive to the importance of a more thorough investigation into their interior life, we shall feel satisfied with our labor. And in taking leave of our readers, if any there are who have not faithfully and honestly investigated the claims of spirit communion, we beg of them, from the depths of our soul, each one to ask the question of himself, of his own interior nature, WHAT'S O'CLOCK?

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