

WHAT IS TRUTH?

BY JUDGE EDMONDS.

SPIRITUALISM

AND

FORMER SUPERSTITIONS.

BY PROFESSOR MONTI,

OF HARVARD COLLEGE.

A REVIEW

OF THE TREATMENT SPIRITUALISM HAS RECEIVED FROM THE
HANDS OF ITS OPPONENTS.

By JOEL TIFFANY, Esq.

NEW YORK:

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WHAT IS TRUTH?

A DISCOURSE DELIVERED BY JOHN W. EDMONDS,

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1859.

Where is truth to be found? How often do we ask ourselves this question, the investigation into which constitutes our religion or the science of our future life. Where is truth to be found? Absolute verity; reliable truth which can save us from anxiety and toil in the search. As was once written to me by one who stands high in society; 'O truth; truth, so hard to find.' Thus my friends it is difficult for man to attain to truth unless he approaches to the God of Heaven whence it emanates, so long as man is a creature of progression; so long as it is his destiny to move onward and upward from the cradle to eternity, so long it will of necessity be difficult for him to attain unto truth. So long as it is necessary for man to exercise his own freedom and independence of thought, so long it is inevitable that he must be liable to error. We have then no right to expect absolute truth upon which we can rely.

In morals, as in the natural world, man must dig for his diamonds; he must dig for his gold amid the sand and water of the glittering vein.

No school house travels around the village seeking its scholars; man must seek and earn his knowledge for himself, of course its progress with him and his progress with it must be valued and enhanced; it is therefore impossible that truth can come to man with that absolute reliability which in his indolence he is apt to crave.

How long has it been that many of the truths that we now receive as such, have been working their way through the human mind; two thousand years elapsed after the idea of

the planetary system was announced to man before it could be believed by him. Nearly as long a time passed before Aristotle's philosophy of syllogisms was superseded by the wiser philosophy of Bacon—that of induction. How many years passed after we knew that water would generate steam, before man found out its power. I could carry you through the world, and show you how inevitable it is that man must attain truth gradually and by progression; and I am not confined to the moral world. See how slow has been the progress of truth—how gradually it has made its way in the moral world. The children of Israel had to wander in the wilderness till one generation could die out before they could receive the truths that came to them. And now 1800 years have passed since the truths of the Christian religion have been revealed to man, and yet out of 600,000,000 inhabitants of the earth not one-fifth know and receive these truths.

When then we ask for truth, let us remember that we are to receive it according as we have capacity to do so. And remember this, that of necessity it assumes the form and shape of those to whom it is given; like water poured into a basin, the element is ever the same, but assumes the shape of the vessel into which it is poured.

And thus it must ever be; but when we are searching after truth we must remember these great truths that lay at the very threshold, or else we allow our indolence to mislead us.

Now, bearing these things in mind, we come to the question which we are this morning to consider: 'What is the Truth' in pursuit of which we are engaged.—The truth that the spirits of the departed do commune with us after death; that they who have lived upon the earth as we now live, speak to us from beyond the grave. This truth we believe; this truth I am here now to defend.

We regard it as of infinite importance to man, for the simple reason that it reveals to him his future, and lets him wander no longer darkling amid error and ignorance, and the blindness of the past, but opens to him such a knowledge

of the future, that he can now wisely and well prepare for it. We regard this truth as of infinite importance. How can it be revealed to man : can the rock or the tree reveal it ? Can you read it in the roaring ocean, or the storm that sweeps over its surface ? Will either animate or inanimate nature reveal it to you—what is the future of the immortal soul ? You ask in vain for the revelation from these sources, and in vain has nature animate or inanimate been preaching to man for centuries upon this subject.

There is but one way in which man can receive the revelation, and that is through his brother man, either here or one who has gone before. And if this is so—and the time will not permit me to pause and argue upon this point ; it must content me that I present the facts for your consideration and reflection afterward. I say that this is so, and it is only thus that man can receive a revelation to the eye ; then of necessity the revelation that comes to man must be imperfect. The sources through which it comes, whether disembodied spirit beyond the grave, or the embodied spirit of the medium here, after it has passed through these channels, all is stamped with imperfection.

How then, under such circumstances, can a perfect revelation—one upon which man can rest his soul—be received ? Now, as it is of necessity that the evidence is imperfect, and being imperfect, the question presents itself, ‘ what will we do with it ? ’ Will you reject it because you cannot always rely upon it ? Will you have no truth in the world because falsehood strides along beside it ? Will you throw away everything that may be found in the midst of the rubbish in which you have to search, upon the bank ; throw the glittering jewel and the paltry earth both away, because all is not shining before your eyes ; or will you carefully search the rubbish, and seek to find out the precious gems ? Some call upon us to reject the whole of this evidence presented to us, because there are so many inconsistencies among it. We believe that out of all this mass of confusion and difficulty, truth can be found, and we attempt to find it.

Upon this occasion I seek to find the truth of the proposition as I have announced it: 'That the spirits of the departed do commune with us,' from any of the following sources: From Sacred History; from the earliest periods of man's history; from the profane history of the world of all periods of time; from the universal belief of mankind from the earliest age; from our own personal observation and from the opinions of the good and wise that have gone before us, and left behind them the record of their faith.

To perform a task like that upon an occasion like this, you will readily perceive I must of necessity fail to relate but little upon such a topic; and I cannot, without wearying your patience beyond all bounds, seek to dwell upon it. It must content me and you, that I touch thus generally, and offer rather subjects for your own reflection.

To Sacred History, then, I first appeal. We are told that an angel appeared to Hagar, in xvi Genesis; three to Abraham, in xviii Genesis; two to Lot, in xix Genesis; one to Hagar, xxi Genesis; two to Abraham, in xxii Genesis; one spoke to Jacob in a dream, xxxi Genesis, and one appeared to Moses, in iii Exodus; one appeared to the camp of Israel, in xiv Exodus; one met Baalam, in xxii Numbers; one spoke to the children of Israel in ii Judges; one spoke to Gideon, in vi Judges; one appeared to Manoah's wife, in xiii Judges; one appeared to Elijah in i Kings xix; one stood on the threshing floor of Ornan, in i Chronicles, xxi; one talked with Zechariah, in Zechariah i; one to the two Marys at the sepulchre, in Matthew xxviii; one foretold the birth of John the Baptist, in Luke i; one appeared to the Virgin Mary, in Luke i; one to the two shepherds, in Luke ii; one opened the doors of Peter's prison, in Acts v; two spoke to Jesus, Peter, James and John, in Luke ix, and one spoke to John the Evangelist, in Revelations xxii. It will not do to say that these were angels, or a distinct order of beings from men; those seen by the apostles, and by Moses also, and this seen by John, though called by him an angel, avowed himself to be his fellow-servant and one of the prophets. This is but

little of the evidence that can be drawn from the Christian religion upon that subject, though as I have said, the Christian religion embraces only about one-fifth part of the earth. Every element of religion, even Fetishism, which is the lowest order of worship—embracing the most benighted portion of the human family, those who worship idols, sticks and stones—has its very foundation in a belief in an intercourse between the unseen and the idol-worshiper. Brahmanism, which embraces its hundreds of millions more than Christianity does, teaches of Avatar, and Vishnu and other gods, and teaches the interference of innumerable spirits in the daily affairs of human life, and enumerates some 330,000,000 of these spirits that are supposed to be around and about them.

Llaimaism, which covers the greater portion of Asia, teaches the continual presence of an unseen spirit; the spirit of the grand Llama is always present upon the earth. And Mahomedanism, which has its millions of devotees, teaches also that two angels attend each mortal from his birth to the grave, to influence him. Thus we find in every religion prevailing upon earth, this idea. Nay, you will find from sacred and profane history both, that every religion that was ever received by men was founded upon that which we now profess to believe, and which so many are willing to deem as superstition. No religion has ever yet been received by man that has had any other foundation than that.

And now is it marvellously strange when we find the whole world thus receiving this doctrine, that we also should be inclined to that belief?

But I pass from sacred history to profane—and here we find a universal belief of mankind in spiritual influences.—You will pardon me if I carry your minds a moment back through the history of religion, and trace out the manner in which the human mind has made progress to the present condition of things. Remember what we think now, that the unseen spirits of which we shall speak, we now think to be the spirits of human beings that lived upon the earth, who

can, and *do*, commune with us, and which communion we can control because we understand it.

We find in the early history of Paganism that they worshipped innumerable Gods; they calling them Gods, though clothed with human faculties; they believed that they spoke to men in the form of men. These that we regard as the spirits of the departed, they worshipped as their Gods, they recognised their existence in that form and worshipped them, but not as the great Creator, like the God that we worship. More than all that, the laws of nature were stronger than those very divinities; they thus placed their Gods, as they called them, in the position in which we find now the departed spirits of earth in respect to those who remain behind.

There was this remarkable feature in the Pagan religion—their Gods were divine and not evil, and they believed that they took part in human affairs, and worked miracles—miracles being to them those things which in their ignorance of human laws seemed inexplicable.

Thus we find the Pagan world,—we find in all Paganism this prominent idea, carried so far in some instances, that even those whom they worshipped, they acknowledged to have been men once upon earth.

Passing on, you will find by and by Zoroaster in the East proclaiming the same great truth, which from that day to this through centuries has lived among them, and proclaiming also that spirits were both for good and for evil. This was one step which had been made in the progress of mankind beyond Paganism. Zoroaster was the first teacher of the spirits being both good and evil, and the Jews imbibed the idea from his teachings and from intercourse with those where the doctrine prevailed; and so, when Jesus came upon the earth 1800 years ago, he found prevailing the doctrine of evil spirits, not found in the Old Testament, for there it is scarcely mentioned more than once or twice, unless you suppose the book of Job to be a history rather than a poem. He found prevailing among the Jews the idea of good and

evil spirits—the Beelzebub and the Cherubim as they were then called. He found the idea then, and the Jews fully occupied with it, it was not of his teaching that it was so, he found them there. He did teach them how to deal with the spirit of evil, he did not deny that it existed unseen and could influence human action, but he taught how to overcome it and how to cast it out. The Christian religion started therefore with these ideas; it commenced its progress with the idea of an evil spirit around the man and capable of influencing him; it was seized upon by the priesthood, it was imbibed and believed by them and taught by them to their people, and has come down to us; and you will find now the idea of a devil, which has been so long the bugbear to frighten men, coming to us, not from the source and origin of our religion, but from the teachings of the great Revelator in Asia many years ago.

But be that as it may, the Christian religion started with the idea of angels, good and bad; of devils and ministers of God surrounding mankind. They borrowed the idea partly from the Jews as to the evil, and partly from the Pagans as to the existence of spirits at all; and thus Christianity started, surrounded, tinted and affected by these considerations which existed at the time it was born. The early teachers of Christianity imbibed and continued to teach that idea during the first three centuries of the Christian religion. The idea was that to each child that was born, an evil spirit, or a devil as it was called, was specially assigned; and such was the prominent idea in the Christian world until one of the saints—Saint Augustine proclaimed to the world that it was time to stop. Out of these ideas thus early prevalent in the Christian world, came this idea that the innocent man should fear; and with the conception to which I have already referred, nothing could be more natural than that man in his ignorance should be terrified by such a belief. This fear was over mankind, the thunders spoke God's wrath, the earthquake told of his vengeance, and there was no change whatso-

ever but was a mark of his vindictive spirit. Such was the doctrine then taught!

In the mean time you will observe, how amid these errors and superstitions man had progressed from the early ages and came to know that there were spirit that surrounded every individual; he had come to know that these spirits were evil as well as good; and had learned to know that he had power over them, but did not know the extent of that power or the extent of their capacity for evil, and hence the appeal to fear was so successful.

Such was the condition of christendom at the time the Northern barbarians swept across the continent and overthrew the Roman Empire and its institutions. They brought with them into the south of Europe those ideas which they had imbibed from Paganists in their Northern climate and in their Northern homes. One of these ideas, most prevalent among them, which accompanied them throughout their progress down to this day, was that there was an unseen intelligence that dwelt with men and interfered with their affairs. They believed not merely in spirits, but in the immortality of man, and hence, when they made this irruption from the north, over the continent of Europe, instead of embracing Roman paganism, they embraced Christianity, because it harmonized with their progressive notions. Then came a mingling of the Demon superstition of the north of Europe, ideas to which I have referred as having crept up from the south. A universal belief pervaded all parts of Christendom that there was a spirit constantly at work around each human being for good or for evil. Religion made it superstition, but persecution could not eradicate the idea, and during a period of three centuries those who were believed to have been affected by evil spirits were in various forms, whether magicians, witches or otherwise, drove to death by hundreds and thousands. Thus during a period of three centuries thousands upon thousands of human beings were murdered because of this unseen influence in which the world believed, call it now what you will, and believed too

with that intensity that the feeling did not rest, but continued on, sacrificing not the old and decrepid only, but the poor and maimed, and even invaded the seat of the Pope, seized upon and sacrificed the greatest human power in the land, and made the whole world stand terrified at the position in which mankind were placed by this evil influence. But connected with this persecution came this idea, making another advance of man in his knowledge of this great truth which is destined to work such marvels among men. Out from this persecution came the idea, which we now receive, namely, that man himself is responsible to others for the works of evil done by him. It was in the advance to this responsibility that so many thousands were slain in those days of darkness and superstition.

Now pause for a moment and see what progress man has made ; for in this brief statement I have carried you through a period of some fifteen centuries. See what progress man has made ! There was a belief in an unseen intelligence around, and that it was interfering in human affairs for good as well as for ill ; that man had power over it, and that he was responsible for the evil influence exerted by or through him. This era culminated in the 15th century, when Innocent VIII., Pope of Rome, proclaimed his remarkable bull, the most damnable one that was ever produced to the world, and which was called the " Hammer of Witchcraft," and which signified how it could be told where the influence was and how the people were to be tried for it. Out of that bull of that Pope, this " Hammer of Witchcraft," more persecution arose, still more wide spread, which reached all classes, rich and literary men as well as the poor and decrepid. Out of this state of things, however, came a remarkable change ; and I may be permitted to pause here for a moment to draw a comparison that struck me when I was exploring this history of the Crusades, that for some three centuries poured forth on Europe and Asia, millions to redeem from the Mahomedan rule and possession the birth-place of Christ. Millions of human beings were sacrificed in these crusades ; thousands

upon thousands of Christians laid their bones upon the sands of Palestine during a period of some three centuries. We are in the habit of looking at it as one of the most marvellous instances of the superstition of man that his history can reveal to us. Let us in the review of the spiritual history of man pause here, and we find it in one marvellous mass of inexplicable superstition. Let us not however stop there with the Crusades, for time enough has elapsed to let us know that it was one of the wisest dispensations that has ever been bestowed upon man—the infatuation out of which these crusades grew. And if it had not been for some such overpowering flood that swept over Europe and upon the plains of Asia, there would have been nothing to stop the progress of Mahommedanism, that was then so very strong in the East. All Europe which has been civilized from that day to this, would have been steeped in ignorance; and darkness would have reigned not merely over the Eastern Continent, but here, where twenty-five millions can now stand erect in the presence of their Maker.

Shall I ask you to progress a step further in this history? It was found that neither the clergy nor the literary man was exempt from these persecutions: they invaded the sanctity of private life and threatened the safety of individuals to such an extent that the whole community began to be alarmed, and priests began to preach against the Pope. Step by step the world began to quarrel with the idea so dangerous to individual happiness and so destructive to the advancing race; they began to deny that there was any such thing as a devil, and from the period of the 17th Century down to the present day it has been the custom of the educated and the intelligent utterly to deny any such thing. The world has been asking for a long time how much of this is to be rejected or adopted, and they reject it all and say there is no such thing as communication between us and the spirits of the departed. Thus it is that we come down to the birth of the idea that we are now called upon to interpret and say whether there is any such thing; the world has been made mad and furious and

imagines those people idiotic and steeped in insanity for believing this which was known for ages past. But I for my own part, even in the midst of this melancholy picture, I can find the light; even in the midst of all this rubbish I can see the diamond sparkle.

Now we approach the age of unbelief; we trace the history of man down to the 17th century, and now the age of unbelief is passing away. The early part of this century and the latter part of the last gave evidence that the age of unbelief was almost gone. The question is presented to us, and where are we to turn for refuge, with regard to this great theme which is now speaking to us and manifesting itself to us to-day as it has not manifested itself for ages past?—Where, I ask, shall we turn for refuge? Shall we go to the age when this intelligence was worshipped as a God, when the instruments of that intelligence were worshipped as Gods around us? Shall we take refuge in the age when superstition was predominant? Are we prepared, I ask, to take refuge in any of these conditions, or shall we find a better refuge for ourselves? Can we find any medium between a blind faith and knowledge? between fanaticism and infidelity? between superstition and sound reason? Amid the immense flood that is pouring across the world and has been coming in this deluge for centuries, can we find no Ararat on which we may rest? Ask your self the question, for the flood is here and the ark is floating on its surface.

Now in the midst of all this influence, and in this progress of this great idea, we must not overlook these absurdities, which accompany our progress more or less. To-day we may in humiliation contemplate the absurdities and errors of the past, and learn how to avoid those that beset our progress now.

Very many discoveries in these times must keep science disguised—disguised, too, for fear of persecution. You all know the fate of Galileo, when he proclaimed the great truth which was distasteful to the priesthood. You remember that the man who printed the first copy of the Bible came

near being burned to death for that great feat; and men were terrified by the dangers that surrounded them. Then again, two or three hundred years ago it was infinitely more the practice among scientific men to conceal their discoveries in order to enhance their own fame. Hence it is that these manifestations are looked upon now as superstitions; nevertheless in their midst some are wiser. But how easy it is for us to discover much of the truth that is now among us. Let me give you a few instances. Roger Bacon proclaimed that he could raise the thunder, and control the lightning and create the rain, but he had not yet *found* any body who could raise the thunder or create rain. But our Franklin realized the idea of controlling the lightning, and our Morse has chained it as obedient cattle to the car of human progress, making it a most stupendous engine in the diffusion of knowledge among men.

Among the early writings of Lord Bacon, we find the steam engine rudely shadowed forth. Out of the astrology at which we now laugh, many of the most important discoveries in astronomy have sprung; in the search after the elixir of love hartshorn was discovered; Paracelsus in the search after the same object found laudanum; the kaleidoscope, with all its beautiful changing images, slept for two centuries under the rubbish of the philosophers of that day; and in the search after the philosopher's stone very many of our most valuable discoveries in chemistry were brought to light; gunpowder came down hidden under the dust of ages. Now I ask whether amid all this superstition and ignorance, this science or that which we call spiritual communications, for a period of more than fifteen centuries, is as inadequate as any of the other natural sciences, or is it some great truth that represents the advance of man? Now I say that the question is presented to us, with the true history of the last two centuries, to answer—the question, what are the general features of the spiritualism of to-day? Men are possessed of the devil apparently, but instead of giving him shelter immediately, they have the

good sense to lay hands upon and cast out the unhallowed stranger.

In Florence, Italy, how do they manage these things? When some of these phenomena occurred in the English quarter, the bells rang in the house, and rang after the wires were cut; we know what to do with it here; but the first thing that was done was to call the police—but the police could do nothing except to look and see the bells ring; the next thing was to call the priest to exorcise the house of the demon that haunted the place, and nothing would do till all the bells were taken out of the house!

Now how stands the question which is presented before you; the great question between superstition on the one side and an intelligent understanding on the other? There have been manifestations in times past as we have them now; Charles Wesley, and George Fox both had manifestations; Swedenborg, many years ago, made them known to all the world, and during thirty years after that there was an immense revival of this same feeling throughout the earth. The preaching mania of 1842 was like that of to-day, when persons, like myself, have a mania for speaking. Modern Spiritualism gives an answer to this question—that Spiritualism which is all over the world—Asia, America and Africa and the Islands of the sea, all recognise the existence of this power, which is everywhere the same in its general characteristics.

It has never been exposed, though it has often been tried, and disclosures often furnished; it has defied all the investigation to which it has been subjected; and thus it is throughout the world. It has been witnessed in this country by hundreds and thousands of intelligent beings. Mark me, for I speak of a miracle such as the history of the world does not tell, it is in your own midst, and can be witnessed by yourselves; it has been witnessed by millions throughout the world. It is this:—*Inanimate matter moving without mortal contact, and displaying intelligence*; a chair a table of stone or wood, or an old hat—moving without mortal contact, and displaying

intelligence ! What is this intelligence ? It knows its letters, it can spell and write, it can cipher, and whatever else human intellect can do. This marvel is in your midst—I ask, does it answer the question ?

Now whence comes this marvel, and what produces it ? Scientific men say it is a delusion.

We answer with the simple proposition—we must believe the evidence of our own senses or we cannot keep out of harm's way a moment. We believe there is a power at work connected with man, and we believe there is no other hypothesis upon which it can be explained except the spiritual one. This is by many proclaimed absurd ; but let me show, that if this is absurd, we are absurd in most excellent company. I will read you first what Socrates says to Plato—

‘The cause of this is, that which you have often and in many places heard me mention ; because I am moved by a certain divine and spiritual influence, which also Melitus, through mockery, has set out in the indictment. This began with me from childhood, being a kind of voice, which, when present, always diverts me from what I am about to do, but never urges me on. But this duty, as I said, has been enjoined me by the deity, by oracles, by dreams, and by every other mode by which any other divine decree has ever enjoined any thing for man to do.’

Cicero declares his age to be indebted to such unseen agencies for many valuable discoveries in physis, for warnings, for predictions, and extraordinary deliverances, and he says, ‘I know not any one nation, polite or barbarous, which does not hold that some person has the power of foretelling future events.’

Pope besides his *Essay on Man*, writes : ‘I shall depend upon your constant friendship, like the trust we have in the benevolent spirits, who, though we never hear or see them, we think are constantly praying for us.’

Dryden writes,

The mighty ghost of our great Harrys rose.
And armed Edwards looked with anxious eyes.

Addison says : ‘ At the same time I think a person who is terrified by the imagination of ghosts and spectres much more reasonable than one who, contrary to the report of all historians,, sacred and profane, ancient and modern, and to the traditions of all nations, thinks the appearance of spirits fabulous and groundless. Could I not give myself up to the testimony of mankind, I should to the revelations of particular persons who are now living, and whom I cannot distrust, in other matters of fact. I may here add that not only the historians, to whom we may join the poets, but likewise the philosophers of antiquity, have favored this opinion.’

Johnson writes : ‘ That the dead are seen no more,’ said Imiac, ‘ I will not undertake to maintain against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages and all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not believed. This opinion which perhaps prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truths. Those who never heard of one another would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience can make credible ; that it is doubted by single cavillers can very little weaken the general evidence, and some who deny it by their tongues confess it by their fears.’

Josephus in the seventeenth book of the Antiquities, writes; ‘ Glaphyra, the daughter of King Archelaus, after the death of her two first husbands (being married to a third, who was brother to her first husband), had a very odd kind of a dream. She fancied that she saw her first husband come towards her, and that she embraced him with great tenderness : when in the midst of the pleasure which she expressed at the sight of him he reproached her after the following manner :— ‘ Glaphyra,’ says he ‘ thou hast made good the old saying, that women are not to be trusted. Was not I the husband of thy virginity ? Have I not children by thee ? How couldst thou so far forget our loves as to enter into a second marriage, and after that into a third—nay to take for thy husband a man who has so shamelessly crept into the bed of his brother ? However, for the sake of our past loves, I shall free

thee from thy present reproach, and make the mine forever, Glaphyra told this dream to several women of her acquaintance, and died soon after. I thought this story might not be impertinent in this place, wherein I speak of those kings. Besides that, the example deserves to be taken notice of, as it contains a most certain proof of the immortality of souls, and of Divine Providence. If any man thinks these things incredible, let him enjoy his own opinion to himself, but let him not endeavour to disturb the belief of others, who, by instances of this nature, are excited to the study of virtue.'

Cornelius Agrippa, (says Disraeli, vol. 6, p. 55,) before he wrote his *Varieties of the Arts and Sciences*, intended to reduce into a system and method the secret of communication with spirits and demons. On good authority—that of Porphyrius, Psellus Plotinus, Jamblicus—and on better were it necessary to allege it—he was well assured that the upper regions of the air swarmed with what the Greeks called *demonēs*, just as our lower atmosphere is full of birds, our waters of fish, and our earth of insects.

Need I go any further? I have shown that the learned of many ages, all believed in this superstition. Socrates, who has come down to us as the wisest man of antiquity, was made to drink poison because his enemies said he corrupted the youth of Athens with his teachings. Cornelius Agrippa, of whom I have spoken, was a most learned man, who was acquainted with some eight different languages; he was a benevolent man, very much beloved by all who knew him, and yet he was avoided entirely because of the universal belief that a black dog that accompanied him in his walks was the devil who was ever beside him. Now I ask wherein consists the superstition?

Now see, my friends, from this brief statement, what it is they who assail our religion have to do—they call upon us to disbelieve in spiritual intercourse; against the universal belief of mankind in all ages; against repeated instances in Sacred History, and against all religions; against repeated instances from profane history, and against human testi-

mony such as I have spoken of; against our own senses, and against the opinions of the wise and good of various ages—this is what we are called upon to do. They pronounce our belief a delusion and they call upon us to put away all that we have derived from nature and from God; to own that we are poor, weak, miserable men to have the presumption to say so.

Is it indeed so? Has the glory that once descended and sat between the wings of the cherubims faded like good memories from the sight of man? No indeed! Indeed it cannot be! Man is yet creature of progression; he is yet destined to attain knowledge, on through all eternity, be the source of that knowledge what it may. Man is yet to thrust his hand into the great store-house of knowledge, and obtain greater treasures than have yet been given unto him. It may not be in my day or in yours, but the day is now dawning upon us when these marvels of divine Providence shall produce a new earth and new heaven and as we shall then stand forth, we shall lift man step by step to that glory, till he knows what is this wonderful power which is now dealing with him, till he shall know how to deal with it and chain it also as well as the lightning, to the car of human thought. The time cannot be far distant, though it may neither be in your day, or mine, when there shall come this knowledge which will lift man yet nigher and nigher to Him who has created us in his own image.

SPIRITUALISTS AND FORMER SUPERSTITIONS.

SKETCH OF A DISCOURSE BY SIGNOR MONTI, PROFESSOR OF ITALIAN IN HARVARD COLLEGE, ON SPIRITUALISM AS COMPARED WITH THE SUPERSTITIONS OF FORMER TIMES.

[Signor Monti requested that a full report should not be published.]

SIGNOR MONTI commenced with the ancient declaration, that "there is nothing new under the sun." Discoveries, he said, were made every day in the natural and scientific world, but the human mind remained ever the same. He did not believe in its progress. Philosophers of all kinds had made schemes for its perfection, but they had never succeeded, and he thought they never would. The modern ages had not produced either more wise or intellectual minds than the old ones, while at the same time the superstitions which oppressed our first fathers existed now and probably would ever exist. The subject upon which he purposed to speak was very well known; he did not intend to say anything in regard to its phenomena; he wished merely by referring to ancient history to show that this was a revival of old errors in a new shape, and that as from those evil sprung, and nothing but evil, the natural consequence was that no good would come of these. The ancient oracles were the same as the more modern witchcraft and the present Spiritualism, with the distinction that the oracles were honored and worshiped as derived from the gods; witchcraft was despised and persecuted as deriving from the devil, and Spiritualism neither worshiped nor persecuted—for our government did not allow the latter, and the people were not disposed to do the former—and all three deriving from the same source; that is, the belief in supernatural power. Men were prone to consider as supernatural what they were not able to account for. So thunder and lightning, comets, eclipses,

storms and dreams were considered divine or diabolical. Had they been able to account for them they would have had no such belief. The same might be said of all subsequent errors, such as the belief in ghosts, phantoms, fairies, spirits, apparitions of angels and of devils. And when our minds were under the influence of such ideas there were no errors to which they would not resort. This was superstition, as, for example, to look at the moon over the left shoulder, and to avoid to start on a journey on a Friday, to never pass under a ladder, and many others.

Signor MONTI gave a description of several of the ancient oracles and the manner in which their responses were obtained. "Change Apollo," said he, "into a spirit, and the Pythoness into an American girl, and you will have the trance medium!"

Signor MONTI gave a long account of the sayings and sooth-sayings of the oracles; he supposed that the priests who attended on them were acquainted with animal magnetism; they used it in healing, but pretended that it was the power of the Deity. The responses were always given in some language with which the priests were acquainted; so he had seen a trance medium who was to deliver an extemporary poem under the influence of an Italian poet, give it in English; the reason given being the same in both cases, that the God or Spirit preferred the language understood by the hearers. The Sybil of Cumæ was then described, and some of her answers were related at length. So strong was the hold which superstition had gained, even upon the civilized nations, that it was not until 1821 that the profession of witchcraft was abolished in England. Signor MONTI quoted extensively to show that the witches were supposed to have power to evoke departed spirits, demons, and even the gods themselves. There was no absurdity at which superstition stopped. Even gaping and sneezing were considered divine. If the ancients happened to sneeze in dressing in the morning, they immediately returned to bed. On the Continent of Europe it was now the custom to congratulate persons when they sneezed, and when they gaped to make the sign of the cross over the mouth. We might laugh at the ancients, but there were few people in Catholic countries who would start on a journey on

Friday, or who would make thirteen at table. Had we not heard here that spirits enjoyed smoking and drinking through a medium? And if a medium had to smoke and drink for half-a-dozen spirits in a day, why he must submit.

When the mind had once allowed itself to be influenced by superstitious errors, it inevitably fell into proscription, intolerance and crime. Many were the human victims whom it had demanded; the most atrocious crimes had been committed in order to discover hidden treasures or the long-sought philosopher's stone. Early Christianity had none of this. But when superstition crept in, when belief was revived in the apparition of angels and devils, in witchcraft, in ghosts and such supernatural wonders, then the most horrible crimes were the result.

Signor MONTI related at great length the story of Gilles de Laval, Duc de Retz and Marshal of France, who caused the murder of more than one hundred infants in his incantations to discover hidden treasure. He was tried in September 1640. A still better account may be found in *Mackay's History of Popular Delusions*, in *Michelet's History of France*, or in any of the histories of Britany. Signor MONTI consumed nearly half an hour in telling this story and that of Count Cagliostro and the Diamond Necklace, which may be found in *Carlyle's Miscellanies*.

People might ask what had this to do with Spiritualism. Had they not heard of spiritual enthusiasts who dug a cave in order to find the treasures which Captain Kyd had buried there? Had they not heard of other fanatics who had gone to dig in other places, because the spirits had revealed to them that there were hidden treasures there? Place these fanatics in the same circumstances, and give them the same power, and they would commit the same crimes. Had not our ancestors really believed in the power of Spiritualism there would never have been such cases as that of Cagliostro and De Retz. Superstition would produce the same effects now as it always had. How many husbands had abandoned their wives, how many fathers their children, how many children their parents, how many religious people their God; how many people had committed crimes and suicides,

how many were in the insane hospital because of Spiritualism? The belief in supernatural powers and affinities, which formerly led to the witches' orgies, now led to Freelove meetings. It was not the will of God that we should know more than he had already revealed to us. The world of nature was wide enough for our investigation, and if we attempted more, we should always find our labor worse than worthless.

TIFFANY'S REVIEW

OF THE TREATMENT SPIRITUALISM HAS RECEIVED FROM THE
HANDS OF ITS OPPONENTS.

I HAVE been called here this evening by the invitation of your committee, to reply to the arguments with which it was supposed Signor Monti, of Harvard College, would attack Spiritualism. The task is a difficult one, because of the little there is to do. I had hoped, when I received this invitation, that we should have found in this gentleman an opponent well qualified to discuss, in an able and scientific manner, the phenomena and principles of modern Spiritual manifestations. I had hoped that Signor Monti, unlike other of our opponents, had examined this subject for himself, and had thus qualified himself to speak from his own observations and reflections. But in this I have been disappointed.

Spiritualism has grown to be a mighty fact, known in its phenomena by hundreds of thousands, and believed in by millions. Upon its testimony thousands upon thousands rely for evidence of the soul's immortality; and they will not surrender their faith to the *ipse dixit* of any man or class of men. Whoever takes upon himself the labor of overthrowing Spiritualism, must qualify himself to deal with its facts as they are known to exist, and with those principles which are necessarily involved in their production. There are those of us who *know* whereof we affirm, if there are any faculties of the mind which are reliable, and the number not a few.

In the absence of much to do in replying to our opponent, I propose to investigate *the manner* in which Spiritualism has been received and treated by those professing to know and be better than those deceived by it. I think it due to ourselves, that our opponents be criticised somewhat, that an impartial future may judge between us.

In the first place, our opponents, of whom Signor Monti seems to be a fair type, do not appear to have ever examined the subject with that care and scientific accuracy which is neces-

sary to enable them to form a correct judgment, and entitle their opinions to any weight. They generally appear to belong to a class of men "born wise" upon the subject of spiritual intercourse, and deem themselves qualified to determine all questions pertaining to the intercommunication of the two worlds, without investigation.

One is not usually supposed to be qualified to teach science or art, unless he has made himself familiar with its principles or practice. Men never think of filling the various chairs in an institution of learning, unless they have some particular acquaintance with the duties of their respective chairs. Why then should people expect to gain any light upon the facts and principles of spiritual intercourse from those who have never carefully investigated the subject!

That such is the character and condition of the Pulpit and the Press respecting spiritualism, is most manifest from their manner of dealing with the subject. They are ready to believe every idle tale that is told against spiritualism, but nothing in favor thereof. From the first until now, they have eagerly seized upon every pretended solution of the mystery, which ignored the presence and agency of spirit, and when the phenomena were such that spiritual agency could not be dispensed with, they have either denied the phenomena, or charged it upon the devil.

The Pulpit and the Press stand before the world as teachers. As such, they ought to inform themselves of the truth of that which they teach. They should not be careless or reckless in what they affirm or deny. There ought to be deep earnestness and integrity of spirit, as well as intellectual and moral ability. But what has been their character as manifested in their treatment of the subject of spiritual intercourse? Let facts answer.

It will be remembered that the first exposition of spiritualism which was heralded through the land by the Pulpit and the Press, as being true and satisfactory, was that of the celebrated Buffalo Doctors, seconded by their Evangelist C. Chauncey Burr, and his "brother Heman." The phenomena were then declared to be the result of trickery; the sounds were said to be made by the snapping of the knee and toe joints. This explanation, how-

ever, lasted but a few days. It was soon found to be false, and none were left foolish enough to urge it.

Next came the mystical theory of Rogers. He affirmed that the phenomena were produced through the agency of a certain force, which was excited or called into action through the "brain centres" and "nerve centres" of minds or spirits in the body, and a theory was built thereupon, so complicated and unscientific, that not even Rogers himself could understand it. Yet it was enough for our opponents to know, that Rogers attempted to dispense with the agency of disembodied spirits in the production of these phenomena, and that fact made his theory satisfactory; and it was published as a true and just solution of the mystery.

It, however, soon ceased to be urged, because new expositions and theories, which contradicted all that could be understood of his, were being brought before the public. Mahan undertook to revive the theory of Rogers, and immortalize himself; but he came too late; and the "intellectual giant" met with a very indifferent reception, and soon ceased to be heard from altogether. Our opponents very unkindly accused Mahan of doing mischief; because he admitted the facts, but did not dispose of them satisfactorily.

About this time a very important discovery was given to the world through the Tribune, I think. It may be denominated the "pine table" epoch. It was discovered that by forming a circle around a "pine table," in a very short time it would become so charged with electricity, or something else, that it would spontaneously perform all these modern wonders. Now the mystery was unquestionably explained. It was all "Electricity." That strange force had taken upon itself a new mode of manifestation, and it was trumpeted to the world as the death-knell of spiritualism. "Pine tables" were in great demand. Orthodoxy had now found out a "new pleasure;" and you could find many a disciple of the knee and toe joint philosophy, and the "nerve and brain centres," giving up all their old notions of the cause of these strange manifestations, and adopting the "pine table" and "electric" theory. But time wrought changes here

likewise. The experiment proved dangerous. Those "pine tables" sometimes "spoke more than was set down for them," and they became dangerous amusements in these anti-spiritual circles, many a medium was developed, unintentionally, and it came to be suspected that some wicked spiritualist, knowing the ignorance and gullibility of our opponents upon the subject of these phenomena, took that method of getting them into difficulty. Be that as it may, the "*pine table*" theory, like the "knee and toe joint" theory, had its day, and passed away.

Then, or a little before this, came the "Farraday mania," the involuntary contraction and motion of the muscles of the medium. Here was something refreshing from across the water. The learned Farraday, like one of old, "came," "saw," and "conquered." But there were thousands of our opponents who knew that the learned Professor had fooled himself, if he believed in any such solution of the mystery. Our children knew enough of these phenomena to know that Farraday's theory was not true.

Along in due time came the venerable Dr. Dodd. He had the key to unlock the whole, provided the phenomena would keep within a certain range. It must not get *above his head*; if it did, he would confess himself and theory *under*. The "automatic action of the back brain," failed to keep things under itself, and so *it went under*; and ceased to satisfy the author or the people. It too went the way of all the preceding theories.

In this way I might proceed to cite the many theories and explanations which our opponents have brought forward, to do away with the agency of spirits in these manifestations, but time and space forbids. I might have cited the "Consociation of Ministers," and the "Beecher report," which determined the falsity of all the preceding theories and expositions, and declared the agency to be spiritual; but owing to their lack of orthodoxy they were to be considered "*evil*," and be treated like other heterodox people. I might also have noticed the treatise of Dr. Berg, affirming it as a fact, and also as Bible doctrine, that the spirits of the departed do communicate, *good* as well as *bad*. But owing to the *few* good ones mentioned in the Bible, compared with the *number* of the bad, we are to consider the chances

against us, and avoid their society. I also might mention another D. D., Dr. Gordon, who has tested the matter by some "thirty sittings," and has found them all to be "personating devils;" and last, though not least, Signor Monti, who judges it to be a revival of witchcraft and the old superstitions. But I must not tarry.

Can any one calmly contemplate this conduct on the part of our opponents, without being satisfied that they know little or nothing of this subject? That they exhibit a lack of fairness and candor by the acceptance of such an array of contradictory and false theories, for the purpose of destroying Spiritualism? Why do they so eagerly seize upon, and publish to the world, such false and foolish expositions and explanations, without taking more pains to inform themselves? And why, after so many failures, are they as eager as ever to be deceived by some new nonsense in the name of an explanation?

The theories by which our opponents have attempted to dispense with the agency of disembodied spirits have been most contradictory and absurd. No one of them could be true, without overthrowing some of the others. Mahan could find nothing in all the phenomena which could not be traced to a "mundane origin." Beecher was compelled to admit the presence and agency of spirits, but he believed them to be bad because of the unsoundness of their theology. Dr. Berg could find it to be a fact that good spirits as well as bad could, and sometimes did communicate, and that such was the Bible doctrine upon that subject. Dr. Gordon found them all to be "personating devils," trying to deceive him, etc. Now "who shall decide when the Doctors disagree?" These very doctors declare that these spirits must be *bad*, because of their disagreement. What then shall be said of our opponents if such is to be taken as the standard of judgment?

In the outset I will say to our opponents, that, as a Spiritualist, I am willing to adopt any test, and be judged by any standard that they will consent to have applied to themselves and their faith. If they will not shrink from their own positions, when applied to themselves and their faith, then I will accord to them

honesty at least. But when I find them dodging their own arguments when turned against them, I have good evidence that they are not quite sincere.

Among other things our opponents denounce Spiritualism, because there are or have been certain false or pretended mediums who practice deception. Because of these things the whole is denounced as a trick. Their logic runs thus: Because some are known to deceive, therefore all are deceivers.

Mosheim, in his Ecclesiastical History, speaking of the doctrines of the Church, during the second century, says: The Platonists and Pythagoreans held it as a maxim, that it was not only lawful, but even praiseworthy, to deceive and even use the expedient of a lie to advance the cause of truth and piety. The Jews, who lived in Egypt, had learned and received this maxim from them before the coming of Christ, as appears incontestably from a multitude of ancient records. And the Christians were infected from both these sources with this same pernicious error.

The pious frauds practiced by the Fathers of the Church, are known to every student of ecclesiastical history. False mediums and false miracles were as common in those days in the Church, as among Spiritualists. And the skeptic has been inclined to apply the same argument. He says, Some of the Gospels are known to be spurious and forged, therefore the presumption is that all are. Some of the pretended miracles are known to have been fraudulent, therefore the presumption is that all were so. Some of the professedly inspired teachers of that day were confessedly deceivers, therefore they all were.

This argument our orthodox opponents will not admit to be just or true as applied to themselves, yet they are most indefatigable in applying it to the cause of Spiritualism. When it is applied to them or their faith, they say, "The presence of the counterfeit proves the existence of the genuine." But when applied to Spiritualism, then it is not competent to prove the genuine in that way. This method of our opponents is unjust, and they know it to be so, yet they use that kind of argument.

Our opponents in their criticisms on Spiritualism commit another fatal error. They do not try the cause by the principles

of its faith, but by the imperfection of its members or professors. When trying Spiritualism, Christianity, or any other system by the inconsistencies and imperfections of those professing a faith in its doctrines, we charge the system with that which does not necessarily belong to it. The best faith may be most unworthily represented by unfaithful professors.

Suppose Christianity were to be tried and judged of in this manner. Suppose we were to point to the bloody persecutions and wars carried on in its name. Suppose we were to charge it with the corruption of its priests, with the hypocrisy of many of its professors, with the licentiousness of many of its ministers, bishops, etc., would our opponents consider it fair treatment? Would they not say, if you wish to accuse Christianity go to its principles, examine them, and ascertain if they encourage or justify any such conduct. Charge the system with what it teaches, and not with the faults and follies of those who do not obey its principles. The professor of any other system of faith has no difficulty in determining how *his faith* should be tried.

Yet these same individuals in the Pulpit, and through the Press, commit this same error and perpetuate the same injustice when judging of Spiritualism. They will sharply rebuke the unbeliever who accuses their faith, and in the very next breath will be guilty of the same thing. Why this inconsistency? Their wills and not their understandings are at fault.

If their object were to demonstrate that a mere profession of faith in Christianity, Spiritualism, or any other system, does not necessarily make an honest pure-minded man, then these facts and arguments might be well enough. But if their object be to attack and expose the system, then such method is irrelevant and unfair. We should never confound the principles of a faith with the frailty of its professors.

Signor Monti concluded that Spiritualism was but the revival of the old superstitions, such as witchcraft, etc., attended with all that was dehumanizing and demoralizing, begetting insanity, sensualism, freeloivism, etc. It would have been much more satisfactory to Spiritualists, and more honorable to himself, had he pointed out the necessary relation—if there be any—existing

between Spiritualism in its principles and faith, and these objectionable practices. But he did not do it, for the reason that no such relation exists.

It is not denied that Spiritualists, like any other class, are not exempt from a liability to insanity: and, that some persons, from the intensity of their thought and feeling upon the subject of Spiritualism, are made insane. But what are we thence to infer? That the fault is in the subject to be investigated, or in those making the investigation.

Some three years ago, when the like charge was made against Spiritualism, and when it was said, that it was filling our insane asylums, I investigated the subject. I found from all the reports of the lunatic asylums which I could gather, that *religious excitement* was reported by them to be the cause of the insanity of more of their inmates, than Spiritualism, in the proportion of *ten to one*. Since that time I have continued to notice the same. I have never yet seen the report of a lunatic asylum in which the number of insane from religious excitement did not far exceed the number made insane through Spiritualism, according to their reports. And the reflections of every observing mind will affirm the same thing. In every community the like result has been observed.

Signor Monti could not have been ignorant of this fact, but it did not suit his purpose to notice it. The Pulpit and the Press are or ought to be aware of these facts; but neither does it suit *their* purposes to notice them. The charge is unfair as against Spiritualism. There is nothing pertaining to the investigation of it which is calculated to disturb or unbalance any well balanced mind. There is not an art, science, or profession which has not been the cause of insanity in the same sense, and upon the same principle. Then why should Spiritualism be singled out from all the rest, and be made responsible for all the insanity occurring among its professors? while religious excitement or revivalism goes scot free. By what sort of logic or justice is the one exonerated and the other condemned?

But again, Spiritualism is accused of licentiousness. But upon what is that charge made, and by what evidence is it sus-

tained? Not by referring to its doctrines. Not by any principles involved in the doctrine of intercommunication between the two worlds. No, no. All Spiritualists do not become perfect at once. Some who profess the faith lead impure lives, are guilty of vicious practices. Such is the argument. It is surprising that our opponents can be so coolly impudent in making such a charge based upon such evidence. There is scarcely a week passes by which does not bring to our ears some startling account of clerical delinquencies; for licentiousness would seem, according to the Press, to be the besetting sin of that profession. It is safe to say, that the proportion of such delinquencies between the public teachers of orthodox Christianity and the public teachers of Spiritualism, is against orthodoxy, *ten to one*. That the Pulpit should denounce Spiritualism for its licentiousness, and make its charges upon such evidence, is surprising.

It is an undeniable fact that every year a surprisingly large number of the orthodox clergy are detected in the practice of licentiousness. Search the public journals, and you will find there is no other one class so numerously represented in that department of crime. What then are we to infer? That Christianity tends to licentiousness? By no means. We are rather to infer that the profession of Christianity does not necessarily deter from the practice of licentiousness. Then why is such an inference to be made against Spiritualism? There is nothing to be found in its doctrines excusing or encouraging any such practices, but everything to discourage and denounce it. Let our opponents be tried by the same rule they apply to Spiritualism, and they protest against it as unfair and false. Then why do they use it? This demonstrates that their heads are better than their hearts in this matter. Let us have an earnest and searching investigation, and an honest judgment. That is what we demand.

But Spiritualism is accused of teaching or encouraging the practice of polygamy, for that is the simple English of our opponents' charge of *freeloveism*. That there may be persons professing and practicing such doctrines, who are Spiritualists, is not denied. But it is denied that such practice forms any part of their Spiritualism, or is in any manner related to it. They derive

their arguments and authority from another source altogether. They affirm that it is sustained by nature and by God, and to prove their affirmation they appeal to the sanctions of the Bible. They quote the examples of the patriarchs, such as Abraham and Jacob, and also of David and Solomon. They affirm that God approved of it in those days, and in those men, so eminent for their purity; and that he would not have done so, had it been wrong. They sometimes fortify themselves by the action upon that subject of the American Board of Foreign Missions. But I believe they never appeal to the doctrines and principles of Spiritual intercommunication for any such authority.

The truth is, that these objections thus urged against Spiritualism, have no more just force against it, than they have against Christianity, or any or all other professions. There is no *mere* profession which will make men true, just and pure: nothing short of a deep spiritual work in the heart, purging lust and impurity therefrom; and all this rant and cant against Spiritualism as a faith, is as unfair and unjust, as it would be if made against real Christianity.

Why Spiritualism should be charged with all the shortcomings of humanity, merely because certain ones professing its faith do not become perfect in character and conduct, I do not understand. If it did redeem its professors from everything censurable, it would accomplish what no other faith or profession has hitherto done. Christianity, with the truthfulness of its philosophy, and the purity of its religion, would fare hard in its reputation, if it were to be tried by any such standard, and become responsible for the vices of its ministers and professors. Give Spiritualism the same rules of judgment, and the same tribunal before which to be judged as you do Christianity, and that is all I desire; and I have a right to demand that.

Professing Christians may be false, impure and unjust, *notwithstanding their profession, not because of it*. Then why may it not be so with respect to Spiritualism? Should a professed Spiritualist do wrong, would it be proper to say, that he did the wrong because he was a Spiritualist? Would it not become necessary to show that the doctrines of Spiritualism taught or

inculcated the wrong before Spiritualism could be held responsible? In short, should not Spiritualism have a fair trial and be judged by its principles?

The vices and crimes charged upon our faith are by no means peculiar to it. We have already noticed that they are incident to the weakness, selfishness and sensualism of man, and depend more upon his *character* than upon his *profession*. It is true we hear more of the sensualism of the clergy than of any other one class. But I am hardly willing to believe that it is owing to any peculiar influence of their profession. Some think otherwise, I know: think that the attention and flattery they receive is unfavorable to that meekness and poverty of spirit which would correct such licentious tendency. But I am inclined to think that the position they occupy in society is such, that delinquencies of this kind are more likely to be noticed and made public.

The same is also true respecting Spiritualism. If you were to examine the records of the courts granting divorces, you would not find a greater proportion of the parties applying, Spiritualists, than you would belonging to any other class equally numerous. Nor would you find the causes alleged for the proceedings, any more allied to Spiritualism than to orthodoxy, or any other mode of faith. But whenever a Spiritualist seeks any thing of the kind, he or she is published from Maine to Georgia, and a great noise is made to injure Spiritualism. These things should be taken into the account in judging of the clergy for sensualism, or of Spiritualism for any of the many slanders and abuses heaped upon it. There are most probably as many among the orthodox opposers of Spiritualism seeking divorce, but there is not so much said about it. It is not so popular to post them.

But there is another very remarkable feature to be noticed in the conduct of our orthodox opponents. They are so intent upon demolishing Spiritualism, that they attack and seek to destroy the very basis upon which their own faith in God and immortality rests. Accord to them the truth of those positions they seek to establish, and man has no evidence, nor can he have, that there is any spirit-world or future life. They are like the famous mower, who, raising his scythe to kill a snake, so directed

his blow as to cut off his own head before his weapon reached the snake. So it is with our orthodox opponents. They make such use of their weapons as to necessarily destroy their own faith, before they can invalidate the evidences of Spiritualism. They cannot destroy the evidence which Spiritualism offers to the world, unless they impeach the faculties by which spiritual existences can be perceived. They must show that man has no faculty by which to perceive the presence and communion of spiritual beings, or that, possessing such faculties, he can make no certain use of them; either of which positions are fatal to the external evidence upon which their own faith is based.

Spiritualism embraces in its facts all the evidences upon which the world must rely to prove the existence of a spirit-world and a future life. That philosophy which can overthrow Spiritualism in its facts of spiritual intercourse, can successfully combat all the evidence which history brings to us, proving the actuality of spiritual existence in any age of the world; that which successfully impeaches the evidence of to-day, and accounts for modern spiritual phenomena without the necessary agency of spirits, removes the last barrier to the final triumph of atheism.

It cannot be denied, that so far as intellectual, moral, and religious development are concerned, men are as competent to judge of the value of evidence to-day as they were eighteen hundred and three thousand years ago. Their senses and perceptions are as reliable now as then. They are no more subject to sensible or other illusions. The tests by which to distinguish between the *real* and the *imaginary*, are better understood now, than they were then. Upon what principle, then, are we required to receive, with undoubting faith, the testimony of men and women upon this subject, who lived eighteen hundred years ago, and yet required to reject, without reserve, the testimony of those equally competent and honest to-day. So far as the spiritual constitution and character of man, and his relations through that constitution and character to the divine government, are concerned, I am not aware of any change. Let those who affirm a change, make their affirmation good. Then why should the

spiritual phenomena of those days be received as truth, and the like phenomena of to-day be denounced as false or from the devil? Who will answer?

If it be true that all the visions of spiritual things, persons, etc., which are now had, are mental hallucinations, self-imposed, or received through sympathy with other minds in the body, what assurance can we have that the angels seen by the women at the sepulchre, and that the individual supposed to be Jesus, seen by disciples, etc., were not mere psychologic impressions made upon their minds. These things are said to so occur now-a-days, that their spurious character cannot be detected. Jesus did not appear to the world after his crucifixion — none but his friends saw and conversed with him. Such facts, now-a-days, are desecrated upon as evidence of fraud and trickery.

We would take this opportunity of suggesting to our opponents, that care should be taken not to impeach the faculties by which men may see or perceive spiritual beings. To do that, will be fatal to all spiritual faith. If spiritual beings exist at all, and if man as man, possesses any faculty or sense by which such existences can be perceived, then such phenomena are among possible events. Now to deny in man the existence of any such faculty, is to deny the possibility of his cognizing spiritual phenomena. To deny such possibility, is to deny that spiritual beings ever have been seen. For if spiritual beings ever have been seen or heard, that proves the existence of such beings, and also it proves the existence of faculties in man, which, under favorable circumstances, can perceive such existences.

If we wish to maintain the *facts* that spiritual beings exist, and that man has seen or perceived them at any time, we must be careful and not deny the existence of these faculties in man. For if we do so, our facts cannot be sustained by any possible evidence. Nor will it do to impeach the integrity of these faculties. To affirm, that they can in no case become absolutely reliable, is the same as to affirm their non-existence. If there are no means by which man can positively distinguish between real and spurious mediumship, or real and spurious spiritual phenomena, then there can be no certainty that there are any

genuine spiritual phenomena, or that spiritual beings ever have been seen. To affirm the certainty of any fact, involves the means by which such fact can be made certain. Hence, to affirm the certainty of spiritual phenomena in any age, is to affirm the *certain reliability* of the faculties by which those phenomena are made known.

Hence, it will not do to deny the existence of the faculties in man, by which spiritual existence and action can be perceived; neither will it do to impeach the integrity of those faculties, unless, like the materialist and atheist, you strike at all spiritual existence and manifestation of every age. Hence the arguments of our opponents upon this point are atheistic, and if true, atheism must prevail.

But admitting the existence and integrity of these spiritual faculties, then the remaining question is one of evidence; and to be settled, like any other question, by the evidence. Then, if our witnesses are honest, and have the capability to perceive and judge, their word is to be taken. To this standard, we, as Spiritualists, are willing to come. Are our opponents willing to meet us there? will they try us by the same rules of evidence by which they demand to be tried?

Can not our opponents perceive the fairness of this proposition, and will they not act upon it?

Again, our opponents are not only denying the possibility of the evidence upon which their own faith is based, but in their eagerness to overthrow Spiritualism, they are denying the evidence based upon spiritual gifts. The *fact* of the existence and exercise of those powers, called "spiritual gifts," in the days of the Apostles, cannot be denied. They are capable of the most positive and certain proof. But how are these facts of to-day met by them? By affirming that they are no evidence of spirit-presence and power.

St. Paul said, "The gift of tongues was a sign to the unbeliever" in Christianity. Mosheim, in his History of the Times and Works of the Apostles, says: "The person to whom the Divine Omnipotence and liberality had imparted the gift of tongues, might conclude with the utmost assurance, from the

gift itself, which a wise being would not bestow in vain, that he was appointed by God to propagate the truth, and employ his talents in the service of Christianity. But to-day the gift of tongues proves nothing, and is a sign of weakness and bedevilment." Mahan says, it is the outworking of a latent *unconscious memory*, through the stimulating influence of odd force, or something of that kind. So that apostolic gift, upon which they used to rely, now goes for nothing. The pentecostal season, if not an evidence of drunkenness, would now be judged to be an evidence of bedevilment, deserving the reprobation of all sensible and good citizens.

But the "gift of tongues" is not only stricken from the test, but the "gift of healing" now belongs to the "black art." I know of not one gift, once relied upon to prove the genuineness of Christ's mission, through his spiritual works, which is not now impeached, and declared to be of no worth, when applied to any other system. So that it is now certain that the old arguments of our theologians will not answer for the future of their faith. Either they must abandon this method of attacking Spiritualism or give up their former method of proving their own faith. This may be a trying "dispensation of Providence" to them, but there is no escape from it.

Our opponents conduct very strangely in the light of other facts. It was said by them of olden times, "Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad." Our opponents, if they would inform themselves thoroughly upon this subject, would find it unnecessary to make these kinds of attack upon Spiritualism. The evils incident to modern Spiritualism can all be ascertained and corrected in a way consistent with truth and a pure Christianity. Therefore these universal denials, and atheistic arguments on their part, are unnecessary, and do much harm and no good.

The fundamental facts and principles of Spiritualism can all be admitted consistent with the principles of Christianity. There is no such war or antagonism between Spiritualism and Christianity as has been supposed, by some of each party. Every leading fact and principle fundamental to Spiritualism is also funda-

mental to Christianity. The existence of a spirit-world, and the possibility of intercommunication between the two worlds, is a doctrine older than Christianity, and facts, designed to prove it, are recorded both in the Old and New Testaments. And the facts recorded in those books cannot be true, unless the above propositions be likewise true.

That man has spiritual faculties by which spirit-presence and power may be perceived, and recognized, is an article in our common faith. The Bible, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelations, is one continuous record of facts which prove the truth of this second article of our common faith; and, from my earliest recollection until now, it has been the doctrine of the Pulpit and of the religious Press, that man possessed these faculties, and was the subject of spiritual influences both good and bad, according to his own state.

That man, under certain conditions, can see spiritual forms and communicate with them, is a doctrine of the Church. "The Communion of Saints," spoken of in the Apostolic Creed, refers to the intercourse and communion existing between the two spheres of existence. That has been and is the faith of a large portion of Christendom. And every neighborhood, and almost every family, have treasured up facts, showing that our spirit-friends do often meet us at the gate of death. It never was deemed heterodox to entertain and teach such a faith until quite recently, and only the most bigoted now consider such doctrines heterodox.

Many of their Doctors of Divinity and Bishops, who are in good and regular standing, still affirm their faith in these things. One says "it is good genuine Bible doctrine that the spirits of our departed friends can and do manifest themselves to those who are left behind;" and that the "Church and ministry ought so to understand and teach the Bible." "Yes," says a Bishop, "it is not only 'Bible doctrine,' but it is a 'comforting doctrine' too."

If the facts which our orthodox opponents profess to believe be indeed true, then spirits, as such, have power to make physical demonstrations. This was not questioned in former times. The phenomena recorded in the New Testament, if true, settle

this question. The angel or spirit who opened the sepulchre and rolled back the stone from its mouth, could not have performed that work with the necessary faculty. The ones who opened the prison doors, and liberated Peter at one time, and Paul and Silas at another, gave some very strong physical demonstrations. The taking of Philip away from the Eunuch, and transporting him the distance history mentions, was quite a spiritual feat. It would be pretty hard for our opponents to believe it, had it taken place less than eighteen hundred years ago. All these things show that we must have a common faith upon this point.

There is another point of faith held in common between us and our opponents. We believe that man can by his own spiritual, as well as physical conditions, determine to a great extent, the character of the influence to which he is or shall be subject. We believe that he can be subject to good or bad influences, according to his own spiritual state. That if he seeks the good with all his power or affection, the evil cannot influence him. We believe that we can by our own voluntary acts and conditions aid or embarrass these influences and manifestations. Now this, in principle, is in perfect accordance with the doctrines of spirit influence, as preached from the orthodox pulpits. They claim that we can yield ourselves to the influence and working of the devil, or the Holy Ghost, just as we please. That man is subject to both classes of influence, according to his own spiritual state.

We both believe in the doctrine of guardian angels, and a very large proportion of our orthodox opponents believe these guardian angels to be the spirits of our deceased friends. We have often heard this preached at funerals, especially before modern manifestations demonstrated it to be so. This faith in the existence of guardian angels necessarily involves a faith in all that is necessary to make them efficient as guardians. Consequently, we must believe in their power to perceive and influence those over whom they watch, and thus make themselves to be felt and observed.

We also have a common faith as to the existence and influence of spirits of diverse characters, called good and bad. And also, as to man's susceptibility to these diverse influences, accord-

ing to the corresponding states within himself. If man, by his earnest aspirations, becomes superior to his selfishness, falsehood and lust, he is naturally in communion with spirits of a corresponding character; but if he is under the influence of his passions, etc., he is as naturally in communion with a very different class.

Thus I might proceed, pointing out the principles of our common faith, showing that our opponents are obliged to admit the essential truths of Spiritualism, to make a basis for their own religious faith; and that in this indiscriminate onslaught upon us, they must either fail, or destroy themselves.

It therefore has seemed very strange to me that the professedly religious world should have been so blind to their own principles of truth, as to have conducted as they have with respect to Spiritualism. Nothing was more imperatively demanded at the particular juncture the world was in, to arrest the tide of Materialism and Atheism, than these very phenomena. The conflicts which had been going on for a long time, between the philosophers and theologians, had involved the thinking minds in the greatest doubt and uncertainty, respecting spiritual existence and a future life. Science and doubt as to a future life were quite sure to be united, for two reasons. First, the theologians had strenuously opposed the progress of scientific truth upon the plea that it contradicted the Bible: and compelled the philosopher to combat both them and the Bible, to maintain that which he believed to be true. This conduct on the part of theologians, often arrayed against them the most learned and astute minds; and the result of their investigations led them to discover the uncertainty of ecclesiastical history and of everything coming through that channel. In every conflict with the theologians and the Bible, science ultimately succeeded. This did not assist the faith of the doubting, but rather weakened and destroyed it. A second cause for this growing skepticism arose from the direction given to the mental energies of leading minds. The rapid progress of science, the development and perfection of art, the stimulus given to the inventive and constructive faculties, withdrew the attention from subjects of a religious and spiritual cha-

racter, and tended to externalize and materialize the mind. Seeking for wealth, as a means of influence and power, caused nearly all to lay up their treasures in earthly things.

Other causes still might be assigned for this growing skepticism, at the time these manifestations of spirit presence and power first appeared so as to be recognized. But whatever the cause or causes, the fact of such prevailing disbelief was most apparent. These manifestations came to bridge over the gulf of Atheism, which lies between *authority* and *reason*. Without *facts* demonstrating spiritual existence and presence, few, indeed, can throw off the shackles of authority and escape Atheism. But with facts, such as modern manifestations have brought within the reach of all who would patiently and earnestly investigate, man easily passes from the despotic rule of authority, and yet retains his faith in God and immortality.

These spiritual phenomena have arrested this tide of disbelief in a spiritual and future life; have established thousands and hundreds of thousands in that belief; and have demonstrated that a perfect destiny awaits all who will seek for it. These phenomena, multifarious as they have been, have revealed to the attentive observer, and the careful student, more of man's nature, relations and destiny, more of the constitution and structure of the spirit-world, than all previous revelations. The sum total of these spiritual phenomena, have been to the spiritual student, what the sum total of geological phenomena are to the geological student. In no other way could man learn the science of the earth's formation, than from the language of its phenomena. Theories of creation, the idle and fanciful speculations of poets and dreamers, must give way to the more certain teachings of God, as he has made the record himself, in the tables of stone found on all the mountains and in vallies of the earth.

These spiritual phenomena, combining with modern science, have given us the key to all past mythologies and superstitions. Witchcraft can never again afflict that portion of the world, where modern Spiritualism is known. Witchcraft was the child of ignorance and spirit influence. Our opponent, Signor Monti, charged modern Spiritualism with being a revival of ancient

superstitions. He is mistaken in this. Spiritualism is a revival of the spiritual part thereof, with science enough to destroy the superstition, and hence, to put an end to witchcraft. There will be no more witchcraft, unless old theology prevails. Let the light of science continue to shine; let the spiritual phenomena, in all their variety, be found in the mental cabinets of our judges and lawyers, and if possible our clergy; and the world will have nothing to fear from any revival of ancient superstitions and witchcrafts.

Spiritualism has not yet wrought its work upon society. It found the world spiritually where Christianity found it, enveloped in ignorance of all the real principles of spirit-life and action; full of selfishness and lust; ready to prostitute everything to its own selfish pleasure and gratification. Such was the soil into which its seeds of truth were cast, and it is not surprising that it has not yet brought forth its best fruits. When Paul went to Corinth and gathered the first Christian Church there, what was the result? He had scarcely left them, before their ignorance and lust perverted every truth, and made them a spectacle to the world for vice, disorder and dissoluteness. They became contentious, full of pride and lust. Their meetings were most disorderly and disgraceful. They became intoxicated at their sacraments, and conducted themselves more like the disciples of Bacchus than of Jesus. Read Paul's first letter to them. His sharp rebukes made many of them his enemies. They threatened him, they slandered him, they impugned his motives, they accused him of domineering, because he rebuked them. If what Paul, in his letter to them, said of them, was true, they were worse, and behaved worse than any body of Spiritualists I have yet heard of. He told them that they committed fornications not known among the heathen; that they got drunk at their sacraments; that they were carnal and contentious in their intercourse with each other; and disorderly and bedlamish in their meetings.

This state of things at Corinth had its origin in the ignorance and lust of the Corinthians, not in the doctrines Paul taught. In the same manner has it been with some who have received

Spiritualism as a mere fact. It is not the fault of Spiritualism as a system of truth and philosophy, but rather the fault of many receiving it.

The opponents complain that Spiritualism is irreligious, and seeks to destroy religion. This is not true. All that has given to it that appearance is chargeable over to the illiberal and wicked conduct of our professedly religious teachers. Had they, like earnest men seeking the truth, come up fairly to the investigation of the subject, instead of shutting their eyes and stopping their ears, and pouring out their denunciation and contempt upon it, its religious influence and character would have been quite different.

Just so they complained that science and philosophy were irreligious. But what made them so? The bigoted and proscriptive conduct of those who opposed them at every advance. Taking the conduct and character of those persecuting, bigoted and proscriptive theologians as a fair specimen of the influence of their religion and faith, they did reject them and it. But true science and true philosophy are most religious, when left free to work their best work in the mind and heart of the earnest man. They give strength and grandeur to the soul, while religion beautifies and harmonizes it.

Spiritualism in its first manifestations was not irreligious, and it never became so any farther than the false character and conduct of the professedly religious world tended to make it so. That tendency is now passed, and there is nothing which will more certainly and permanently awaken the religious aspirations prompting to right action, than a true Spiritualism.

There are many other considerations I would gladly present to your minds at this time, but time forbids. I would that I could command the time and the attention of the world to set before them Spiritualism as a fact, philosophy, and religion. If I could succeed in portraying in their minds that beauty, harmony, and order by which it is revealed to my own, I should feel somewhat that I had finished the work given me to do. To God and His grace I commend it and you, praying most fervently, that it may speedily bring forth in you all its best fruit.

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