



THE
STANDARD FOR TRYING
THE
SPIRITS AND THEIR REVELATIONS,
DETERMINED AND APPLIED.

TWO DISCOURSES,

DELIVERED IN THE

M. E. CHURCH,

IN PORT HURON, MICHIGAN,

APRIL 15 AND 22, 1860,

BY REV. S. CLEMENTS, Jr., PASTOR.

PUBLISHED BY SPECIAL REQUEST.

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THE STANDARD FOR TRYING SPIRIT COMMUNICATIONS, DETERMINED.

“ Beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God. And this is that Spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now it is in the world.”—1 John, iv. 1—3.

THE mind of our community has been agitated, during the past few months, by certain marvellous manifestations, claimed by their authors to be spiritual in their origin. These wonders are offered as attesting evidence of the truth of certain moral and religious theories which are being propagated, with a great deal of zeal, and, we are told, with some success, among us. These theories are presented in the form of lectures to crowded assemblages of our people, and are discussed in our streets, saloons, shops, stores and parlors, by all classes of our citizens—some eagerly embracing and defending them, while others anxiously labor to overthrow and destroy them.

This agitation gives the subject a local importance, and calls for some attention to it from the pulpit. I have never regarded it as of any great intrinsic importance—nor of sufficient magnitude, in itself, to demand the notice of the pulpit as a special theme of inquiry or discourse. It embraces essentially but one idea, as a distinguishing characteristic, and that is in itself of no very considerable value or importance. It will, of course, like everything else, of its kind, create a sensation, grow strong by the arts of popular disputation,—through injudicious opposition, excite public sympathy, by the cry of persecution, and by its bravos in challenging debates and discussions—not of its essential self or one idea, but of truths which

all the world have received, ever since God breathed into man the "breath of life." It may, perhaps, unsettle the religious faith of some, destroy the peace and happiness of others, confirm many in sensuality, make a few infidels, and then, when left to its own strength, to stand alone or fall, it will disappear and soon be forgotten, except as the future historian may, in a single paragraph, note the fact that it once had an existence.

It claims to recognise the existence of a Supreme Being. But is this peculiar to this pretentious theory of spirit revelations? Who does not believe in the Divine existence? Who first learned that there is a God from modern Spiritism?*

It professes belief in the immortality of the soul! So did many of the old heathen philosophers. So did old Job. Jesus Christ, in his resurrection, demonstrated this doctrine, by actualizing it into palpable fact. Paul declared, to his persecuted and despised Corinthian brethren, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." And Peter proclaimed to the whole church, throughout its successive ages 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." This glorious doctrine is by no means a peculiarity of modern Spiritism. It has neither invented nor discovered it; but its cheering light has been the rich possession of the world during all the ages of the past.

But Spiritism believes in eternal progression! And who does not? Who, having even a superficial knowledge of the nature and powers of the human mind, ever questioned its potentially unlimited progress, from the inherent laws and forces of its own being. But Spiritism believes in the necessarily virtuous progress of the soul in the spirit state! Have not Restoration Universalists always taught this substantially? What is there new here?

Spiritists believe in spiritual communion. But what is there new in this? Have not mankind always held the same thing? Shakespeare's Hamlet saw the ghost of his murdered father, and Macbeth could not "down" the bloody spectre of Banquo, with all his kingly authority.

Who has not heard nursery tales of ghosts and spirits, that have chilled

* I use the term Spiritism, instead of "Spiritualism," not in an unkind or opprobrious manner; but for the simple and only reason that the former term expresses the idea as fully and truly, and the latter is and has been used, by the Christian world, in quite a different sense from that in which it is used by this sect.

his young blood with horror, and made him afraid to go out from his home, or to pass by grave yards, after dark, lest he might meet some unwelcome visitor, from "that undiscovered country" which lies beyond the vale of death? Who again has not heard bereaved wives, husbands, parents, or children, consoling themselves with the thought, that the departed loved ones were still near them as guiding spirits or guardian angels? Without stopping now to inquire into the real foundation of these fancies, I simply remark that they are not the property of modern spiritism. Nor can it, with any propriety, claim them in support of its pretensions. Thousands possessed them, before it was ever thought of in its present form, and thousands now retain them, who respect its one idea.

Spiritism, at least through some of its advocates, denies the inspiration of the Bible, the Divinity of Christ, the vicarious character of his sufferings and death, and the future punishment of the wicked; but all this had been done previous to its advent. The infidelity of Spiritism was probably borrowed from Hume or Paine, or from some of the lesser lights of that exploded school of philosophy. But what is the one idea—the essence of modern Spiritism? It is simply this. That departed human spirits return to earth, and hold communion with men, not by spirit contact, through the intuitional faculty or consciousness of the soul, but through the physical senses, by means of raps, writing, and the conversational organs of mediums. This, as I conceive it, is the distinctive characteristic of Spiritism, and this is the only thing claimed which distinguishes it from any, and everything else. As before said, the idea is of comparatively minor importance. It cannot long sustain itself, or bind together a company of men in fraternal union. And were it not for the capital which some designing men hope to make out of it, against Bible Christianity, it would not be deemed worthy of any effort to propagate it, and would hardly be allowed a place in the world of theoretical or speculative thought.

It is not my purpose to enter into the question of spirit manifestation, to inquire after the fact, whether spirits can or cannot hold sensible intercourse with men; but to lay down certain fundamental principles which should guide us in all moral and religious inquiries, and by which we may determine the character, for truthfulness and reliability, of all this supernatural instructions, communicated through mediums. The claim of Spiritism, upon public belief and confidence, rests wholly upon certain phenomena, such as raps, the moving of tables and other furniture, bodily contortions, and the disclosure of the secrets of personal history which have, been for years, locked up in the secret recesses of the individual heart. Some of these phenomena are, without doubt, impostures, the merest jug-

glories. Some of them may be real. How much is false and how much true, it is difficult now to say. Some things, reported by men of undoubted integrity, are truly marvellous. It is difficult to explain them, upon any principles of mental or physical science, now fully known and established. But as facts, they will form the basis of new and more extended inquiry, and may open up to future observers, wide-spread fields of scientific truth; and demonstate the existence of powers, in the human soul, which have been apparently latent, from the creation of man until the present day.

The discovery of a new fact or class of facts does not hurry the patient and candid philosopher into a paroxism of curiosity, and precipitate him to an immediate explanation of what requires long and profound examination. He is not ashamed to profess his ignorance, and steadily and unweariedly prosecute his inquiries for a series of years, making and repeating his experiments under every variety of modifying influence and circumstance. He is satisfied with a slow progress; paying more attention to the solidity than to the celerity of his inquiries, being always amply repaid with the consciousness that the ground under his feet is firm and unyielding, and that every step in advance is grounded in a demonstrated certainty.

But this is, by no means, a characteristic of mankind generally. It is not true, as Mr. Hume insists, that "experience is the ground of credit we give to human testimony." Men are naturally credulous and superstitious. They seek the marvellous and supernatural with insatiable anxiety, and overwhelmed with a stupid awe, by supposed manifestations of supernal power, and they eagerly accept any proffered explanation of the wonderful, however ridiculous or absurd.

To the superstitious savages, an eclipse of the moon was a presage of coming vengeance from their incensed gods, for neglecting Columbus and his needy and helpless crew. To terror-stricken millions of the present day, the appearance of a comet is the vengeful sword of the Almighty, and a sure precursor of war, plague, famine, or some dire calamity, by which the land is to be desolated, and thousands of its inhabitants swept to destruction. In those shooting meteors which blaze through the atmosphere multitudes see stars falling from heaven, "as a figtree casteth her untimely figs, when shaken of a mighty wind," and listen in terror for the first blast of that trumpet which shall summon all the dead and the living to the final judgment scene.

In those luminous phosphoric exhalations which sometimes float over grave-yards, and in low swampy districts, many see ghosts walking abroad to keep watch, over the resting place of the departed, or to reveal the

crimes of men, and to warn the heedless of a coming doom. Whenever any new wonder arises which is calculated to awaken public curiosity, or excite men's superstition, quacks and empirics seize hold of it, and perambulate the country, delivering lectures in every town, hamlet and country school house, where they can gain access, performing feats of legerdemain and pouring their crude and undigested speculations into the minds of overcredulous multitudes. For the time, they rise out of merited obscurity and contempt, and pass with the wondering masses as prodigies of wisdom and learning—as the highest and brightest examples of genius. They do immense injury to the principles and souls of men; and then when the wave subsides, upon whose crest they have been riding into hateful prominence, they sink into oblivion, and their base memorials perish with them. The senseless chatterings of these apes, disgust the honest and thoughtful investigator of truth, and, sick at heart, he turns away from such specimens of folly and insolence, to await the disappearance of the smoke, vapor and dust, which these sinister partizans have raised. But when all again is clear he will return with his crucible of analytical thought, and by the resolving fires of a lucid logic, he will try such *facts* as remain—subjecting them to such tests as will reveal their real nature and detect their true causes.

Whether the present phenomena—asccribed to Spirits—can be properly thus accounted for or not, I am not able to say: Nor do I think it can be so clearly ascertained, as to satisfy any impartial inquirer after truth, until the patronage and defense of the subject shall pass into other hands. The cause of truth always suffers, when its first faint rays of dawning light are seized and wholly absorbed in sectarian theories and dogmas. This investigation is now conducted by the forces, and its pretended discoveries all appropriated, to promote the interests and sway of a heartless sectarianism. It is mainly directed and controlled by the most inveterate and unscrupulous class of sectaries in the world. Men who, while they make the highest, the strongest and the loudest pretensions to liberality, are the most narrow-minded, bigoted, illiberal and severely proscriptive sectarian propagandists that ever cursed humanity. This sect, through the phenomena they originate by means of Spiritism, are manufacturing the evidence which is to sustain their ism, and thrusting it upon the world, as absolute truth, and beyond the reach of rational doubt or question, and that too, with an effrontery and assurance more wonderful than any of the wonders they proclaim. Hence the *animus* of every book printed, of every lecture delivered, of every disputation maintained, is to show that Christianity, as a whole, or in some of its essential features and fundamental doctrines, is untrue and unworthy of confidence.

This sect is as old as Christianity itself. The Lord Jesus said of it in his day—"Me it hateth because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." A spiritual and vital Christianity has always been opposed by the same inveterate sect, under different guises, but for the same reason. It crucified the Son of God, and has persecuted these actuated by his Spirit in all ages. It would even silence God's oracles, invert his eternal order of law and righteousness, and, if possible, pluck him from his throne of universal dominion; and all because he testifies of it, "that the works thereof are evil."

Such inveterate and unscrupulous sectarianism, while it determines to bend everything to such a purpose, is incapable of prosecuting an impartial investigation. Its examinations are all *ex parte*, and its conclusions interested and unsafe. Let it make what it can of its spirits and phantoms. By and by, when it can do no more against Christ and his cause; when its trickery and legerdemain have been fully exposed and become known, and the simple naked facts which have been evolved, stand forth distinct and clear, before the world, true science, which is always impartial, humble and modest, will assign them their proper character and cause. It may be natural; it may be supernatural. We shall see.

But for the purposes of the present argument, if we admit the spiritual cause of the phenomena in question, our work of inquiry is by no means done. There have been, in the history of the past, spirit manifestations quite as strange and wonderful as those which are now asserted to occur, notwithstanding the arrogant claim of our moderns to "the latter day glory." And they are quite as well attested; for I confess to as firm a belief in well authenticated history, as in the interested testimony of contemporary witnesses.

The modes of spirit manifestation were various in the earlier ages of the world. There was an agency exerted, through the consciousness of soul; there was the agency of angels or supernatural messengers; and there were also the feats of mediums, similar to those of the present day. By the first method "Abel obtained a witness that he was righteous; God testifying of his gifts." By it Enoch was made to *know* that "he pleased God." By it, for anything that appears in the record, Noah was warned of coming danger, and directed not only to build an Ark, but how to build it, and what to do, to preserve animal life in the world. The Patriarchs, no doubt, were strengthened in this way. The prophets were inspired in this way; and in this way, we believe, it is the blessed privilege of every one who trusts wholly, in the Atoning merit of the Lord Jesus Christ, to know that he is accepted of God, and adopted as a child of the Most High.

"The Spirit itself," that is, the Holy Ghost, "beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

Angelic messengers were sent to Abraham, Lot, Jacob, Moses, Joshua and others. They appeared in the form of men, and from this appearance, are sometimes called men. They gave their message in direct oral communications, as man talks to or communicates with man; the recipient being in a natural state—in the full possession of his consciousness and of all his natural endowments and powers. A miracle was wrought, whether in his powers of vision, or in giving the Angelic visitant color, so as to make immaterial spirit visible to material organs of sense, it is not within my province now to say.

But there were also Spirit manifestations, through mediums, as at this day. The first example is the most strange and wonderful instance on record. It has no equal, even among the startling wonders of this wonderfully advanced age. The spirit, from want of a better subject—for there were few willing subjects, in those days—entranced a snake, and through that "trance speaker," held the fatal parley with the unfortunate Eve. She first heard a "trance medium," and demonstrated, in her sad experience, that it is not the safest or surest way to obtain a knowledge of the things of God.

In the statutes which God gave the Jewish theocracy, we find these enactments, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." "Regard not them that have familiar spirits; neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them." God did not regard them as very pure in those days. Now, what is a witch? Webster says, among other things, "a witch is a woman who, by compact with the devil, practises sorcery or enchantment." "Sorcery," he tells us, "is divination by the assistance, or supposed assistance, of evil spirits, or the *power of commanding the spirits.*" "Enchantment," he defines as "the art of producing certain wonderful effects, by the invocation of demons, or the agency of certain supposed spirits, the use of magic arts, spells or charms." A witch is, therefore, in the modern form of expression, a spirit medium. Their facilities of fantastic travelling through the air, and a thousand other superstitious notions concerning them, are demonstrated, in more modern experience, to be only the wild picturings of feverish fancies and guilt-stricken imaginations.

Some learned men suppose that those described as having "familiar spirits," were nothing other than what moderns call "spirit mediums." They had one or more spirits, always attending them, with whom they were familiar and in constant communion; that the heathen oracles were under such demoniacal influences. Whether this is true, it is not in the

line of my argument now to inquire. I freely yield all the advantage which this opinion may give.

The case of the woman, commonly called the witch of Endor, is an example, showing some points of resemblance between the ancient and modern performers of spirit wonders, and is offered, I am told, in this latitude, in proof of the power of mediums over departed human spirits. She is said, in the scriptures, to have had a familiar spirit, and was one of those whom God had forbidden his people to consult, or to have anything to do with, for fear of defilement. She claimed to hold intercourse with departed human spirits—to have the absolute command of all of them, though they numbered millions. For, like an obsequious salesman in a variety store, she demanded of Saul, what will you have, sir? “Whom shall I bring up unto thee?”

Saul demanded the spirit of Samuel, and Samuel came. But evidently to the disappointment and terror of the medium; for she cried out with fear, and declared, in describing the advance guard of Samuel’s escort, “I saw gods ascending out of the earth.” Or, as the Chaldee version, as quoted by Dr. A. Clark, has it, “I see an angel of the Lord ascending from the earth.” This was not her familiar, but a stranger—one before whose power and glory she quailed in the greatest consternation. Afterwards she said, “An old man cometh up, covered with a mantle.” In this second apparition, Saul recognized the person whose presence he desired. But Samuel complained of the thing as unusual. Not of the medium; for her incantations and arts of sorcery had not reached him in his high abode. She had evidently exercised no power or influence in the matter. Her familiar, like those of the prophets of Baal, had fled away or stood terror bound in the presence of superior power. But he complains of Saul. “Why hast thou disquieted me?” Saul, and not the medium, disquieted Samuel. The whole account indicates a greater surprise and terror in the medium than in any one else; and the rational probabilities are, that she had as little efficient agency in it, as any one present.

Saul’s cup was now full. He had given himself over wholly to disobedience and rebellion, and the Almighty actually sent Samuel, under an angelic escort, to declare to him his certain and speedy doom. In this last act of deliberate disobedience—of dishonoring that God who had exalted him to the throne, and protected him amid the dangers incident to it, his wickedness reached its culmination, and his terrible retribution drew nigh.

Should any one fail to perceive the point of Saul’s offending, and the particular turpitude of his sin, in this act, let me remind him that God

had explicitly and emphatically forbidden this very thing. He had said, "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a charmer, or a *consulter of familiar spirits*, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord." It is a fearful thing to neglect or disobey the commands of the Almighty God. This act of Saul is elsewhere given as one of the causes of his destruction. "So Saul died, for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord; which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; and enquired not of the Lord; therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David, the son of Jesse."

Manasseh, the successor of Hezekiah, and the fifteenth king of Judah, appears to have been himself a medium. Among other crimes laid to his charge, it is said "he used enchantment and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards." That "he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen, which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel;" and that "he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger." By the authority of the Author of the Bible, his spiritism is placed in the same category with the other outrageous crimes which Manasseh had perpetrated, and we are thus taught that God regarded it, as possessing the same character with them.

Simon Magus was a medium at Samaria, in the times of the Apostles; and Peter's opinion of him, even after his professed conversion to Christianity, was, that he was "in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity." That he had "no part nor lot" in Christianity. But through repentance and faith, he might find salvation. And so, thank God, may even mediums, of the present day.

Elymus, otherwise called Bar-Jesus, appears to have been a medium in the Island of Cyprus. He was not a believer in Christianity. He withstood Paul and Barnabas, and sought to prevent the Deputy of the Island, Sergius Paulus, from becoming a Christian. Paul's opinion of him is thus strongly and emphatically expressed, in the form of a direct address, to him personally, "O full of all subtilty, and all malice, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" Certainly not a very high commendation for a religious instructor and guide.

Another medium, mentioned in the New Testament, is a certain damsel at Phillippi, in Macedonia, whose spirit communications were a source of

great pecuniary gains to her masters. Her power as a medium was destroyed by Paul, in the name of the Lord Jesus. True, she testified to the truth of Christianity; but Paul, like the Savior, when the devils proclaimed his divine character, was not particularly gratified with the testimony.—There was that in it which would rationally raise a suspicion in the minds of the pure, and deter them from embracing it. This act of Paul gave great offence to the mercenary masters of the damsel. It occasioned the Apostles to be inhumanly beaten, and thrust into prison. But it resulted in the conversion of the jailor and his family—in the effectual humbling of a corrupt and reckless magistracy, and in the permanent establishment of a Christian Church at Phillippi. Verily, “The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice!”

There is also mention made of a personal collision between mediums in those days. The seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish priest, living at Ephesus—all mediums, undertook to dispossess another medium of his guardian spirit, in the name of Jesus, whom Paul preached. But the spirit refused to recognize their authority, and indignant at their officious interfering with his affairs, stimulated his medium, and “he leaped upon them, overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of the house naked and wounded.”

Deceiving spirits are matters of prophetic revelation. They have been abroad, in all ages, from the days of Eve, to those of Paul; and if we may credit the legends of tradition, from the days of Paul, until the present time. Those which have been foretold, may now be here, and while we, all unsuspecting, lured from our watch, by the ridicule of the old infidelity, are laughing at, and ridiculing, the idea of their presence and work, they may be accomplishing their dark mission in our midst, and among our dearest friends.

God has declared, for our warning and admonition, “Take heed that no man deceive you, for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ, and shall deceive many.” “There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets.” “Of your own selves,” says Paul to the Elders of the Ephesian Church, “shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.” To Timothy, he says, “The spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy.”—Peter declares, “There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers also among you, who privily bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them.” St. John says, “Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus

is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an Anti-Christ."

Being thus warned of the coming, and work of deceivers, it is clearly right, proper, and our duty to try them; and especially, as they come in an invisible form, and under the mysterious and awe-inspiring character of messengers from the spirit world. We cannot see them, with our natural organs of vision. We cannot identify them, and if we could see them, we learn that satan may be transformed into an angel of light, and may he not assume such a form as to deceive us, in a matter of personal identity, if he would in a revelation? It is said, "the spirits tell us who they are." But how do we know that they tell us truly? What rational ground of confidence have we in any thing they may say? If they may deceive us in great things, and if it is necessary to try them, in order to secure ourselves against such deception, may they not also deceive us in the question of personal identity and name, and will they not be likely to do it, especially if their main design will be furthered thereby? If they *have deceived* in order to ruin men, in the past history of the world, what evidence have we that they have lost any of their malignity, or hellish hate: Are they not capable of deceiving us with the same cruel and fiendish design?

Like many spirits that are embodied, they delight to deceive, and glory in the ruin they are working. Look at the dens of drunkenness and their patrons with which our land abounds. Look at our gambling hells, and those miserable haunts of licentiousness, into which the sun blushes to look.—Those ulcers in society, where putrefaction, ruin and death, are generated at such a fearful rate, and whose victims are falling so rapidly into a grave of infamy and into a hell of torment.

How are the supplies to these kept up? Certainly not by their own inherent beauty or attractive loveliness; but by their agents and runners.—Creatures who walk forth in the clothing of men and women, professing of course, a profound respect for virtue and purity; but utterly averse to any and everything that will either promote or protect them. They deny the essential character of vice, and make it consist wholly and entirely in the excessive use of those things which God has commanded us to "touch not, taste not, and handle not." They ridicule the warnings of religion, and the entreaties of the benevolent and pious; invite the youth to forbidden indulgences; are tireless in their seducing efforts, until the black serpent of vicious habit has entwined itself around their unsuspecting victim, when they forsake him, and look upon his fearful contortions and struggles, with the same gratification that the devil does upon a damned soul, as it enters

its dark abode, and the terrible realities which it has so often ridiculed and despised, become awful verities, among which it must writhe in agony forever. Their delight increases, as his efforts, from exhaustion and discouragement, become febler and fainter, and they seem only satisfied when the black pall of despair overspreads him entirely, and he yields himself wholly to a speedy and inevitable destruction.

If spirits in the body are so base, may we not rationally expect, that at least some of those out of the body are no better? Hence we should try them, as a matter of prudence and protection to ourselves, and as a matter of duty to our friends, who are in danger of being led away by them. Another circumstance which should awaken suspicion, and lead us to try them thoroughly, before we trust any great interest to their revelations, is their wanton and persistent attacks upon ministers and good men—men known and tried—who stand as pillars and supports of all virtue and real progress in society.

That there are bad men in the ministry, and hypocrites in the church, is no doubt true. So are there thieves, murderers and robbers, in society. But the existence of the latter does not prove that stealing, robbing and murdering, are a general characteristic of society, or cordially approved by a majority of its members. No more does the existence of the former prove that there are in the church, and in the ministry, none of that virtue and purity which hypocrites have so basely counterfeited.

But is there any class of men so severely attacked, so bitterly denounced and so vindictively pursued by these spirits, as ministers and leading men of the church. According to spirit teaching, put forth by what I suppose to be high authority,* the very best men, belong to these classes, enter the spirit world, in the lowest sphere—below drunkards, harlots and the foulest and basest classes in human society, if they are only believers in Spiritism. And all because they insisted, in their preaching, that “the wages of sin is death”—a truth which God, the Creator and moral Governor of the world, has wrought into the essential nature of man, and written in letters of blood, on every page of the worlds history.

Now go among thieves, harlots, gamblers, murderers, and the very worst criminals that disgrace our race, and you will hear the same kind of denunciation, against the same classes of generous, self-sacrificing men, and for the same reasons. This coincidence is remarkable, and should awaken

* Judge Edmunds and Dr. Dexter.

suspicion. It should lead us at least, to "try the spirits whether they be of God."

We should come to this trial with an unprejudiced mind. Not asking what will follow, if this or that be true—what indulgence or license will be given, or what restraints will be imposed. But what is truth? What the real destiny, God, the Almighty Creator has ordained, and what changeless realities await us, in the future, when the currents of time shall have borne us beyond the limits of the present life?

But what shall be our standard of trial? The spirits furnish us no reliable criterion. The most they claim to do, is to convince us of their spiritual character, without giving us any vouchers whatever, by which we can learn their moral character. Are they pure or corrupt—elevated or depraved—honest or base? As before said, their denunciations of good men, and their apparent sympathy with the bad, creates a rational presumption against them. "But they are the spirits of those we have known here,—our friends and relatives who have departed this life," it is replied. This is most emphatically denied. It will be considered hereafter.

Now by what safe and reliable standard shall we try them? If the grocer or the druggist would try his scales, the farmer his measures, or the surveyor his chain; they must each appeal to some standard, universally acknowledged to be correct, by which to try his implement, and with which to make it agree.

But what shall be the standard by which to try the spirits? What the balances in which we are to weigh them? What the invariable rule by which we are to measure them?

With a rational mind, it is not enough to know that spirits have made such and such statements. But it is the truth of the statement, we wish to canvass, whoever was its author. Have the spirits lied, or are their revelations reliable, and worthy of our trust and confidence? It is admitted that spirits sometimes lie, but what evidence have we that they *ever* tell the truth? "But they sometimes tell us what we know to be true." Valuable information, certainly! He who would deceive you, in order to your injury, would show himself to be nearly an absolute fool, if he were to betray his real character by lying to you concerning those things of which he knew you already had a perfect knowledge. He would thus reveal his real character and defeat the very objects he had in view.

But let reason, it is said, determine whether their revelations are true or false. But what has reason to do with the subject matter of a revela-

tion, on the question whether it be true or false? What is reason, and what its proper province in all matters claiming to be revelations from the unseen world? Reason may be regarded as a power or capability of the mind, and as that power in exercise or acting. Taken in the former sense it is a capability of the mind to consider two or more truths or facts, and infer a further truth from their relation to and influence upon each other, which arises from them naturally, as a plant does from a seed.

In the latter sense, it is the act of comparing truth, and inferring what was before unknown, from what is either well known, or supposed to be true. It is the act of producing truth in the mind, from seeds already there. In order to reason in the latter sense, you must have truth to start with. To produce truth by this process, you must not only have a soil and climate adapted to it, but you must have the seed from which it is to grow. Hence, in every science, whose development depends upon the reasoning process, there are the seeds—axioms or self-evident truths, which the mind perceives intuitively; such as, the whole of anything is equal to the sum of all its parts; things equal to the same thing, are equal to each other; if equals are added to equals, the sums will be equal; and if equals are subtracted from equals, the remainders will be equal.

All revelations of facts which have transpired in the past, or remotely from us, are necessarily beyond the sphere of reason, and within the domain of faith. We cannot reason directly upon their truth or falseness at all; because they come to us from a sphere beyond the range of our knowledge. But you ask, in surprise, must we then receive, with unquestioning credulity, every tale that is told us, however puerile or absurd it may be? I answer, no! By no means! It may be false, and designed to deceive you. Though reason cannot come directly to its subject matter, and pass upon that, she has a large range around it, to traverse and explore. She may inquire concerning its source—where it came from—what is the character of that source—his design in sending it—the influence it is calculated to exert upon character and destiny—who brought it, when and how—the competency and reliability of the messenger—the evidence on which its claim to confidence is based—and the character and competency of the witnesses testifying to it.

If it is from a source fully entitled to our confidence—if its practical influence, according to the laws of rational being, is purifying and elevating to the soul, and to society—if the witnesses are truthful—if their capacity in every respect, commend to us their competency—if their ascertained motives are in harmony with rectitude—in fine, if the surrounding and attending circumstances of its truthfulness, are such as by authority to

force conviction—then all questions of reason are at an end, and faith lays hold of it, with a certainty as positive, as the knowledge gained be intuitional insight or consciousness.

There is an essential difference between a discovery and a revelation. The former is the result of exploration. The adventurer goes forth, torch in hand, carefully marking every step of his progress, so that coming generations may follow him and, peering intensely into the dark unknown around him, sees and rescues only those gems which glitter in and reflect the light he brings, and thus reveal their nature and their place. His path is open to other adventurers, and his success invites them to examine the region which he has invaded, in search of other gems which shall rival in richness those already discovered. Thus the boundaries of the known are extended; the wilderness invaded, explored, rescued and occupied, and the domain of truth and positive science constantly enlarged.

But a revelation is like the glorious sun in heaven. It dispels the darkness by its own power, and reveals existent worlds of truth which without its light could never have been discovered. Its disclosures are all original, beautiful and sublime; but without any analogies in nature, from which we could have positively inferred them, or obtained any certain knowledge of their existence. Whence, then, have we our axioms, or seeds of truth, from which new products are to spring up, in this department of inquiry?

“From our experience,” responds Mr. Hume. But we have no experience relating to the matter in question, and, from the very nature of the case, we can have none until we submit to its requirements, and, by “believing on the Son of God,” obtain a “witness in ourselves.” “Then reject the whole as false,” is the unphilosophical and irrational reply. By such a rule of procedure we must reject the principal source of all knowledge. At one stroke we blot from the minds of men all knowledge of past history, also, all current history, except where we may have a personal experience; all geographical knowledge, except what relates to places we may have visited; and all scientific truth, except what we have ourselves personally examined and demonstrated. We at once arrest all progress among men, and circumscribe ourselves within the narrow limits of our own experience and consciousness.

I never saw a battle, where thousands of men are furnished with deadly weapons, and under the imperious mandates of human authority, are drawn up in hostile array, for the single and only purpose of killing one another. It is directly contrary to my experience, that such a cruel event should occur. I see men, generally sympathetic and kind, ready to rush into any danger to rescue one another from death; appalled at the occur-

rence of any calamity, as the falling of a building, a conflagration, a railroad disaster, or a shipwreck, wherein human life is destroyed. I see governments making diligent inquest into the causes of mysterious deaths, punishing murderers with the severest penalties, and eager to adopt measures which will afford greater security to the persons and lives of men. Is it not absolutely incredible, then, taking my own experience as my standard of judgment, that there ever has been or can be a battle, or the terrible carnage of the battle field.

You all remember the well-attested incident of the incredulous old heathen chief, who dismissed the British ambassadors, as miserable liars, utterly unworthy of any confidence, because they told him, that in their country water sometimes became so hard, that men and even horses could walk upon it without sinking. Such a thing was contrary to his experience, and, from the nature of things, so far as his knowledge went, was impossible. He never suspected the imperfection of his experience, or the limited range of his knowledge, and that what was told him might be true, though he never saw it nor anything like it.

Because a thing is marvellous to me, is no reason why it may not be true, and very simple and common to another. Its truthfulness does not depend upon my experience, but upon the character of the evidence which sustains it. The marvellousness, however, of anything is no evidence of its truth. A spirit may come to me to impart information. He may tell me what his condition has been, is now, or is to be hereafter. But what evidence have I that he does not lie in every particular of his information? The simple fact that he is a spirit, if that be conceded, and *claims* to possess the means of knowing what he reveals, is not sufficient grounds for believing him, while I am in utter ignorance of his character, and do not know whether he is an angel or a devil—a friend or an enemy; and especially where my eternal interests are concerned in his statements. Who is he? Truthful or a liar? Trusty or unworthy of confidence? An angel or a demon? A friend who would save, or an enemy who would damn me? How shall we know?

I confess I know of no safe or reliable standard but the Bible; that great Spirit Revelation which the Omniscient Governor of the universe has graciously given to man; that great sun which the Almighty has fixed in the moral heavens, whose pure light streams down through the darkness and chaos of the past, spreads abroad in such rich and glorious splendor all around us, and enables us to look out with confidence and hope upon the otherwise dark and fearful ocean of eternity. But how shall we try this standard? How know that it is fully reliable and true? Spiritists—

in this place at least, certainly ought not to ask this question. The reason I will presently notice. But I answer the question, now by saying, it has been tried, thoroughly, severely tried. The puerile rage of demons has been for ages directed against it, but in vain. It has stood firmer than the rocky shore to the ocean's surge. The fierce assaults of men have recoiled upon themselves; they have fallen under the reflex influence of their own malice, and ignominiously disappeared. The charge has been renewed again and again, but with no better success than before. Still, this glorious monument of the Divine goodness stands firmer, if possible, than ever before; and millions are multiplying rapidly who can testify, from a blessed personal experience, to its divine truth and excellence.

The heavy ordnance of infidelity occasionally thunder at it, and for a moment make earth tremble all around; but soon sink out of sight in the quagmires, on which they were planted for the attack. Innumerable imitators of inferior calibre, from the toy gun of the nursery to the swivel of the privateer, eagerly fire away, fancying they are doing fearful execution. But their tumult soon ceases, and its echoes are hushed in the stillness of death, while the solid and impregnable fortress of Divine truth still stands in all its grandeur and glory, its foundations reposing upon the rock of ages, its heights rising into the cloudless heavens of God.

Should the noble lion, whose angry voice awakens the greatest consternation among the denizens of the forest, and the annoying, impudent house-*eur*, both direct their fury against the orb of day, the results, respectively, would be the same. The sun, in the prescribed sphere where God has placed him, in the sublime majesty of his movements, would still roll on serenely and beautifully, chiming in endless circles with the harmonies of the universe.

"Light has come into the world;" but if men will not be enlightened by it, thank God, they cannot extinguish or destroy it. The glorious light of heaven shines for the illumination of all. But men may refuse to see it. They may put out their eyes or crawl away into dens and caves and holes, among owls, bats and scorpions and grovel and grope, prone as the serpent, among slime and filth, and then, truthfully enough, complain that all is thick darkness around them. But who would believe that the sun did not shine simply because they did not see it?

If men will enjoy the light, they must come to it, and consent to behold it. The Bible offers phenomena in its miracles of knowledge, in its miracles of works, and in its miracles of experience, which fully proclaim it to be from God. If any man will submit to its requirements, he shall know of its teachings that they are Divine.

But Spiritism, as I intimated above, ought not to object to being tried by this standard. It ought not to raise the question of Scriptural authority or inspiration; for it claims to be the only legitimate growth which has sprung out of this seed. It assumes to be a higher, fuller and purer development of Christianity—the very effulgence of millennial glory. Mormonism makes the same claim. The question of their rights, respectively, to this honor, they must settle between themselves. I incline toward neither, and most emphatically deny that either has any just claims whatever to the purity and excellence of the Christian religion.

But, according to their claim, they cannot discredit nor modify their original source. They cannot make a Bible—make us believe it is the identical one which God gave to us, and then claim that they are the legitimate products of a bible which they made, after arriving at full maturity. To discredit their origin, is to discredit themselves, and to discredit whatever of special honor they may pretend to derive from that origin.

If Spiritism is, indeed, an outgrowth of Christianity, as Christianity was of Judaism—an advance step in the development of the kingdom of God among men—it cannot certainly object to be tried by the Scriptures as a standard of ultimate authority, in reference to its character and teachings. It must recognize them as of at least equal authority, fundamentally, with itself. Christ said, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." Paul reasoned out of the Scriptures, "Opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen from the dead; and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ." Those of Berea are called "noble," because they "searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so."

But if this pretension to millennial honors is all mere clap-trap—a garment of light, borrowed to conceal an inherent deformity and ugliness, for purposes of deception only—it is no more than might rationally be expected, that it will shrink back from a searching examination in the clear light of God's truth. But in doing so, it must throw off its disguise, take its true position, and be known in its true character, a cowardly, assassin infidelity, that would rob us of our Savior, deprive us of our peace and joy, murder our hopes, and sensualize our future glorious heaven, only to silence the remonstrances of its own conscience, and secure a license to the lowest sensuality and vice. It assumed the guise of friendship, only that it might find an opportunity to beguile and destroy.

I hate deception. I loathe dishonesty and fraud. Let men show upon their fronts their true character. Let them stand forth boldly, and avow their real principles, that no one may be deceived by them, that all may

have full knowledge of them, and treat them according to their true merits.

Do the pretended spirit revelations then harmonize with the Bible, the only explanation of the ten thousand contradictions within and around us, and the only authoritative source of knowledge from the spiritual world?

“When they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and mutter, should not a people seek unto their God? Why should ye seek unto the dead concerning the living? To the law and to the testimony. If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”—Isa. viii., 19—20.

* See Dr. A. Clarke on the place:

MODERN SPIRIT REVELATIONS

TRIED BY THE STANDARD.

"Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus."—
1 Cor. iii, 11.

"But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."—Gal. i., 8.

In the close of the preceding discourse, I occupied your attention with the question, whether the teachings of pretended spirits harmonize with those of the Bible, in doctrine, in the alleged facts which they reveal respecting the spirit world, and in the requirements which they impose? If they do, in what light shall we regard them? Are they the expansion of a germ found in the Bible, a fuller development of certain topics which were left obscure and difficult to be understood by the inspired writers? Do they add to the Bible teachings upon any subject? Do they take from or repeal any of its sacred injunctions? Or are they merely spirit expositions of the Scripture text? In either case, do they speak to us by any authority? If so, whence do they derive their authority?

If we concede the one idea of Spiritism, what have we then in its application to the question we are considering? Simply this, and nothing more. That beings, in a certain state of existence, that is, in an ethereal spiritual state, hold communion with the same class of beings in another, that is, an embodied state, through their material organs. Now, in point of essential excellence, why is the former state of life, in any particular, superior to the latter? And why should I receive the expositions or revelations of the one in preference to those of the other? If it be answered, because of their superior knowledge of rational intelligencies in a disembodied state. I answer—that, of course, depends upon the individual,

beings themselves ; who they are. For, while we are free to admit of some that they are our superiors in knowledge, we are unwilling to admit this of all. When it is said, therefore, that they know more than we do, we very naturally inquire, who? What particular individuals or persons? If it be replied, the opportunities of spirits to acquire a knowledge of certain things are superior to ours, I ask what things? The facts connected with the disembodied state, it is replied. But this, by no means, comprises all the teachings of the sacred record.

The Bible instruction embraces doctrines, or the principles and laws of the Divine government among men, and the procedures of the Divine administrations, under the different circumstances and conditions of his creatures. It contains, also, a system of precepts, or rules, for the government of our personal volitions and actions. Now, though it may be true of the spiritual state of being, that its opportunities for a knowledge of the spirit world are superior to ours, it is very far from being certain, or even probable, that the knowledge which spirits possess of the principles and precepts of the Divine government among men, is, in any respect, superior to ours. The Apostle tells us of mysteries connected with the plan of human redemption, which the angels do not understand, "but desire to look into." How, then, are disembodied spirits any better qualified to unfold the laws and administration of God, or to pronounce authoritative judgments, in matters of faith, than rational and well trained intelligences in the present life? Besides, as I have elsewhere said, we require, in a teacher whose instructions relate to our spiritual well-being and destiny, a higher qualification than a mere ability to tell the truth, namely, a fixed intention and purpose to do it; and this must be with us a matter of the fullest assurance. Without this, whatever his ability, his expositions are of no weight or authority. Wanting this, we cannot accept of spirits as authoritative expositors of the Divine word.

But if their teachings agree with the word as far as the word goes, and offer us additional light, we insist upon their own principles, that in any sense, they are unnecessary. To say that they are, is to say that a reception of them, as a matter of faith, is, to some extent indispensable, either to our present peace and progress, or to our future perfection and happiness. If this be not true, of what special use are their teachings? Why make any effort to defend or diffuse them? If they can do no good, it is worse than useless to spend our precious time upon them. For the time thus wasted, might be directed to the most positively useful investigations. But if it be replied, these teachings are vitally related to man's well-being, both here and hereafter, both now and forever, then faith in them is certainly

necessary, in order to the reception of their beneficial results. For to him who rejects them as matters of faith, affecting his present peace, or his eternal weal or woe, they are of no more advantage than the most absurd and frivolous tales of romance and fancy. But if faith in spirit teachings is necessary in order to the soul's benefit and salvation, then is Spiritism fully convicted of making faith a condition of salvation, and inextricably involved, in what it charges upon Christianity, as its radical error, viz., that of making faith a condition of any saving benefit whatever, within the gift of an infinitely benevolent Creator. But if faith in Spiritism is necessary, in order to enjoy its light and licenses to their full extent, why may not faith in the world's Redeemer be necessary upon the same principles, in order to the reception of that free pardon of sin, that sweet peace of soul, that blessed evidence of adoption, and that infinite glory which the Saviour's precious life was so freely given to purchase, and to make possible for us. Why should we hear any more complaint or cavilling about Christianity requiring men to believe, in order to be saved and blessed.

But the Bible, as a revelation, "is a sufficient rule, both of faith and practice." True, there are many questions, of a speculative character, arising to an inquiring mind, in connection with its teachings. To understand them fully would be extremely gratifying to every one seeking after knowledge. But such a knowledge of intricate topics is not necessary that we may understand our duty to either God or man, nor to assure us of our immortality, and the conditions upon which the character of that immortality depends; whether it is to be one of purity and glory, or of guilt and shame. Besides, the spirit teachings, either as additional revelations, or as expository of existing facts, are of no reliable authority whatever. They give no demonstrations of their truth, and no reasons on which we can rely, drawn either from the nature of things, or from the written word; but offer us simply, and only, a naked dogmatic assertion. This is really of less value than an intelligent opinion of one of our fellow-beings around us.

But if the spirit teachings do not agree with the Divine word, they are entirely unsafe. For not only are they without demonstration of truthfulness and authority, but they disagree with that which has been demonstrated most clearly and strongly, to be Divinely true, and of the highest conceivable authority.

To receive them, therefore, as of equal authority with the Bible, involves a greater credulity than any sceptic has ever, truthfully charged upon the Christian world: It is a credulity greater than any careful jurist will

exercise in his legal investigations, where he has the least regard for his professional reputation, or the rights of the parties in litigation before him. It is a credulity that would be criminal in a chemist, who deals with the health and lives of men in compounding and preparing his medical substances and remedies. It is a credulity which would ruin the reputation of every scientific reasoner in the world, and destroy the confidence of mankind in the certainty of everything depending upon the process of human logic.

In human experience, men ever tend to extremes—to extremes of scepticism and extremes of credulity. The extreme of credulity on this subject, in men accustomed to reason and to investigate—men of great talent and profound learning, in their several departments of thought, is to me passing strange, and even unaccountable; except upon the principle that “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.” The heart affects the head, and the head in turn, by its theories, accommodates the heart, giving an assurance of impunity to its questionable indulgencies.

To receive the mere statements of a vagrant ghost, confessedly as prone to lie, as to tell the truth, as equal in authority with the word of the Omniscient God, which has stood the test of centuries, and the assaults of some of the mightiest minds of the world; which is confirmed by the strongest possible evidence, and can number among its supporters, thousands of the purest men, is a credulity surpassing all faith, all reason, all intelligence. It is destructive of all the interests of truth, and, if universally applied, would unsettle the very foundations of all thought and knowledge.

But to receive the spirit teachings as superior to the Bible, is to annihilate everything that is authoritative and established in morals; to leave men free, so far as any authority is concerned, to follow their own inclinations, under the advice of their ghostly counsellors, whatever be their character or their direction, with nothing but the counter inclinations of their fellows to control them: A condition as near like that of the brutes as anything conceivable. For if God promulgates no law to them, and exercises no authority over them, their spectral attendants being finite like themselves, have no right to control them; they may yield to their fellow-men just as far as it is for their interest to do so, or as the power of those fellows may oblige them to, but no farther; for their own safety and inclinations are the only restraints upon their actions.

Such a faith in spirit teaching, destroys all that is firm and consoling in hope; loosing the anchor which has fastened upon the Rock of eternal truth, and holds the soul securely, amid all the storms and tempests of life, with a deathless assurance that it shall enjoy final repose and safety in heaven. If the Bible must give place to the vagaries of spiritism, your anticipations of future rest, are all unwarranted fancies. Your expectations of purity and blessedness, founded upon the promises of your God, are all without authority. Your ardent and glowing hopes of the society of your Redeemer, are but the sickly pinings of a diseased imagination. The gracious promises of your God, attested by so many manifestations of mercy, and so often verified in the rich experiences of his life, must give place to the vague fancies of unconscious dreamers, and your strong soul-supporting assurances, become as unsettled, as indefinite, and as uncertain, as spirit revelations are contradictory and puerile.

Spiritism destroys everything inspiring in reformatory Christian doctrines, and leaves man alone, or with only a powerless ghost at his side, to battle with the strong currents of depraved appetites and passions in his own nature, and with the terrible power of surrounding evil influences. It offers him no help; no Holy Ghost. It gives him no assurances of success; no pardon for his follies and sins; no adoption into the family of God, from whom, his own consciousness assures him he has wandered; and no hope of deliverance from those forces of death which are working within him, such fearful results, and fitting him for a destruction more terrible hereafter.

It heaves man from that secure harbor and safe mooring, which God in his revelation has prepared for him, and where he has found security for ages, and sets him adrift upon a wild tumultuous sea, without compass or chart of any reliable authority; and in the midst of darkness the most profound and awful. The heavens above are blackness! No star appears to relieve the gloom, or indicate, to the wretched voyager his position or his course. All around and all within him is dark, and he is being piloted, possibly by some lying, murderous ghost, to the "blackness of darkness forever." And for what are we called upon to surrender the positive good of revelation, and expose ourselves to such awful hazard? What are we to gain by it? What great advantage is to inure to us? What vital truth is there to be revealed, not already known and received? Spiritism destroys the authority of that record which utters such fearful denunciations against a life of sensuality and sin, and offers, without authority, a comparative impunity, to every species of criminal volitions, and actions. It has no burning, endless hell, and hence for those who are

determined to persist in rebellion against God, it offers a modified penalty—a more hopeful result. Men do not like to submit to God, and at the same time they are anxious to escape from the dire consequences of persistent rebellion. Vain attempt! God the all-knowing and Almighty reigns, and “there is no darkness, nor shadow of death, where the workers of iniquity can hide themselves,” from his searching eye. Whatever natural order of sequence, he has ordained for a given antecedent, he will surely bring to pass, however much men may seek to disbelieve or ignore it. “God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.” The truth and authority of God will endure, though a universe of dependent worms should rise up in rebellion against him.

But granting the phenomena which are offered, to be supernatural in character, and the revelations which accompany them, to be really from spirits—an important question arises; one in which we are all deeply interested. What spirits are these which bring us tidings from the land beyond the tomb? There are three orders spoken of in the Divine Record. Men, angels, and demons. Now, to which of these classes do these communicating with men belong? The allegation that they are disembodied human spirits, is emphatically denied. This is the principal ground on which the claim to confidence, in them, is based. But this being questioned, the burden of proof is properly upon those who set up the claim and make the assertion, and it remains for them to show: First, that it is the general economy of God, that disembodied *human spirits* return to earth, and commune with men through their senses; and second, that the particular spirits which occasion this phenomena, and make these revelations, are of this class, before they even ask us to believe them. This, we apprehend, is no very easy task.

But we are told that the phenomena which prove these agents to be spirits, prove them also to be human spirits. We demand, how? This we have a right to demand. Why, it is replied, “I have had the secrets of my heart disclosed to me—secrets which were locked up between me and my deceased friend, and never known to any other living beings.” This certainly is too strong. How do you or can you *know* what you affirm? You may indeed know that you never told them to any one; and may *believe* that your friend never did; but you cannot *know* that he never did. But granting that he did not—the point is by no means established. It is a theory older than Milton, and so far as I know, universally received, by civilized and savage nations, that

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,
Unseen both when we wake and when we sleep,
All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear,
All intellect, all sense; and as they please
They limb themselves, and color, shape, or size
Assume, as likes them best, condense or rare:

They are of every variety of character and moral hue :

"Black spirits and white.
Red spirits and gray."

A legion of them may have been present and witnessed that secret which you almost thought hidden from the eyes of Omniscience. Or they may, even now, read the record of it, which faithful memory has written, upon the tablet of the soul. It is only man we may deceive. Only the eye of sense from whom we may hide our true character and our secret thoughts. To spirit intelligences we may be fully known, as we really are. To them, all may be open, plain and palpable. The disclosure of your secrets, then, while it may form a presumption that spirit agency is employed, is no evidence at all, that the departed spirit of your friend, is near, or has anything to do with it.

Again, it is said, "these spirits *profess* to be human spirits." But this profession is certainly worth nothing at all, on a question of character. What knave professes to be what he really is, when he intends to rob or defraud you? If you knew him, would not that knowledge protect you from his wicked designs? If these spirits professed to be demons, who would seek them, or have anything to do with them? Would not their mediums be looked upon with the greatest horror and detestation, by the thronging multitudes who are now so eagerly running after them. Why were witches once such a terror to men? and why are they now to the ignorant and superstitious? And may not these spirits be demons for anything we *know* or can know to the contrary?

But it is said, "The mediums see them, and are thus able to identify them personally, in form, complexion, size, expression of countenance color of eyes, hair, texture, color and style of dress," &c. This claim appears so absurd upon its face, that it is hardly worth a reply. And yet it may be the honest opinion of many, and on that account alone, is entitled to a respectful consideration.

The medium is, by confession, in an abnormal state, and absolutely incapable of exercising his own faculties and judgment when he sees these things. What confidence, then, can you rationally repose in his opinions or statements. Suppose you were put upon trial, for your life, for some high crime against society; and the prosecution were to introduce, as his

principal witness against you, some medium—an individual who offered to testify, that while he was in a dreamy, unconscious state—in a trance—and did not know anything, a thousand miles from you, he saw you commit the crime, and knew then, and knows now, that it was you and not another. Would you allow such testimony? Would any intelligent court in Christendom admit it? But if one could be found superstitious enough to do it, what weight would an intelligent jury give to such absurd statements? But should you be convicted upon such evidence, would you not proclaim from the scaffold, in the attentive ears of an intelligent world, that you were being judicially murdered? And would not your blood blot the escutcheon of any nation, who would retain in positions of judicial authority, such insane fanatics? And is not this the very kind of testimony by which it is sought to try us for our immortal life? Are you not thus determining who they are, who claim to be officially pointing out to us the way to heaven? Excuse me, if I most emphatically, deny the competency, of these dreamy unconscious witnesses; and on that account reject their testimony entirely.

Even the largest charity will not allow us to suppose intelligent and sane men, capable of such a stretch of superstitious credulity, as honestly to claim that spirits are perceived by the medium, through the natural organs of vision, while he is in a normal state, and thus identified to be human. This is conceded to be physically impossible. To render it possible to see them, a miracle must be wrought either on the beholder's eye or on the appearing spirit, so as to adapt the sense to the object, or the object to the sense. This has been done in the case of appearing angels. It may be done now, if it shall please God to do it. But whenever it is done, it becomes a historical fact, and is capable of the same kind of proof, as any other fact; until that proof is offered, we rest in a simply negative position. But when that is done, we shall raise the further question, as to how spirits are identified. In angelic appearances, men in olden time were sometimes mistaken; supposing them, in some instances, to be men, and in others to be God. Why may they not now be mistaken in the same way?

We fall back then, again, upon the question, are they human spirits?

It is answered, "they are." How do we or may we know? It is replied, "In the earlier history of our race, spirits were in the habit of returning to earth, and holding intercourse with men." The case of Samuel and Saul, and the appearance of Moses and Elijah, on the mount of transfiguration are given in proof. This latter case is improperly cited. For there is nothing connected with it, in any way analogous to the spirit wonders or manifestations of the present time. The effort to wrest and pervert this incident, into the support of spiritism, only shows that it is hard pressed for respectable and reliable evidence. The other case, I have already shown to be special in its character, and not susceptible of being fairly employed, in support of spiritual pretensions: But for the moment, and for a special object, I will concede all that is claimed in this case. It is a single case. And if Saul had not sinned fearfully against his God, Spiritism would have been without even a single case, which it would not be ashamed to bring forward. Now, will any disciple of Bacon, infer a general principle from a single fact, and that fact exceptional in its character? Let me give you a parallel, and its results, from the application of this principle of inductive reasoning.

In the times of Elisha, an axe which had accidentally fallen into the river; in a mysterious manner, rose to surface, and was recovered; therefore iron has a less specific gravity than water, and will float upon its surface. Who does not revolt at this conclusion, and see in it not only a violation, but an absolute discarding of every principle of inductive science.

The examples of the New Testament, so far from establishing the fact that human spirits return to earth, and hold communion with men, prove that the spirits which had converse with men, in those days, were of an entirely different class. Out of one person, Christ cast seven demons, and out of another legions, and numerous instances are mentioned, of himself and his disciples, dispossessing unfortunate victims of spirit delusion, of their degrading and destructive attending spirits. He is as able and willing to do it now as ever he was; would that men were as willing and anxious to be cured.

I believe, I have now stated fairly, and answered fully, the arguments of Spiritists, in support of their one idea. I might rest the case here,

and perhaps my readers would be fully satisfied on this point. But I should feel that I had not done my whole duty. I therefore respectfully ask your attention, to a few negative considerations, or arguments against this one idea. You have seen that there is really but little to sustain it. But to my mind there are weighty reasons against it.

The exalted nature and dignity of man, we think, furnish strong presumptive evidence against it, and render it, to say the least, highly improbable. The whole history of man shows him to be a superior being, and formed for a high and noble destiny. He was made in the image of God, and endowed with transcendent capacities at his creation; such as were not given to any other being in the universe, of which we have any knowledge. The plan of his redemption and recovery from sin; the immense expense and sacrifices, involved in its execution, are also presumptive of the high sphere of action he was designed to fill. Angels had fallen, but were left in their ruined condition, "reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." Angels, again, are made the servants of men, and "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." To this it is objected, that man was made "a little lower than the angels." The objection is met by stating the design of this inferiority which is declared to be "the suffering of death." But the passage will suffer no violence in sense, if we read it; "thou madest him a little while inferior to the angels." But it is said also, "thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thine hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet." But it is claimed that this is affirmed of Christ and descriptive of his dignity. This may be true of its primary design. But He has promised that, "where I am, there shall also my servants be;" that the servant shall be as his Lord, and he declares, "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Is it rational, then, to suppose that beings of such dignity of character, and such exalted capabilities, will be employed by an infinitely wise Governor, in the sublime work of knocking a plastered wall, tipping and shoving around parlor tables, and catering to a morbid love of the wonderful and marvelous in the thoughtless crowd?

It is a general belief, upon what authority, beyond what I have already referred to, I will not now inquire, that the spirit state of human existence is higher, in its capabilities and powers, than is the embodied state. In

this, the world may be wrong. Our tendency may be downward, instead of upward; a retrograde, instead of an advance progress. And if the communications I have seen, which purported to be from Lord Bacon, and Swedenborg, were really from them, I have no doubt, that passing from the body, we start on a retrograde career, towards the reptile and monad, which some claim as their "illustrious ancestors."

I had thought that those loved ones of mine, who died in the Lord, years ago, had entered upon a state, where their living active principle, unincumbered by clogging mortality, operated with greater facility and vigor; comprehended with more ease; rose higher and higher, in the regions of purity and blessedness; approximating the infinite source of life and intelligence, and communicating their thoughts with amazing ease and distinctness. But alas! how new discoveries dissipate old theories! These fond, pleasing fancies, I must now give up as false. My loved ones surrounding me, in invisible forms, though they have the physical power to lift a large table, and me besides, and desire much to speak to me, a word of caution or encouragement, cannot even assure me of their presence, except through the physical organs of some medium, from whose very touch they would have recoiled, as from the fetid breath of death, while they were here in the body. Though my spirit is directly accessible, and alive to any impressions they might make upon it; though they could illuminate my consciousness, and make me see, the sublimest scenes and truths, by intuition, thus giving me to *know* what they communicated; yet they can only talk to me, through the medium of unintelligent sounds, or when I am in an unconscious state, so that memory can make no record of their thoughts, or words, for my future instruction or consolation. They can only commune with me indirectly, through a third person, whose word I must receive, as expressions of their thoughts and feelings. Could I be made to believe that death exercises such a shriveling and dwarfing influence upon the soul, such a belief would give it ten fold horrors, and make me dread utter annihilation, at no very distant period, as the inevitable sequel, of the destructive process, indicated by the dissolution of the body.

A further presumptive argument, I draw from the Savior's narrative, of the rich man and Lazarus. I say narrative, for such I believe it to be.—But lest some caviling objector should seek to break the force of the argument, by insisting, as many do, that "it is only a parable," I remark, that for all the purposes of the present discussion, it is quite indifferent, in which light it is viewed. For our Savior never teaches error incidentally, while teaching truth directly. In this narrative, or parable as you please, the curtain, dividing the present from the future world, is drawn aside,

and we are permitted to look in upon the inhabitants, of God's retributive dominions. We behold their glorious exaltation, and imagine their exultant shouts; or see their degradation and hear their fruitless wail of anguish and woe. 'I am tormented in this flame.' The scene which rises before us is one in which spirits alone are actors. One in the midst of the flame entreats for a single drop of water to cool his tongue and assuage his torment. This is denied him; because, in those days, it was impossible to comply with the request. An impassable gulf separated the places, so that they could hold no intercourse, by passing from the one to the other. Some, in modern times, insist that this gulf has been bridged over; but I have no confidence in the sources of their information, and will not risk any interest upon the intelligence. The next request that goes up, from this pool of woe, is that a disembodied human spirit may be sent back to earth on a mission of mercy. The motives of this request have been variously given. Some insisting they were from a purely fraternal affection. That because he loved his five brothers tenderly, he did not want them to come to that awful place and he knew well, from what he remembered of their manner of life, that they would certainly come there. Hence he wanted Lazarus sent back, to tell them what he had seen, and to warn them of the fearful realities awaiting them in the unseen world. Others, and I think with greater propriety, regard his motives as purely and wholly selfish. He knew his own influence and example with those brothers, had wickedly opposed the means by which God sought to affect their salvation; and that they would justly charge their damnation upon him, and by their bitter denunciations, augment the severity of his torments. Hence his desire that they might not come to that place; to be his companions in endless sorrow and remorse.

However this may be, his request was not complied with; for the reason that those brothers had the scriptures, and upon all questions of duty to God and man they were amply sufficient. It was not the want of light or of a knowledge of the right and duty that kept them in sin, but a perverseness of heart which would also keep them from being benefitted, by any additional light that might be given them, corroborating that which they already had. "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

Observe here, the rich man did not ask to go himself. There are strong reasons why he would have made this request if he had supposed it to be allowable on any account. He could have spoken from an awful experience, and with an earnestness and pathos which would have been more likely to move and melt the obdurate hearts of those five brothers. Laza-

rus had been comparatively unknown to them. He had, probably, died among the dogs, who were his physicians and nurses, during his last painful illness—had been rudely dragged from the kennel by the vassals and minions of aristocratic pomp and pride; thrown into a grave without ceremony or regret, and covered with earth, amid mutterings and execrations, because he did not die elsewhere, so as to have devolved the labor of burying him upon other hands. Had he now returned, they might not have recognized him at all; or his extreme poverty, low social position and possibly uncultivated manners, would have rendered him an object of contempt and defeated the purpose of his mission. Their brother they knew.—They had seen him die amid the splendors of his sumptuous abode; they had closed his eyes in the darkness of death; they had wept around his cold remains; followed him to his last resting place, and seen him buried from their sight in the deep, cold, silent recesses of the grave. He could have entreated them with a favor which would have melted them into contrition and tenderness or have frozen their blood with terror. But he did not even ask to go back? Why? Because he knew that it was contrary to the established order of God, that such as he should return to earth. The spirits of the damned therefore, cannot escape from their prison, to return to their former abode or earthly associations.

Lazarus was not permitted to return, as already said, because it was unnecessary; heaven being judge of the necessity. A human spirit saved—was not sent from heaven, even on an errand of salvation, and is it therefore reasonable, to suppose, that they will be sent back merely to excite the wonder or contribute to the amusement, of those who delight to toy with them? How surpassingly absurd it seems that Abraham, Elijah and Daniel; Stephen, Paul and John; Luther, Knox and Wesley; Bacon, Washington and Marshall should leave all celestial employment, and be kept constantly on the tilt; darting like lightning around the earth, to answer the call and enter the body of every superstitious dreamer in the world, only too feed a superstition still more morbid and degrading, in the eager throngs that may gather around him; or to rap out their presence upon the wall, for the pleasure of every dozing circle that may convene in darkness, around a table in the most filthy haunts of men. And possibly each spirit is claiming to be present in a thousand different places at the same time.

The dignity of human nature; the laws of progress in the human soul, and the word of God, all proclaim against it. It is not, it cannot be true.

But if the phenomena are spiritual at all, and not caused by human

spirits, what is the character of their authors? This is certainly, a question of great importance. For if there are good spirits and bad,—angels and demons around us, and any are making marvelous manifestations among us, we ought to know their character. If they are good, although their agency may not avail to our salvation and moral perfection, yet may their instruction extend the area of our knowledge, as would that of wise and good men, their lessons being in harmony with the standard of truth which the Almighty has graciously given us. But if they are evil, to follow their pernicious teachings will lead to the worst of consequences, and may involve us in the most disastrous result.

Are they then good spirits? Those who say they are, will certainly, not think me captious, when I demand the proof. It is not enough to say they do not counsel profaneness, lying, dishonesty, unchastity and crimes of every grade and hue. This they may not do directly, from motives of policy, but may do it indirectly, as we shall hereafter see, with greater efficiency, and more fatal results than they could do, by any positive measures or efforts.

It will not do to say, we must presume them good, until from some overt act of theirs, we can convict them of wrong. These spirits claim our confidence, in matters where our eternal interests are involved, and it is our right and duty, to require of them testimonials of character, before we yield to their demands, or repose our trust in what they say. What proof then have we that they are good spirits?

So far as I am informed, the only arguments offered to show them good and worthy of confidence, are merely inferential in their character. First, it is argued, if God is good, it is not rational to suppose, that he will permit us to be deceived, by base and malicious spirits. To this I reply, the premise is most cheerfully and fully conceded. God is good, infinitely good. But the inference from this premise is most positively denied.—The fact that he does permit “evil men and seducers,” to “wax worse, and worse, deceiving, and being deceived,” is not only the declaration of his word; but obvious, to the most superficial observers of his providential dealing with men. Nay to those “who will not obey the truth,” but have “pleasure in unrighteousness,” he sends, “strong delusions, that they may believe a lie,” and be damned. Nor do I conceive that this conflicts, at all, with his goodness; for I have the fullest confidence in his wisdom, and believe he knows, quite as well as we do, how he may most properly, manifest his goodness to his creatures. I do not think he specially needs our instruction. What God does therefore is right.

But it is not a new thing, by any means, for a criminal, to complain of

the cruelty of a just and righteous government, and while he is exposed to punishment and sufferings due to his offences, to infer that the authority which deals with him is vindictive and arbitrary. I can see no reason in the nature of God, in any of his attributes, or in the analogies of his providence, why he may not permit evil spirits, to deceive those who are eager to be deceived; in order to find an excuse for sin which will silence the voice of their conscience, and let them, without compunction or restraint, follow the leadings of their own depraved appetites, passions and affections.

The second argument, in favor of the purity of these, spirits is drawn from the assumption, that they are the departed spirits of our friends, and that they being actuated by the same love they had for us here, will not, therefore deceive or mislead us. As to this argument, I have already shown, that there is no rational evidence to support the belief, that the spirits, of our deceased friends, return to earth, to hold intercourse with us, either by raps, through mediums, or in any other way. God has taken them from us, because he wanted them, in some other sphere, and they are occupied in employments, higher and nobler, and corresponding more fully with their enlarged capacities and powers. The inference therefore, drawn from such an assumption, is utterly worthless, and falls to the ground. But should we admit the premise, "we have also a more sure word of prophecy whereunto" we "do well" to "take heed, as unto a light, that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in" our "hearts." There is a stronger affection for us, and a safer guidance, than any finite being has ever possessed or exercised: "Can a woman forget her sucking child? yea" she "may forget, yet will not I forget thee."

Thus we see, that the assumption, that the rapping spirits are pure and good, is supported by no positive evidence. For me, their credentials and certificates of character are insufficient to command confidence. If a mendicant stranger, could not make out a better case of honesty and trustworthiness, clearer than theirs, I should retain my charities for worthier objects. But let us now examine the probabilities against their claim to goodness. There is something in the manner of their appearing, which indicates restraint, and raises a suspicion against them. In olden times, angels appeared as men—were sent as special messengers, and their mission was usually confined to one particular object; and in their communications, they were direct, unrestrained and free. In the cases of spirit communication from God, to the patriarchs, prophets and others; no arts of enchantments or sorcery were used, no incantations, no self-formed circles, waiting in breathless silence, motionless as mummies, lest the spirit, like

a coy and timid bird, might be frightened away—sitting, until the imagination wrought up the soul, to the highest pitch of superstitious awe, rendering it stupid from terror, and fit for any kind of imposition and delusion. The mode of Divine manifestation, where it was not through angelic messengers, was through the intuitive powers, or consciousness of the soul. It did not suspend or destroy, for the time being, the soul's consciousness or any of its powers. The spirit never took possession, of the individual so fully, as to render him irresponsible, or oblivious to the common proprieties and decencies of life.

Sometimes the Divine influence was so great, and its revelations, so enrapturingly glorious, as to suspend for the time, all voluntary muscular power, as in the case of Daniel. But, though his physical strength was gone, his mind was vigorously active; his consciousness clear, his memory vivid and tenacious; and its records, being distinct and enduring, he could afterwards dwell upon, and describe all the particulars and details, of his wonderful visions. The spirit communications from God, were like the effulgence of day; the clear and glorious light of the soul, making palpably visible, to the man himself, the things which his Author wished to reveal.

Spiritism claims, that the spirit takes possession of his medium, suspends his individual judgment, consciousness, memory and will; and then uses his physical organs as mediums for communicating its own views and thoughts; and when finally, it gives back the mental powers to their rightful possessor, the person thus degraded and demented, has not even a dim recollection of anything he has said or done. And this, strange to tell, is esteemed a condition of the highest perfection—the very acme of Spiritist aspiration and ambition. How unlike is this, to the manner in which good spirits formerly manifested themselves; and how very like the mode of demoniacal manifestations, in the times of Christ and his Apostles! It is said by those who claim to have observed extensively, the influence of these spirit communications upon individual character, that drunkenness, in its basest forms, does not tend more certainly and rapidly to idiocy and lunacy; and to a general destruction of the higher and nobler powers of the mind, than does this spirit agency. This I do not avow as truth; nor do I refer to it for any invidious purposes. My own personal observation, confessedly not extensive, rather confirms, than denies it; and reasoning upon the nature of things, as fairly as I can, I am forced to the same conclusion. I therefore refer to it, as a matter of warning, and ask you to inquire concerning its truth, as opportunities may occur around you.

Let us now inquire concerning the spirits' teaching—their doctrines and their revelations—comparing them with that great standard of truth which an intelligent Christian world, has adopted as “the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of faith and practice.” Here, at the very outset, it is remarkable, that the spirits join hands with the most inveterate infidels, the world has ever seen. Hence, from this point, whatever their professions of love for Christianity, or their admiration of its purity, we cannot look upon them as friends. The most terrible of all enemies, are those who, under guise of friendship, have gained access to your person and heart, with the sole intent to deal you an assassin's blow, when you least expect it. The foes, most to be dreaded, are those who are stealthily undermining the foundations of your faith, and laboring to subvert the strong holds of your existence, and to submerge it in the vortex of an endless ruin. The spirits adopt, as a fundamental principle, the very rule which the subtlest infidels of the world, from Celsus to Mr. Newman—from the second to the nineteenth century, have insisted upon; and which has been resisted and opposed, by the clearest and strongest minds of the Church, in all ages, viz., that no physical phenomena, however wonderful—however, confessedly, beyond the power of a finite agency, can possibly attest a written revelation to be Divine in its origin.* This clearly shows the affinities of these spirits, and does it at the expense of their consistency. For, the position clearly involves them in inextricable confusion; nay, sweeps away all their pretensions at a single blast. Without its physical phenomena—its raps, table moving, and bodily contortions, what would there be of Spiritism. Who would give it any attention, or repose the least degree of confidence in its equivocal, incoherent and inconsistent vagaries?

The Lord Jesus declares his works bore witness of his character, and attested the truth of his doctrine. “But I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish; the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.” “The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me.” “Believe me, that I am in the Father and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works sake.” “If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father.” The Apostle declares, that God bore witness to the great salvation proclaimed by Christ, “both with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, according to his own will.”

* See Spiritualism, by Judge Edmunds and Dr. Dexter.

And the earlier ministers of Christianity, proclaimed the resurrection of Christ, as the Divine confirmation of the Gospel.

But the determined enemies of the cross, aware of the hopelessness of their destructive efforts, if they permitted God to testify, have all along invented the most absurd rules of evidence, by which to judge the sacred record, and by which they could reject the Divine testimony; rules which, in their general application, would prove the most revolutionary in every department of human inquiry and knowledge. And the spirits true to their instincts have adopted these rules, though by doing so they destroy every vestige of claim to authority as teachers of truth, and revelators of God's counsels.

The spirits also deny the essentially Divine character of our Lord and Saviour, regarding the great focal and radiating centre of all history—the theme of prophetic description and rapture, the object of angelic wonder and adoration, the object in which centered the desire of all nations, the adorable and ever blessed Messiah, a mere man, and a miserable proscribed wizard at that. The highest character they award him, is that of being a perfect medium—a passive tool, to be used by every straggling ghost or malignant demon, according to its fancy or caprice.

Our great standard proclaims that “in him dwelt all the fullness of the God-head bodily.” That “it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.” “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.” He was “God manifest in the flesh;” and “God over all, blessed forever.” But the logical teachings of the spirits proclaim him as one of the most base, unscrupulous and arrogant pretenders, that ever walked the earth. This is a logical necessity of their position. He assumed to change and revoke portions of God's law, of what he and his disciples recognized to be such.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But *I* say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the Council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.” “Again, ye have heard it hath been said, by them of old time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths; but *I* say unto you, Swear not *at all*.” Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but *I* say unto you, that ye resist not evil.” He forgave sins. Received worship. Performed miracles; giving no intimation that his power was delegated; and he proclaimed himself equal

with God. "I and my Father are one." If he was not what he claimed to be, he was a false pretender; and our holy Christianity is the baseless theory of an impostor, who in his life and conduct violated every one of its fundamental principles. Who is ready to give up his hope in Christ, and his confidence in the religion of his fathers, upon any such authority? Do not their views of Christ, show the character of the spirits? "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God."

Again, the spirits deny the vicarious nature of Christ's death. They ridicule the idea that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures;" that "he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities;" that the chastisement of our peace was upon him," and that we may be "healed by his stripes." They strike an exterminating blow at all our hopes of pardon, and leave us to expiate our own guilt, by our own degradation, sufferings and shame. They offer us no salvation; but leave us in our sins and in our blood; declaring positively for the encouragement of sensuality and crime, what all human experience, and every known law of the human mind, teaches to be in the highest degree improbable—that the soul, though while here in the body, and its character well known, may be rushing rapidly downward in its moral career, yet no sooner passes out of our sight, than it suddenly stops in its march to death, and turns its course upwards towards God and heaven. Or in other words; that the end of life is the end of sin. That death, and not Christ is the Saviour of the world.

Of course, then, our consciousness of Pardon, and our joy in the Holy Ghost, is all a mere fancy, an utter delusion. We must give up the consolations which religion affords, and depend only upon the assurances of such ghosts and spectres, as may chance to visit us, as they "are going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it." We are thus left without an atonement, and without a Holy Ghost, to rise by the recuperative energies of our own natures, out of any degradation into which sin may have plunged us. Our elevation depends not upon the Divine mercy, nor yet upon our own volitions, but upon the spontaneous action of the of progress in our nature.

Verily the Revelator, and those whom he saw in heaven, must have been consummately ignorant of the true cause of their exaltation. For they sung, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever." And one of the "four and twenty elders," who abide continually in the presence of the awful Majesty, must have been inexcusably ignorant of this law of progress, to which he was wholly

indebted for his sublime elevation; for he declares, concerning the hosts who were saved from earth, "These are they who came up through great tribulation, having washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

I have thus endeavored to answer the question, "Are the spirits good?" Applying their teachings to the great standard of truth which God has given us, we find they bear a strong resemblance to the spirit which held the first fatal parley with the too credulous Eve, through the first spirit medium ever known. They discredit the external and collateral evidence on which rests the Divine authority of the word of God, and thus leave us without any authoritative record of the will of our Maker and moral Governor—any standard of right and duty, afloat upon the trackless waves of delusive opinions, promulgated by lying and God-abandoned spirits. They deny the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by consequence, the divinity of Christianity, and make the whole Christian world follow the speculations of a base deceiver, and an arrogant pretender. They deny the atonement of the New Testament, and thus leave us without a Saviour, without pardon and without hope.

And yet those who believe their teaching, and insist that they are worthy of more confidence than the Bible; complain that we slander them, when we say of this doctrine, that it is infidel in character, and denies the divinity of Christianity.

What kind of a Christianity would that be, which was without a Divine Christ? Without an atoning sacrifice, and the forgiveness of sins? Without a Holy Ghost, and a power to change and renew the heart? Whatever else it might be, it certainly would *not be*, the Christianity of the Bible. That to which we cling so fondly; for which we are willing, like the martyrs of olden times, to encounter any dangers and make any sacrifices. That which gives us peace and joy, which enables us to triumph in the hour of temptation and affliction, and will bear us exultingly through death, home, to those mansions of blessedness which our Saviour is preparing for us, in our Father's house in heaven.

It is better to believe God, than man. Safer to follow Christ than demons. Let us not, then, be deceived by specious pretenders. Let us believe and abide in our father's God. Walk in the same safe path; mind the same pure and rational things; rest firmly upon the same immutable foundation; and we shall finally overcome as they did, and dwell and reign with them forever. "Other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."