

NOTES

ON CERTAIN

FORMS OF SPIRITUALISM,

ADDRESSED TO THE

MEMBERS OF THE "NEW CHURCH."

WITH REMARKS ON A RECENT OBITUARY.

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" Wild, wild wind, wilt thou never cease thy sighing ?

Dark, dark night, wilt thou never wear away ?

Cold, cold church, in thy death sleep lying,

Thy Lent is past, thy Passion here, but not thine Easter-day !"

LONDON:

WILLIAM WHITE, 36 BLOOMSBURY STREET.

1858.

P R E F A C E.

(a.) I FEEL it right to state, in this place, that it would be contrary to my intention if any passages in the following pages, relative to the church and the ministry, were construed in a personal sense. My remarks apply to the capacity of the church as an Institution, and to the ideal thus set up of the ministerial functions. Taking the ministers and leaders of the church individually, any one of them might have far more reason to rebuke me than I can have to pass judgment on them. The church, as it exists, is not ungenerous, either, in outward charities, while individual instances of liberality deserve the warmest acknowledgment. A capital defect is the want of that interior sympathy, which is charity in the sense of the Apostles, and it is the incapacity of the church, as it works at present, to promote this, conjoined with the inability of its official members to see the evil, and *à fortiori*, to provide the remedy for it, of which I complain.

(b.) A judicious friend yawns over the conclusion of my Appendix, and exclaims, "Why put in so much pap!" It is very probable that others may share in this feeling, to whom I can only say, that there has been a time when the strongest man living did not disdain to feed on that soft substance. "Milk for babes" is a wise rule, and we ought to take heed not to despise one of these little ones. The worshippers of combined intellect and force are growing a large body. Let them not forget that kings may become nursing fathers, and their queens nursing mothers, without derogation from their essential dignity (Isa. xlix. 23).

(c.) And now a voice over my left shoulder hoarsely whispers that "Swedenborg, indeed, was allowed a peep into heaven, but that he afterwards locked the door and threw away the key!" It is almost unnecessary to say, that for my own part, I believe it the voice of a lying spirit. My readers must judge for themselves.

NOTES ON SPIRITUALISM,

ETC.

THE following observations have been suggested by certain aspersions unjustly cast upon the memory of a deceased brother in the "New Church," accompanied with a general denunciation of "spiritualism," "mesmerism," and "clairvoyance." They are offered purely in the interest of truth and justice; for, I have no desire to debate opinions with any person soever, and much less with the conductor of a New Church periodical. On the contrary, greatly would it rejoice me if I could sit down in silence, and see animosities die out, and a better spirit and a holier love take the place of mistaken zeal, and of those sad memories with which the history of every church—as of every other human institution—seems to be associated. Yet, with this feeling predominant, and with the sincerest toleration for mistaken zeal, and for bigotry in all its forms, I feel that I have no choice in the present instance but to protest against it, as a *practical injustice*,—as I shall be able to prove very shortly,—both to the living and the dead.

It is my intention to treat the subject of "spiritualism" on general grounds, but the particular wrong of which I complain is embodied in the following paragraph, cited from an obituary notice of the late James Knight, Esq., which appeared in the *Monthly Observer and New Church Record* for November, 1858. I omit the details—which, as far as they go, are truthfully given—of Mr. Knight's personal history, and of his exertions for many years in the cause of the Church, and submit to my readers the concluding summary:—

“Highly, however,” says the writer of the notice, “as we may appreciate the services of the departed in the public business of the Church, and much as we may have regarded him individually in his private relations, it would not be just to the Church to pass over those peculiarities in his character which have been the cause of offence to many, of discredit to the cause, and which have left an indelible blot on his escutcheon. Previous to his reception of the doctrines, he was strongly prone to astrological studies and pursuits, the love of which remained with him to the last, and sadly helped to weaken his judgment. His tablets were consulted on general occasions, prior to decision of action; and advice was received from a ‘familiar spirit,’ with whom he professed to be in communication. Speaking on the subject, more than once, in the presence of the late Mr. Noble, he was warned by him of the danger of giving way to such proceedings; ‘for,’ said Mr. N., ‘your familiar spirit will be sure eventually to lead you into some scrape.’ And, judging from the desperate state in which his worldly affairs were left, it may be presumed that it did. When Mr. Knight ceased to be the leader of the Society at Derby, Mr. Mason became its minister, and he proposed (although he had been greatly instrumental in its production, and had himself composed one of the services), to simplify the Conference Liturgy for the use of the Derby Society. Upon which he received two letters from Mr. Knight announcing that ‘the angel of the Lord’ had commanded him to warn Mr. Mason against proceeding with his project. Of these letters Mr. Mason did not take any notice; and the Derby Liturgy was used with the full concurrence of the Society, without any of the disasters of which Mr. Knight had expressed apprehension. Of this circumstance Mr. Mason acquainted Mr. Noble, who thereupon advised Mr. Knight not to propose becoming a member of the Cross Street Society, as he had intended to have done on settling in London. Eventually Mr. Knight settled down in the persuasion that the observance of the Sabbath, as a day of worship and instruction in matters of religion, was neither necessary nor required; and that any ordinary business might be transacted on that day. It is much to be regretted that other members of the Church have fallen into the same persuasion. With the weakness of mind produced by these pursuits, it is not to be wondered at that he drifted into the practice of mesmerism, clairvoyance, spiritualism, and other kindred fancies, which so completely occupied his mind, that, habitually reckless of,

or unacquainted with, the value of money, his pecuniary position, when seriously looked at, should have produced those anxieties which brought on the disease of the heart of which he died—died without having made provision for his family or for the liquidation of his debts. For his uses to the Church generally, and his efforts to introduce the doctrines to those with whom he came in connexion, he must stand forth as an example for our imitation; but in the other respects mentioned, his peculiarities should be a warning to all who forsake the truths revealed to mankind by the Lord, through the special instrumentality of Swedenborg, and give themselves up, body and soul, to the leadings and teachings of spirits of, at least, an unknown character.”

As I have a simple story to tell, the purely personal matter in this paragraph will occupy our attention but a little while—yet long enough, I trust, to demonstrate that a great wrong has been done to the memory of Mr. Knight. The question for our consideration is not so much the alleged worldly improvidence of our friend, or the unsettled state of his affairs, as the reason assigned for this state of things, viz., that he consulted his *tablets* “prior to decision of action,” even to the last, and also that he “sought advice from a *familiar spirit* with whom he professed to be in communication.” It must be distinctly borne in mind that this alone is the question we are now considering. It is no uncommon thing for a man to die leaving his family unprovided for, and his debts unpaid, and when this is the case, after a fair income has been enjoyed, it is on all sides regarded as an unjustifiable thing; in such cases, however, it is usual to make inquiries, which result in approximate knowledge of the facts, and very often even the cold business-man of the world discovers that there is far more reason to pity and forgive the deceased than to pass harsh judgment upon him.* But the question before us is altogether of another nature. The charge against Mr.

* In regard to Mr. Knight, I waive this part of the subject with the simple remark that his difficulties commenced years ago, at a period when he served the Church, not only by his personal exertions, but by the liberal use of his purse, and even insured his life for a short period to assist the cause. At Mr. Knight's death his debts had accumulated to near £600, between £200 and £300 of which, I am given to understand, was for money borrowed of his own relations.

Knight is not that he died in debt, or died poor, but that his difficulties were occasioned by his reliance on *astrology*, and on the advice of a *familiar spirit*. This is either true or false, and if false it is an imputation not only injurious to the memory of Mr. Knight, but painful to his family and friends, and by no means unimportant to the general body of the New Church.

With respect to the first of these singular charges I cannot enter upon a minute examination of facts, having no documents that would aid me in such a course, but I can speak from my general knowledge of Mr. Knight's course of life since 1845, that in all that period he very rarely occupied himself with astrology; and, on those rare occasions, so far as my own knowledge and my inquiries extend, the trouble he took was to gratify the curiosity, or relieve the anxieties, of others, who had already perplexed themselves by searching into this kind of knowledge. Further, I can show by undeniable evidence, that he was, to say the least, *very unlikely* to be thus guided; and the document I shall quote for this purpose will also prove how truthfully he applied the doctrines of the New Church to the otherwise dark teachings of that misdoubted science. Being no friend to the practice of astrology myself, I offer this evidence impartially. It is derived from a letter addressed, in the year 1853, to a gentleman (not of the New Church) who had made certain inquiries of Mr. Knight, and among others this, "If any choice of propitious stars and seasons could counteract the general malignant influences on the event," which had been the subject of inquiry. Mr. Knight replied as follows:—

"No choice of times for any special purpose can displace the general tendency of the scheme at birth. Nothing but the voluntary principle of man can resist or counteract it. The first influence into the human mind, or what is the same thing, the tendency by which man is first led, is what may be called impulse, somewhat like, but, nevertheless, of a higher order than the mere instinct of beasts—in opposition to which the latter cannot act. As man advances in age he may learn from instruction what he ought to do, and what

he ought to abstain from ; thus, he may obtain an enlightened intellectual principle. His freedom of will enables him to choose that which he prefers, and thus he may either adopt the lower impulses of his natural life, and thereby make them his own, or from the superior light of instruction resist them, and by such resistance become receptive, from the Divine Being, of a new power to keep the natural impulses in check, and to live from the new power, or what is the same thing, the new life acquired in the way above-mentioned. In the latter case is the ancient maxim to be understood, that '*a wise man rules the stars;*' but one who does not thus rule, or keep in subjection the disordered impulses of early life, is the person to whom the ancients referred in the subsequent part of the same maxim, viz., '*but a fool is ruled by them.*' The ancients, also, had another maxim in relation to this branch of the subject, and it was, '*God rules the stars.*' These are the fundamental principles of astrology; whatever, therefore, may be the general influences represented by the stars (for of themselves they have no influence inclining men), the influences so represented are permissions of the Divine Providence, in order that man, if he will, may be led from states of impurity to states of purity, and thus, finally, to states of light, life, and blessedness."

Such, then, was Mr. Knight's general view of astrology, and such his faithful witness to New Church truth, when addressing an intellectual man of the world, who appears to have been the willing slave of material influences. Whatever difference of opinion may exist in regard to the truth, abstractly considered, of the ancient science of astrology, no one surely will believe that the writer of the above passage was habitually, and to the end of his life, "the fool ruled by the stars." I come now to the second imputation, that my friend also received advice "from a familiar spirit with whom he professed to be in communication."

There is something in the tone of this charge even more offensive than in the former. What is the reader expected to understand by a "Familiar Spirit," in these days? Among the latest instances, every one is acquainted with the story of Agrippa's black dog, which followed him continually, until he was dismissed with a curse. The wizard of Courtray

kept a demon enclosed in a ring; and a young lady of Poitou wore a charm in her bosom, in which the devil lurked. Heywood tells us, on the authority of Grillandus, that all magicians and witches having done homage to the prince of darkness, have a familiar spirit given to attend them, which is sometimes visible to men in the shape of a dog, or it may appear sometimes as a rat, or an Æthiop. In which of these forms are we to believe our friend Mr. Knight was attended? Did he, like the lawyer of Burdegell, keep one of these Paredrii in a vial? or, as in the case of Magdalena Crucia, did it follow him in the form of a black servant? or, again, was it only his own shadow that he caused to walk before him, as Simon Magus is reported to have done? * Paracelsus carried his familiar in the hilt of his sword, but then it brought him abundant wealth, while it appears that Mr. Knight had not wherewithal to pay his debts, neither was he courtly enough to wear a rapier. The reader will observe that an idea of something as wicked as the demon in Faust, is suggested by the writer of the *Obituary*; and to complete the picture, he has only to draw upon his imagination for the details, consisting, perhaps, of a charmed circle, and a bond subscribed in blood, which delivered its victim, "body and soul," into the power of unknown spirits. Alas, for the romance of all this, when the simple facts are stated, and the story of the Familiar Spirit, traced to its source, namely, to our friend's unpretending and unobtrusive acquaintance with some of the phenomena of clairvoyance, and, perhaps, his occasional experience of similar influences.

My own acquaintance with Mr. Knight dates from his settlement in London, about the time of his marriage, in 1845, and the particular circumstances alluded to, *apropos* of Mr. Mason's reform of the Liturgy, occurred before that time. I know, however, that Mr. Knight was acquainted with a "clairvoyante" in the country, and I can easily imagine that his enthusiastic temperament might lead him to receive

* See a work by the author of this pamphlet, entitled *Occult Sciences*, forming the 31st volume of the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*, Cabinet edition, 1855.

as oracular, communications which others would have judged intellectually; and if he felt strongly opposed to the alterations made by Mr. Mason, it is not at all surprising that he should have cited those oracular responses in support of his own judgment. The truest friend of Mr. Knight may allow that it was a weakness to do any such thing, not because there was a shadow of evil or impropriety in the manner of it, but because it really proved nothing except the earnestness of his own convictions, and was little likely to have the effect he anticipated. But this is very different from allowing that a mistake (in the application of means), so innocent in itself, and so very unlikely to injure others, has left an "indelible blot on his escutcheon," any more than his fondness for astrology has done so. Of his "familiar spirit" since 1845, I can speak with better knowledge—perhaps with more knowledge than any other of his friends—the only possible ground for the use of such a term, being his occasional enjoyment of the spiritual discourses of a remarkable *extatique*, in common with myself, and a select few in London. The medium in this case, I may remark, being a lady, whose gift would have been deemed a sacred one in the days of Numa, and is so rare and beautiful in some of its manifestations, that even now—cold and worldly as we have grown—it would, in all likelihood, secure for her a saintly name in the Roman Church.*

* The following passages from some of her communications exist in Mr. Knight's handwriting, and are cited to show the general purport of the "advice" he received from this source; they may serve, perhaps, as "a warning to all who forsake the truths revealed to mankind by the Lord, through the instrumentality of Swedenborg, and give themselves up, body and soul, to the leadings and teachings of spirits of at least an unknown character" (see *Observer*). The details of the various *séances* from which I have collected these little teachings, are too elaborate, and by far too delicate in substance, for these pages. Suffice it, that such is the quality of the meditations—occasionally enjoyed—by which our poor friend was so sadly deluded, and "the cause injured;" for as the Intelligence from whom these passages were received by the *extatique* was the only "Familiar Spirit" of Mr. Knight's acquaintance, of course it could be no other than he or she who led him into the "scrape" predicted by Mr. Noble—*ergo*, who caused him to get into debt, etc.

"Bring before me the sons and daughters of Adam.

"And Jehovah breathed upon them, and they received his Word.

"Stand with thy face to the East, and thy right hand to the North, and consider the sayings of Jehovah.

As the following pages will be chiefly occupied with the subject of spiritualism, I may here dispose of another distinct

“With his breath he filleth them with love, and the wings of his Word beareth truth.

“Jehovah hath said it.

“[The above was read from the roll of the Ancient Word, and was heard from over head, where a red and blue cloud appeared to the *extatique*].

“Loosen the cords of your garments and leave them before Jehovah.

“Arise, stand forth, for he passeth with the east wind and scattereth the remnant.

“For, behold, Jehovah hath said, Keep that which bloweth from the East.

“Jehovah rideth forth for evermore.

“[Heard in the Paradise (of which we always hear in these visions), and afterwards given in the above words from the mountain].

“Jehovah hath sounded a trumpet, and he hath called his sons and daughters to the garden of Eden. Lift up your hands, and receive abundantly instruction.

“[From the interior of the gold and silver garden].

“Arise, gather yourselves together in his garden, and receive sure bread and honey. Jehovah provideth plenty for his sons and daughters, and keepeth them from harm.

“[From the gold and silver mountain].

“Jehovah keepeth [the Word] from his sons, till his daughters be of age [from a garden in which the Chinese were seen].

“I, Jehovah, will call together, from the four quarters of the heavens, my seven sons and seven daughters, who shall stand before thee [the one spoken to], and thus shall ye speak—

“Stand thou before this fountain, and drink of the golden cup, and I will lead and guide you thereto.

“For ye, my sons and daughters, are of my first love; for ye are garments of beauty, sent forth from myself.

“For I have loved you, and will lead you to the end of the seventh day.

“From Jehovah’s love to his people, from the book of Jasher.

“[Received from the *extatique* in a rosary, so large that it exceeded the range of her vision].

“Jehovah, the fountain! from him flow bread and wine to feed and nourish those that are near him.

“To the hungry, bread shall be good; and to the thirsty, water is truth.

“I, Jehovah, have looked, and the bread was falling, and the water stood still in the garden.

“[From a mountain of fire].

“Jehovah is good to all that dwell in Eden; not one being prepared shall receive less than another. Jehovah is good to all.

“The goodness of Jehovah causeth you to pass through the fire without hurt. Because he is with you, ye can walk to and fro in light and heat.

“Therefore we will praise Jehovah for his goodness, for he is loving and kind to his sons and daughters.

“[From a mountain of fire].

“Stand forth, but keep silence. Gather in the centre of the garden, and I will feed you with the roses from the centre of the brook.

“Lift up your hand and consider the working of the water. It encircles the garden, and throweth light in the midst. Stand still and consider.

“[From the book of the Enunciations].

“Come, ye daughter of the East, and prophesy.

“Jehovah hath surrounded the water with light, and the fire is filled with his glory. For by these doth his sons and daughters live,

“[From the gold and silver garden].

charge against Mr. Knight, that "eventually he settled down in the persuasion that the observance of the Sabbath as a day of worship and instruction in matters of religion was neither necessary nor required; and that any ordinary business might be transacted on that day." The writer of his obituary adds, "It is much to be regretted that other members of the church have fallen into the same persuasion." Now, certainly, if Mr. Knight, or any other member of the New Church, can justly be accused of holding that one day in seven is neither necessary nor required to be observed as a day of rest from the labours which the love of the world and the love of self force upon us, it *is* very much to be regretted. But I do not believe that any intelligent man, and much less any member of the New Church, would admit that his views of the Sabbath were at all understood in these terms. Perhaps the writer attached little importance to the exact force of his words, and all he meant to express was his regret that Mr. Knight, in common with many other good and true men in all churches and all times, was one who adhered to the advice of Paul, "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of *the Sabbath*" (Col. ii. 16). If so, the charge is not altogether unfounded, as our friend acted very independently of common opinion in this respect. He allowed no man to judge him. Perhaps he had read the observation of Swedenborg on this subject—that the institution of the Sabbath is among the commands in respect to which it is permitted to exercise a little human discretion (*A. C.* 9349); or he might have acquired his notion of liberty in this respect directly from Paul, or from the words of our Lord himself. What he did was to claim and exercise his spiritual freedom to make the best use of the first day in the

"Eloah looked, and waters broke forth, and fire round about.

"[From a mountain of fire].

"The Lord is our joy and our strength; praise him for his greatness.

"He that stands by the shoulder exalt his power.

"Praise him for his loving-kindness and mercy, ye dwellers in Jerusalem.

"Our Lord is mighty and strong; praise him for ever.

"[From a paradise in the new Christian heavens, where the *extalique* heard these words as a chant, or general glorification]."

week that his conscience dictated, and I am not aware that he made an evil use of the time, or that he was ever known to knock at the doors of the law courts on that day in pursuit of unholy gain as an attorney. On the contrary, for the sake of initiating the public worship of the New Church at Chel-laston, Melbourne, and Derby, he was accustomed to begin his "sabbath-day journey" like one of the hard-working missionaries of Wesleyanism, as early as five o'clock in the morning, and often the bells chimed twelve at night on his return home. He was the indefatigable supporter of the Sunday Schools established in his neighbourhood, and the leader of the Derby Society for several years, as the writer of the obituary has himself shown. That he nevertheless held opinions respecting the Sabbath which tended to a more popular and social development of its duties, may be very true; and many others in England and America have arrived at similar results by independent processes of thought and experience. One of the immediate consequences of these views, I may remark, is an ever-increasing demand on the part of our working populace for the means of innocent and healthy recreation on their only holiday; and, coincident with it, an important movement may be observed in the Church of England, which will eventually, perhaps, reconcile our social requirements and religious duties in provisions which are at present but dimly foreshadowed in those forbidden thoughts, that tend, as some think, to the violation of "divine order." But enough on this subject, which it would be inconsistent with my purpose, in the publication of these remarks, to pursue to its further issues in these pages. Those who desire to know precisely the teaching of Swedenborg, may consult an article in the *New Churchman* for November, 1857, in which it is laid out textually, with all the references, and without regard to the opinions or practices of any individual whatever.

I have objected to the peculiar phrase under which the writer of the obituary has alluded to our friend's acquaintance with the phenomena of *clairvoyance*, because all the world

understands something more or less evil by a *familiar spirit*; though, really, it denotes the spirit *most familiar with every one*, or, in Swedenborg's language, *the attendant spirit*, and whether it be good or evil, when spoken with, depends on the love of the heart, and not on the mere fact of vision or speech with a spiritual intelligence. It is not for me to deny that acquaintance with spiritual powers may also increase our acquaintance with evil, either in conception or act, for the apostle truly testifies, "When I would do good evil is present with me" (Rom. vii. 21); but I utterly deny that any man has a right to impute evil to experiences of this kind, unless it be ultimated, that is to say, unless it absolutely exhibit itself as evil. No one will dare to say this of any action that can be ascribed to our friend, Mr. Knight, and I have already shown that his inquiries had no relation whatever to his worldly affairs. Under these circumstances the charge of "diablerie" is more than a wrong to the individual, for it strikes at a doctrine and practice which we shall presently see have been co-extensive with Christianity; it is a wrong to the Church, because, in fact, it amounts to a denial of her spiritual character, and, practically, to a mis-direction of her cause.

Show me the church, pretending to the name of Christian, over whose portals you may boldly write, "*spiritualism disavowed*," and I will show you the dry bones which lay in the valley before Ezekiel prophesied (chap. xxxvii. 1—14). It is no answer to urge that we shrink from the follies and trivialities of spiritualism, for it is precisely with the follies of the world that the Church has need to contend, and if God withholds not his countenance, and the breath of his life, from creeping things and reptiles, by what right does the Church presume to gather her garments around her, and pick her dainty way through the world, with a "Stand by, I am holier than thou?" It was not thus the apostles entered upon their mission. Sent forth as sheep among wolves, they understood well that they were the possessors of a kingdom, and not the mere preachers of a doctrine. To cast out devils, to

speaking with new tongues, to take up serpents, and to drink any deadly thing without hurt, nay, to restore the sick by the laying on of hands,* were among the prerogatives of their office. They went forth to the conquest of their spiritual dominions literally unarmed—no scholasticism or ritualism for a shield; no doctrinal point, forged and polished by theological decision for a sword of sharpness. And if it be said that they went forth the opponents of spiritualism in principle, I deny the fact. Their very strength, on the contrary, lay in its recognition, and they built up the primitive church by demonstrating that all the privileges and gifts that Paganism had ever claimed were comprehended in it, with the addition of a loftier inspiration, and a surer hope. It was in this sense that the demons were dispossessed of their oracles, by the triumph of the cross, and Fontenelle, or his Dutch authority, are very welcome to their learned arguments, tending to prove the contrary, by showing that responses were frequently obtained at later periods. The prerogative of Jupiter-Dodonus, and all the gods of Hellas, had departed for ever, and as the redeemed Israelites spoiled the Egyptians of their gold and silver, so, in a holier sense, the first Christians possessed themselves of all that was precious in the temples of Paganism.

Hence, *the indefinite variety of spiritual gifts* in the early period of the church, *and their unity in one spirit*, are facts which have always claimed the recognition of learned writers of all classes. It will suffice, at present, to cite the words of Arthur Penrhyn Stanley, M.A., Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Oxford, who thus introduces his critique on 1 Corinthians, chap. xii. :—

“One of the chief characteristics of the apostolical age was the possession of what are here called “spiritual gifts,” the signs that there was moving to and fro in the Church a mighty rushing wind, a spirit of life, and freedom, and energy

* Any further allusion to *Mesmerism* I consider unnecessary, it being universally recognised as a valuable means of cure, and practised by many of the most distinguished members of the medical profession. Yet, his appreciation of this precious gift has been made one of the charges against our deceased friend, Mr. Knight.

which stirred the dry bones of the world, and made those who felt its influence conscious that they were alive, though all around was dead. Before this consciousness of a higher power than their own, the ordinary and natural faculties of the human mind seemed to retire, to make way for loftier aspirations, more immediate intimations of the Divine will, more visible manifestations of the Divine power. Every believer, male or female, old or young, free or slave, found himself instinct with this new life, varying in degree and according to the strength of his natural character, but still sufficiently powerful to be a constant witness to him of the reality of the new faith which it had accompanied. It resembled in some degree the inspirations of the Jewish judges, psalmists, and prophets; it may be illustrated by the extasies and visions of prophets and dreamers in all religions; but in its energy and universality it was peculiar to the Christian society of the apostolical age."

Were I to urge the strict applicability of any part of this description to manifestations which have occurred in our own times, it would be replied that the same "divine order" does not attend them now as in the age alluded to, and that whereas they were consistent with the design of Providence, and especially ruled by the Spirit of God in the beginning of the Christian era, they now take place contrary to the intention of Providence, and under circumstances which show that the spirit of God has no part in them; in short, that the good fruit they bore in the apostolic age was sufficient to prove that they were in order, as their mixed character and often trivial import in our age is sufficient to prove their disorder. In answer to this argument, let us hear Mr. Stanley again:—

"It may easily be conceived," he remarks, "that this new life was liable to much confusion and excitement, especially in a society where the principle of moral stability was not developed commensurately with it. Such was, we know, the state of Corinth. They had, on the one hand, been 'in everything enriched by Christ, in all utterance, and in all knowledge,' 'coming behind in no gift' (i. 5—7); but, on the other hand, the same contentious spirit which had turned the most sacred names into party watch-words, and profaned the celebration of the supper of the Lord, was ready to avail itself of the openings for vanity and ambition afforded by the

distinctions of the different gifts. Accordingly, various disorders arose; every one thought of himself, and no one of his neighbour's good; and as a natural consequence, those gifts were most highly honoured, not which were most useful, but which were most astonishing. Amongst these the gift of tongues rose pre-eminent, as being in itself the most expressive of the new spiritual life; the very words, 'spiritual gifts,' 'spiritual man' (*πνευματικῶ*, xiv. 1; *πνευματικός*, xiv. 37), seem in common parlance, to have been exclusively appropriated to it; and the other gifts, especially that of prophecy, were despised, as hardly proceeding from the same Divine source. To combat this particular exemplification of the factious and disorderly spirit which he had noticed in xi. 16—19, the apostle proceeds to show: (a.) That all the gifts which were bestowed upon the church, equally proceeded from the spirit (xii. 1—30). (b.) That love was to be their guide in all things (xii. 31;—xiii. 13). (c.) That therefore the most useful were also the most exalted gifts (xiv. 1—25). and (d.) That order was to prevail throughout (xiv. 26—40.)

In answer, then, to the very plausible objection, that possession of a spiritual gift does not seem to render its recipient more spiritual, but that it rather develops presumption and spiritual pride, I reply, that it is in vain we expect an unmixed good on this side the grave. The case, now, is precisely what it was in the apostolic age, in this particular respect, and no one could be more sensible of the lamentable fact than Paul, who, nevertheless, exhorts the church to "covet the best gifts," and as a cure for every inconvenience and evil connected with them (to shun and denounce them as disorderly? no), to cultivate *charity* (1 Cor. xii. 31; and chap. xiii.) He hits no blot in "the escutcheon" of his fellow-labourer in the Lord's vineyard, much less pronounces it "indelible," but with loving and persuasive words, calls around him the misguided, the vain, and the trifling (as he might justly have deemed them), and acknowledging their zeal in all things, points out the folly of their contentions, and the especial value of all their various gifts. Some are apostles, bearing a message from Christ himself. Some are prophets with inspired utterances, some are teachers, well trained and learned, some interpret, some speak with tongues,

some have the gift of healing, and some the discernment of spirits. Alas, why disagree on these points, and why pass such unloving judgment on each other? You who dare to adjudge your brother guilty of trifling with divine things, look deeply into your own heart, and see if your judgment has been influenced by that spirit of love which is not easily provoked and which thinketh no evil. It is thus Paul argues, in the noble exhortation to which I have alluded: "Love alone can give reality to the revelations of prophecy, the intuition of knowledge, the energy of faith . . . Look at her as she stands before you, portrayed in her full proportions; look at her kind unruffled countenance, so unlike your factions and rivalries; look at her freedom from the envy with which you regard each others' gifts; look at her freedom from the display, the false pretensions, the vulgar insolence which disgrace your public meetings; look at her refusal to press her own rights, to take offence, or to bear malice: how unlike your selfish and litigious spirit; look at her sympathy with all that is good; her endurance, her trustful and hopeful character, embracing as it does all that is greatest in her two accompanying graces, FAITH *and* HOPE. She continues, and so will they with her. For look, lastly, at her imperishable freshness; what a contrast to the transitory character of all other gifts. The gift of tongues shall cease of itself when the occasion for it is gone. The gifts of prophecy and of knowledge, being in their own nature imperfect and partial, shall pass when this earthly system shall pass away before the coming of that which is perfect. Then, and not before, shall the inarticulate utterances, and the half-formed conceptions of our present infantine state, be exchanged for the full-grown faculties of the man; then, and not before, shall the dimly-seen images of the earthly glass be exchanged for that perfect vision of divine things which was enjoyed by Moses, when he stood with unveiled face on the mount, and received in his countenance the reflected glory of God himself. But till that time is come, we can conceive of the future only through these three great gifts, which exist now, and will continue hereafter;

namely, Faith and Hope, which live as the handmaids of the greatest of all, Love."

Had Paul lived in our own day, it is precisely thus he might have addressed the Corinthians of this age—I mean the members of the New Church. It is not because there has been any change in the relation of the true church, internally, to its divine head, that divine visions and extraordinary spiritual gifts have ceased (as some suppose), but because there is no external reception in Christian love; and the same deficiency accounts for the disorder and triviality of such gifts as occasionally manifest themselves. The divine economy is unchangeably the same towards the church, without favour for the apostolic, or any other age, and all in vain is the labour of the learned to prove that communications of this nature were confined to the times of the Apostles. To quote the words of Mr. Hartley, the personal friend of Swedenborg, "In so contradicting the current testimony of church history, they show much prejudice and little modesty. The apostolical fathers, Barnabas, Clement, and Hermas (whose writings were revered as of canonical authority for four hundred years, and were read, together with the canonical Scriptures, in many of the churches), confirm the truth of prophecy, divine visions, and miraculous gifts, continuing in the church after the apostolical age, both by their testimony and experience; and to pass over many other venerable names (among whom Tertullian and Origen are witnesses to the same truth afterwards), Eusebius, Cyprian, and Lactantius, still lower down, declare that extraordinary divine manifestations were not uncommon in their days. Cyprian is very express on this subject, praising God on that behalf, with respect to himself, to divers of the clergy, and many of the people, using these words. 'The discipline of God over us never ceases by night and by day to correct and reprove; for not only by visions of the night, but also by day, even the innocent age of children among us is filled with the Holy Spirit, and they see, and hear, and speak, in extacy, 'such things as the Lord vouchsafes to admonish and instruct us by,' Epist. xvi.: and it was

the settled belief of the early fathers of the church, that these divine communications, for direction, edification, and comfort, would never wholly cease therein.

“That extraordinary gifts became more rare in the church about the middle of the third century, is allowed by Cyprian himself, and such other writers, both contemporary and subsequent, as at the same time testified to the reality of them; and they account for it from the encouragement given to the pernicious doctrines of Epicurus, and other materialists at that time, which disposed many to turn everything supernatural and spiritual into mockery and contempt. In the next century, when the profession of Christianity became established by Constantine as the religion of the empire, and millions adopted it from its being the religion of the court, the fashion of the times, or the road to temporal emoluments; then Christianity appeared, indeed, more gorgeous in her apparel, but became less glorious within; was more splendid in form, but less vigorous in power; and so what the church gained in surface she lost in depth. She suffered her faith to be corrupted by the impure mixtures of the heathenish philosophy, whilst the honours, riches, and pleasures of the world, insinuated themselves into her affections, stole away her graces, and so robbed her of her best treasure; insomuch, that many have made it a doubt whether in the time here spoken of, paganism was more Christianized, or Christianity more paganized.”

Mr. Hartley, who penned this remarkable passage, was called away from the scene of his earthly labours many years before modern spiritualism and clairvoyance were heard of; or he might have added the testimony of his own experience to that of Cyprian and Tertullian; certain facts within my own knowledge, being of exactly the same character as those which are put on record by the fathers. Tertullian, for example, speaks of a dear sister among the Christians of his day, who had obtained the gift of revelations, which, he says, “She receives *in the congregation, or solemn sanctuary, by extacy in the spirit;*” and he testifies, that “she has converse

with angels, and sees and hears sacred truths ;” nay, that “she discerns the hearts of some, and ministers remedies to those who want of them.” “Also,” he adds, “according as the Scriptures are read, or the Psalms sung, or exhortations uttered, or petitions presented, so from these several sources materials are furnished for her visions.” All this, I repeat, has been exactly reproduced in our own times, though not received in “the congregation, or solemn sanctuary.” There has been no change in the internal constitution of the church, but its living body has been swathed in the cerements of formalism, and all its holy affections and instincts regarded as the dead.

The contempt in which the holy experiences of the *spiritual extatique* are now held, and the utter want of appreciation for other spiritual gifts—for example, the gift of prophecy, or speaking from impression—is a sign of the eclipse of faith, and of the denial of the perpetual inspiration promised to the church, more impressive even than the continuance of sin in the world. “To make way,” as Law observed, “for parts, criticism, and language-learning to have the full management of salvation doctrines, the well-read scholar gives out that the ancient way of knowing the things of God, taught and practised by fishermen-apostles, is obsolete,—that they, indeed, required to have divine knowledge from the immediate and continual operation of the Holy Spirit; but that this state was only for a time, till genius and learning entered the pale of the church.” “Behold, if ever, the Abomination of Desolation standing in the holy place!” Or, as he further remarks, “the kingdom of God entirely shut up, and only a kingdom of Scribes and Pharisees come instead of it.”

It is almost incredible that expressions of this import should be applicable in the present case, for I have before me a tract which bears the imprint of “The Missionary and Tract Society of the New Church,” and I read, under article xii., p. 27, as follows:—“ . . . if we seriously consider the records of the Eternal Truth, it is impossible not to be

forcibly struck with the interesting reflection, that the character of a *Seer*, or of one whose eyes are open to behold the great realities of the invisible world, is not only represented there as an honourable, but also as a familiar character, recognised and venerated by all who had the happiness of being acquainted with it, and at the same time so common, that there were few periods of the church (except when the lives of its members were grossly corrupted through infidelity and profligacy) which did not enjoy that happiness and the benefits resulting from it." This fact is then proved by numerous citations, and the writer adds,—

"Nor do we find, in any part of the Sacred Records, any limitation set to the continuation of such spiritual intercourse between the inhabitants of the two worlds, of spirit and of matter; but, on the contrary, every encouragement to hope that the blessing will be secured, as Divine Providence may see fit, to the latest posterity of the human race. For thus it is declared in the sure word of prophecy, concerning the latter days: "*Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams; your young men shall see visions*" (Joel ii. 8) The Saviour of the world, too, was pleased to confirm the same gracious prediction, and promise, in those memorable words, which remain yet to be accomplished here on earth: "*Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man*" (John i. 51).

These words are not mine, nor even Mr. Hartley's, but they have been circulated by the "Missionary and Tract Society of the New Church," for years past; they are the words in which the ministers of the church have been talking about the spiritual life; while here and there, in remote corners, a few humble individuals have been silently essaying the practice of it, and are now openly condemned for their living faith in these promises. The "New Church" has challenged the attention of the world to the claims of Swedenborg, on grounds which she now hastens to repudiate, not because they have proved fallacious, but on the contrary, because they have proved themselves living facts of greater proportions, and broader significance, than was ever anticipated.

“Thou hast appealed to Cæsar, to Cæsar shalt thou go,” were threatening words, by which, however, the Apostle was not dismayed. The leaders of the church, on the contrary, by far less courageous, shrink from the result of their own challenge, and stand, like decrepid enchanters, trembling in the midst of the circle they dared to draw. Like children and maids who delight in ghost stories, so long as they circulate with the wine and chestnuts, round a blazing fire, but shiver and cry out in the dark, they have talked bravely of angels and spirits, and heaven opening upon the world, and now, when angels beckon them, and the spirit of Antichrist is abroad, they have no faith in heaven, and no hope in the promises which they have intellectually received.

But the failure of faith and hope in a church are the signs of a greater failure still—that of charity, which may be demonstrated from experience, thus: Where there is real love for a brother or sister who possesses a spiritual gift, that gift will be cherished, and cherishing it will increase its power; its value will become known, and certain knowledge will beget trust, in which the faith of love can be received, and all in the New Church are agreed that whatever spiritual virtue can be received is freely given. On the contrary, want of love causes the same gift to be despised, and being despised it is weakened and cast out of the church; its value is never known, and the want of knowledge is the parent of mistrust and fear, in which no faith can be present. Thus, we arrive again, by the short road of experience at the teaching of Paul, that the greatest of the three principles, and the universal of all gifts is simply *charity*.*

* The following communication, written by a lady, whose remarkable flower-drawings have been made known by the work of Mr. W. M. Wilkinson, corroborates this view. It is cited here as an example of much that has been written of the same general character by different hands:—

“Spirit influx! unbelieved in when it comes—unsought when it does not come; questioned, despised, sneered at, and almost universally doubted, and even dreaded! How wonderful is the state of man! All his thoughts, words, and actions, are suggested by Spirit influence—and see the result;—a steadfast unbelief in Spirit guidance, although every really great and good thing that exists in your lower world comes from our and your bright home above. You are all coming to us—some soon, some later; then why do you not strive to prepare the way, by opening your hearts to receive from us what we can give you from the Lord? The gifts of the Spirit are “love, joy, peace.”

The very existence of spiritualism in all its varied forms, within the Church and without, constitutes a demand of no ordinary significance upon her charity, if she possesses that virtue; and a reproach on her pretensions if she does not. It suggests the necessity of a more social development of the church—a development so wide and loving, as to comprehend all these diversities of gifts and opinions, and eliminate from them all that is true and good. Spiritualism is the proof that the church, even in its official character, is co-extensive with humanity, and this being seen, no enlightened New Churchman will deem it possible to create orders of clergy, and thus put himself in the singular position of setting up a representation of spiritual gifts, while the gifts themselves are exercised in social circles, where no such distinction is sought, but all are governed by the spirit of Christian love. A social church, with spiritual gifts; a Christian brotherhood in our day, exercising a sovereign influence over the disorderly spiritual manifestations which are taking place around us, is surely not a vain dream! To me it seems the result pointed at by the great discoveries which took place, and especially the opening of magnetism and clairvoyance, so soon after the announcement of the New Jerusalem by Swedenborg, whose leading doctrines were thus rendered in some sort experimental.

To revert only, by way of illustration, to his doctrine of spheres and auras. Like any other doctrine, it may be compared to a net thrown into the sea, but with the new ex-

Love, the mainspring of all; joy and peace proceed from it—and such joy! The joy that there is in heaven over one sinner that repenteth is unknown to man—it passes man's understanding—it fills the whole heavens with the bright rosy glow of hearts that are overflowing with gratitude and love; the angels chant their hallelujahs!—the whole atmosphere of heaven is filled with odoriferous perfumes, and joy and peace fill the hearts of the enraptured beings who live in the light of love celestial.

"This love, joy, and peace, may be yours. Oh, man! do not refuse such gifts—do not meet this offer with indifference, rather draw near and clasp these loving thoughts to your hearts; give Spirit influence its due; it is a sensitive plant that only requires to be touched rudely to withdraw itself; but like the sensitive plant, it is no sooner closed than it opens again, and is ready for the next rude hand that comes to try its powers.

"Spirit life would send a bright halo round your homes; dull care would cease its troublings; trust and faith would bring their loveliest flowers; charity would bring to man a taste of heaven; and true religion, which is love to our neighbour, would spring and flourish. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard the things that are prepared for those who love the Lord."

periences of magnetism it is like the same net let down on the right side of the ship, and filled with the living fish of experience. To state that every man is surrounded with a spiritual sphere—which is the sphere of his life, his real world—is to state a theoretical proposition, but to demonstrate the existence of that sphere, and exhibit its living force in act, is to put the man in actual possession of a fact, and surround him with a new and entire world, in which his active sympathies, and every beneficent feeling of his nature, may be exercised. Can we doubt that the same holy spirit which revealed the *theory*, designed also, in due time, the revelation of the *fact*? or else, why should the spiritual sphere of man's life coalesce, as we find it really does, with the purest elements of nature, and stream forth, as from every pore of the body, in healing virtue, and in colours and forms of beauty such as clairvoyance reveals to us? Why are we made sensible at all of that mysterious power which communicates itself by the touch, and even blesses the head we love by the laying on of hands? Why is it a joy only to feel the soft, warm limbs of our infants, and why do we breathe a vernal delight in the sphere of innocence that surrounds our children? Why, I seriously ask, all this inviting warmth and soft wooing of nature, if to study her secrets is a profanation, and to accept her best gifts is a departure from God's truth?

But I am so far from doubting my position, that I firmly hold all the doctrines revealed by Swedenborg to be really prophecies of *facts*, and signs of *events*. His doctrine of the spiritual sphere was prophetic of the magnetic power. His doctrine of spiritual light was prophetic of clairvoyance. His doctrine of the Divine Human was prophetic of a diviner life among men.* In this consists the great difference between Swedenborg and the scholastic theologians who preceded him, and to deny the facts, while professing to accept the doctrines which were only the shadows of those substantial things cast

* See pp. 60, 61, of a pamphlet, published by the author in 1856, entitled *Notes on a recently revived Controversy concerning the Humanity assumed by the Lord, and its Glorification*. To be had of William White, Bloomsbury Street.

in advance of them, is really to disclaim his mission and insult Providence. In truth, all nature testifies against the barrenness, the impossibility of such a faith; and all reason laughs it to scorn. Choose where you will among all the capital doctrines of Swedenborg, and honestly follow whither it leads. Let it be the doctrine of Influx, and what is this but the theory of the divine presence in all things? whither leads it, but outward and downward into the lowest material substances? Well then, I acknowledge no force, no attraction compatible with this devotional philosophy, in all the vast realm of nature, that can separate me from the divine fullness therein;—When the healing hand is placed on my forehead, it is the hand of God; when the sweet and expressive smile of the *extatique* rejoices my heart, it is the smile of heaven.

Thus I maintain, that a rational and earnest believer of the truths revealed by Swedenborg has no alternative but to follow them down from abstract principles to positive results, and instead of the believer in mesmerism and clairvoyance being chargeable with forsaking those truths, he is the very man who faithfully adheres to them. How long shall it be proclaimed and dinned into the ears of those who are purposely deaf, that a formal creed is no more a divine truth than a statue carved in stone is a living man? The statue is immoveable, and the artist can only walk round it in silent admiration, or choose his point of view for a careful study of its proportions. But the living man is not only here or there, but everywhere, and to know him thoroughly is to live with him his life, and associate with him in his works; nay, his heart and soul may still have a depth of feeling and a treasury of thought which, as yet, the most favoured friend may not penetrate. What, then, shall we infer of divine truth, which is a more living thing than man himself, for it is the very life and substance of all things? Shall we pretend that its life and fullness can be contained for ever in the fixed posture of a creed? As soon could a rational and warm-hearted man be fixed on a pedestal, and abide there for ever in marble-like rigidity. A creed, if true, is but truth in a catalepsy, and even so it may be commanding and beautiful, standing,

perhaps, like a fair woman in extatic thought, with her finger pointing upwards to heaven as the enchanter fixed her. But if not true, its rigidity is that of the artist's lay figure; its immobility is that of the self-tortured fakeer, whose ankylosed joints are insensible to all stimuli, beating, tickling, or pricking.* Alas, what a thing man makes of himself when he freezes, in his own icy veins, the ever-free, ever-loving spirit of God!

Or, in conclusion, can we believe that the time has been when that spirit was more freely bestowed, and with a fullness of love greater than it is at this instant? Not in the apostolical age, for we have already seen that the same revelations and spiritual enjoyments were continued to the church in the second and third centuries; not even then, for there are many to testify that the same precious gifts survive at this hour all the obloquy that has been cast upon them. Inspiration is the very life of the spirit, as respiration of the body, and the air could more easily fail to supply the exhausted lungs than the love of God could fail the spirit. The failure has been in man—in the church as externally constituted—in the want of a living charity—in the scorn of that communion of saints which is taught in the Prayer Book of the Church of England—in the utter denial of the spirit of love. It has been forgotten that the church and the world are distinct things, and that to join the church is really to enter into a brotherhood which should be more free, more disinterested and loving than the brotherhood of the flesh.

Additional Note.—The mediumship of Mr. Thomas L. Harris marks an epoch in the New Church, and I rejoice to observe, by the imprint of *The New Church Publishing Association*, that his mission is distinctly recognised by a large body of our American brethren. I am not yet sufficiently acquainted with his works to pronounce an opinion on their positive value as a further development of truth, nor, consequently on the relation they assume to the works of Swe-

* See a brief description of catalepsy in *Occult Sciences*.

denborg, in which, possibly, I might be very far from agreeing with the author. I do, however, see distinctly that they link the church to the great spiritual movement proceeding in America, and so far my object in addressing these pages to my countrymen is an accomplished one. In the great whirl of the commingling elements of spiritualism in that country, a centre has been struck from which a divine order is as certain to radiate as light from the sun. In the chaos of fire and frost, and wet and dry, a word of power has gone forth, and the morning song of a new creation may already be heard—softly murmuring and intermittent, perhaps—but every day gaining strength, with its fullness of good overcoming evil, with its abundant light chasing the shadows of a fearful night, and with its warm human love inviting the tempest-tost soul to seek repose once more in the bosom of the Word and the Lord. I have confessed my slight acquaintance with his remarkable works, but had Mr. Harris only given to the world his Lyrics and Spiritual Hymns, sufficient would exist to justify my appreciation of his spiritual gift. If any of my readers have felt the grief of parting with a dear child, let them take, for example, the following beautiful allusion to the reception of departed children by the angels :—

“ With roses crown her baby head ;
Close with a kiss her tender eyes ;
Strew lilies o'er her cradle bed,
For she shall wake in Paradise.

“ What music fills the silent room ?
O list ! the guardian angel sings ;
' Our spirit rosebud springs to bloom,
Our spirit bird unfolds its wings.'

“ O mother ! look with inward eyes ;
Dear heart ! at once bereaved and blest,
Behold the infant cherub rise ;
She smiles upon an angel's breast.

“ Rejoice amid thy sorrow's tears ;
Rejoice, for unto thee 'twas given
To swell the music of the spheres,
To bear an angel-babe for heaven.”

The one great fact that I recognise at present, in the

issues, either more or less remote, of Mr. Harris's mediumship, is the absorption of all the gifts in the unity of the spirit, as comprehended by the church. In a word, precisely what occurred in the apostolical age. The mediumship of Andrew Jackson Davis has given wings to materialism, and thousands of circles have been established on naturalistic, or still worse, on purely cabalistic principles. The revelations of spiritualism have been everywhere received as antagonistic to the revelations of the Word; or, if the Word has been accepted, it is only as a collection of historical documents relative to an older development of the same phenomena. As in France, when the Robespierres held their clairvoyante *séances*, and established the worship of Reason, personated by a woman in Nôtre Dame, so in the whole extent of America, the churches have been deserted for *séances* in darkened rooms, accompanied by cabalistic rites, and the doctrines issuing from them have threatened society in the West with an absolute revival of pagan mysteries.* In the midst of this darkness light has at length sprung up, and now, in the Babel of Tongues, the still small voice may be heard, in the full resonance of which, a hush will again fall upon the pagan oracles. It is nothing to me what opinion may ultimately be formed of the special works written by Mr. Harris, or what reception they meet with in England at the present time. The recognition of his mediumship by an associated body of the church in America, in union with his blameless life and pure Christian doctrine, constitute a great fact—a fact which I cannot be mistaken in regarding as the product of that Christian love upon which Paul so strongly insists; and wanting which, for his support and consolation in this country, even the heaven-ordained teacher may err and suffer greatly; for I may truly say, we read, yet understand not, why Jesus groaned in the spirit when Lazarus lay dead.

* See Appendix (1).

APPENDIX (1.)

THE following extract, from a private letter, dated 1856, will justify the remark in the text; but a volume might be filled with similar facts. The intention of the spirits, as revealed in the series of visions alluded to, may be compared with the boast of the tempter in Mr. Harris's "Song of Satan." Progress by Naturalistic means, under the inspiration of Thomas Paine, is common to both:—

"While I was at Cincinnati I learned that a very strange occurrence had caused some stir amongst the spiritualists there about a year and a half ago. A large, flat stone, about two inches thick and sixteen inches square, was sent by the Parcels' Delivery Company to a stone-cutter in the city, and on it were carved a number of small cavities, which gave the surface an appearance of the stars by night. The man could neither understand the meaning of these dots, nor guess who sent the stone to him. At length, he was entranced, although he had, up to that time, been opposed to spiritualism, and disinclined to inquire into it. He was then sent to Major G., a spiritualist, who lives a few miles in the country; a medium was consulted, and two spirits, purporting to be General G. (the father of the major) and 'Hiram Abiff, the celebrated founder of the Freemasons' Order at the building of Solomon's temple,' spoke through the medium, saying that the stone had been prepared by spirits, and sent to the stone-cutter, who was impressed to convey it to Major G. The spirits then said the stone contained a mystic language, or the alphabet of a language spoken in the stars, and is to be explained by degrees, to serve as the foundation of a new order, similar to that of the freemasons, and to be called the 'Patriarchal Order,' which is to organise a new church or a new society in the world, 'for the elevation and the harmonization of the human race.' The order is to be governed by a society of spirits in the other world, and by a patriarch and a matriarch, under their influence, in this. The order is to be secret at first, because, as new ideas and institutions are developed in its midst, the conservative powers that be will be opposed to it, and finally resort to persecution. The secrecy of the order will then be a protection to its members. Three degrees of the order have been explained and organized, enabling the members of the third degree to read a small group of stars on one corner of the stone. I was induced to take the first degree, which is that of a child born into the new family. Whether I shall go on or not remains to be seen.

"In giving the third degree, the spirits gave instructions that a certain medium, a lady I have seen, Mrs. H. B., of Cleveland, Ohio, should refrain from all food but bread and water during forty-eight hours, and be shut up alone in a room, seeing nobody, and waiting for anything that might occur. She saw a series of visions, one every hour, twelve of which she was told to describe at present, and wait

until a future time to describe the others. I must here observe, that she was told to sit with a peculiar instrument, composed of divers metals, and enclosed in a box, by order of the spirits; this is called a 'psychosmon,' and is intended to form a medium of connection between the seven ethers or magnetisms of the two worlds. 'This was by instructions of the Qualifier (an officer appointed in the third degree of the order of patriarchs) to construct an instrument according to instructions given, and whose duty it is to use it in qualifying lecturers, teachers, and healers of the sick.' The spirits spell the word thus: 'Psychosmon.' As yet, the instrument is not completed, but is in process of formation, as all the metals are not combined. They are directed 'to continue its construction until further light,' and told that 'its power will increase with its size.' The Psychosmon seems to be a means of reviving, in a new form, the ancient amulets and talismans, Urim and Thummim, etc., and Major G. is placed at the head of this new order. He is a very simple man, and showed me an article he had cut out from a journal which seemed to him in strange, mysterious coincidence with the date of the origin of the order (Feb. 10, 1855). The article was dated London, Feb., 1855, and spoke of the necessity of a new moral law and patriarchal order of government. The article was one of Dr. S.'s letters to a spiritualist journal here, and G. was greatly interested when I told him that I knew the author, and that he was a man who had been many years connected with spiritualism in England.

"I will now give you a few extracts from the description of the visions:—1st hour. 'My first sensation,' says the medium, 'was a prickling resembling the rash, succeeded by chills and flashes of intense heat. At length, I seemed afloat in the atmosphere, and looked about me to be certain that I was still in my chair. In about twenty minutes I saw in the distance, sitting in a beautiful alcove, Fanny Wright; she, like myself, sitting by a table, and facing the south. We sat face to face, as I faced the north. Upon her table was something which I supposed to be a 'Psychosmon.' Behind her, forming a semi-circle, I saw General G., Hiram Abiff, and Thomas Paine; a bow, containing all the colours of the rainbow, encircled the persons and table When my Psychosmon is finished it will contain the seven minerals, wherein are all the magnetisms. It will then impart to persons all that goes to make up a harmonic man. The soul in embryo may be vastly benefitted by these instruments.' 2nd hour. 'My spiritual eyes were opened, and I saw how earth from chaos came forth; how man was developed The spirit is yet a little child, but it will increase in wisdom and strength, and go forth to rule in its own kingdom. The animal man has ruled, because, like earth, the spirit must have its development. The present conflict is the strife between the animal and spiritual man for power.' 3rd hour. 'I saw the progress and destiny of the spirit. I saw how great and harmonious it would be after the conquering of the animal. The spirit will then be a law unto itself. Then the lion and the lamb will lie down together, and

a little child will lead them; then the morning stars will sing together, and the angels of God will shout for joy. I saw how needful to the soul had been the furnace-heat of persecutions; struggles are the labour-pains which give birth to the spirit.' 5th hour. 'I saw a temple in building; the form was conical. It was built of human beings. The sky was over-cast; here and there a star dispelled the midnight gloom. At length the day dawned, and the builders (who were spirits) began to make (of the mass of beings) selections for the temple. As the building progressed, it increased in beauty and brilliancy. At the dome was what seemed a band of glorified spirits; but I think they are humans of the future. At length, the temple seemed one great blaze of living light. From this temple went out those whose mission it was to heal the sick, to open the prison-doors to the captive, and demolish what retards the soul in its upward and onward march. Those without, who were blind, persecuted the missionaries; but in the temple they found shelter and sympathy.' . . . 'It would shock the strong of heart to know the plans and purposes of the spirits. I expressed a wish to know the future. For a single moment the veil was lifted up, and I was awed by the strange changes among my friends.' 'This is five years hence in the future,' was whispered, and the curtain fell.

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"The twelve visions described are too long to be copied here, and the document is only published in the order. I merely mention the fact to show you that spiritualism is progressing rapidly and widely where it seems to be almost unknown to the public. More than 100 persons belong to the order in New Orleans, and groups are formed in very many villages and cities of the West. Astonishing cures have been made by healing mediums, and every sort of instruction, from the highest wisdom to the lowest childishness, has been, and is constantly given by the spirits through all grades of media."

I trust my friend, from whose letter I have copied the above, will pardon the liberty, in consideration of its value as an illustration of the facts alluded to. I have been careful to suppress the names of living actors in these scenes.

APPENDIX (2.)

THE following examples of spiritual experience, and of communications by writing, are of recent date. They are inserted here to illustrate the innocent character of such communications in general, and would very unjustly be regarded as modern specimens of the great apostolic gifts of which I have spoken in the preceding pages. This observation is especially addressed to those whose critical acuteness may be a little in excess of their good nature.

The first is an interesting vision which occurred to a lady, recently deceased, who, in her bright, youthful days often acted as amanuensis to Mr. Clowes. It was written during an interval of rest a few days previous to her death, and is inscribed by her friend, who favoured me

with a copy of it: "Dear M. M.'s experience during the crisis of her dangerous illness, at B., whilst the guest of Mr. and Mrs. B., and after I had joined her there, 29th Sept., 1858:"—

"During the most severe stage of my illness, and when the doctor had but little expectation that it would terminate what is commonly called favourably, while I was wide awake and more calm and collected than I am at this moment of recalling the blessed scene, the sun appeared to grow very large, and descend like a shaft from heaven, filled with myriads of angels. Four or five grouped themselves in such a manner as to form a cradle with their wings, into which my soul, as a new-born infant, was most gently laid. They most soothingly wafted me up this long, long, bright vista. The multitude of angels all making way, and looking so lovingly on, as if rejoicing in the work of love. High, high up, and in dazzling light and glory, such as Isaiah describes in his vision, was our adorable Lord and Saviour. I dared not gaze, but seemed to bury myself in my winged cradle. My loving bearers then offered me to the Lord, as one who had been made willing either to remain in the body or to leave it, as might best harmonize with his divine will. Oh, never, never can I forget the thrilling look of love when he smiled upon me and said, "Be content, she is accepted." I was returned in the same tender manner to my poor suffering body, but so penetrated with holy joy that I was unconscious of any other sensation, and made to feel so *trustingly sure* that I was in the Lord's hands that nothing like anxiety could find entrance. I longed to communicate this at once to those around, but I was told to let my soul feed upon the glorious sight, and not to weaken its effects by talking about it. It was truly a rich and inexhaustible feast."

Such was the vision, prior to the departure of this accepted soul; a few days subsequent to which the following was communicated by a writing medium, Mrs. P., and sent, unsolicited, to her sorrowing friend. It purports to be dictated by the spirit of the deceased, and is dated Sunday, Nov. 14th.

"Oh, my friend! may not my soul pour out its love from heaven as it did from earth? My friend, love may not lessen because it is removed to brighter regions! Most miserly would be our love if walls of clay could hold it. Our affections know no space. Measure not the thought by reason of wise philosophy, but by the sentient soul in its inner freedom.

"Worn out is my earth-thought mind. Morning has dawned, and my soul lives in melody of morning delight, to be more and more perfected to mid-day light and love. . . . Worn are my friends in sorrow, whilst I am blest in mind and body.

"Your loving,
"M——."

The same medium, also, a day later, communicated the following to the surviving friend. It purports to come from the husband of the latter, who has been many years a widow. The opening remark on

the Judgment is in allusion to the long-tried and purified character of the deceased.

“My ever-willing wife! marvel not at the mostly-received opinion of the day being false, that every one is going to his great account, much as prisoners are called to the bar! For the bar has been on earth with many, and their sins and penalties for sin have been mostly paid and wiped out. The inner man has grown mightily in the bodies, and the outer husk has only to be put off, and beings in angel lineaments are amongst their kindred.

“My wife! now has M—— seen those loving friends who watched over her in willing care. Now has she caught the melody of their hearts, and she makes her voice echo the tune of love which, heart to heart, finds answered in the other. Many are the sights and sounds around her, but each is her heart’s feeling, willing melody of affection. My wife! she will tell you so herself. My darling, worn wife! weep no more. My misery is your sorrow; my joy your bright content; my home your heart, where our Lord is reigning; my haven was yours on earth; my bliss is my Saviour’s mercy in uniting us for ever. Worship, my Lord wants not for himself, but his creatures’ good. Oh, the boundless love of such mercy!

“Your watchful, loving husband,

“C——.”

To show the varied character of these remarkable communications I will now fill up the remaining space to which I have limited myself with an example or two from other sources. A young girl (we will call her Emma), is writing or speaking—for in her case, it matters not which—on the text, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” It may be said that her elucidation contains no new revelation of truth, that is to say, nothing that a reader of Swedenborg can regard as new. But may not the same thing be said of every sermon we hear preached, and is not this a good sermon to fall from the lips of a child? First, as to the idea of heaven,—

“Before we give the signification of this verse we will try and tell you what heaven is. Man is the likeness of God, and heaven is the representation of man; it is therefore one great man, whose life is God, and the fuller this man or heaven is with that life, the larger and richer does it become. Thousands of souls may tread the pathways of heaven, and yet no space limit their progress. Heaven, then, is a form of man whose life is God, whose every pulsation is God, and who really is but a receptacle of God. . . . Were man as the Lord intended him to be, he also would be the image of God, and heaven would be within him; and, until God is the true life of man the kingdom of heaven *cannot* be within him.”

Next, how heaven is to be understood in the series of the spiritual sense of the Word,—

“When heaven and earth are spoken of in the Word they signify some state in man. When we read the heavens were opened, of

course the natural heavens are not to be understood, but the spiritual, internal heavens; the celestial state of man perceived with the internal eye. Heaven is everywhere in this celestial state. God, also, is everywhere, and yet when alone in the world he was in heaven, for where the celestial principle of good and truth is, there is heaven."

Thirdly, as to the earth,—

"Even our Lord, with all his divinity, entered the rational, and also the natural, for he trod the earth. We all must have the foundation firm, and all our materials for building good, or else our yearning desires can never be accomplished. Can we build a glorious temple if our stone and marble be not good? No; our godness must pervade our whole being; every nerve must thrill with the one glowing life of God. We must have a ladder from heaven to earth. The celestial must have communion with the natural. God must be conjoined to man.

Lastly, the general sense of the passage,—

"'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.' The chief signification in this sentence belongs to the simple syllable *words*. . . . Word signifies the Lord's doctrine, and words principles appertaining to doctrine. Heaven is the internal man, and earth the external, therefore by this verse we learn that the internal and external man *can* fall or pass away, but the principles of our Lord's holy and divine doctrine *can never*. Man may become, instead of the image of his Lord, the image of Satan, but in becoming so he does not debase good, but he goes from good. The internal man, or spirit, and the natural man, may fall, but the truth and doctrine of our Lord shall for ever stand forth, full of burning life, the flame of which can never be quenched, but undying will it burn on, even to eternity!"

It will of course be understood, that I have quoted this little elucidation simply as an example of much that is condemned, *en masse*, as evil in its origin; and no cavil that may be raised about this or that particular expression, can avail to stigmatise it as a disorderly or diabolical manifestation. Much truer would it be to say with old Cyprian, "Even the innocent age of children among us is filled with the Holy Spirit, and they see, and hear, and speak, in extacy, 'such things as the Lord vouchsafes to admonish and instruct us by.'" Or, at least, to believe with Tertullian, that the *extatique* is furnished with materials for her discourses, "according as the Scriptures are read or the Psalms sung, or exhortations uttered" (ante, p. 19, 20). Surely, it is something remarkable to hear a discourse, in the above terms, from the lips of a timid girl, or to witness the ease and rapidity with which it is written down; to both of which I can testify as phenomena of constant occurrence.

Another example, quite different in character from any of the preceding, I transcribe from a *séance* in which the resuscitation of a child in the world of spirits was the subject of conversation. The medium (we will call her Annie) speaks of what Swedenborg would call a "living representation."

“ We enter a large park, in the centre of which is a small garden, fenced with a green trellis, in which fruit trees are interlaced, and the fruits seen growing through it. A stream runs through the garden, on the banks of which children stand waiting. Soon the form of a child rises through the water. It rises three times. The first time they cannot catch it; nor the second; but the third time one of the children will snatch it to her bosom, and she will become its first teacher, and be as a mother to it.”

“ The stream represents spiritual truth, and rising three times, so many successive states. 1st. Leaving the natural world. 2nd. Entrance into the world of spirits. 3rd. Reception of the child into the society to which she will belong, viz., the first society of infants in the world of spirits. The park represents the child’s hereditary state as to knowledges—the hereditary regenerate state, in place of the barrenness that would appear if the parents were without spiritual life. The garden in the park is that part of the child which is already cultivated. The fence round the garden is protection from the Word.

“ We still looked on (said the *extatique*, after giving this explanation), and as the dear child rose she looked like marble. She has on a loose linen dress, dripping with water, and the little girl holds her to her heart. Her body is transparent—not opaque marble—and you see the process of animation; first the heart, then the lungs, then the flowing of the circulation to the extremities, and at last to the brain. Now her eyes first open—now her mouth—and an angel brings an apple from the trellis, which she receives in her left hand, and sits down. She rolls it into the stream—it opens, and bright sparks of light are seen in the interior, forming letters.”

“ The little girl who received her (added the *extatique*) was on the right, and is the Innocence of Good, or, in reality, the Lord, because the resuscitated child was filled with his presence.”

I have called this a “living representation,” in accordance with the phraseology of Swedenborg, and with what I believe to be the fact, for it is not to be supposed that the child would be conscious of rising through the water into the society where she was received. Her real consciousness of the facts was probably in accordance with a description given in another part of the same *séance*,—lying upon a bed, with angels on either side guarding her, and preparing wreaths of flowers for her initiation into the spiritual life; by which may be understood, the truths of intelligence first received with delight; and the reception accompanied by these gifts. “Children in their first state (said the *extatique*) sleep much, and in their sleep they see things which afterwards become real to them.”

Of course many will deride all this, and one may be found to pass heavy judgment on the parents who were a little consoled by it, especially if they should leave the world in debt. Nevertheless, wherein is it an evil or a delusion? A question I put not to the world, but to the members of a Church, the very foundations of which are laid in a disclosure of the phenomena of the world of spirits.

The last illustration for which I have room, is a communication forwarded to the widow of Mr. Knight, by a medium (Mr. Jones, of Chatham), who was a stranger to the family, and who remarks in his letter that it was the first poem he ever received, and it was obtained, he says, from the spirit of Mr. Knight, in tears; "I wept, and he wept."

"Tuesday (Nov. 9th).—Our dear friend now present. His conversation has been with angels concerning the Divine Word. Mr. Clowes is with him, whose garment appears as if composed of fiery diamonds. A golden chariot, drawn by two horses of spotless whiteness, now awaits them. Gently kissing my forehead, they bid me a short adieu. 'But one word more,' exclaims our dear friend, 'May the hour come when I may talk to you in the presence of those on earth whom I tenderly love!'" I may add, that those who knew Mr. Knight will recognise in all this, and in the particular expressions, a remarkable *vraisemblance*:—

" THE REUNION.

" TO MY BELOVED WANDERER IN THE WILDERNESS.

- " 'Twas matchless love that called away
Thy partner from thy faithful breast;
But, oh! a sweeter bridal day
Awaits us in the spheres of rest.
- " Sweet charmer of my time below,
I love thee still, and thou art blest!
'Twas thine to soothe my hours of woe,
When lonely thoughts my soul oppress;
- " But now 'tis mine to soothe thy soul
With forms of love of purer mould,
And gild thy minutes, as they roll,
With silver wings and yellow gold.
- " Tell the sweet charmers of our life
The precious gems nursed by thy hand,
Their father is removed from strife,
And waits them in a happier land.
- " Oh, loved one, still my heart's best life,
What scenes await thee on this shore;
When God shall close thy chequered life
And give thee to my arms once more.
- " We'll kneel, and praise his matchless love,
And seated on the nectared flowers,
We'll sip fresh bliss from streams above,
And learn to love in Eden's bowers.
- " Till then, my lov'd one, I will dwell
Within thy home, and share thy breast;
And sweeter stories often tell
Of our bright land of peaceful rest."

[See Preface, b.]