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SOME
EXAMINATION
OF
THE THEORY
OF
SPIRITUALISM.

John H. Bradley

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INTRODUCTORY.

I WAS sitting one day at my writing table in my room, where, in my crippled condition, I have spent so long a time, when my old friend and neighbor, Judge DAVID McDONALD, came briskly into the room, and coming up behind my chair, laughingly said, "Bradley, I am either a fool, or a liar, or crazy, or *this thing* is true." I turned around to him, and said, "Judge, I have known you now for more than twenty-five years, much of the time very intimately, and I know you are neither a fool, nor a liar, nor crazy, not by a long-shot; now what is '*this thing*,' which you say 'is true'?" "Why, Spiritualism," said he. "Spiritualism!!!" I repeated. "Why, Judge, I don't know anything about it. I have never given it any attention, except to read some of Swedenborg's writings; and once when in Hartford, in 1852, raising money to build our Indiana Central Railway, I was induced by a banker acquaintance there, to go one evening to see the performance of the celebrated Miss Fox. I went, saw nothing which I could think impossible to be done by any expert woman; staid about an hour, and came away. Yes, I now remember another time. One evening in Washington City, Mrs. Major Mace asked me to go with her to a friend's house, and witness some exhibition of it. I went. Joshua R. Giddings was there. He and I were each rather heavy men. We two were seated, one on each end of a very heavy piano. The young lady, who was *entranced* (as it was said), played the piano, and the two front feet of the instrument beat time regularly to the music, and pounded the floor together,

raising up *both at once*, about two inches from the floor, and, of course, lifting Mr. Giddings and myself and half of the heavy piano at every thump on the floor. Nobody helped her, and it was too heavy a lift for the young woman. We didn't understand it, and there was no explanation given us. This is my whole knowledge of Spiritualism." The Judge responded: "Well, I have known but little about it, nor ever given it any attention until lately. I was induced to go and see a Mrs. Shaffer, a medium, at Dayton, Ohio, and I there saw and heard what astonished me very much. After this, I went to Jeffersonville and witnessed the manifestations there: They were equally strange and unaccountable. I became satisfied, perfectly, that there was no physical cheating about it, and if it be not done supernaturally I cannot understand how it is done. I want *you* now to go with me and examine this matter. You are an old lawyer, accustomed to hunt out truths, and not easily led away or deceived. You have time to spare, and are now able to go on the cars to those places. Will you go with me, and keep me straight?" After some further conversation, and seeing that he was very desirous I should accompany him, I agreed to do so. The following chapters will tell what came of it. He and I continued together in the investigation, comparing notes and opinions, weighing facts and evidence, and correcting conclusions, as long as he lived. I do not think that while he lived, we either of us formed any conclusion about Spiritualism different from the other, or ever came to any opinion without a consultation and a united assent. The Judge had been and still was a great reader, a fine historian, and had a wonderful memory. He was almost like a dictionary to me in history, especially in ecclesiastical and theological matters. He died and left me to work on alone. A good while before his death, but when neither he nor I expected that we would either live on earth long, he one day said, "Bradley, we will both soon pass into the next life, where we will learn all about these things, and I want us to promise one another that the one who goes first, will, if he is permitted, come back and tell the other all about it. Will you make the promise?" I answered: "Yes, and shall

expect you to do the same." We so agreed. And it was not strange, and did not in the least surprise me, that, after his death, the very first time I was with any medium, he (the Judge) wrote on the slate: "My old friend, do you remember the bargain you and I made about this thing when we were together in your world?" I replied that I did, and asked him to write down what that bargain was. *He wrote it out in full exactly as it was.* Certainly no one present knew or uttered one word of that bargain, in that house, until it was read in his bold, stiff, rough handwriting on the slate. He carried our agreement into his new life, and as he always had done in this life, *he performed his promise.* Many, many times since he has communicated with me, and I am sure will continue to do so as long as I shall remain here behind him.

He and I together, when we commenced this examination, determined that we would carefully guard against deception, accept nothing without proof, and let nothing of old prejudices prevent us from accepting any new information, or believing new facts, if proven.

After a time, it was our purpose to put in writing what we learned. The Judge died before we had jointly carried out that purpose. We both had separately written down a part of our experiences.

After his death I alone, at the request of some friends, gave to the "State Sentinel" some of my investigations, in rough sketches of what I saw and heard. These were at first given over the signature "B," but afterwards, when another person assumed that signature, I abandoned it, and signed all my articles "Examiner." They were all published in the "State Sentinel;" they are now all gathered together, and, with some additional matter, contained in the following pages. The reader will find many things new, curious, and (to me) wonderful. One thing he may feel sure of, that is, that the facts stated by me, as occurring within my knowledge, *are true*, and are not exaggerated. The theory of Spirit communication with us is a very happy and beautiful one to mortals, and if anything can light up the dark pathway to the grave of this life, it does and will.

But every one should examine it for him or herself—go where the proof can be received, and take nothing on trust.

These chapters were the occupation and amusement of my hours of confinement to my room in my physical inability to pursue any labor out of doors. They interested me, and with the few journeys by the cars, made in connection with them, have carried me through many weeks and months, that otherwise would have been weary months to me.

JOHN H. BRADLEY.

SOME EXAMINATION
OF THE
THEORY OF SPIRITUALISM.

LETTER I.

I PROPOSE now to give some of my ideas—the result of my own examination into this new theory called spiritualism. I have no personal knowledge of the answering of letters, alleged to be fraudulent: and while I hold, from the information I have, that it is not very safe or very prudent for a sensible person to assert or deny what can or can not be done through these manifestations, without more information upon the subject than I have (or, as I believe, any of the persons connected with that transaction have), yet it seems to be conceded that the letters referred to, sent to be answered, had been surreptitiously opened (and no doubt read) before being returned to the writers. From my knowledge of Mrs. Keigwin, the medium, I feel very sure that *she* would not be guilty of any such fraud. My examination into this new theory has been

confined to manifestations made by speaking through the trumpet, at Dayton, Ohio, and to writings upon the slate, at Jeffersonville, Indiana. Those examinations have not extended very far, but each one has presented such new, wonderful and surprising developments as to make further examinations seem absolutely necessary. I have given most attention to slate writing, and I have myself received a great many communications from, and held a great many conversations with, an intelligence wholly invisible, in which my side of the conversation, sometimes oral, just as I would speak to a person sitting before me; sometimes by writing what I had to say on the slate, or on a piece of paper laid on the slate; sometimes merely mental (not speaking or writing anything at all), and in all cases the replies were immediately made to me by the pencil writing them on the slate. In most cases the conversation was as full, complete and pertinent as if held with a living person sitting near me. These conversations in this manner, have occurred very many times in daylight, in an open parlor. The slate upon which replies were written was held under a table by Mrs. Keigwin, in one hand, her other hand being on the table or in her lap, and in no way connected with the slate. It was very clear to me that she had nothing to do with the act of writing. It was utterly impossible for her to have done it. I have had the same manifestations made, and long letters

written to me, the slate being held by a little step-daughter of Mrs. Keigwin, only nine years old, no person but the child and myself being in the room, or probably in the house, and Mr. and Mrs. Keigwin being certainly away from home. I am told that this child can neither read nor write. She certainly can not write the matters that were written on the slate. Many things have been written to me in this way that were not in my own mind, that I was not thinking of at any time, and, in some instances, that I did not know. Matters of family affairs, of affection, of current events, as well as matters concerning human life on earth, and the life to come after the earthly life is done, clearly establishing the truth of those manifestations as made by no mortal mind, and as clearly affirming the immortality of the soul, *and never in any instance denying or contradicting the teachings of our Saviour, or the fundamental tenets of the Christian religion.* I am thus enabled to affirm:

First—That the writings on the slate are not done by human hands, and of course Mrs. K. does not make them.

Second—That they are sensible and pertinent; often of matters wholly unknown to the hearer.

Third—That they often come without questioning, in the shape of long letters, originating their own subjects.

Fourth—That they teach the immortality of the

soul and the doctrine of rewards and punishments for good and evil deeds done in this life.

Fifth—That they sustain Christianity, in all its facts, and make plain many of its mysteries.

Sixth—That learned men should examine this thing instead of avoiding it or abusing it.

LETTER II.

IN my former letter I said “I was enabled to affirm ‘*That the writings on the slate are not done by human hands,*’ and of course Mrs. Keigwin does not write them.”

I say so, because in *very many* instances in which I personally acted, it was utterly impossible for the medium, or any other person in the room, to *reach* or *guide* the pencil. The medium could not have so written if she *had* held the pencil; for the writing was rapidly done, in straight full lines across the slate from side to side, and from top to bottom—the t’s crossed, and the i’s dotted, and always *inverted* or *upside-down* to the medium, and the slate not at any time within her sight. *The best writer I ever knew could not do it* as it was done. I have been a reasonably good and rapid writer in my time, yet I never was able to write near so rapidly and so well, even

with the slate lying on my desk before me. The time usually occupied by the pencil in filling a slate *full* was about half as long as a good writer usually requires when he hurries. But no person *can* hold a slate under a table, out of sight, and write on it while holding it, doing both the holding and writing, with *one hand* only. This was always done; the other hand of the medium being plainly seen lying on her lap or on the top of the table. I have heard it asserted as to the *inverted* writing, "that the medium *turned* the slate as she took it out from under the table." I *know* this is not so; for I have myself held the other end of the slate, and have taken it out from under the table, so that I should certainly know if it was turned. It was not.

A writer in the Chicago "Times" some weeks ago, in his wisdom, told how the writing could be done, and the slate held by the same hand. He said, "take a pencil about as big as a grain of wheat, and when the fingers have grasped the slate, reach out the middle finger and lay the end of it on the little pencil, and so write."

A wise man that. A slate is about twelve inches long and eight wide. The middle finger might reach (to write) three inches. How would the whole side of the slate be written on? How could a four-inch finger reach twelve inches? The manner in which this writing is obtained is simple and plain to be seen by any one. A lady's small work table,

sometimes called a card table, about twenty inches square, with a four-inch drawer in it, next to the top, was set out in the parlor in full daylight. A shawl or table cover was thrown over it, reaching within (say) twelve inches of the carpet. A common school slate, perfectly clean, was taken in the fingers and thumb of the medium, usually grasping it at one end, or near the corner, on one side. The pencil was laid on the slate. Then the medium sat up close to one side of the table, and raising the cover, put her hand, which held the slate, under the table and held it there, dropping the cover on her arm or wrist, and laying her other hand on the top of the table, or on her lap, as she leaned forward supporting the slate.

It will be observed by this that there is now only *one* hand under the table, and that one is holding the slate there; that the light is wholly shut off from the slate, and that below the bottom of the cover all is open and it can be plainly seen, and that there is nothing else under the table. Very soon is heard the sound of the pencil as if writing. After a while three taps of the pencil are made on the slate, and then the pencil is heard to drop. Draw it out and you find plain, full writing on the slate; sometimes a whole slate full, sometimes a name only, all pertinent, sensible, and generally addressed to some one present, and if a letter, signed with a name as the writer of a letter signs.

Now who, or what power or influence does this? All the world, if all the world could be present, would see and say, and if need be swear, *that that writing was not done by mortal hands*. Anybody can satisfy himself or herself of this fact. Well, who does do it, or what power does it? This is what I am trying to find out. One single letter, one single name, written on the slate in this strange way, presents the whole case. It is useless for an investigator to look further. If one such can be written, *volumes* can. Many such have been written on slates in Mrs. Keigwin's hand, *to my certain knowledge*, and witnessed by many other persons; writings addressed to me (apparently) by those once dearest and nearest to me on earth, who have long since passed from this life; writings addressed to others equally near and dear to them, by departed friends—not in one or two, but in hundreds of instances—all plain, direct, intelligent, well written, and all on matters interesting to them, and coming and reading to their understanding, just as letters come and read when written by one person to another here in this life.

Now, is not this strange and wonderful fact worth investigating?

To obtain this writing, we require and have a medium, a table and cover, a slate and pencil. This is all. Well, what is a medium? I can only say as to Mrs. Keigwin, that she is a very pleasant,

young married woman, apparently about twenty-six years old, in excellent, even robust health, and not in any respect, apparently, differing from other ladies, except that she has this faculty or power to receive these strange writings, which other ladies do not possess. This power seems to be only *the capacity to act as a conductor* between the writer or intelligence, or spirit that does the writing, and the mind or spirit of the person to or for whom the writing is made; a mere conductor, just as the telegraph wire is the conductor of the electric currents from one station to another. I once asked that question of a spirit writing on the slate, viz.: "What is a medium; is it a mere conductor, like the telegraph wire?" The answer was immediately given, "Yes; that is it." I then asked, "Is every person capable of being or becoming a medium?" The answer was, "No; but there is a medium in nearly every family, or a person capable of being developed as a medium." I asked, "What is necessary to develop a medium?" The answer was, "They must practice; hold the slate often regularly every day, and after a while the writing will be done on it.

It would seem that certain individuals have, from birth, mediumistic power; that it is born with them. They are natural conductors, and different from others in this, as some persons are from others in magnetic or electrical power; that many persons are mediums undeveloped, who, by practicing the

holding of the slate perseveringly, can and will develop their natural gift and be able to receive these writings as Mrs. Keigwin now does. This, though, is only theorizing.

This communication is already long enough. In my next I will have more to say about how the table *ought* to be fixed, to satisfy inquiring and cautious minds. The world is credulous enough already, and should not be required to take anything on trust.

LETTER III.

THE great difficulty with most persons either in examining or accepting evidences of this new theory is, that *that they are too credulous*. They are convinced without evidence, or on too little evidence. Such persons are *very* easily deceived. I have myself seen many instances where I felt that it would be easy to deceive *me*, and I have no doubt I have been deluded sometimes. I was, though, always careful not to let my consciousness of it be known, but to use the experience to prevent similar results afterwards. It was always strange to me how any one could expect another to believe in these extraordinary manifestations upon the mere say so of another. To my mind no one should believe them

on any evidence short of his or her own actual examination, and the evidences of his or her own senses.

A person who would believe on the statement of another alone, when the power to test personally existed, must be very weak; and the man who will expect credence when he or she relates these wonders and volunteers to vouch for them is weaker still.

If a medium, or any friend of a medium, through whom these writings can come, desires to exhibit them, and also desires to be, and *to be esteemed* honest and truthful, it has always seemed to me that the first effort and duty should be to make the exhibition in such a way and under such circumstances as that any common mind could see that *deception was not possible*. In this "slate writing" it is so easy to do this that not to do it seems not only a blunder, but actually like leaving open purposely a means for deception. Three sides of the table can easily be, and ought by all means to be *boarded up closely*; the side where the medium sits, down to within three inches of the floor, with only a slit or opening in the boarding (say three-quarters of an inch wide and ten inches long), merely sufficient to slip the slate in endways, and in which it would be *impossible to slip the hand*. The two sides to the right and left of the medium should be *boarded up tight* down to within twelve inches of the floor. The

opposite side to the medium might be open, or with merely a cloth or cover to shut out the light.

Let a medium sit down to such a table, and push the slate and pencil into the slit on her side of the table, and any one can see that it would be utterly impossible for her to reach or touch the pencil; and thus, at the very outset, deception by her would be out of the question, and she would be freed from all such imputations. This would be one step, and to most minds a very long step in our inquiry, and were I the medium, or any one interested in her, this would be the very first step I should insist on having taken. It being made *certain* and apparent to every one that the medium does not do the writing, it is easy to show that no other mortal can do it; because all other persons can easily be excluded from the room, or kept at such a distance from the table that they could not.

It being, then, satisfactorily shown that the writing is not done by human or mortal hands, we come back to my inquiry—*Who, or what power does it?* This is so difficult a question, so covered up in mystery, that I have never yet ventured on any fixed opinion about it. It is said that SPIRITS of those who have passed from this earthly life into the new and happier life beyond the grave, do it. In some cases it really seems as if this was true; but in other cases it *does not* seem so; for often things are written which are not correct; and unless

we accept fully the doctrine that our souls pass into the next life in about the same fallible character that they leave this, we can hardly believe them liable to make such mistakes. Others say that DEMONS do it. This is more difficult to understand than the other. First, Who are and what are demons? I have no conception of, no belief in, any such beings or intelligences. I would very much-like that some one versed in Demonology, and who will get his information *and authority outside* of Pantheonic, or Pagan, or *Poetic* history, would give me the true account of them. All our teachings—religious, moral and scientific—in this world go to prove that man *is immortal*. We see that creation all around us continues one unceasing *progress*. Nothing is lost, nothing is annihilated, though everything, nearly, changes and passes into new shapes. Little and great things alike, all change. Some parts are seen to lose activity—to die—to pass off into other plainly living forms, or into *gases*, which we know go to make up other material forms; but nothing is lost.

Man has here a body, an earthly body, and also a living soul or spirit. The two together, here on earth, make *man*. The *body* dies:—we know this, we see it. We *do not know* that the soul or spirit dies. We do not see it so—nor any reason for it. We are not taught so anywhere, or by anything or any body, and unless, in this respect, the great

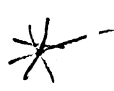
system and plan of our Creator is here changed—and that *progress* does not attach or belong to our spirituality as it does to every thing else, the spirit does not either die (or sleep). Then, while I do not know that there are any such beings as *demons*, I do know that there are spirits—souls—of persons who have lived with us here, and whose bodies have died. The word “*demon*,” as used, as I have accepted it, means something evil (although that was not the original meaning of the word).

It is hard for me to conceive of anything, any created thing, not made by the great Creator, the Father of all. I think He made all things, mortal and immortal; and that He never made any demon or any *evil* thing. All His work was good. Some of it may be less good than other, but all good. But admit for a moment that there are beings called demons in the life beyond this, and that they are employed to thus write to us messages that, on their face, are sent to us from our departed friends, how, pray, does that change the matter? No matter who or what hand *writes* the letter, if it contains what the spirit of our lost one says to us. My inquiry is not confined to the amanuensis merely, but covers the matter of *from whom the writing comes*. If the matter written be good and *not evil*, we are taught by the highest authority with Christians, that it can not emanate from a Satanic source, and therefore it can not be demoniac. If it purport to come from

our lost friend, or wife, or parent, or child, and contain and consist of those things only which that lost one and ourselves know of, or would be, or could be interested in, and these things be good, not evil—not Satanic—then why, pray, may we not accredit it to the living spirit of the lost one, rather than go rummaging through heathen mythology, and theorizing through mists and darkness, and against Nature and Nature's God, as we are taught to understand them by all around us—for some, probably mythical or Satanic, origin for this thing? To my mind, the spiritual, the good, guardian spiritual solution of this matter is much the plainest and most sensible, and is wholly consistent with our belief in the power of our Creator, and with the evidences we find all through the Old and New Testaments, of similar demonstrations made to man at different times in past ages. But this branch of the subject, "Who does the writing?" has led me to theorizing, while my purpose is to adhere as closely as possible to facts, and let others take the facts and do their own theorizing.

I prefer, therefore, to come back to the table and the medium again—and with a table properly arranged, obtain writings in the presence of good, safe witnesses—and with those, considering the matters written, endeavor to elucidate the question who, or what power does the writing. I hope to have such an opportunity afforded me, and to have

the aid of good, clear, unbiased minds to assist me. I feel the need of such aid to-day—for one who led me to this study, who asked of me to assist him in its investigation, and at whose request, only a few months ago, I took the subject up, and who from that day onward, until sickness disabled him from all work, has gone with me step by step in its consideration, has now left me and passed into that better life, where all things are made plain, and all mists and doubts are brushed away. I feel his loss greatly. *A great jurist and an honest man, his mind was peculiarly fitted for close and intricate study. Assiduous in his investigations, he accepted nothing not reasonably well proven. A deep scholar, he brought the past and the evidence of ages up, to explain as far as they could the matters occurring in our work. He allowed no prejudice to warp his opinions, and cowered before no unjust criticism or condemnation of his views or opinions. He was a good, pure-minded, honest man, and I do not soon expect to look upon his like again. But I will, as well as I can, follow up the work that he and I proposed to do together, hoping that good may come of it only, and whether I arrive at important truths or not, will work my way onward alone.



Judge David M. ...

LETTER IV.

I HAVE no idea that there is anything *supernatural* about these manifestations, for however they may come, they are undoubtedly the work of Nature's God. There may be, and at present it seems to me there is, something *superhuman* about them. There are many of the Creator's works that finite humanity don't understand. We *may* come to understand all about it, and to do so we must go forward step by step, making sure of our progress; and to do that, we must strip our path of all delusion or possibilities of delusion. The first step, of course, is to show plainly, beyond question, that it is not done by human hands. If the table be arranged as I have suggested, with my knowledge of the honesty of the medium, Mrs. Keigwin, I am sure we can and will receive manifestations on the slate, proven beyond all doubt to be *superhuman*. Not one, but many; not to one person only, but to many.

Having received such, we can then, looking at their contents and other matters connected with them, probably arrive at some opinion who wrote them. I trust that for their own sakes, as well as the benefit of science, those connected with these manifestations in Jeffersonville, and elsewhere, will

make such arrangements of the table as I have suggested, and also of other attendant circumstances, and that the medium will cheerfully afford *sufficient* and *pleasant* opportunities for fully testing the matter by thorough examinations, and thus set at rest forever the sneers and suspicious cavilings of those who, otherwise in their own conceit, *know*, without evidence, that it is all humbug, and so pronounce it; or those, worse than the first, who, in stubborn bigotry and unbelief, go into its examination only because they can not decently refuse to do so, but determined to admit no proof as sufficient and no evidence as honest. Such minds can not be brought to admit conviction until they are *crushed* with proof, and every loop-hole and point to hang a doubt or objection on will be resorted to by them, while any such remain.

But having obtained clear proof of the *superhuman* character of these writings, I desire to warn the investigator that his trouble is not over. The danger now becomes very great, that being convinced of this one strange and wonderful fact, he will become more credulous, and concede too readily other matters equally wonderful, but which equally require evidence to become established as truths. The whole matter, even conceding the writing to be spiritual, is involved in mystery. You can not be certain what spirit writes it. It seems that there are counterfeits everywhere. While I

should feel it wrong and an outrage to the strongest feelings of affection, to deny or to doubt the authenticity of some of the messages I have received, I am equally clear that others which have come to me were *not* from the source that they purported to be, but were from those false spirits who, we are warned, will come and deceive even the very elect. No admonition could be given us, better, more appropriate and useful, than that which tells us to "prove all things." I have been impressed sometime, even in one communication (of course embracing more than one subject), that there were two intelligences writing—the one true, the other a counterfeit. Of these things every one must judge for himself. Adopting the fundamental tenets of Christianity as our guide, which I trust all do, and not troubling our minds or harrassing our judgments with the conflicting inferences and differing sectarian doctrines of the different churches (which are at best only the opinions of men, and nearly always mere "husks"); testing all by the true guide; we may come near the truth and at some enlightenment of our future path.

It will be remarked that I have confined myself heretofore mainly to writings on the slate—conversational; the investigator inquiring and the slate pencil answering. This I have frequently seen, and often been a party to, for half an hour continuously, just as two persons would converse, the slate pencil

representing one of them, asking or answering just as promptly and pertinently as an individual could, and very frequently presenting matters wholly unknown to, and not thought of by any in the room, some of them seeming to carry conviction on their very face. Here is an instance (at which, though, I was not present): Two ladies and Mrs. Keigwin only were present. The two ladies were there to see the writing done. One of them had frequently seen it; the other (a resident of Hendricks county) never had. The strange lady was quite unwell. The spirit of Dr. Shuler, deceased, her friend's father, once a distinguished physician in Terre Haute, was (apparently) occupying the slate, writing. She said: "Father, Mrs.—, who is with me, is very ill; can't you prescribe some medicine for her to relieve her?" The pencil immediately wrote: "Daughter, what ails her?" The lady answered, giving her ailment. The pencil immediately wrote *a regular physician's prescription for the disease, in all the marks, signs, hieroglyphics and language which doctors use*, and which prescription was pronounced by two druggists (one of whom was the sick lady's husband) to be admirable for her complaint. Now, neither of the three ladies present knew how to write such a prescription, and neither of them, I think, could read it when written. I have seen many others equally strange.

But, it is also asserted that letters may be addressed to the spirits, and they will be answered on the slate without being opened. Other things, equally strange, and apparently proven to me, seem to make this possible. Indeed, as I have before remarked, "it is very unsafe for any one to assert or deny what can or can not be done."

I have laid on the slate a letter, which I know neither myself or any other person present had read a word of, or knew the contents of, to be answered, and it was mainly answered—giving, in the answer, names and persons asked about in the letter, correctly, and answering pertinently. One name only, out of four, was omitted. I had no idea, at all, what the question was, or that any such persons or names were inquired about—and no person in the room, medium or any one else, had ever heard of such persons. In this case, then, *the letter was answered*. The writing on the slate had told me that the spirit *could* read a letter as I wrote it at my table at home, and would answer it on the slate, if I would send it to Jeffersonville for that purpose, without the seal being broken, or the letter being opened.

Other letters, written by other parties, we are assured, have been answered in this way, unopened. The late trouble about this matter (as it was plain that the envelopes in those cases had been cut), I regard as to have good results. It will make

persons more particular, more cautious, and obtain fuller proof. Yet I do not think that Mr. or Mrs. Keigwin should be condemned for such a fraud without evidence. There are other ways that those envelopes might have been cut, and I should be sorry to decide the case against them without better and more full proof. Then, before deciding on this matter of letter-answering, let a letter be taken there, and (as in my case) retained in a disinterested person's hands until laid on the slate to be answered. The medium, I am sure, don't want the custody of any such letters, and there is no need for her to have such custody. In this way the truth can be made plain, and no injustice done to any one. But let us not by any means condemn or impeach the honesty of a medium, without as full and conclusive proof as the skeptic requires to establish the genuineness of a manifestation. We must not be too credulous, but we must equally avoid being unreasonably skeptical, or foolishly bigoted and prejudiced. Every one should remember always, that there are some things that *he* does not know.

In the next I hope to speak of other kinds of manifestation and their character, and how they are made, and of the credit they seem entitled to.

LETTER V.

THESE manifestations are made in many different ways, and through many different kinds of mediums; but I have yet seen only two kinds (besides the slate writings). Those two were, first, and the first I ever saw, a trumpet medium, where a voice spoke to me apparently through a long tin trumpet, like a large dinner horn, and the second where the medium alleged that she *saw the spirit* (and she certainly did describe the person whose spirit it purported to be, most accurately), and where and when the medium held the conversation with me, alleging that she merely *uttered the words of the spirit*, the spirit speaking through her (the medium), and not her own words; and that a minute after she had pronounced the words, she (the medium) did not know what words she had so uttered.

I shall devote this communication to describing my visit to the trumpet medium, Mrs. Shaffer, at Dayton, Ohio. This was my first experience in spiritualism. I had never seen anything of it before. I was invited and strongly urged by my friend, Judge McDonald, to go with him and aid him to examine the matter, and I went. We went to the house of the medium, accompanied by two ladies, friends of

the Judge, and who, being residents of Dayton, knew the medium personally, and went with us to introduce us there, and try to have us get a fair hearing and a good opportunity of testing the matter. I was a stranger to the two ladies and to the medium, and it was arranged by the Judge that I should not be introduced or my name mentioned to any of them. This was so far carried out, that, to my knowledge, my name was not pronounced in the house, or in the presence of the medium, until it was pronounced by the voice speaking through the trumpet. We were all four taken by the medium up stairs into the attic room. It was a room about fourteen feet square, occupying the end of the house next to the street. Two sides of it were made by the pitches of the roof, a third by the gable end of the house, and the fourth by a partition separating it from a bedroom (the two rooms occupying the whole garret of the building, and the roof coming down within about two feet of the floor).

When we entered this room (I entered it first) there were in it five common Windsor chairs, a very plain plank settee, a heating drum (being part of the stovepipe coming up from the stove in the room below), a tin trumpet, old and a good deal battered, about four feet and a half long, and nothing else. There was only one door in it, where we entered, and no closet. There was a small gable-end window, closed and curtained.

The medium fixed a chair for herself toward and near the northwest corner of the room, and fixed our four chairs about four feet apart, and rather in a circle, about ten feet off, in front of her. She then set the trumpet up on end, resting on its large end, in front of us, and about six or eight feet distant from herself. She then drew a curtain over the door, shutting out every ray of light, sat down on her chair, and blew out her lamp. We were now in darkness, dark as darkness could well be made. It was painful to the eyes. All for a while was silent. Then the medium and the Judge commenced talking—her woman's peculiar voice showing her location in the corner. A hymn or two was then sung, and during its singing, moving lights appeared overhead, passing all over the upper part of the room, beautiful white balls, not like fire, not like electricity—something like phosphorus, but very beautiful. Some one said, "There they come. You'll soon hear the trumpet, now," and the talking was continued by the medium and some of the others.

Very soon a humming, whizzing sound swept around the room in front of us, as if the trumpet had been taken up and swept rapidly round, and the buzzing sound made through it. It came so near my face and so rapidly, that I drew back, fearing it would strike me, for I could see nothing. Then it stopped, and a coarse, loud, masculine voice spoke, apparently through it, and said, "My friends,

your friends are here, and very anxious to talk with you. They will try, but may not be able to do so to-night." Then another voice spoke through the trumpet, plainly, to the Judge—I heard every word distinctly—and said, "My dear husband, Mr. B.'s friends are here (here my name was first mentioned) and want to talk with him. They will try, but may not be able to, to-night." Then immediately, as that ceased, I felt something touching me on the knee, and up the arm, and on the shoulder, and upon the side, and around my head; the most delicate and gentle touches imaginable. I said, "Judge, something is touching me." He replied, "Yes, it is the trumpet. Your friends are touching you with it. They will speak to you presently." An effort was almost immediately made by a voice at the far end (large end) of the trumpet, to speak to me—to utter words. The voice was low and mournful, a very little above a whisper, and like one trying to talk who could not.

This effort to talk was continued for some minutes, but no word was spoken so distinctly as to be understood by me. I asked, "Who is it that wants to talk to me?" There was an immediate attempt to answer by the voice, but no distinct word uttered. It seemed as if the voice was trying to speak a name, but could not. Soon that voice ceased and another seemed to have the trumpet, trying to talk to me. There appeared the same difficulty in uttering distinct words—the same soft, mournful tone.

I could not gather or understand one word. The voice ceased, and at once a loud, manly voice spoke through the trumpet to me, and said: "My friend, your friends can not talk to you to-night; they are not able to talk; they must learn. You know we must all creep before we can walk. They will talk to you when you come again. Come to-morrow morning, and you will not be disappointed." There were some other voices spoke to the Judge, and one to one of the ladies—all plain, loud, and heard by all of us. Then the trumpet seemed to be *thrown* down on the floor. The medium announced that *that* indicated that they would do no more talking that night, and lighted her lamp and we left the room.

Next morning the Judge and I went there alone, and were taken to the room, the darkness made, and trumpet placed as before. Soon the beautiful lights appeared as before, and then the trumpet whirled around before our faces, and directly touched the Judge and spoke to him, and in a few minutes came and gently touched me as before, and a voice began speaking to me through it—the same voice that first spoke, or tried to speak to me, the night before. It now was more distinct, though low and mournful as before. I caught words now, and in reply to my inquiry, who was it, was told a name, and that she had tried fifty times last night to tell me her name and could not. The voice spoke many things to me, all of gladness at my coming there, and passed

over to the Judge and feelingly thanked him for bringing me there. Soon another voice came to me through the trumpet, and I was touched with it as before, most caressingly. This last voice also told me who it was, and talked a long time to me in such a way and of such things as to excite the strongest and most affectionate feelings of my nature. This voice also passed over to the Judge, and most warmly and feelingly thanked him for bringing me there—so feelingly as to bring the tears to his eyes and cause him to weep very much. This voice spoke fully of the new and strange manifestation, of her ignorance of it when she died, and of the rejoicing that a gracious Heavenly Father had so arranged His creation that she could come and communicate with me, and others dear to her, whom she had left behind, and whom at her death she never expected to see or hear again until she met them at the bar of God.

A great deal was said to me—all good—all affectionate—all Christian—all befitting the character of the speaker as held by her here in life.

Other voices came one after the other, to the Judge and to me. As quick as the trumpet would be laid down by one, it was taken up by another, and for an hour or two (probably longer) it was a constant talk with one or the other of us. Most full—most satisfactory, and all most wonderful—new and strange, too, and unexpected by me.

During the whole time nearly, there was conversation by the medium and the Judge, so much so that I once asked them to be quiet that I might hear the voice better.

Now what meant those beautiful lights? What meant those spirit voices? What does it all mean? I have never since seen it, or gone to see or hear it again; though I wish to, and God willing, will. There is more in it than I had ever dreamed of in my philosophy, and all seems good.

I have thus given a true history of my visit to the trumpet medium, Mrs. Shaeffer, at Dayton, Ohio, and I feel sure any one going there with good intent, and an honest purpose, can have a similar experience.

LETTER VI.

“Now, concerning spiritual *gifts*, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge; to another the gift of healing; to another the working of miracles; to another *discerning of spirits*; but all these worketh that one and the selfsame spirit.”—*First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 12.*

I propose, in this communication, to speak of my experience, and what I saw, and what was done by a medium who alleged that she had capacity to discern spirits, and that she actually saw them, and spoke for them, uttering their words, and not her own. It will be seen by the quotation above that we have high authority for the existence of this power, or gift.

These manifestations are usually produced by mediums said to be in a *trance* state, like Mrs. Conant, of Boston. Those I saw were not. The medium was not entranced, but entirely natural. I have been present three different times when these demonstrations were made, each time in the parlors of my friends and each time in the presence of ten or twelve witnesses, intelligent neighbors. There was no preparation, no paraphernalia used, or present, other than the absence of strong light. The parlor was darkened, but—in some instances, I know—not so dark but that I could discern faces several feet from me. We all sat in the parlor, just as a company of several persons usually do in ordinary society, the medium occupying a position from which she could readily see the position of any other person in the room, if she wished to do so. Conversation was carried on, as is usually done, except when the medium was speaking, when, of course, the silence of others was necessary.

The medium (speaking) said: "Mrs. M., I see

standing by you a tall man, not very old, apparently twenty-five or thirty; good looking; has blue eyes; a fair complexion; is dressed in soldier clothes, as an officer—a lieutenant, I think. I can not see the bars on the straps distinctly. He says his name is S. F., and that he is your cousin.”

Mrs. M. asks, “Does he want to talk to me?” The medium answers, “He don’t say any more; he don’t seem to wish to now.”

Soon the medium said, “Mr. B., there is standing before you a small, pleasant looking, elderly lady, dressed quite plain, in a drab dress, with a small brown silk handkerchief or shawl on her shoulders, crossed on her bosom. She is looking right at you and smiling. She says, ‘John, thee knows I love thee.’ She seems to be about fifty years old, with bright, light eyes, and a fair skin. Her face is very pleasant. Do you recognize her?” I replied, “Probably; does she want to talk to me?” “She don’t say anything more.” I said, “Ask her if she will write me on the slate, and give me a full description of spirit life—a long letter.” “She says she will soon.”

In this way the evenings were passed—every once in a while the medium seeing and describing some one—many of them recognized by their friends present, and some not recognized.

An old lady, the mother of Mr. P., was described,



and talked to her son (through the medium), calling him by his boyhood name, at his home in Tennessee, in early days; a name which few if any of his acquaintances now know he ever bore; and calling up some private family matters and incidents, which Mr. P. afterward told me were correct, and which took place in Tennessee.

In the foregoing I have given only partial statements of what took place, and especially of the descriptions of the spirits by the medium. These were often very full. My object has been not so much to report the matters word for word (for I do not suppose I have done, or could do so now), but rather to show how it was done. The spirits described by her nearly always gave her their names, many of which she never knew. Some of them were dead before she (the medium) was born. Take it all in all, it was queer, strange, wonderful. Yet I said to her, "I have great confidence in you, and in your honesty and perfect truthfulness. Yet you must see that for the correctness of these manifestations we have to rely mainly on you alone.

We can not see the spirits you describe, and though *you say* you utter the words of the spirits, we can't *know that* except from your statement; or once in a while by actually in other ways knowing you to be ignorant of the matters stated in those words. In some of these descriptions and utterances you are so corroborated. This might be, probably ought

to be, evidence to sustain you in all cases. Yet you know how hard it is to bring a cautious mind to admit any fact as true, which is learned outside of and beyond human understanding. For this reason it seems to me that the *slate writing* and the *speaking through the trumpet* are both better than your system, because more certainly authenticated, more easily corroborated."

LETTER VII.

MEDIUMS.

MR. OWEN in a late article on this subject says, truly :

"That the literature of modern spiritualism, with honorable exceptions, lacks precision and culture, and often runs altogether too much into the vague and transcendental. If we would succeed in working out any science, we must begin at the beginning. We have not yet sufficiently studied the physics of spiritualism ; we are scantily prepared for its metaphysics. which, as etymology suggests, should come *after* an examination of sensible phenomena.

"The mental phenomena connected with spiritualism, are indeed more important and more convincing than the purely material. But both classes of phenomena must be examined, as Bacon examines

nature, by the inductive method; in other words, we must ascend from particular facts to general principles. Mere wild, dreamy bursts of mysticism are valueless and revolting to the common sense of our day. I hope, by and by, to see much of the space which, in papers friendly to spiritualism, is now too often occupied by the reveries of writers who seem to think sentiment is elevated in proportion as it is obscure, filled by valuable contributions to the evidences of spiritualism itself.

“Mere hearsay, in such matters, is absolutely worthless. The law demands, where it is possible, specifications of time and place and person; nor does it ever admit, at second-hand, what can be directly proved. To these rules, whenever we can, we should adhere. And in describing a spiritual phenomenon, whether observed by ourselves or obtained from a witness, we should give even what may seem trifling details, if we are sure they are exact.

“A single example, observed with minute accuracy, recorded on the spot at the time, verified by the name of the witness, and described with sufficient detail, is worth far more than a volume of slackly-attested tales.

“In the present state of public opinion, however, it often unfortunately happens that an author is not permitted to give the name of his informant. Yet, if it be a writer in whom the public confides, his voucher for the character of the witness may be as

good as the name itself, especially if it be a name unknown outside of a private circle.

“All other things being equal, spontaneous phenomena, neither sought nor expected—even unwelcome, perhaps—and occurring in the privacy of the domestic circle, are often the most conclusive. As to such, there can be no suspicion that the observer has been misled by epidemic excitement or expectant attention.”

Mr. Owen is right. Single *facts* and incidents of manifestations are worth more than volumes of theory or speculation. Visible manifestations, by slate writing, or by talking, are plain to human understanding, and these we want shown to us if possible, or duly proven by reliable witnesses. I have heretofore described how this can be done, but to do it we need mediums. At present there are too few developed to us. Undoubtedly there are hundreds that may be developed, and will be, when it is known more generally what a medium is. We are told that there is some one born with the qualities and capacity to be a medium in nearly every family. In some families there are many. In that to which Mrs. Keigwin belongs, we already know of several. When it is understood that it is a power given by nature, “a gift,” as St. Paul says, that many have, and is only the capacity to be a *conductor*, like a telegraph wire, nothing else whatever, between mind and mind; that it is not witchcraft, nor anything

unnatural; that it involves no evil, or produces
✓ none; that it is possessed by every class of people,
and requires neither worldly learning, nor high
worldly position; that it is found as well at the
wash tub and in the kitchen, and in the workshop
and daily labor, as in the professional and learned
walks of life, more persons will look to it, and as-
certain if they have not this natural gift. When
these trials and examinations become general, there
will be found, doubtless, many mediums; many per-
sons who can hold the slate and receive these won-
derful writings. Try. Examine. Get a slate and
pencil, lay the pencil on the slate, and hold it under
a table, or under a cover; anywhere, where the
light is excluded from the slate, and where there is
air, and *room* for the pencil to be used. It need not
be at night, but in plain daylight; only keep the
light shut off from the slate and pencil, for the writ-
ing can not be done when the light can come in to
the slate. Be patient, try often, persevere, do it by
yourselves, in "quiet if you can, but it is not neces-
sary to be alone, or to be entirely silent, though it is
said to be best. If the trial be made under a table
there should be a cover over the table reaching
down all around to within about a foot of the floor.
A natural life and natural actions are said to be
best adapted to mediumship, and these ought to be
found everywhere. It needs no scholarly learning.

It is well ascertained that the exercise of mediumship does not and can not, in any way, injure any one, and it seems to me that it would be a most interesting study; and if by merely holding a slate for a few minutes, I could enable any one to receive a letter from some lost one who was dearly loved in life, and who possibly might give convincing proof of the certainty and the beauty and happiness of the life to come, it would be to me a most happy and pleasant labor.

LETTER VIII.

MEDIUMS.

In my last number I recommended that persons everywhere, in every position of life, who could make the trial, or who believed themselves to be strongly magnetic, should make the trial, and see if *they* could not also receive these superhuman writings. They are not *supernatural* writings, in my opinion, any more than telegraphing is supernatural; but only *superhuman*; that is, writings made by intelligences not human, but made through a human *conductor*—a *medium*. A medium is a woman or a man having the capacity to receive the writing, or to enable the unseen intelligence to write it—just as the iron wire enables the telegrapher to send

a message, and nothing more—fitted by nature, to carry the electric message, which we all know, a rope, or a strip of wood, can not do.

There is nothing discreditable or improper in the exercise of mediumship. It is a *natural gift*, as the New Testament tells us; and of course given by our Creator for a useful and good purpose, and therefore should be used by every one who possesses it. It is a talent, and ought not to be buried. It will of course occupy the time of the person who thus acts as a medium, but every one who thus employs a medium—to receive messages and writings, from his or her spirit friends—will cheerfully make compensation for that time. In this way it would be much better, in a worldly point of view, for any one who has the power to be a good medium, than many of their present employments are. All persons desiring them to hold the slate for them, would freely and cheerfully pay them for their time. A good medium, known as respectable and honest, whose power was acknowledged, would have an excellent, profitable and reputable profession, right here in our city. No doubt there are fifty persons here, who are good mediums—but as yet undeveloped. Try the matter. Get a common slate and pencil. Hold them under a table or under a cover, any place where the pencil can be used to write, and where the air can circulate. Be patient. Try often and perseveringly. Remember that this is

not witchcraft, not supernatural; but the mere development of one of nature's laws of which the world in general has, as yet, been ignorant. We are constantly learning new things, always progressing in knowledge, and from what we see and read about this matter it appears that a new field for study is here opened up to us, and promised to us, as a theory more beautiful and interesting than any ever before known. Many of us are examining it carefully and honestly, with good intent, and want honest and known mediums to aid us. We are told that mediums *can* cheat and deceive us; that there are many corrupt and dishonest persons who are practicing, apparent mediumship who are cheats and mountebanks. We don't want anything to do with such people, and, if we can help it, won't. Therefore it is that there is need to try and develop more mediums.

LETTER IX.

WITHIN the last few days I have again witnessed the spiritual manifestations, made through Mrs. Keigwin as medium, at Jeffersonville. A table has been prepared to make the test on, at which it is utterly impossible for her to *reach* or *touch*, or even *see* the pencil. *She* does not put the slate under the table; does not hold it there, and does not take it

out after the writing has been done. Yet, when the slate is lying there, you hear the pencil writing plainly; and when you take it out, there is plainly written, in a good handwriting, a sensible, pertinent communication, directly answering a question asked, on a slate which *you know* you put under the table, yourself, without any writing or any mark of the pencil on it.

The fact is now, therefore, established, by clear proof to the human mind, and beyond all question, that Mrs. K. does not do the writing—that no mortal does it—and I trust that hereafter all cavil and doubt or suspicion about it will cease. The table is wholly enclosed on three sides with boards, is, in fact, down to within a few inches of the floor, a tight box, with only a slit or opening in the side next to the medium, just large enough to let the end frame of the slate project, for her to lay her fingers on. She does not do the writing, and does not *turn the slate in taking it out*, for she does not take it out, or move it at all, and the writing is *all upside down to the medium*. I had established these facts to my own satisfaction long ago, and I am glad that now no sensible person who will see this strange manifestation given on this or a similar table, will or *can* have a shadow of reason to charge deception on Mrs. K., whom I have always believed to be perfectly honest and sincere. These writings are not done by mortal hands, and there is now left to us

only the question, *by whom, or what power or intelligence are they done.*

I have had many communications from departed friends since I came, some of them wonderful tests, to which I may refer in a future article. My design in this is to give you a statement of another kind of spirit action, and a new kind to me, for I had never before witnessed such. There were many persons in the room, neighbors here, and of the most respectable people of this city and Louisville. Two men of the company took a strong rope, placed Mrs. K. on a chair, and tied her there—bound her hand, foot and body to the chair, and bound her hands to her sides and to the chair, in such a way that she could not move, and could not move her arms or hands at all. All saw this. I thought it almost cruel. They then gagged her with a handkerchief, so that she could not speak, though she could make a sound. (A few evenings before they had gagged her with a regular wooden gag. This I objected to as too bad, and a handkerchief was used.) They then placed the table in front of, and some three feet distant from her. All persons then sat around the room in a circle, leaving an open space between the circle and the table—with Mrs. K.'s chair about two feet from the wall of the room. Doctor H., of this city, who had aided to tie her, sat on her left and some four feet from her, and Mr. P., of Louisville, sat on her right. No other

persons were near her or the table. The room was then darkened, and the spirits were requested to write on the slate. It was done. They were then requested *to talk to us*. *It was done* in a plain, pleasant and manly voice. Then requested to untie her; it was done in about one fourth the time it took to tie her, and the rope first tapped Dr. H., and was thrown ten feet across the room, a voice saying "the persons that tied her should catch it for doing so." The light was then brought in, and Mrs. K. and the table were in the position they had been placed, and Mrs. K. was still gagged as she had been. I sat about five feet from her, was entirely silent and attentive, indeed, *watching*, and I know there was no person went near her; that her chair or the table were not moved, and that no sound of the speaking was made from her mouth, and that she could not, and of course did not, untie herself. This sitting proved (as many times has been done for me) that the writing is done on the slate when neither the medium nor any other mortal is near it; that a spirit can talk in the manner, and with the same sound and tone, as a mortal. That unseen hands and power did untie the rope, and unfasten the medium. These things, I say, were proven clearly to our human minds and understanding. Since that time I had two conversations, not a mere word or sound, but conversations, with the same spirit voice that spoke while untying the medium.

We conversed from opposite sides of the room, and all heard us. It was a man's voice, and he told me many things new and strange. He would tell me and others what spirits were in the room, and give names. He would tell when a spirit came to write, or wanted to write. When any person present would give an opinion as to any matter of spiritism, the voice would plainly and instantly say that is so, or that is right, or that is not so—affirming or denying the opinion. The voice or spirit critically examined the new table, lifted it up from the floor, turned it over, and seemed to be investigating it fully—talking to us while he did so. When the examination seemed to be over, I asked, "Well, will the table do?" He answered "Yes, but we like the old table better." I asked, "Won't the spirits like this one?" He answered, "Yes, may be, when they get used to it." This spirit voice has become very interesting to me, and has promised to give me all the information he can as to the spirit life. I promise myself much to be gleaned from him. There is nothing unpleasant, nothing fearful in conversation with him, any more than in a talk with a human being; indeed, nothing different, except that you *do not see* the talker. He can not talk except when a medium is present, but he can and does talk to me at the time the medium is talking to other persons. Both voices are heard *at once* frequently, and very different in tone, and he has talked, and can talk when the

medium was completely *gagged* so as not to be able to utter a word. It has been thoroughly and completely *proven* that ventriloquism had nothing to do with it.

I have on two different evenings since, conversed with him freely and lengthily, and often he has been very useful to me in my investigations. But the most wonderful manifestations I have ever seen occurred here last evening. They proved, I think, that Mrs. K. is possessed of mediumistic power, beyond any one I have ever read of.

It was written to me on the slate, by my daughter, that she would rather *talk* to me than write. I asked her how she could talk to me, and she told me. I requested Mr. K. to arrange for it, and he did so. The way it was to be done was wholly new to Mr. K. and to the medium, and to every one present except myself. I had once before witnessed a part of the mode. There were only three persons and the medium in the room, or in the house (except the children up stairs in bed). As soon as we were seated and the room darkened, my daughter commenced talking to me plainly, in a loud whisper, and very affectionately, about myself, her spirit life, our family and family affairs, naming my children and inquiring why I had done so and so (which I had done), and receiving from me explanations, and making suggestions, just as a person would in this life. She went across the room and talked to the

other gentleman. She afterwards, at my request, again talked to a lady (that had just come in) and warmly thanked her for her kindness to "her poor crippled father," and then turned to me and again conversed with me, concluding by saying that the medium was exhausted and she must stop. She then made a most beautiful and feeling prayer to our Great Creator to bless and protect me and our family, and ceased. If any person hearing this conversation and prayer (and all in the room heard it) could say or think or believe, that it was an emanation from an evil spirit, such a person would certainly be a fit subject for our lunatic asylum.

The mother of Mr. M. came and talked *twice* to her son and her daughter-in-law most affectionately, speaking of their family and family affairs and naming persons. A former wife of Mr. K. also came and talked to him a long time. All these conversations were heard by all of us. All the time the manly spirit I had previously heard, was in the room, and every few minutes would speak about some of the matters occurring. During the whole time the medium was frightened, agitated and nervous, and objected to them coming and touching her, and was once warmly reprimanded by the manly spirit's voice, for her agitation, and told not to be foolish about it.

These manifestations were very wonderful and never before made or witnessed here. I wished

several times that our Chaplain Lozier and others among us that seek light and are willing to find it, could have been present to see those things. There were many other incidents to which I may allude hereafter, but one of which I will mention here. While we were thus being talked to in the whispering voices of our friends, and by the full natural voice of the manly spirit, to which I have alluded, all at once, in one room, there was written on the slate *in the adjoining room* (which we had left), and where we left the slate lying on the table, perfectly clear, this: "These manifestations remind me of our visit together to Dayton." There was no person in that room. Both Mr. and Mrs. K. were all the time in the room with us, and the writing on the slate was seen only when it was first brought in the light. Thus we had right there, evidence of three strange facts, viz: that writing could be done on the slate when the medium was not near it; that our spirit friends *could* talk to us; and that the talking *could be done* in a voice very like a mortal's.

LETTER X.

WHEN I commenced writing these letters, my purpose was to write of only that *which I saw*. My examination has gone so far, and so many new and strange things have been shown to me, that I have been led to read, and ascertain whether others, who are or were reliable, good men and truthful witnesses, have ascertained similar facts. I find that they have, and that their experience tallies exactly, in most cases, with my own. I have, therefore, concluded to take their descriptions of occurrences sometimes, when I can verify them by my own experience. In my reading, I find the following, said by Baron Swedenborg, certainly one of the most learned and moral men this world ever saw:

“After death,” he says, “a man is so little changed that he even does not know but that he is living in the present world. He eats and drinks and enjoys as he does in this world; and the resemblance between the two worlds is so great that in the spiritual world there are palaces and houses, writing, books, employments. * * * * * In a word, there is, in the spiritual world, all and every thing that there is in the natural world, but in Heaven such things are in an infinitely more perfect shape.”

And again: "They who are in Heaven are continually advancing in the spring-time of life, and the more thousands of years they live, the more delightful and happy is the spring to which they attain. Good women, worn with age, come after a while more and more into the flower of youth, and into a loveliness which exceeds any conception of beauty that can be formed from what the eye has ever seen. Goodness moulds the form into its own image, and makes the countenance beam with grace and sweetness."

This is a delightful prospect for the much enduring sons and daughters of this earth; and I hope it is as true as it is delightful.

Just what Swedenborg there says, I have been told, or had written to me in the wonderful mode by which I have heretofore described, and by the spirits apparently of those who I know never read Swedenborg in their lives.

I find a description of some matters in our spirit life by a very intelligent spirit, speaking in Massachusetts during the last month. I give it to show the idea of caste and race, and some other matters. It is speaking of an article printed in a Louisiana paper, on the subject of a message purporting to come from a negro girl. The spirit says:

"He contends, if I understand him aright, that the negro has no distinct immortality. If he has any at all, it is only that that has been borrowed from

the whites. All he knows of the arts and sciences, of religion, of politics, of anything pertaining to intellectual life, he has borrowed from his white brothers. Being an imitative race, parrot-like, he says only what he has been taught to say—nothing more. Well, how much are we, claiming to be intelligent under white skins, in advance of the negro in this respect? Do we originate a single thought? Hardly. Do we not copy from all the past through which we have come? Do we not pattern after everything that we happen to fancy? We certainly do. If we hear a great thought expressed, we make use of it, no matter who expresses it.”

Further on, the article seems to express the idea that Spiritualists make a very great mistake in believing that the negro is an immortal soul, and ends up by making reference to a spirit message which he tells us he has received from a reliable source. The spirit informs him that all caste and grade of development, etc., are preserved intact in the spirit world. Caste is attracted to caste, color to color, form to form, race to race, and so on.

Following that article there appears one from the editor, which is in itself rather ambiguous. He does not take any particular stand in it, that we are able to discover, but seems to carry the idea that if immortality means anything at all, it means a conscious individual existence after death. There seems

to be a feeling thrown out in the entire article that the white race alone has the crowning gift of immortality; that we, God's favored, chosen ones, are alone endowed with eternal life; that we, and we alone, possess and hold our individuality intact after death: "Now, I wish to make here a very broad and unqualified statement, and it is this: according to the accepted definition of the terms individuality and immortality, we do not, any single one of us, possess immortality—not one of us. There never was an immortal spirit; there never will be one. Nature and Nature's God seem to have forbidden it. All intelligence seems to define individuality and immortality in one way—at least all that intelligence that is exhibited through physical life; and more than that, this intelligence seems to connect the two inseparably together. They seem to have woven bands around their immortality and individuality, and will not allow them to be separated, when they are, in fact, distinctly separated, just as much so as the musician is separated from the instrument upon which he performs. It is a well known scientific fact that we are constantly changing our individualities, and if a man or woman was to be measured spiritually by their individualities and the characteristics which they possess, and immortality is allied to that individuality—inseparably so—then we can not be immortal, because those individualities are constantly changing. We are not to-day

what we were yesterday—not any one of us. The individuality that belonged to us yesterday is not ours to-day. We do not think precisely to-day as we did yesterday; we do not act precisely the same. We change constantly. Those who knew us in childhood, only recognize us in mature age, perhaps, by our outward features, by our name, by those chiselings of physical life that may be recognized, but not by our thoughts, not by that which goes to make us intelligent beings. Paul says, “When I was a child I spake as a child, but when I became a man I put away childish things;” in other words, I changed my individuality. The mother who expects to meet her infant babe as a child in the spirit world, after years have been added to it in that life, will be disappointed, for the child grows in form and intellect. The old individuality it possessed with its baby life here has been added to again and again, till the little germ is entirely changed. The acorn produces the oak, but in looking at the oak who would say it was an acorn? Not one of us. It is no longer such. And yet it has come from that life; it belongs to it, but the individuality of the acorn is lost. Our immortality does not consist in form, or in the amount of intelligence we have, or in the particular kind of intelligence that we are endowed with. What does it consist in, then? Why, that we have the gift of life, under some condition, forever and forever. The time is at hand when all the tribes of

men and women inhabiting the earth now will become assured of this fact, that the spirit world is in close alliance with the natural world, that spirits can return and communicate, and more than this, for they will ever teach you not to preserve caste, color, forms, or any particular kind of religion—nothing of the kind. Nature will do all that. There is an instinctive power within each individual that determines what they shall like and what they shall dislike. We do not return preaching that the Caucasian shall admire the Ethiopian. No. If there is anything in the Ethiopian that inspires admiration in the Caucasian, they will admire. If there is nothing, they will not admire. We do not expect to turn to a rose or lily because we admire it. We do not expect the lily will turn to our life because we look upon it and declare it to be beautiful. The lily preserves its life and this particular form till its inner nature demands something more, something better, till it merges into a higher state; and so it is with us. The negro remains such in the spirit world till that life that belongs to him has need of a higher unfoldment, and then he has it. All the different forms of being are gifted with life, but so far as form is concerned, not with eternal life. We change as nature changes. The sun shines upon the earth, and brings out from her bosom the hidden treasures. Rains fall, and all the elements of nature combine to bring forth change—change in

every department of life. Oh, that all of us could read life aright; that her lessons were properly understood by us. We should then be willing to accord justice to the negro, to the Indian, to the flowers, to all kinds of minerals, to every form of being, and to ourselves; for by according justice through all departments of being, we alone can be just to ourselves."

I shall, in my next, give you a further account of manifestations, following up my last number, and afterward (as the question of deception in the writing is now settled), will give several communications, just as they come to us, that you may judge *who writes them*.

LETTER XI.

ASSUMING it to be now established beyond all denial or controversy, that this wonderful slate writing is not done by mortal hands, but is *superhuman*, I regard my examination as having advanced that one step, and shall not hereafter allow that question to occupy any more space in these letters. We have proven that a human being does not write it, and shall now proceed to try to ascertain who or what being or intelligence does write it. Inasmuch as our worldly teaching does not impress us with

the belief that departed spirits do, or can, come back and write to or communicate with the friends they have left on earth, and that about all the education we get in early life concerning spirits, presents them to us as ghostly spectres, clothed in white, wandering in grave-yards at midnight hours—frightful ideas to children, and often so impressed that superstition carries the image to the man and woman, who carry it to the grave. With this idea of a spiritual form, we can readily see that most persons would repel any belief that they do or can come to us. Yet nearly every denomination of Christians, nearly every preacher, does preach, has preached, as a religious truth, that the spirits of our friends who have died *are still with us and near to us*. If they are, then why may it not be possible that our great Creator has so arranged it that they *can* communicate with us? Who can say that He has not? Who *knows* that he has not? No one. Is it not just as possible that they can write and talk to us as it was for the angels to talk with Saul, and to the women at the sepulchre, and to many others, in Bible times? Certainly it is; for the laws of creation are unchangeable, and what mortal or immortal beings could do then, they can do now. There are various theories as to the character of the authors of these strange writings. Many of the conclusions are so far-fetched and so wire-drawn as to be almost ridiculous. Not one of those theories formed

outside of, and independent of writings themselves, have any reliable foundation. Most theorists admit that the writings are written by spirits, but assert that they are evil spirits. Why evil rather than good? In either case the power to come and write or talk to us must be natural, conferred by the Great Being who made all things—Nature's God. Pray, why should an evil spirit be sent us, rather than a good spirit? If an evil spirit can come, surely a good spirit can. Ask one of these theorists why he says that they are evil, and he will tell you that somebody, two or three thousand years ago, said that evil spirits came *then*. Admit it; but did not Moses, and Elias, and Samuel, and many others, come then also? They were not evil. But it seems to me that there is a better way to judge than by theorizing. We have the writings. In worldly matters we judge of a letter-writer by what the letter contains, just as we judge of a man by his talk, and the sentiments expressed. We can easily see in the writings themselves, whether they emanate from good or evil, and we are advised that Satan, or evil, can not do or produce good. Then if the writings inculcate or impress good, and not evil—if they contain advice or counsel and information promotive of good, of human happiness here and hereafter; if they preach the doctrines our Savior taught, the main foundation-stones of Christianity—then surely they are not evil teachers. So far as I have

any experience, they do all this. The letters written—the sentiments expressed to us by these spiritual friends, certainly give us the best evidence of their character. When kindness, affection, and family kindred regard; when the relations of life here, and incidents of that life and relationship, known only to the writer and reader, and probably felt only by them, are all expressed and referred to in the writing; when the feelings and actions of the life here in times past are written of and recalled; when a mother's love for her children with her in the new life, or left behind her here on earth, and her care for those left here, are all written, feelingly and fully, as if the writer were in mortal life, and the name of the writer is fully given, confirming the identification of the writer, whom the subject matter of the writing had designated, almost beyond all question, why should we theorize and resort to far-fetched opinions to find some other author? We should not, and until I have some better proof, *I will not*. That you may judge, I will now proceed to give you several writings, every one from the spirit of a person once well known and beloved, here on earth in our own city, respected always in life, and greatly mourned in death. I omit names, now, but am ready to stand sponsor to all, that the character of the person in life was as I have stated, and that the writings were the work of no mortal hands. They

nearly all write short letters, giving as a reason that they exhaust the medium.

The following was by a wife to her husband (he holding one end of the slate, the medium being a child only nine years old, and no other person being in the room). It was written last July, at two sittings:

MRS. B. TO HER HUSBAND.

DEAR J.—Good morning. Are you well this morning? You expressed a desire to know something of our spirit home. Well, it is far superior to anything you can imagine. The good (spirits) go up to the higher spheres, and the wicked go to the lower spheres. The good ones can go down below to the wicked ones, but the wicked ones can not come up to us. We very seldom go among those below us, unless sent on an errand of mercy from our controlling spirits, who send us there to try and reform them, and teach them the way of progression. As for our apparel, about which you asked, we dress the same as in earth life, spiritually. We all enjoy ourselves, and can go wherever we please, after our work is done. That work is trying to educate young children, and helping others up into the higher spheres. This is all I can say this morning. I will finish after (your) dinner. I go on duty now. Your spirit wife,

SAME TO SAME.

DEAR HUSBAND:—How do you feel after tea? Oh, J——, you don't know how I feel when you come down here to see me, for you say you only come here to see me. Oh, how glad I am to think you love me yet, and that you often think of me. I am continually with you, my dear, and always will be as long as you are in the flesh. Yes, J——, as you say, spiritualists have a good deal to contend with, and are laughed at by a great many people; but ere long they will all be spiritualists. Then the first believers will be looked upon as something wonderful for holding the truth. Oh, this is spoken of in the Holy Book, and why shall it be denied? It hurts me when you ask me questions that you really know, for if this is not L., your loving spirit wife, who *can* it be but me? Who can doubt it? This has taken all this child's (the medium's) power away from her, and she is weak; so farewell for to-night.

L——.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

WRITTEN SEPTEMBER 28.

DEAR HUSBAND:—Good morning; how do you feel this beautiful Sabbath morning? I can write with ease this morning, for the air is pure and sweet. We can not write when the atmosphere is damp like yesterday was. When it is nice like to-day,

we can do so much better. God always furnishes power to succeed, where it is best success should come. Now there is great need of an opening between the two worlds, and you all ought to thank God for it (the opening). I am satisfied with what God has done for me; and from my spirit home I beg of all to raise at once and do all you can for this good and new science, and you will be rewarded in your heavenly spirit-home. We are none of us in Heaven yet. We have never met our Savior. We have spheres, and they are numbered up to seven, for adults.

The little children are in the eighth. They are all more pure, and are nearer their happy home in Heaven. They can come down to see their parents in lower spheres, but we can not go to them. When we leave the spheres and go to the *third* Heaven, we do not desire to visit earth. Our seventh sphere is the *first Heaven*, the little children's (eighth sphere) is *second* Heaven.

L. H. B.

It must be remembered that nearly every descriptive statement given in the foregoing letters was in reply to inquiries made by me, at some time previously, either of her or some other spirit then writing. The last paragraph (as to Heaven) was in reply to a question asked by me the evening before of my old friend Judge McDonald (who was then writing to me) as to what they understood in the

spirit land by the word Heaven, as distinguishing it from spheres. His writing (and all writing) was interrupted *then* by visitors coming into the room and disturbing the medium. Next morning when the medium sat for me, the above came from my wife.

But this number is long enough. In my next I will give you other letters from the spirits of other persons.

LETTER XII.

I now give you some other letters coming through the same medium (Mrs. Keigwin), to other parties, some of them written in my presence, and others when I was not present.

These letters I give to show the character of the communications made by those spiritual intelligences; and that they are filled with affection, sympathy and general kindly regard, as good people on earth have for each other, and that the idea and feeling of veneration for and worship of our great Creator is never lost sight of by them. Strange as the facts they state, and the descriptions of spirit life they give are, we have no reason, no knowledge, no authority to doubt their correctness. *It can be*, so far as we know, just they state it, as well as any

other way; and the shadowy dreams of mankind, as to the realities of our next state of existence, after this world shall have passed away from us, have a much poorer foundation than this spiritual statement.

FROM THE REV. E—— R—— TO HIS WIFE.

DEAR WIFE OF MY YOUTH:—Good morning, S—a. It is a glorious thought to you, to be able to communicate with your beloved ones who have gone to the far-off spirit land.

The power given to this lady (the medium) is a boon given to *prove the immortality of the soul*. We are often watching over you and reading your thoughts, etc. Good morning.

Your ever loving husband,

E—— R——.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

You say that letter was not what you expected. That you wanted a description of this summer-land. It is perfectly elegant; it is far beyond your imagination. It is laid off in squares, and they are called the Spheres. They are numbered—first, second, third, and so on, up to the seventh. The very good go to the seventh (which is the highest), and the wicked are in the first and second, and are very unhappy. We, that are in the seventh, are perfectly happy. We have our duties to perform,

and when they are done we are free to go where we choose, and so you see I can be with you. We have libraries here the same as you have; also, fruits and flowers, which are very beautiful. Little children progress here; they are taught to read and write. They grow much faster here than they do with you. A child that has been here ten years is matured into man and womanhood. We have no trouble here; all is peace to those who are good enough to enjoy peace. This is not all I could tell you, but is enough for this time.

E—— R.——.

FROM THE SAME (AND OTHERS) TO THE SAME.

[The following seems to be from a husband, child and sister, uniting in one letter:]

WIFE, MOTHER AND SISTER:—We are here for the purpose of talking to you for a short time only. Never expect any good manifestations when the weather is so excessively warm. Oh, ma, how glad I am that we can return to those we love; but we have such a beautiful way to return. Never for a moment have a fear when death enters your dear household, for it is beautiful. Our God in Heaven does all for the best, and why do you fear His glorious works? You know not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Heavenly Father's notice. We have our birds, and flowers, and trees, and grasses and everything you have. Ah, you think

how strange is the working of Providence. You ought to be glad that the lines of your lots are here with us who are gone to the heavenly realms of a happy shore, to await your entrance there, and to help you prepare to sit at your Father's throne, among ten thousand harps, and hear the sweet voices of angels hovering over your friends whom you have left on the cold earth.

Farewell! And Oh, Lord, I pray thee, bring all your children to think, and lead them out of darkness. Amen. E——.

FROM A WIFE TO HER HUSBAND.

DEAR J——: That *was* mother (her mother) that was here Saturday night, and she wants me to write for her to thee. She says tell thee that she is very happy in her spirit home. We are all together, my mother and father and children, and our children and grandchild (M——'s child, who was here last night.)†

This is a happy place. There is no sickness or suffering here—all is peace, pleasure and happiness. We have rooms in our mansion, and each family has a room. No difference how large the family is, there is always room for one more. Dear J——, I am waiting patiently for you to come and take your place, but you can't come until the Lord is ready for you to leave your earth-home. But when you

† That grandchild had at that time written to me on the slate.

do come, I will be at the golden gate to unclasp it, and welcome you into our beautiful summer-land, there to meet all who have been there years ago. Do you write to F——y, and tell her mother is going to bring her a nice bouquet from her father. J——, we *can* make spirit flowers, but then they soon fade away, perhaps while you are looking at them.

Your spirit wife,

L——.

I have many more and most excellent letters.

LETTER XIII.

I FIND the following answers of spirits (through mediums) on several subjects quite interesting to every one, which I give in this letter. I have, in my investigation of this subject, gathered quite a large number of extracts of those spiritual statements, selecting only those plainly and intelligently stated, and well authenticated as genuine; and first, what they say of their affection for us, and their presence with us. I give the questions and answers both, that it may be better understood, viz:

QUESTION. Have the spirits of our departed friends the same affection for us in the spirit land as they do here?

ANSWER. Oh, certainly yes; only it is more perfect. It was a child here. It was matured in the spirit world.

Q. Do they always know us?

A. Always; they never fail to.

Q. Are they always permitted to be with and watch over us?

A. Not always. Earthly circumstances sometimes prevent their coming into very near *rapport* with you, and again, sometimes earthly circumstances draw them very close to you—as near as the pulsations of your own lives.

Q. Have we reason to believe that they sympathize with their friends upon earth in their distress?

A. Yes, you have reason to believe it. They come, and in all possible ways endeavor to alleviate the distress, to drive away the clouds and show you the sunshine. They are by no means removed to some far-off Heaven. Heaven is but a condition of mind, wherever they are; if happy, they are in Heaven. Sometimes it is by your cottage fires, sometimes in your pulpits, sometimes in your counting houses, sometimes upon the ocean. In all the varied walks of life are unseen spirits, who are actually living and taking part in the scenes of life with you.

Q. Do spirits regard the misdeeds of their earth-friends in the same light they did while here in the physical form?

A. Oh, no; they regard them with sympathy, with charity, with pity; they regard them in the full light of truth; are able to see behind the effect, and discern the cause; they know wherefore their friends take this or that course in life; they see the propelling forces—the levers that move their friends in this or that direction. And when they see them forced by circumstances to that which is the lesser good, they mourn over the course they have taken, but not without hope; because they know that by the experience they will gain in traveling that way they will attain strength to free themselves, and will avoid such a course in future by coming into harmony with better laws, by making themselves acquainted with their surroundings. When we are thoroughly acquainted with the laws that govern us, we shall of course place ourselves in harmony with those laws, and shall move on in concert with them. It is only because we are ignorant of ourselves and the law, and our relation to the law, that we kick so hard against the law. If we were not ignorant, we should never do this, because we should know that the law is greater than ourselves, and would rend us more severely if we were not in harmony with it.

Q. Is the highest aim of spiritual life to mingle with the scenes of this earth?

A. No, it is not the highest, but it is the highest that some spirits can enjoy. It is not the highest that all can enjoy, but the highest that some can.

Q. Is there anything we can do to assist our spirit friends to influence us or to speak to us?

A. Yes, a great deal. Love them with all your soul. That is the very best thing you can do. Think of them often, not as dead, but as living and with you, and they will seek all possible means to respond to your thoughts, sometimes so tangibly that you can not mistake their presence. They will do the very best they can to do this, and in many cases will give you perfect satisfaction.

Q. You say love them with all our hearts?

A. I do.

Q. That is to fulfill the law of true religious life, as expressed in what is called the Golden Rule?

A. Yes; love fills the entire religious circle—is the circle itself. It is all there that is alive to any system of religion. When you love perfectly and truly, you exhibit all the characteristics of the divine nature; you shadow forth religion in its divinest sense. You can not injure a thing you love. It would be impossible.

Here is what is said about the *religion* which spiritualism teaches. One would hardly believe that Satan, or a demon, or any evil spirit, would teach us this:

“If spiritualism teaches any investigating soul to think less of the pure doctrines of Jesus of Nazareth, then such a soul had better abandon the investigation of spiritualism. Spiritualism is but the

voice of this same Jesus, the Christ, speaking unto the people of this day, but how few there are who recognize this voice. Even those who pretend to know most about Jesus know the least generally. Your correspondent, Mr. Chairman, seems to be wedded to an idol. He seems to have more love for the personality of Jesus, than for the divine principles which he taught. He seems to forget that there is a divine truth in spiritualism, precisely analogous to that which was taught by Jesus."

"I would that there were more devout worshippers at the shrine of the spirit of Christ, and less at the shrine of the personality. I would that men and women could worship more the divine principle, and less the image. But so it is. The crust of humanity at present is not thin enough for the spirit to look out and beyond the form of the spirit that animates the form. But since we are growing through the conditions of life, passing higher and still higher, we have a hope that the time will come when religion, pure and undefiled, will be known; that religion that worships God in spirit and in truth; that knows no form; that recognizes no altars save those the living God has erected everywhere; that expects no general judgment, but knows that the judgment seat is within every living soul. Your correspondent has but to compare notes between modern spiritualism and that Judean Spiritualism taught by Jesus, and he can but come to

the conclusion, if he is a reasonable individual, that they are one and the same, and that if he worships the spirit of Christ as exhibited upon the plain of Judea, he worships the spirit of Spiritualism as it is seen to-day."

I have given the foregoing, obtained from spirit-speaking, a great way off from here, as corroborating the facts shown by the letters contained in my last two communications, viz:

That affection for friends and kindred left on earth does not cease at our death; that the spirit home is here in this world, this creation, all around us, and not in some far-off place, whose locality we can not even imagine, and our spirit friends are all around us; and that spiritualism is not irreligion, not anti-Christian, but teaches the very essence of Christianity, purity of life and worship of God in spirit and in truth.

LETTER XIV.

I CONTINUE my extracts from the statements and teachings of spirits, through various mediums, on subjects very interesting to us. These extracts are taken from various speakings, at different times, and may seem often unconnected and repetitions. When

they are apparently the latter, they are from different spirits and given at different times, and confirmatory of each other.

As to what is LIFE, SPIRIT, SOUL and VITALITY, they say as follows, viz:

QUESTION. Is life, or that principle of vital activity which is manifested through the human organism, spirit? If not, what is it leaves the body at death?

ANSWER. Spirit I define as something undiscernable by human sense: something which no living soul can measure or analyze. I define life to be, so far as we understand it, a manifestation of spirit. Those things which our senses perceive, recognize, are the things of life, all *living* things, every one of them—not one dead; and they are all manifestations of spirit. That subtle power that defies the scalpel and passes out of the body at the change, called death, I believe to be spirit, co-eternal with the God-spirit and part and portion of the divine life, such a part as that divine life saw fit to exercise over humanity. You call it the spirit of man, the soul of man or woman. It matters not by what term it is recognized. It is the one spirit, the infinite, all-pervading, a something indestructible, without creation and without end.

Jesus understood this when he said, "Consider the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin, yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these," clearly

teaching that the God-spirit was there and cared for the lily. And again he says, "Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Heavenly Father's notice." How beautiful! clearly saying again that God dwells in the sparrow, and, therefore, careth for it. And, if he dwells there, the sparrow has an immortality just as you and I have. Why, heaven to me would be no heaven at all without its birds and its flowers, its trees, its grasses, and all that which goes to make up the body of Nature here. Heaven would be no heaven at all. It would be a barren wilderness, devoid of all that the soul delights to look upon.

Q. You consider all spirit immortal?

A. I do, most certainly. And I have most ample proofs that it is all immortal.

That spirit is not matter, matter is every day proving. But that spirit is inseparably connected with matter, matter is also every day proving. Matter is the expression of spirit; not the spirit—the outer bark, the foilage, the branches—not the inner, invisible life. What the advantage? Why, all intelligence can answer that question as well as we can. Of what advantage is it to you of this age that you have greater light than they who lived ages before you did? Since you require greater light, certainly it is for your advantage to have it. All the expressions of spirit through matter are not only an advantage to matter, but also

to intelligence, to that subtle force that expresses itself through the human brain, and says, "Behold, this is very beautiful, or very grand." The world of matter was made for the world of intelligence. When you keep this in your mind, you will hardly wonder that matter changes its form.

Q. Is the spirit of the infant an emanation from that of the parent? And if so, is the spirit of the parent less an individualized entity, or does it suffer any diminution or disarrangement in its powers?

A. The infant is physically a physiological result of the parent's life, but spiritually it is not. It is a spirit independent of either father or mother. You may be sure of this. It is from God, the Great Spirit, the Father and Mother, the Whole, the Universal Life.

Those who claim to be teachers of the people should understand something more than the shell—something more than the sign. They should understand the inner, the subtle force that moves the hand, that acts upon the brain that moves them, and that sends out souls to the other life by thousands and tens of thousands at every breath. It is vain to say this is one of the mysteries and can not be understood. It is not. It hath pleased our Father to open the books to us, and if we refuse to read them and study them till the truth dawns upon us, it is our own fault; by no means the fault of the great Infinite Spirit moving through Nature. Yes,

there is such a force as you call *vitality*, and it is the electro-magnetic aura, or gas, which is the same to the human body that hydrogen is to water, or oxygen is to the atmosphere. It is generated by the functions of the body, and its power and quality is also determined by the same, a vital force, a subtle principle that not only pervades the human form and keeps it in motion, but pervades all other forms. You call it sometimes electricity—sometimes magnetism. You divide it off into different degrees or states, and give it different names. It is an imponderable essence, that keeps these human machines in motion by playing upon the nerves, and the nerves in turn play upon the muscles. If it was not for the presence of this vital force in the system, decay would ensue. Wherever it is absent, decomposition begins to take place. If any part of the system is diseased, the vital force is not there. If it was, it would ward off disease; it would keep the parts in health. The absence of it lays us open to disease. The presence of it keeps off disease, and keeps us in harmony with Nature's laws. When the vital force is lacking in a plant it dies. Its leaves wither; its stalk becomes unable to transmit anything that will give new life from the roots. So it is with all animal life. When the vital force is lacking, the animal form begins to change—to decompose—the particles begin to separate. This vital force is found in the atmosphere, in the water,

in the lightning, in the darkness. You find it everywhere. We may as well call it God as to call it anything else.

Q. Is the spirit the offspring of soul, as some assert?

A. I believe that the two terms, spirit and soul, are synonymous. Some determine the soul to be the inner life, and the spirit to be the body of the inner life. I can draw no line of demarcation between the two. I believe them to be terms representing one idea. For my own part I have never been able to discover any distinction between the two. I hear many spirits talking about the spirit and talking about the soul, but I find by their conversation that they mean one and the same thing. Some call the consciousness of human life the soul—some call it the spirit. Some make a distinction, and call the spirit the clothing of the soul—the external through which the soul manifests.

Q. In the transition to spirit life does the spirit enter at once into a healthy, manly condition, or must it go through a process of development before coming to its full stature?

A. As death, or the change so-called, leaves you, so the spirit world takes you up. Some spirits may become possessed of that entire vigor of manhood or womanhood that is so desirable to mentality, immediately after entering the spirit world; others

remain in a dormant state, incapable of action to any great extent, for a long time.

When the last particle of magnetic life has been separated from the animal body, then the spirit body is thoroughly and well formed. It is a distinct, objective intelligence to all other spirits.

Q. Do you, as a spirit, possess a more definite idea of your destiny, and the destiny of the human race, than you possessed while in the earth form?

A. Yes, more definite, but not absolutely definite. We see a little further into the future than we did when here; that is all.

Q. Am I right in believing that the body serves to develop the spirit or spirit body, and, having answered its purpose, fades and dies?—the spirit body, having attained its maturity, remains firm, not sharing in the slightest degree in the decay of the material body, and presenting the same appearance when the man dies at the age of ninety that it would if he had died at thirty-five or forty?

A. Your correspondent is very nearly correct. The spirit body is indeed, to a very great extent, a production of the physical body and physical, magnetic life. And that spirit body is not always matured here in this life. The infant possesses the spirit body of the infant, and that spirit body matures after death, perhaps, just as well as before that change.

Q. Do the souls of men and women essentially

differ, independently of the conditions that surround their bodies?

A. Not as souls; in essence they are one; but in the manifestation that accrues from the essence they are more than one.

Q. What is the difference between spirit and animal magnetism?

A. The difference is in degree. One is more refined than the other. Animal magnetism is that that is adapted to animal life; more crude, more dense than that adapted to spirit life. In essence they are one. They differ only in degree.

LETTER XV.

I continue my extracts from the statements and teachings of spirits, given at different places, through mediums of good reputation, on the subject below; and, first, as to Guardian Spirits, and as to our knowing our friends and kindred in the next life, they teach as follows:

Q. Is it prudent for us to expect to recognize our friends in the spirit world when we fail to do so, in very many cases, after an absence from our most intimate friends in this life?

A. I can not say as to whether it is prudent or

not, but you must expect to meet with those obstacles incident to change in the spirit world just as you meet with them here. But the soul has the gift of eternal memory, and it is through the action of that that we are able to prove, oftentimes, the absolute identity of our friends in spirit who have been our friends for a long time, but have progressed out of our social sphere. For instance, the mother lays her baby away by death. She herself remains for three-score years or more on the earth. She remembers the child as her baby. She remembers all the circumstances attending its birth and its death—all the incidents of its young life. They are all treasured up in her memory. When she goes to the spirit world she meets, not her baby, but a mature spirit—a beautiful intelligence, that claims her as its earthly mother. But she says, “My child was an infant. I laid it away under the sods of earth in its babyhood. It can not be that you are my child.” Straightway there are numbers of intelligent spirits who were present at the second birth—the death of this child—and know all the circumstances pertaining to its young life here. They say to her, “This little child has passed through certain experiences in earth life. You know them well. You know the time of its death and all the circumstances attending it.” “Yes, I know that,” says the mother, “but my child died a baby.” Then all the changes through which it has passed are portrayed

to the mother. She sees them all upon the canvas of being. There is her baby. There all the steps in its life of progress—every one. She sees the changes and the analogy between them all, and then she knows that the mature spirit who claims her as its parent is her own child.

Q. Do we recognize each other in the spirit world?

A. Certainly we do.

Q. Is the spirit body a perfect type of the natural physical body? When the latter is deformed, will the deformity appear in the spiritual body after death?

A. Those deformities which are the result of accident, so-called by you, will not appear upon the spirit body, for it can suffer no accident. That deformity that appears upon the body that is outwrought from the inner forces will appear also upon the spirit body.

Q. Suppose a person is born with native deformities, are these seen in the spirit?

A. They are seen upon the spirit form, and remain there until that form passes beyond them in growth.

Q. Then the spirit will of necessity make itself apparent in that form through mediums? It might be recognized clairvoyantly by those deformities?

A. Yes, certainly, as by the color of the hair, the eyes, the skin, the size, the temperament. All

these are results of the projecting power of spirit through matter, therefore they appear upon the spirit body as upon the natural body. But if by accident, by violence, a limb of the natural body is disfigured, that is not seen upon the spirit body, for it comes from the external, and belongs to the external. The negro is the negro still in the spirit world; the Indian is the Indian still. And why? Because he has been made such by the action of the inner or spiritual forces upon the outer or natural forces.

Q. Do our spirit friends in the next life have any influence over us here?

A. Certainly they do. They try all they can to influence us for our good. They have a very great influence.

Q. Do we all have a guardian spirit in the spirit home?

A. It is to be presumed that you all have somebody in the spirit world who is attracted to you.

Q. How are we to understand when they are with us?

A. You can not always know.

Q. Are there not times when we can understand?

A. Some persons are susceptible to the knowledge of their presence, and some are not.

Q. In what condition should our minds be, in order to receive their impressions best?

A. Passive, negative. A quiet state is best for receiving spirit impressions.

Q. Do they ever shake us in our beds or chairs in order to make themselves known?

A. They do, certainly.

Q. Do our guardian spirits at all times attend us?

A. Not always. You sometimes entertain erroneous ideas concerning guardian spirits. You should not suppose that they must of necessity be always with you. They are those spirits who, from sympathy, are attracted to you from time to time, and seek to do whatever they may be able toward assisting you through life here toward the life that is to come. They warn you of danger, if they can. They warn you in all possible ways, and assist you up the hill of mortal life as they may be able to, but they are not always present with you. They come and go as your necessity demands.

Q. If our mind goes out toward them, will it be likely to draw them towards us?

A. Yes, unless there is a power acting in contradiction to your mind that is stronger than your mind. Then they will be likely to be drawn the other way.

PRAYER.

Q. What is the cause of those waves of feeling that sometimes sweep over the soul, which can only

find their appropriate expression in prayer—those intense, often unutterable desires for greater light, holiness, purity, closer communion, and more perfect assimilation with the spirit of all goodness? In other words, what is the spirit that prompts us to prayer?

A. I believe that we are acted upon constantly by the great infinite spirit of Nature, and when we feel in our souls that rising up, that spirit of prayer which would cause us to leave our darkness and enter light, then it is, I believe, that the spirit of infinite goodness sheds holy dews upon us. We rise by temptation. We are tempted to leave the past perpetually. The soul feels that there is a better state of existence, and that it is an heir to that better state. It reaches out clairvoyantly and perceives the future, and, being dissatisfied with the present because of the future, it holds up its hands in prayer to the great spirit, and thus comes nearer to that spirit, comes into *rapport* with the higher good, leaves its present state of mentality, and rises for the time being, at least, to a higher state. It is, as one writer hath said, "The key to heaven." Another hath said, "Prayer is the wings of the angels." And another hath said, "It is the voice of God speaking to human hearts," and I believe it is.

Q. When we thus pray, do we receive the things for which we ask? And may our friends be blessed

with these same promptings and desires in answer to our prayers?

A. It is a self-evident fact that we do not always receive things for which we pray, but it is a self-evident fact, also, that we are made better by prayer. No one can ever give birth to a high and holy aspiration—which is prayer, to me—but is made better for it. They rise in the scale of mind. They shed something of their darkness, and take on something of light.

Q. What is the secret of the different degrees of faith we feel at different times, in regard to the bestowal of the blessings we seek?

A. We are constantly being acted upon by all surroundings, and because we are, we are perpetually changing. Our mental state is constantly changing. We are sometimes full of faith, and sometimes where faith should be there is a vacuum. We act upon all other intelligences, and all other things, and other intelligences act upon us. We are motes in the sunbeams of God's infinite power. We are sometimes here and sometimes there. We can not always think alike. We can not always act alike. Variety seems to be the order of change. No two expressions of a soul are exactly alike.

Q. When you pray to the Father, how do you expect that prayer to be answered? Through the means of spirits, or by the Father himself?

A. I believe that God is ever present with us;

that the Infinite Spirit makes all things to serve it; and when we pray we do but make ourselves receptive to the highest good. We fit ourselves to receive blessings, and they come to us. We pray for truth, and our very desire for truth fits us to receive it.

Q. Is there any such thing as a special Providence that directs all the acts of life, to whom we can pray to ask for particular blessings?

A. All the special Providence that I know of is general law, such as pertains to general life. I do not know—indeed I do not believe that we can change the law one jot or tittle by our prayers. We can place ourselves in harmony with our circumstances, with the conditions by which we are divinely and humanly surrounded by prayer, which is all, in my opinion, that we can do. We might pray to all eternity for the sun to come down that we may examine it. Would it come? I think not. Prayer makes us in harmony with the law. It fits us to receive what we ask for, but it does by no means change the law itself.

PROGRESS AND ETERNITY.

Q. Are the spirit's chances for progression expanded or limited by the change usually termed death?

A. They are expanded, because the spirit does

not meet with those external states that it meets with here. It has none of that kind of poverty to contend with that it had to contend with here. Knowledge is free for all. It is not closed within the walls of any institution; it does not demand gold and silver for our instruction; it is free for all; therefore you will at once perceive that the spirit enlarges its freedom at death. It takes on new conditions; it has new faculties added to it. The worm, when it leaves the chrysalis, becomes the butterfly; before, it was but the grub crawling on the ground. It died, and rose again with a larger freedom; and thus it is with the soul.

Q. Do all spirits enter upon the road of progression as soon as they pass from this earth, or otherwise?

A. The law of progress has been in action from all past eternity. Spirits are always progressing here in this world, and in the spirit world proper. Although they may seem to stand still, though they may make no perceptible forward movement, yet the wheels of progression are ever revolving in the experience of every soul.

Q. Do you have degrees of progress?

A. Yes, there are very many degrees of progress. Some are more marked than others. Some souls progress in an even, harmonious manner, others in a rough, uneven manner. Some go down into the valley, that they may progress thereby, and

drink large draughts of the waters of bitterness and despair; but they are progressing. Others move along upon the quiet current of an even life, and they, too, are progressing.

Q. Is that reconcilable with the idea of eternal progress? In other words, can we divide eternity?

A. We certainly can, because if we could not, it would not well serve the purpose of individual life.

Q. How can you divide? Is there any point of departure, or terminus, in eternity?

A. No, we have no terminus, because eternity implies a condition without beginning and without ending.

They thus teach us that the soul and spirit are the same; that it is only a difference in name; that the soul or spirit is immortal; that it was without beginning and will be without end, or eternal.

This is not a new idea, by any means. Mankind have been impressed with it, and in all of nature's works have had proof of it in all ages since our world began.

Our Saviour gave strong testimony to its truth; but long before His appearance on earth it was believed and asserted by the most learned and religious men.

In the great Hindoo war, the war of the Mahabarat, in the most important battle of that war, on the field of Curu-Khetu, when the Empire of India

was contested and lost—and where, in a battle lasting eighteen days, myriads were slain—Arjuna, one of the chiefs, was reluctant to begin the fight, because he felt he would thus be wading to the throne through the blood of his brother, kinsmen and friends, who were opposed to him. He tells Crishna, who was his companion, of this feeling. Crishna was a great man and great religionist, and was afterwards, and is yet, probably, in some parts of India, worshiped as a saint; he was also called Apollo. He chided and rebuked Arjuna for his tameness, and replied to him in the following sublime manner. (See Pocock's India, page 150.) This was about fifteen hundred years before our Saviour:

“Ne’er was the time when I was not, nor thou, nor yonder kinds
of earth.

Hereafter ne’er shall be the time, when one of us shall cease to be.
The soul within its mortal frame, glides on through childhood,
youth, and age,

Then in another form renewed, renews its stated course again.

All indestructible is he that spread the living universe;

And who is he, that shall destroy the work of the Indestructible?

Corruptible these bodies are, that wrap the ever-lasting soul—

The eternal, unimaginable soul. Whence on to battle Bharata!

For he that thinks to slay the soul, or he that thinks the soul is
slain,

Are both alike deceived. It is not slain, it slayeth not,

It is not born, it doth not die; past, present, future, know it not;

Ancient, eternal, and unchanged, it dies not with the dying frame.”

Thus was the immortality of the soul taught by the ancients, just as Spiritualism teaches it now.

LETTER XVI.

I am very glad that Judge Huff, Dr. Yeakel and others, who are well known, and most excellent and reliable men in Tippecanoe county, have exposed that abominable cheat and trickster, Church. They were deficient in duty only, in not ducking him in the Wabash river. Any society that tolerates his connection with them one moment after this exposure at Lafayette, will be unworthy of anybody's respect, and so far as they may pretend any connection with the investigation of the sublime and sacred theory of Spiritualism, should be at once and everywhere repudiated. Honest and sincere people are interesting themselves in the investigation of Spiritualism, and it is lamentable that they should have to meet the odium of such actions as those of this fellow; for no matter how innocent they may be, nor how much abhor such *tricks* and *counterfeiting*, many in the world, who will look no further, will reject the *whole* because that *part* was false.

In my reading, lately, I have come across a very

interesting, and, indeed, a logical and scientific, explanation of some of the matters about spirits and spiritualism in the "Phrenological Journal." I commend it to the attention of every one. I extract the material part of it. As it is too long for this communication, I will continue and finish it in my next. It occurs in a communication purporting to explain the famous writing board called *Planchette*, but extends, as you will see, to many other matters, and more important ones :

I give this as I find it. I do not know when or where it was given. The thing must stand as its own voucher. It is as follows, namely :

QUESTION—What is the nature of this power, intelligence, and will, that communicates with us in this mysterious manner ?

ANSWER—It is the reduplication of your own mental state ; it is a spirit ; it is the whole spiritual world ; it is God—one or all, according to your condition and the form and aspect in which you are able to receive the communication.

Q. In saying "It is a spirit," do you mean that you, yourself, the immediate communicating agent, are an intelligence outside of, and separate from, myself, and that that intelligence is the spirit or soul of a man who once occupied a physical body, as I now do ?

A. That is what I assert—only in re-affirmation

of what the world, in explanation of similar phenomena has been told a thousand times before.

Q. It is so contrary to our ordinary course of thought; contrary to the general experience of the world up to this time. In fact, the more highly educated minds of the world have long agreed in classing the idea as among the grossest of superstitions.

A. If you would, in place of each one of the assertions, affirm directly the contrary, you would come much nearer the truth. It is certain that the highest minds, as well as the lowest, of all ages and nations, with only such exceptions as prove rather than disprove the rule, have confidently believed in the occasional interposition of spirits in mundane affairs. True, there are, in this age, many of the class which you call the "more highly educated minds," who do not admit such an idea; but do not even these generally admit that there is an invisible world of spirits?

Q. Most of them do; all professing Christians do. I do, certainly.

A. Let me test their consistency, and yours, then, by asking, do you and they hold that one and the same God made all worlds, both natural and spiritual, and all things in them?

A. Of course they do. How otherwise?

A. Then, seeing that you acknowledge the unity of the cause of all worlds, and all things in them,

you must acknowledge a certain union of all these in one universal system as the offspring of that one cause, must you not ?

Q. Yes ; I suppose the totality of things, natural and spiritual, must be acknowledged as forming, in some sense, one uniform system of diverse, but mutually correlated parts.

A. Please tell me, then, how there can be any united system in which the component parts, divisions and subdivisions, down even to the most minute, are not each necessarily and always in communication with all the others, either immediately, or mediately ?

In admitting a connection of any kind, whether mediate or immediate, between the natural and spiritual worlds, you admit that a communication between the two worlds—hence between all things of one and all things of the other ; hence between the intelligent inhabitants of one and those of the other—is logically not only possible but probable, not to say certain ; and in this admission you yield the point under immediate discussion, and virtually concede that the idea of spirit-communication is not only not absurd, but is, indeed, among the most reasonable of things, to which ignorance and materialistic prejudice alone has given the aspect of absurdity.

Can you not go a little farther and admit for established fact, proved by the testimony from the

book from which you derive your religious faith, that communications between spirits and mortals have sometimes taken place?

Q. True, but the Bible calls the spirits thus communicating "familiar spirits," and those who have dealings with them "witches" and "wizards," and forbids the practice under severe penalties. How does that sound to you, my intelligent friend?

A. The way you put it, it sounds as though you did not quite understand the full scope of my question; but no matter, since it is at once a proof and an acknowledgment on your part that spirits have communicated with mortals—the essential point in dispute, which once admitted, will render further reasoning more plain. Let me ask you, however, was not the practice of consulting familiar spirits that is forbidden in the Bible, a practice that was common among the heathen nations of those times?

Did not the heathens consult familiar spirits as petty divinities, or gods, and as such, follow their sayings and commands implicitly? And would not the Israelites, to whom the Old Testament was addressed, have violated the first command in the decalogue by adopting this practice? And was not that the reason, and the only reason, why the practice was forbidden?

Q. To each of these questions, I answer: Yes, certainly.

A. Do the Old or New Testament writings anywhere command us to abstain from all intercourse with spirits? or from any intercourse which would not be a violation of the command, "Thou shalt have no other God before me?"

Q. Really, I do not know that the Bible contains any such command.

A. Do you not know, on the contrary, that spirits other than those called "familiar spirits," often did communicate, and with apparently good and legitimate purposes, too, with men whose names are mentioned in the Bible?

Q. Well, I must in candor say, that there were some cases of that kind. Let me ask, is it true, as generally held, that when a man becomes disencumbered of the clogs and hinderances of the flesh, and passes into the spirit world, his intellect becomes more clear and comprehensive?

A. That is true, as a general rule.

Q. Why is it that the speaking and writing purporting to come from spirits are so generally in the bad grammar, bad spelling, and other distinctive peculiarities of the style of the medium, and so often express precisely what the medium knows, imagines, or surmises, and nothing more?

A. And what of the style and merits of the communications purporting to come from spirits to other persons and through other channels—are they not, as an almost universal rule, decidedly superior

to anything the medium could produce unaided by the influence, whatever it may be, which acts upon him?

Q. Perhaps they are; indeed, I must admit I have known many instances of alleged spirit-communications, which, though evidently stamped with some of the characteristics of the medium, were quite above the capacity of the latter.

A. By just so much, then, as the production given through a medium is elevated above the medium's normal capacity, is the influence which acts upon him to be credited with that production. And now for the question why these communications should be tinged with the characteristics of the medium at all; and why spirits can not, as a general rule, communicate to mortals their own normal intelligence, freely and without obstruction, as man communicates with man, or spirit with spirit. But preparatory to the true explanation, I will lay the foundation of a new thought in your mind by asking, do you know of any body or organism in nature—unless, indeed, it be a *dead* body—which has not something answering to an atmosphere?

Q. It has been said by some astronomers that the moon has no atmosphere; though others, again, have expressed the opinion that she has, indeed, an atmosphere, but a very rare one.

A. Precisely so; and, as might have been expected from the rarity of her atmosphere, she has

the smallest amount of cosmic life of any planetary body in the solar system—only enough to admit of the smallest development of vegetable and animal forms. Still, every sun, planet, and other cosmic body in the space, is generally, and every regularly constituted form connected with that body is superficially, surrounded and also pervaded by its own peculiar and characteristic atmosphere; and to this universal rule, minerals, plants, animals, man, and, in their own degree, even the disembodied men whom you call “spirits,” form no exception.

The atmosphere of other bodies than planets are not air or wind, but in their substance are so different from what you know as atmospheres of the planets as to not have anything specially common with them. The specific atmosphere of flowers, and when excited by friction, those also of some metals, and even of stone crystals, are often perceptible to the sense of smell, and are in that way distinguishable not only from the atmosphere of the earth, but also from the atmospheres of each other. But properly speaking, the psychic *aura* surrounding man and spirits should no longer be called an atmosphere, that is, an *atmo sphere*, or sphere of atoms, but simply a “sphere;” for it is not atomic, that is, material, in its constitution, but is a spiritual substance, and as such extends indefinitely into space, or rather has only an indirect relation to space at all. Nor is the atmosphere, as properly understood, the

only enveloping sphere of the earth, for beyond and pervading it, and pervading, also, even all solid bodies, is a sublime interplanetary substance called "ether," the vehicle of light, and next approach to spiritual substance; while all bodies, solid, liquid and gaseous, are also pervaded by electricity.

LETTER XVII.

I continue my extracts from the very learned and logical explanations as follows, namely :

QUESTION. Can you cite me some familiar fact to prove that man is actually surrounded and pervaded by a sphere such as you describe?

ANSWER. I can only say that you are at times conscious of the fact yourself, as all persons are who are possessed of an ordinary degree of psychic sensitiveness. Does not even the silent presence of certain persons, though entire strangers, affect you with an uncomfortable sense of repulsion, perhaps embarrassing your thoughts and speech, while in the presence of others you at once feel perfectly free, easy, at home, and experiencing even a marked and mysterious sense of congeniality? Farther than this, have you not, at times when free from external disturbances, with the mind in a reverie of

loose thoughts, noticed the abrupt intrusion of the thought of a person altogether out of the line of your previous meditations, and then observed that the same person would come bodily into your presence very shortly afterwards? Have you not personally known of instances, or been credibly informed of them, in which mutually sympathizing friends of highly sensitive organizations were mysteriously and correctly impressed with each other's general conditions, even when long distances apart, and without any external communication?

There must, then, be here some medium of communication; that medium is evidently not cognizable to either of the five outer senses. What, then, can it be but the co-related spheres of the two persons, which I have already told you are not atomic—not material, but spiritual, and as such have little relation to space?

Q. That idea, if true, looks to me to be of some importance, and I would like you, if you can, to show me what relation these “spheres,” as you call them, have to the spiritual nature of man.

A. Consider, then, the primal meaning of the word “spirit.” It is derived from the Latin *spiritus*, the basic meaning of which is breath, wind, air—nearly the same idea that you attach to the word “atmosphere.” So the Greek word *pneuma*, also translated “spirit,” means precisely the same thing. The same meaning is likewise attached to the He-

brew word *ruach*, also sometimes translated "spirit." Now, carrying out this use of terms, the wind, air or atmosphere of the earth (including the ether, electricity and other imponderable elements), is the spirit of the earth. The atmosphere of any body, great or small, is the spirit of that body; the atmosphere, or rather sphere, being now without atoms, of a man, considered as an intellectual and moral being, is the spirit of that man; the sphere of a disembodied man or soul, is the spirit of that man or soul; and so the Infinite and Eternal Sphere of the Deity, which pervades and controls all creations both in the spiritual and natural universe, is the Spirit of the Deity, which in the Bible is called the Holy Spirit.

Of each living material form, the sphere, or at least some sphere, was the cause. Matter, considered simply by itself, is dead, and can only live by the influx of a surrounding sphere or spirit. It may be said at the last synthesis, that the general sphere of each microscopic monad that is in process of becoming vitalized, as well as of the great nebulous mass that is to form a universe, is the spirit of the Infinite Deity, which is present with atoms in the degree of atoms, as well as with worlds in the degree of worlds. This Spirit, as it embodies itself in matter, becomes segregated, finited, and individualized, and forms a specific soul, spirit, or sphere by itself, now no longer deific, but always of a

nature necessarily corresponding to the peculiar form and condition of the matter in which it becomes embodied. Life, therefore, is not the result of organization, but organization is the result of life, which latter is eternal, never having had a beginning; and never to have an end. Some of your scientific men have recently discovered what they have been pleased to term "the physical basis of life," in a microscopic and faintly vital substance called *protoplasm*, which forms the material foundation of all organic structures, both in the vegetable and animal kingdoms. They have not yet, however, discovered the source from which the life found in this substance comes—which would be plain to them if they understood the doctrine of spheres and influx as I have here given it.

You now have some idea of the doctrine of spheres; you will, however, understand that the spheres of created beings, owing to a unity of origin, are universally co-related, and under proper conditions, can act and react upon each other. You have before had some true notion of *rapport*, which means relation or correspondence. You will understand further that there can be no action between any two things or beings in any department of creation, except as they are in *rapport* or correspondence with each other, and that the action can go no farther than the *rapport* or correspondence extends. Now, two spirits can always, when it is in divine

order, readily communicate with each other, because they can always bring themselves into direct *rapport* at some one or more points. Though matter is widely discreted from spirit, in that the one is dead and the other is alive, yet there is a certain correspondence between the two, and between the degrees of the other; and according to the correspondence, relation or *rapport*, spirit may act upon matter. Thus your spirit, in all its degrees and faculties, is in the closest *rapport* with all the degrees of matter composing your body, and for this reason alone it is able to move it as it does, which it will no longer be able to do when the *rapport* is destroyed by what you call death. Through your body it is *en rapport* with, and is able to act upon, surrounding matter. If, then, you are in a susceptible condition, a spirit can not only get into *rapport* with your spirit, and through it with your body, and control its motions, or even suspend your own proper action and external consciousness by entrancement, but if you are at the same time *en rapport* with this little board, it can, through contact of your hands, get into *rapport* with that, and move it without any conscious or volitional agency on your part. Furthermore, under certain favorable conditions, a spirit may, through your sphere and body combined, come into *rapport* even with the spheres of the ultimate particles of material bodies near you, and thence with the particles and the whole bodies themselves, and may thus,

even without contact of your hands, move them or make sounds upon them, as has often been witnessed. Its action, however, as before said, ceases where the *rapport* ceases; if communications from really intelligent spirits have sometimes been defective as to the quality of the intelligence manifested, it is because there has been found nothing in the medium which could be brought into *rapport* or correspondence with the more elevated ideas of the spirit. The spirit, too, in frequent instances, is unable to prevent its energizing influences from being diverted by the re-active power of the medium into the channels of the imperfect types of thought and expression that are established in his mind, and it is for this simple reason that the communication is, as you say, often tinctured with the peculiarities of the medium, and even sometimes is nothing more than the reproduction of the mental states of the latter, perhaps greatly intensified.

THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS DIFFICULTY.

Q. I am constrained to say, my mysterious friend, that you have skillfully disposed of my objections to the spiritual theory of these phenomena, on *rational* grounds, and explained the philosophy of the thing. Another serious objection rests on *moral and religious grounds*. From so important and startling a development as general open communications from spirits, it seems to me that we

would have a right to expect some conspicuous good to mankind; yet, although this thing has been before the world for years, I am unable to see the evidence it has wrought any improvement in the moral condition of the converts its to claims. Pray, how do you account for that fact?

A. My friend, that question should be addressed to the Spiritualists, not to me. I will say, however, that this subject, long as it has been before the world, is still in a chaotic state, its laws have been very little understood, and even its essential objects and uses have been very much misconceived. I may add that from its very nature, its real practical fruits as well as its true philosophy must necessarily be the growth of a considerable period of time.

It is one of the important Providential designs of these manifestations to teach mankind that spirits in general maintain the characters that they formed to themselves during their early life—that, indeed, they are the identical persons they were while dwelling in the flesh—hence, that while there are just, truthful, wise, and Christian spirits, there are also spirits addicted to lying, profanity, obscenity, mischief, and violence, and spirits who deny God and religion, just as they did while in your world. It has become very necessary for mankind to know all this; it certainly could in no other way be so effectually made known as by an actual manifestation of

it; and it is just as necessary that you should see the dark side as the bright side of the picture.

I have said before that the real object of this development has been very much misconceived; I tell you now that the great object is to purge the Church itself of its latent infidelity, to renovate the Christian faith, and to bring theology and religion up to that high standard which will be equal to the wants of this age, as it certainly now is not.

I do not mean to be understood that there is not much that is true and good in it. There is; and I would not by a single harsh word wound the loving hearts of those who have a spark of real religious life in them. I would fan the smoking flax into a flame, rather than quench it. This is the sentiment of all good spirits, of whom I trust I am one. But let me say that you want religion that will tower above all other influences, that will predominate over all, that will unite mankind in charity and brotherly love, and not divide them into hostile sects.

If religious teachers will but study these facts, simply as facts, in all the different aspects which they have presented, from their first appearance up to this time—study them in the same spirit in which the chemist studies affinities, equivalents, and isomeric compounds—in the same spirit in which the astronomer observes planets, suns and nebulae—in the same spirit in which the microscopist studies

monads, blood discs and protoplasm—always hospitable to a new fact, always willing to give up an old error for a new faith; never receiving the mere *dicta* either of spirits or men as absolute authority, but always trusting the guidance of right reason wherever she may lead—if, I say, they will but study these great latter-day signs, providential warnings and monitions, in this spirit, I promise them that they shall soon find a rational and scientific ground on which to rest every real Christian doctrine, from the Incarnation to the crown of glory—miracles, the regeneration, the resurrection, and all, with the great advantage of having the doctrine of immortality taken out of the sphere of faith and made a *fixed fact*. Furthermore, I promise them, on these conditions, that they shall hereafter be able to lead science rather than be dragged along unwillingly in its trail; and then science will be enrolled in the service of God's religion, and no longer in that of the world's materialism and infidelity.

Q. My friend, the wonderful nature of your communication excites my curiosity to know your name. Will you gratify me in this particular?

A. That I may not do. My name is of no consequence in any respect. Besides, if I should give it you might, unconsciously to yourself, be influenced to attach to it the weight of a personal authority, which is specially to be avoided in communications of this kind. There is nothing to

prevent deceiving spirits from assuming great names. With thinkers—minds that are developed to vigorous maturity—the truth itself should be its only and sufficient authority. If what I have told you appears intrinsically rational, logical, scientific, in harmony with known facts, and appeals to your convictions with the force of truth, accept it; if not, reject it; but I advise you not to reject it before giving it a candid and careful examination.

LETTER XVIII.

“If religious teachers will but study these facts, simply as facts, in all their aspects, and in the same spirit as the chemist studies affinities and compounds, and as the astronomer studies planets, suns and nebulae, and as the microscopist studies monads, blood discs and protoplasms; always admitting new facts, always willing to give up an old error for a new truth; never receiving a mere dicta, either of men or spirits, as absolute or final, but always being guided by right reason wherever it may lead; if they will examine and study these great and strange latter-day signs, warnings, monitions and teachings in that spirit, I promise them that they shall soon find a rational and scientific ground on which to

rest *every real Christian doctrine*—miracles, regeneration, resurrection, and all, with the great advantage of having the *fact* of the immortality of the soul taken out of the sphere of *mere faith*, and made a plain, proven, fixed fact. And further, that hereafter they shall *lead* science, rather than be dragged in its trail, and that science shall be enrolled in the service of God's religion, and no longer, as it and its votaries have nearly always heretofore been, be on the side of materialism and infidelity."

The above is the conclusion of one of the most learned and scientific explanations of creation, life, death, and the life after death, extant. It is the teaching of a spiritual intelligence rarely met with, and from its very character commending itself to every fair and reasonable mind. In my last two letters I have given the whole of that explanation, and I cannot again avoid referring to it, and calling the attention of the many intelligent gentlemen among us (religious teachers), in the most earnest manner to it. They, more than all others, should turn their attention to this subject, and give their time and talents to its investigation and development. They, more than all others, are responsible for any errors they may teach; and if there be any important evidence to mankind to be obtained from it, it is their bounden duty to obtain it. It is true, as the above speaker says, that science and scientific

men have always been at loggerheads with the religious portion of the world. It has been a continual conflict, and very many of the most learned men of the world have been murdered by ecclesiastical powers, because their theories were not understood by, and seemed hostile to, the tenets, doctrines, or theories of theologians. The world has several times been made a charnel house of death by the wickedness and ignorance of religious bigots, and all without just cause or reason. Our religious teachers should lead the world, not fight it. To do this (for they have the talent among them) they must come out of their shells; they must enter the field of investigation and of science; they must step on to the common platform for learning with other men, and examine other evidence than that to which they have heretofore confined themselves. There is nothing wrong in investigation, and it would be singular if there were no errors in the opinions of men during all of six thousand years. This theory of spiritualism may, no doubt does, run counter to many opinions and prejudices of past years. What if it does? Truth is what we want; not prejudice, not error.

The history of our earth is being developed and corrected every day. New truths are opened to us and old errors corrected. We are very far from knowing everything. Shall we repudiate, ignore, pooh, pooh, at this new theory, merely because it

carries us to think of and to examine matters beyond this earth? Surely not. Creation is not limited to this earth, or to this life; it includes all lives, all worlds. This earth-life is only a part of it. We examine this part of it; why not all other parts? Oh, but, says some theological bigot, we must not look beyond the grave. We are not to see or know those things. Why not? Who says so? No one but the priest who seeks power; who would keep us and govern us in ignorance—who don't want us to know. We must not meddle with spiritual things, is the cry. That cry will not be listened to any longer. I am glad to see that several of our oldest and most reputable ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church have given their attention to the matter, and are astonished at its wonderful developments, and convinced that it is a language spoken to us from another life—that it is a voice from the spirit land. One of them, in the "Sentinel," only a few days ago, confirms my position taken long ago as to the writings through Mrs. Keigwin, and distinctly says: "This thing can not be overlooked any longer." Nor can religious people longer afford to give it the go-by. I trust many others will come to the same conclusion, and that soon the whole subject will be taken up by good, well meaning, honest and learned men, and taken out of the hands of the ignorant and mercenary.

I shall have more to say as to this branch of the subject hereafter.

LETTER XIX.

OH, dear Mr. Editor, what a blunder you have made. The idea of my saying to our sober, long-faced, matter-of-fact ministers of the gospel, that "They must come out of their shells, and must enter the field of *imagination!!!*" Ridiculous. I didn't say any such thing. I said they must enter the field of "*investigation.*"

Imagination, indeed. They go a great deal too much on *that* already. I want to bring them down to *facts—truth*, proof—with no imagination about it. The "imaginations," and errors, and blunders, of these old, thick-skulled, gormandizing Romanist monks and priests, who first got their hands on the ancient writings, and who copied, and translated, and *filled in*, and made up, *in their own way*, what we are urged now to receive as sacred, and true, and divine, has made trouble and contention enough. Only think of it, twenty thousand (some writers say one hundred and fifty thousand) errors and blunders in the translation of the Bible alone. Nice authority that to swallow whole. No, no. I don't want our good preachers to scamper out in the field of

“imagination.” I want them to go into the field of facts, of truths, of science, governed by their natural, God-given senses; to see, and judge, and investigate, and tell us the right and the wrong of it, as evidence and proof, not imagination, or suspicion, or old, blind, priest-ridden theories, would have them. Our preachers are smarter men, more learned men, men of more sense and less prejudice than those old “fathers,” as they call them, were. They are better judges, better expositors, better men. I want them to step forward and investigate this new and wonderful superhuman theory. It is their peculiar and appropriate work and duty; and they must do it. What if it be the work of demons (which no sane man believes)? Why, our preachers are the very men to step forth and take the devil by the horns, expose him, cast him out. Who better than they? It is cowardly and disreputable in them to stand back and refuse to enter into it.

This new manifestation is either the work of our Creator, or it is imposture. If it be God’s work, who better than the ministers of religion to understand and teach it to us? If it is imposture, it is their duty under their calling to expose it. Come out then, gentlemen; go with us into these things. Treat it like any other study. Help us gather the facts first, and then we can, with you, draw conclusions. The religion of Christianity, the teachings of our Saviour, we believe, are in no danger. They

will find collateral evidence of their truth, and strong support in this thing. This work must be done, and the sooner it is commenced the better. I trust our worthy preachers will not think me obtrusive in this demand on them. I certainly do not mean to be. I want the best men, the best minds we have, to form the tribunal to examine and decide this thing, and I select *them*. Besides, they, standing off, or scowling, or throwing cold water on spiritualism, without ever having examined it, and of course, for that reason, knowing nothing about it, deter others from acting in the matter. It is notorious that even now, in this nineteenth century, with all our education and enlightenment, about one-half the world yet "sneeze only when their minister takes snuff." They go as he orders. It is a lamentable truth, yet it is a truth, that any responsible being, with all his or her senses, will let any mortal make a conscience for him or her, without exercising any judgment in the matter. It is very like one expecting to go to Heaven by machinery. And this being so, you are the more required to sedulously hunt out truth, and get rid of error. Now some of us, firm and full believers in the immortality of the soul, and in the truth of the teachings of our Saviour, have already become about satisfied that you can find in this development more and more direct proof of both than most religious

teachers are in the habit of laying before their people. Better evidence and more convincing to mortal minds; and none of it either, in any respect, contradicting the substantial truths of the Sacred Writings; indeed, confirming them. All it wants to show this, is a thorough examination, with honest effort and purpose. It will be easily done, but to do it we must first learn how. It is a new field—a portion of nature's work and plan, heretofore unexplored and not understood. We *can* explore it, and I trust understand it. Already enough has been learned to show that the human mind can reach, and learn, and understand matters generally supposed to be beyond our reach, but now known not to be so. The spirits of our departed friends *can communicate with us and are* doing so every day. Our religious people really admit this, for they preach to us, that "those loving spirits are with us, helping us and influencing us." Well, pray, are they not then "communicating with us?" If they can influence and help us, they must communicate with us in some way. Who shall say they can not do so in another way? *We know they do write to us and talk to us.* As spirits, we may fairly presume them to be wiser than us. If so, they can teach us; can teach ministers of the gospel. Come then, and listen to us, and learn. *Select your own mediums.* You have, no doubt, many of them in your congregations; form your own societies to make the

examination. Shut out, if you please, the common, vulgar world. Let every man be a member of some church, and, if it must be so, prejudiced against the whole thing—as prejudiced as the Jewish scribes and chief men were against our Saviour. But let all be honest and fair men—open to proof and the evidences of their senses; willing to receive as true that which is plainly proven. Obtain, first, the simple manifestations; then draw your own conclusions from them. Then get what explanations of the mysteries you can from those mysterious teachers, and submit all to fair human judgment and criticism. Take nothing for granted on the faith in any human or spiritual say so. Prove all things. In this way we will come at light, and be made wiser and better.

I intend to continue this appeal hereafter. I want to have this whole examination withdrawn—taken wholly out of the hands and control of the ignorant and the mercenary. It deserves better treatment than to be left in the mists and fogs and odium too often cast around it by charlatans or money-getters.

LETTER XX.

As you observe, I have appealed to our learned and religious men to take hold of this investigation. Ministers can see in my treatment of the following case, what great good they may do. Some weeks back, a controversy was gotten up in our newspapers between a person who signed himself "M. B.," and another who signed himself "B." It seems that M. B. charges all these spiritual manifestations to fraud, trick and deception. He don't believe a word in any of them. The "slate writing" is particularly the object of his attacks, and so "sot" is he, in his own opinion and conceit about it, so "heady," as our old-time people used to say, that he loses his temper, and flings aspersions all around, intimating that a number of other people, besides this officious "B." (who has, it seems, volunteered to goad him), are no wiser than they ought to be. He proposes to test the matter with his money, too, I think very foolishly, for there is no need of that. He can test it without using any money. This is not a matter of money, nor of speculation, nor to dispute or quarrel about; nor for one man to seek to disparage another concerning it. It is a subject

for all to approach with fairness, candor, and good feeling, and to unite in the investigation of.

This "M. B." has as much need to learn the truth about it as I have, and as deep an interest in our all learning it. It seems to me that he is not pursuing the right way. Instead of seeking to establish truth, to obtain proof of facts (for these are what we want), he bends his whole mind, and thoughts, and eyes, to find errors, and tricks, and falsehoods. Why, if Slade, and Church, and Mrs. K., and forty others, should practice deception, should, again and again, be guilty of trickery, what of it? That does not prove that Spiritualism is not true. It only shows that these trickeries are not Spiritualism. Of what use is it, then, to waste time and talents, disputing about tricks? Let us rather go to work unitedly, to obtain proofs of manifestations that are not tricks. I think we can get them. I have given much attention to this subject. I have studied it, not only by watching and testing mediums, but from books, through long series of years. There is a very large amount of authority for it, and one can arrive at a certainty about it, about as readily as we can at the existence of, and facts occurring in, countries and people of long years ago. But my firm belief is that we can, through the kindly aid of our Creator, find the proof right here among us, more abundantly than it was ever given to mankind

before. Our Saviour, as the true and inspired Spokesman of the Almighty Father, told us a few things, laid down a few rules, for our conduct here on earth, which, if we obey, will produce the largest amount of human happiness here, and, we believe, will have the same result hereafter. Assuming, then, that his teachings are right, as a starting point, we must work to them and by them; and as long as any spiritual teachings and evidence we may get shall accord with them we may feel sure we are not far from the right path. Now I feel justified in saying right here, that I have had given to me much such spiritual evidence, or at least evidence that was not of human origin (to me it was plainly from the spirit life). There was no trick about it, and not one word or fact of it, in any case, contravened, or in any way militated against the plain and clear teachings of our Saviour. The immortality of the soul, a future life and existence, rewards for virtue and sufferings for evil done in this life, were all recognized and impressed on me as true. These things were said by witnesses who knew, and they presented to me proof. My conviction of their truth was not asked on faith alone; did not have to rely on faith alone; and M. B., if he will diligently seek as I did, will find as I did. I very much fear (and I gather the idea from his own words) that he has not gone, and is not prepared to go at it in the proper mind. I fear he has beclouded and covered

up his judgment, and probably his heart, with doubts and difficulties and disbeliefs; that he has presumptuously undertaken to assume grounds and opinions under wrong notions—conclusions that nature and nature's God, in his works, does not authorize or warrant. Does he not believe in a great and beneficent Creator? Does he not believe in the immortality of his own soul? Does he not believe in rewards and punishments for deeds done in the body? If he does not, let him sweep all prejudice, all set opinions, all such difficulties away from his mind for a while at least, and come with us, with his mind like a clean sheet of paper, ready to go over the whole matter again, free from bias, and get what proof (not suspicion) that he can, and to set down for consideration only what is proven satisfactory to his own clear reason. Never mind the mediums. We have nothing to do with them, or with their faults. They are only the conductors, like a metal wire, between our spirit friends and us. They are only a tool, needed to work with. Nothing depends on what they think, or believe, or personally do. As conductors they are essential, but as parties, actors, agents, or principals in our communications, they are nothing—not one particle more than the telegraph wire is to the contents of a telegraph message; indeed, just the same. There are some—I hope not very many—persons, no doubt mean and false enough to pretend to be mediums,

who are not, but who set up the trade to gain money. We have no use for such persons, and as fast as we find them out will expose them and kick them out of our way, as we would any other cheats. M. B. ought to give his aid to us to do this. It seems clear, and we are so taught, that the medium power or faculty is a natural gift. Few possess it, so far as we yet know. We have to seek the best and most honest ones, and, no doubt, we will find them after a while.

I observe that M. B. makes the following proposal :

“I now make the following proposition ‘to all whom it may concern :’ I will furnish a double or folding slate, and in the presence of any number of mediums and spiritualists, with an equal number of persons whom I will choose, fold up the slates, with a pencil between them; I will then put four common wood screws through the frames, fastening them together so as to preclude the possibility of human hands doing the writing. The mediums may then hold the slate as they choose, and for every word written on the insides of the slate I will pay ten dollars a word, to the number of one hundred words. Or, as it is claimed by Dr. Slade and others that writing is done for them when the slate is held up against the table leaf, I will, instead of the folding slate, fasten a common slate to the under side of the table leaf, by means of four wood screws, in which condition I will give for every word written

on the side of the slate next to the table leaf, the sum as above stated. The writing to be done in the city of Indianapolis. M. B."

If I understand his object by the above proposition, it is to fix the slate and so arrange the surroundings, that clearly neither the medium nor any other human being can possibly write on the slate. Well, he is right in this. Let it be so done, by all means; but as a precedent matter, let M. B. withdraw all that part of his proposal which contemplates paying money, or requires him to pay money, if it be done. His money is not an essential; it is not wanted in the experiment, and must not enter into it.

And now, before closing this, I want to say to him that he must change his plan somewhat. Writing can not be done at all between two slates screwed together. It can not be done in any close place, where the air can not circulate, any more than a windmill can turn without wind. It has never been done for me where the light can fall on the pencil. But it can be done in a place where the air can circulate, but where the medium or any other mortal can not reach or touch the pencil, and of course can not do the writing. I presume this is all he wants. Let him (M. B.) prepare his slate, clean it, show it to his friends as clean; then put it in its place himself, and where and so he will know

himself that the medium or any other human being can not and does not write on it; and, when the writing is done, he, M. B., take it out himself—no one but him touch it, and we will see what comes of it. I will help you, M. B.; but there must be no money, or payment, in the case. I think you will get the writing.

LETTER XXI.

In my remarks concerning "M. B.'s" notions and propositions, I do not want it understood that I am at all anxious about any test being made for his conversion. I do not know him at all, though I understand he is a very worthy resident of our city. It is not now, and never has been, important to me, whether he or anybody else believes in spiritualism or not. I am investigating the matter for myself, not for other people, and shall continue and apply what proofs I get to my own judgment, and form my own opinions, regardless of what other people say, or think, or believe. I am not seeking to convince others, and I most cheerfully concede to "M. B.," and to everybody else, the same right which I assert for myself. I object to only one thing in others, and that is, to an unreasonable treatment of the subject, and unjust animadversions on all those who

don't see things just as they do themselves. When people denounce a thing without examining it, and of course without knowing anything about it, it is to me disgusting and contemptible. To such persons (and I happen to know two or three editors of newspapers who have done that very thing) I have nothing to say, and want to have nothing to do with them. Their statements and opinions about spiritualism are about as valuable and important as the braying of mules, not more, and should be so regarded. I write these articles for my own entertainment, and because I have been requested to do it. As I have before said, I have received a great deal of evidence that the spirits of our departed friends are still with us, and do interest themselves for us, and can and do communicate with us. I can honestly and freely say—now, here, after much experience in business and with men, in quite a long, busy life—to any and all those who have known me for now so many years, and who, from such knowledge, can well judge of my capacity to form opinions and judge of evidence, that I am clear in the above opinion and fixed in the above belief. I have relied on no jugglery, or been cajoled by no tricks; nor have I had to depend on any one or more mediums. My proof has not depended on any tricksters. I have seen many instances where I was not satisfied, where I have believed that deception might exist. Of course I placed no reliance on such

cases, but looked further, and ceased to look further only when certainty came through such proof, and was confirmed in such a manner as left no loophole for doubt. I hope M. B. and everybody else will take the same course; for in my opinion, any man who will form his opinions on so important a matter as this on the mere say-so of another, greatly lacks discretion, to say the least of it.

The "why" and the "wherefore" of many things that are presented to us, we do not see or know, and of course can't give, and it is folly to ask for them. It is in this as in science, and in other natural matters. Who can tell why the flowers of the rose bush and the lily grow in different shapes, and why the stem of one plant grows round, and of another square? It is to be presumed we will know these things some time. Who can tell how this earth was made? No one. Yet it was made, for here it is. What would be thought of one who would deny that it existed, because no one could tell him how such a thing as the earth could possibly be made?

Very early in my investigations, I, too, arrived at points where my mind could not understand the "why" of it, but there was no explanation to be had. There are so many things we do not know, and doubtless a great many we will never know in this life. I came, long ago, to the conclusion to receive things as they come, to accept the light that

was given me, and patiently go on in my seeking more. The very wonder and mystery of spiritualism, so new to most persons, and so strange, and, withal, in much of it so different from world-wide and deep-fixed opinions, raises up opponents to it at the very onset. Yet it is not more opposed and scoffed at than was Morse's theory of telegraphing. When he told the world that "he could stand in New York and talk with another man who stood in Europe," could send a message to London, and receive an answer in an hour, people pronounced him crazy, or a fool and a cheat. Pray, who were the fools in that case?

And now I feel it proper to apologize somewhat to M. B. for so much referring to him and his difficulties and opinions. I assure him I have not done it in any unkindness. I mean to help him satisfy himself that spirit writing can be done. I told him in my last article that "I thought he would get the writing." Since then I have received an assurance on the slate, that the writing will be done. But at what time, or whether on our first applying for it, I can not be sure. Some times I get none for days, and, at other times, it comes as readily as ordinary conversation. But we will patiently wait, and I feel sure we will get it at last.

And now to come back to the subject of my urging our talented ministers of the gospel to take up this investigation. They must be aware of the vast

amount of want of satisfaction, and often of absolute unbelief, that exists in people's minds all around us, permeating every church and congregation on the subject of religion and religious teachings. There are hundreds among us who do not have any fixed opinions about a hereafter, a future life, or immortality. Many who do not feel at all certain that there is any God. This is lamentable; after all your preaching, all your labors, all your arguing that those propositions are thrown back to you with the verdict, "not proven." Certainly every mortal wants to know and feel that there is in store for him or her, through endless ages, the happy existence you portray. Every juror who tries the case you argue is partial to your side; and yet so many of them decide against you, or are not convinced that you are right. Why is this? Certainly, only because you do not give them sufficient proof. Your case lacks evidence; is rested too much on mere assertion. There is too much appeal to, and reliance on, faith, and too little on facts. For ages past, as men and women have become better informed, and learned to read and to think, each one for himself, diversities of opinions have grown and widened. It is this that has made so many sects, so many churches. Formerly, there was but one Christian sect. Now there are probably fifty; and, worst of all, they not only disagree in opinions, but they quarrel and denounce and abuse each other.

They all assert that they teach and preach Christianity; yet all plainly lack the very foremost of Christian virtues—charity. They do not “love their neighbor as themselves.” This disagreement in opinion must continue and widen until your case is put on plainer and stronger grounds. It is thought it can be.

In my next I will give some further thoughts on this point.

LETTER XXII.

I said in my last that I desired to speak further on the subject of the too prevailing want of satisfactory evidence of the great truths of Christianity, as it is presented by our sectarian preachers, and of the absolute need of some more striking facts. People's minds will not always rest on faith alone—or rather it should be said on “hearsay” alone. They must be reached and held through their own physical senses. A great many good people now believe that Spiritual manifestations do and will furnish this new and additional evidence. I want unprejudiced minds to examine and test this. Good men, who have Christianity and the welfare, here and hereafter, of their fellow-beings honestly at heart. I do not want them to accept Spiritualism,

or anybody's statements about it, as true, but to make their own examination; study it themselves, patiently and thoroughly. They will find, as I have found, a great deal of fog and mist, and moonshine; a great deal of ignorance and superstition, and much of deception and fraud. But they will also find much that is true and good, and new and startling. One thing, at the very outset, they will find to an extent that is absolutely astounding, and that is, that in hundreds of places, far apart, often divided by oceans, with people that have no communication with each other, never heard of one another, precisely similar manifestations are made. The same spirit speakings are spoken, the same writings written, the same truths impressed, and the same information given about our future state, and our death here and life hereafter. With the thousands of spirit witnesses, wholly unconnected with each other in life, and unknown to one another, there is no disagreement in their testimony, or no material disagreement. They give facts alike in character. They refer to events, to family histories, to family names and incidents in the past, correctly, fully and most convincingly. They identify themselves beyond question; they concur in their statements, and they all sustain the foundation stones of Christianity and the immortality of the soul. I have sought everywhere—through manifestations, through mediums, to myself personally,

through others' writings, and statements of manifestations to them, through talkings and writings of spirits to other persons in my presence and hearing, and all agree. It is wonderful, and it all produces the clear conviction that it must be true.

Before such a torrent of concurring evidence, such a mass of corroborating facts, all these noisy stories of deception and trickeries of cheats, even though true, are scattered to the winds as amounting to nothing. Now, out of all this there may be much gleaned to sustain a theory which, though true and good, many dispute because they don't think its support sufficient, and are ever ready to hunt out and point out its weak places. I have to-day met with the sayings of a very eminent spiritualist, a lady, east of the mountains, on this very subject. I give them nearly in her own language. Speaking of the sayings of the spirits, she says:

"There is one coincidence of detail ever presented, and that is in reference to the stern and stupendous fact that we live forever in relation to that we do here; there is no compromise in this. I shall show you that however we may have mingled our psychological impressions with these when we commune with spirits, they all enforce the same solemn doctrine—solemn because it stamps to-day the judgment upon every act, every movement of our lives—all our deeds will be brought face to face with truth/

“Under the old teachings we have gone out in our acts, and laughed the judgments to scorn. Some of us have gone forth to the commission of acts, which, if what the teachers say be true, would have stamped upon us perdition. But now we have come face to face with spirits in every land, repeating the same story; the same gospel is proclaimed everywhere. This was one of the startling facts which demanded reconciliation with the affirmation which had crystallized around the doctrine of a vicarious atonement, which is the linch-pin of ecclesiasticism—not Christianity, for the one is not the same as the other. The linch-pin of the theological doctors is the vicarious atonement, and that is swept away and destroyed forever by the form of individual responsibility, which visits every sin upon the wrong doer, which proclaims compensation alike for Jew and Christian, for infidel and believer, for Turk, Armenian, Greek or Buddhist.

“Many have looked with sorrowful eyes upon the failing of the system which we call Christianity, but when you review the nature of this system, do you not perceive that it has failed to satisfy the demands of this restless, analytical age? Do you not see that the sectarian war in the mother country is now proceeding with the greatest energy? From the one Lord, Christ, and the one book, they have formed the various sectarian systems, into which Christianity is broken, and now they find that these

have failed to answer the demands of their souls, and we hear, from Sunday to Sunday, that religion is not sufficiently vital. Thus, all the systems of the day are failing to supply the needs of humanity. The statistics of crime on the one hand, and the revealments of the growth of civilization on the other, gave evidence of this failure on the part of ecclesiasticism—not of Christianity.

“We do not find any relief when we turn to our churches; we do not find any teachings that will enable us to comprehend the increase of crime, or to remove it. When we attempt to search into the causes of this, are we not answered first by the scornful taunt, what need have you of a standard of right and wrong? But with this vicarious atonement presented to us by the pious, may we not find an excuse for sin? We know that men have taken advantage of this; they have brought the Bible to us; they have spoken of the example of Christ, and given the assurance that his sacrifice is sufficient for our short comings.

“We are answered on the other hand by the devoted bigot, who will not reason, that Christianity is all that is needed for our salvation.

“We know that the mere theological teachings have been a failure; whilst the pure and beautiful enunciations of Christ—that we must do unto others as we would have them do unto us—is in accordance with the declaration which comes from

the spirit world, that we are all living in the consequences of the deeds done in the body.

“Rev. H. Elkin says: ‘Spiritualism comes to the aid of the church, and they reject it. It supplies to the atheists and infidels the lacking evidence of immortality, and they receive it. It thus resembles Christianity in its first movements, which was rejected by professedly religious men.’

“The doctrine of immortality must rest upon proof, or be rejected. And if all the phenomena attending the modern movement be accounted for on physiological grounds, without the intervention of spirits, ancient phenomena will have to pass the same ordeal and receive the same sentence. Whatever physiological law will account for involuntary, polyglot speaking and writing modernly, will account for the speaking in unknown tongues anciently. Whatever physiological law will account for the modern phrophecies, gifts of healing, revelations, poems, hymns and doctrines, will account for the ecstacies, prophecies, gifts of healing, etc., in ancient times, etc., etc.”

Rev. H. W. Beecher, in one of his practical sermons, says: “I confess to you there is something in my mind of sublimity in the idea that the world is full of spirits, good and evil, who are pursuing their various errands, and that the little we can see with these bat’s eyes of ours, the little we can decipher with these imperfect senses, is not the whole of the

reading of those vast pages of that great volume which God hath written." "There is in the love of God more than our philosophy has ever dreamed of."

The great mathematician, Professor De Morgan, of London, although not an avowed convert, affirms "that the spiritualists, beyond a doubt, are in the track that has led to all advancement in physical science, and their opponents are representatives of those who have striven against progress."

Equally interesting quotations might be continued almost indefinitely from clergymen, authors, and men of science.

In our deliberations, let us respect the sentiments of all, at least to the extent of not denouncing any who honestly dissent from our views. We do not expect to always agree among ourselves in regard to minutiae, and do not desire to, for we are not constituted alike. We claim to have truth for the foundation of our action, and can afford to differ in regard to details.

Those who believe that their most secret actions may be known to their departed relatives and friends, may be supposed to have excellent reasons for acting their part on this scenic stage to the best of their ability, especially if they also believe that they must suffer the consequences of their mistakes, misdeeds and sins of omission, and can not by repentance transfer them from themselves to another.

"What an incentive to a scrupulous morality

would the facts of psychometry be if rightly pondered! They show that all acts and thoughts of our existence are forever reproducible, for ourselves and all spiritual intelligences to scan at pleasure; that the warp and the woof of our spiritual substance include all that we have desired, done and thought; that God's judgments are recorded against us, or in our favor, as fast as our acts are performed. There is no waiting for rewards and punishments. Foretastes of heaven may be had even here by every righteous, loving and aspiring spirit. All the good we do, all the pure happiness we enjoy, are happiness and good forever. All the acquisitions in knowledge, in art, in virtue, are made forever, and shall be the vintage ground of even new attainments.

"On the other hand, the hell of the evil-doer yawns for him even now; and, in one sense, it is eternal; for though the sinner may forsake his sin (and in every soul there is a redeeming principle antagonistic to everlasting wrong), the sin will not forsake him. Its record, which is itself, is forever plain to the psychometrist of the spirit world, and the sinner's own memory will not let it go. The pressure of God's laws is upon us every moment, spiritually as well as physically. We can no more violate his law of right without a simultaneous penalty, than we can thrust our finger in the fire without

injury. We have but imperfect conceptions of the powers of our own souls.

“The facts of Spiritualism give us here and there a glimpse of them. We there find the foundations of Spiritualism deeply laid, and we can but consider it a privilege to labor for the spread of this great Gospel, which is glad tidings to the people.”

By “psychometry,” of course is meant the communication and mingling of the spirit in its new life with our spirits or minds here. For just those things they teach us.

LETTER XXIII.

I have earnestly called on our preachers and learned men to come forward, select their own mediums, and help investigate this new theory called Spiritualism. I insist that it is their bounden duty to their fellow men to do so. They *can* find mediums whom they know, and knowing can trust. Every investigation should, by them, and by all others, be made in good faith and with honest purpose to arrive at the truth. There is not probably any matter now presented to the human mind, about which there is so much suspicion and prejudice. I know the feelings and thoughts of others, judging them by my

own. No one can look at it with more doubt and disbelief than I did once. But I determined to be just in my judgment about it; to examine fairly; to decide only on evidence and facts; and to yield to proof. I have done so, and the result has been that my doubts have been dispelled and my conclusions, as I have heretofore stated them, have been formed. I feel sure, for I understand men and the human mind very well, that all fair, honest, rational men, who will do as I have done, will receive all the evidence that I have received, and will believe about it as I believe. I feel, too, that they will have fewer difficulties to contend with, than I have met and been compelled to surmount. All honest and intelligent mediums will make allowances for the peculiar character of the human mind, prejudiced and obstinate as it is. Many of them have much to bear, and it is strange that they bear it so well.

So fixed is this indisposition to believe, and be convinced, that no matter how honest we may know the medium to be, and how respectable and how innocent of any purpose of deception, when those wonderful and, to us, strange and unaccountable manifestations come, we can not repress suspicion, and we mentally ask ourselves: "Well, but are we not imposed on? Does not the medium in some way do this?" This thought, and often fear, comes to every one, and it requires much patience, many tests and trials and proofs to settle

the mind to the belief that there is no deception. Even when it is so settled a careless or thoughtless act of the medium, or may be a word only, having no bad intention in it, will wholly unsettle it again, and befog a belief heretofore established under much proof, and throw the mind out into the sea of uncertainty again. The position of an honest medium is thus often made very unpleasant.

I have, at Jeffersonville, often wondered how they could stand it, feeling sure that I could not. They are of the most respectable people, intelligent, polite, kind and truthful. They invite people to their parlors, sit down and give their time and talents wholly to them, often entire strangers and uninvited; present the strange writings which they themselves do not and could not make, to those visitors, and submit to such remarks, doubts, examinations and criticisms, as plainly say, "Oh, but aint you cheating me? aint that your own slight of hand trick?" High spirited persons would be very apt to "rile up" at such imputations; especially as their kindness, and courtesy, and time, are all given without any remuneration or return, or any expectation of it. Not working for pay, they have at least the right to expect politeness and just and honorable appreciation. All this comes from the absolute impossibility of the human mind to accept or believe anything as true, outside of the pale of ecclesiastical teaching, unless it comes to us with

the kind of proof common and usual to us. Supernatural matters are never readily believed, generally repudiated, notwithstanding the vast amount of evidence given in the Bible, and the unlimited assertions of their former existence, made to us by all our ministers of churches. We can not see that what has happened once, can happen again. We have no reason to believe that it will not occur again, except the assertions of men. We certainly might believe that all these mysterious things in former times, and now also, were, and must be, natural, and the work of our Creator, and who shall say what He may not do? It is thus that nearly every one at first goes to, and looks upon the medium with suspicion; with a prejudiced mind; almost with a determination to disbelieve every thing, thus treating the medium with unfairness, and frequently disrespect. I have myself seen such a course of conduct pursued, that, had I been the medium, I should certainly have ordered the person out of the house. These matters should be treated fairly, and ignorant, prejudiced and obstinate persons had better stay away from them, give no opinion about them, for they are incapable of forming or having any sound opinion.

I am perfectly aware that often good and honest mediums give cause for censure, and make reasons for disbelief; and be it understood that I have no

consideration for cheats, false and mercenary persons, who pretend to be mediums but are not, and are only cheats for money. I have nothing to do with, or say about, such.

But it sometimes happens that no manifestations are given—not often, but sometimes. Persons expecting them are disappointed, and the medium, sorry for their disappointment, makes movements, and askings, and efforts *to cause them* to be given. This a medium should never do. The medium is a mere conductor, or a condenser, an aid or instrument in the spiritual power, *to enable the spirit to give the manifestations*, and no personal effort or action can do any good, or in any way produce a manifestation, if the spirit influence does not see proper to give it. The medium should only assume the required position, be still and passive, and wait; do nothing, interpose in no way. Neither say anything, do anything, or ask anything, any more than a telegraph wire would, to receive a message. If they would always do this, they would often times avoid suspicion and evil remarks about themselves.

LETTER XXIV.

The late exhibition at Terre Haute has seemed to require more attention than it really deserves: not that it is at all important in asserting the truth of Spiritualism, but only as teaching investigators of the theory, caution and prudence. That exhibition, in any of its different phases, was not one of spiritualism at all, and ought not to have been written or spoken of as such. It had nothing to do with Spiritualism. It was plain, open jugglery, and the little girl ought to have been advertised under the patronage of Barnum, instead of that of the Society of Spiritualists.

“There are inquiries among Spiritualists in Terre Haute—men who are above all suspicion of insincerity, and who value their honor more than their lives. Such a man made the cabinet which has been described, and he declared emphatically that no man in Terre Haute would throw the thing overboard quicker than he, if he discovered anything like *trickery* connected with the manifestations.”

Now, to these men especially, and to all honest inquirers, I feel like addressing myself to-day. You and I are sincere believers in the truth of Spiritualism. We have had evidence of it of the strongest kind. We do not want, do not intend, to

present any false testimony about it to our friends. We wish to deceive no one, and will not in any case be connected with, or mixed up with, any deceivers or any deception. It is plain to start with, that all spiritual manifestations are superhuman. No human being *can* do them or make them. It follows then that what a medium—a human being—can do, or does do, *is not spiritualism*; and when any person pretending to be a medium says she “can’t do this,” or “can do that,” she confesses herself a cheat and juggler. When a medium in any of these physical exhibitions refuses to have her hands *inked* or *marked*, or any other proper marks and means of identification placed on her, she thereby admits herself to be a cheat. Such marks are placed there only for the purpose of proving that *she* is not a cheat, and does not falsely counterfeit the spirit action; that she does not play the spirit herself. The very thing every honest medium would want proven. Her audience come there to see the action or manifestation of spirits, not of her smartness or jugglery. She promised them to show them such manifestations. One of these manifestations she promises, is the showing of a spirit hand. Well, what harm, then, to ink *her* hand? That don’t prevent the showing of the hand of the spirit. It only prevents her palming off her own hand in place of the spiritual one, and a gross and abominable lie,

on her audience. The ink detects the swindler only.

I am surprised that the honest and honorable men, who are really spiritualists, who reside there, and have gotten up their hall, who were present, did not take her by the ears and walk her out of the house. Dr. Pence did right, of course, to hand the people back their money.

Honest Spiritualists can not be too careful who they permit to act with them, or who they associate with them in their examinations. The greatest possible care should always be taken as to mediums. No one should be recognized or regarded as a medium in any case who is not thoroughly known or tested. The first requisite should always be, as to every medium, an honest character, well known honesty and truthfulness. No matter how much simplicity, how little learning or polish, there can always be honesty and reliability. I think one of the plainest, roughest, unlearned persons I ever met with was, and is now, one of the best mediums I have ever seen. Polish, learning, fine, fashionable clothes, or appearance, are none of them necessary for a medium. The medium herself does nothing. She is not expected to do anything, but to sit passive. She is to be the instrument with which and through which the spirit does the work. Such are all true mediums; all others are false, cheats and

counterfeits. It is, therefore, of the highest importance that we who are investigating to find truth, shall be very careful who we accept as mediums. The right way, indeed, the only safe way, is to accept none until we have, to ourselves, in our own private examinations, fully tried and tested them. We should never indorse or advertise, or present any one to the public as a medium until we know by our own trial of them that they are mediums.

To know this we must require and have very full, clear proof. When a test is to be made, we should so arrange all circumstances and matters that the act to be shown cannot be done by the medium. This is nearly always easy. Take the case at Terre Haute, of showing the hand through the opening of the cabinet. How easy it would have been to have the hole so far off from the medium, or so high up, or the cabinet so divided and partitioned off that the medium could not get to it. A spirit could get to it anywhere. Then how easy to paint the medium's hands red or black, or to put mittens on them. Or, as she sits in the chair inside, to have a hole in the side of the cabinet right at her shoulder, through which her arm should be run up to the shoulder, and be exposed wholly outside, in full view of the audience, and there held fast by some one of the audience who would sit there. This would prevent her rising from the chair or moving about in the dark cabinet, or doing any thing in there without it

being known. By such and other similar arrangements and caution, we can prove that the medium does not do any acts done, narrowing down the matter to the question, "Who *does* do it?" Then if it be well shown that no other mortal is there in position to do it, the case is still further narrowed down to the point *that no mortal* does it, leaving it plain and clear that the act or manifestation is superhuman, and as such, *spiritual*. In this way only can we have any peace and fair appreciation in our investigation, or ever be rid of cheats and imposters. Let every one holding out himself or herself as a medium, understand that before we can accept him or her as such, or in any way connect ourselves with them, or indorse them, or even permit them to exhibit themselves to others in our circles, they must agree to undergo our tests in our own way, and that we will not listen to *their* statements of what they can or can not do, nor their mode of doing things. Spirits do as they please, and not as the medium says. Then, if a person says she is a physical medium, and can have spiritual hands shown through a hole in a cabinet, very well; we will try her, but fence her up, or paint her hands, and otherwise fix it, that she can't play spirit herself. If she agrees to submit to any or all such tests, it is fair to presume she is honest, and don't mean to cheat. But make the tests. Do not let any want of caution leave open any chance to be cheated. We do not

want to cheat anybody. We certainly do not want to cheat ourselves. We never can establish the truth of Spiritualism, even in our own minds, without absolute, positive proof. Let us have that always, or nothing. Such a failure and exposure as that at Terre Haute does our cause immense harm, and although it proves nothing against Spiritualism, any more than a counterfeit bank note proves against the bank of which it counterfeits, it is published all over the country as showing that the whole theory of Spiritualism is a humbug; and makes hundreds hostile to our investigations, and to turn away from us. Do, pray, let us shut down on all such carelessness in our own conducting of investigations, and thus not only give to ourselves more satisfaction, but gain for ourselves a better and truer appreciation.

LETTER XXV.

The "Sentinel" contains quite a censorious criticism of my last number, as to its reference to the Terre Haute medium. I want my errors corrected. I am against all falsehood. Light and truth can only have any support from me, if I know it; and I think I would be always among the last who

would injure an honest, defenseless, young or old woman. I have carefully re-examined all the evidence I have on the subject of these Terre Haute manifestations. They consist of an article in the "Sentinel;" an article in a Terre Haute paper, by a correspondent, "M.," I presume the same who criticises me now; a long editorial in the Terre Haute "Express," and quite a long private letter from a gentleman of Terre Haute who witnessed the second meeting, at my request, and wrote me of it. So "M." will see I did not write blindly, though I did not witness the occurrences. After again going over all, I am sorry to say I cannot change my mind about it, for truth won't let me; and although I surely do not delight in hard words, I do not see that I have used any that don't fit the case. I have paid a great deal of attention to the theory, and to the facts of spiritual manifestations; I have read and examined many books and writings of well known, honest and learned men, its advocates; followed the subject as it was written down and reported by its friends for about the last seventeen years, and read much of the reports and statements about it of learned and apparently impartial men for ages past, including the scriptures and Swedenborg's writings. I have also witnessed many superhuman manifestations, and have myself received many, so that the evidence of *spirit communication, directly to me*, is such that no

sane man can doubt it, or for a moment hesitate to believe that our spirit friends are permitted by our gracious Creator to communicate with us, from their new and happy life, and do so communicate; and are constantly with us, know all our actions, labor for our good, and teach us the way to a far better world, beyond the grave of this one."

I state these things of myself here, that the many excellent men in Terre Haute who are believers, like myself, may know that I am a Spiritualist in honesty and truth, and not a doubter or caviller; not, as "M." chooses to express it, *weak-kneed*. Right here, allow me to suggest, whether in forming opinions so new, so strange, and of such vital importance to ourselves and our fellowmen, is it not better for us to be a little weak-kneed than "weak-brained." Rather criticise too much than to accept and believe too readily, and be deceived. Is it not better to require over much proof than too little. It will not do—it is not either just or sensible, for anybody to denounce everybody else, because they don't see things, or believe things just as he does; and he will soon ascertain the fact, that however much he may denounce them, they will not do it. And now to come down to the medium. I have not said she may not be a medium, in some respects. God makes mediums. They are not man or woman-made, and no medium or mortal is perfect. I have only denounced her for attempts to

counterfeit spiritual action, and for making manifestations, or attempting to make them, *herself*, when advertised as a mere medium only. A medium does nothing humanly. She is the mere implement for the spirit to work with and do superhuman things. When she attempts to act as a spirit, she is a cheat, a counterfeit and a humbug. These are my sentiments, and I am sorry that I can't take any of them back; though, as they are right, I don't see how it can grieve *him*, as *he* did not produce the cheat. I take him to be an honest, well-meaning man, and I think, from the whole case, it is plain that he or Dr. Pense has but one thing to cringe at or complain of in this matter, and that is, that this smart "young girl" *fooled them*. Well, what of it? We have all been fooled often, with our eyes wide open, too. Therefore it was, that I urged caution and more safeguards *hereafter*. "M." and all others know very well how stiff-necked outsiders abuse me on every hand. We are sneered at without sense or reason for it, the sneerers not knowing or pretending to know anything about Spiritualism at all. Let us not give them cause to do so. Let us allow nothing to go out in favor of our cause that has not full, plain *proof to common minds* of its truth. Let the actors and agents we present, at least, be free from any act or conduct subjecting them to suspicion.

There are enough wandering empyrics and loafers

roaming over the country to cheat our people without our own associations being roped in with them. We can't afford to carry that class of people. Then as to this case:

Did not this young girl ring the bell with a left hand having a gold ring on a finger, the hand and ring being precisely like her own?

Did not a *pretended* spirit hand shown, have on it an ink mark, just as put on her hand by one of the audience?

Was there not an ink mark on her mouth, and also on a whistle (blown, as pretended, by the spirits)?

Did she not assert that "tom-fool" knots could not be untied (which were not untied)?

Did she not struggle quite a long time to untie a hand or wrist and fail, but very much chafe and mark and redden her skin in the effort?

All these things it seems were clearly proven—are not denied. Then Dr. Pence publicly stated that there "was nothing done that evening," and handed back the money. Why, how was that, Mr. M.? Surely you said the bell was rung—the whistle was blown—hands were shown—the sack was taken off, folded up and laid away, etc., etc. Was all this, if done by spirits, *nothing*? Why, if so, it was wonderful. But you see the plain statement of Dr. Pence and everybody else; even the girl herself (by her question as to other things) regarded it that the *spirits had done nothing—none of the above things.*

The cheat stood confessed. Mind, not that you spiritualists of Terre Haute had cheated any body, but that an attempt had been made to cheat you and others also. There is the point of the whole matter. You are not less true and honest; spiritualism is not less true—but this medium, as she is called, has attempted to deceive you and got caught at it.

The spirits never fail to untie a knot, or to show a hand, or to ring a bell, *when they attempt it*. They will take a rope, chain, or iron ring off without untying or opening it. This has been proven a thousand times. M. says:

“Most of the plans suggested to prevent trickery on the part of the medium have been resorted to, except the thrusting the medium’s hands through the sides of the cabinet into the light of the room, and letting some skeptic hold them. E. must be exceedingly well qualified to give advice on such matters when he does not know that the spirit hand can not be materialized from a hand which is exposed to the light. Come over, Brother E., and we will give you a few easy lessons in the philosophy of spirit manifestations.”

Why could you not cover the arm and hand after it was put through the side of the cabinet, and thus exclude the light, and still have the hand and arm held fast there? That suggestion had reference to her moving about, getting up, reaching up her hand

to ring a bell, or to *ink a whistle*, or to fold up and lay away a sack. *Pinioned*, as is suggested, to the side of the cabinet, and all the ropes, sack and instruments placed away out of her reach, most of the things which were done she *could not do*, and, of course, would not be accused of doing. Try her that way, and see if the things are done. The spirits can do them forty feet away.

This *snub* that M. gives me about "materializing" may be all right, but I don't see it so. I have read a good deal about it, and of its being done, and I have asked "on the slate," and received answers telling me how it was done, and during Judge McDonald's lifetime, he and I read much about it, and studied that and other matters a good deal; and from all my information thus gained, I am of the opinion that "M." has something to learn about it himself, which he can profitably employ himself at, before commencing to teach me. However, I am very sure I don't know as much I ought to, and will, therefore, Providence permitting, come over and gladly receive his instruction. I will only say here, though, that the idea apparently held out by the answer below, and also by what "M." says (quoted above) about materialization by spirits, is all twaddle and balderdash, gotten up by ignorance to make sound and talk, when sense and the truth were not understood. There is no evidence that I could ever find that spirits materialize at all. They have told

me that they do make "forms," that is, do make visible their spiritual form, by covering it with an outside more substantial, and that they cannot do this *in the light*, and they gave me the reason why. But it only required the light to be excluded from the *spirit*, so forming, not from the medium's arm or from any other thing or place. They also told me that they took the form so made from the air or atmosphere wholly, and that the atmosphere contained all the materials to form any physical shape or appearance. "M." can find a long and most admirable exposition and explanation of the matter in the teachings of a most intelligent spirit, speaking through Mrs. Conant, at Boston some months ago, to which I refer him.

It too often happens that ignorant blatherskites, in the character of mediums or speakers, when posed by some plain question, *make up* an answer to screen their ignorance of some theory or guessing of their own, and put it forth in great windiness. It won't do, "M.," for us to be gulled by such. Spiritualism can have, and must have a sounder foundation than mere bellowing.

There are several things in "M.'s" article that I can not assent to; some asserted, some intimated. But I am not a controversialist. Letter XXIV was, as all others of these articles were, written on good human evidence of the truth of the matters stated. The articles are all written in plain words, easily

understood, and the words express what they mean. They no where garble the truth; they no where set up any new theory of their own, or any new religion. Every reader will see that Letter XXIV honestly sustains the cause of Spiritualism, and asks others to do so fairly, and denounces only fraudulent and deceitful misrepresentations of spiritual proofs and manifestations. Pray, how can such writing do harm to anything but humbug?

The writer has said (often) that he believes spiritual communication with us to be fact, and now a proven and established truth; and that he believes Spiritualism in all its aspects and demonstrations proves and sustains the truth of the religion of our Saviour stronger and better even than the expounders of our Christian sectarians. Believing this, I want no new religious sect, and certainly no new religion. Our Saviour taught us right, and Spiritualism proves it. I accept it as the best proof that He was right, and refuse to accept anything which it disproves or does not sustain. There can be no better teaching, and surely no more cheering and comforting belief.

LETTER XXVI.

I propose now to give a compilation of statements of the spirits on divers matters, collected by me from time to time, when the manifestations were apparently authentic. The readers can judge for themselves. I regard them as coming through honest sources.

AS TO IDIOTCY AND SUICIDE.

QUESTION. Is an idiot in this world also one in the spirit world, if he was naturally so?

ANSWER. No, certainly not. I am at a loss to determine what your correspondent means by the term naturally. To me this belongs to the human physique, and the life of this world, to the things of time and sense. They are all Nature; they belong to our mother, the earth. The idiot is not so in soul, in spirit. But the spirit can not grow, can not unfold, can not progress by earthly experience, but it is not an idiot in soul. It is only so according to Nature, that is, according to the body. Some impression that has been made, either by sickness or by deformity, or by psychological impressions upon the body—it is these things that determine the idiot. For instance, the mother may be in a peculiar state prior to the birth of the child; and

may be very much depressed in spirits, may be passing through severe sorrow, heavy mental trials, or may be suffering from physical disease, and in consequence may impress that upon the brain, the physique of her unborn child, and when it comes into physical life the spirit can not control it; the brain will not act in response to the spirit. The body grows, unfolds, and all the outward senses, it may be, grow and unfold perfectly, may present a fine physique to the world, but at the same time the spirit can not act upon the brain; the brain does not respond to the efforts of the spirit, and so the spirit remains in a prison house of intellectual death till the physical, chemical change you call death takes place; then it is no longer an idiot. It goes into the spirit world as a babe—is cared for by those whose business it is to care for such little waifs in our life. It grows there, unfolds there. Its intellect is carefully nourished and brought out, and it becomes, perhaps, an archangel in the hereafter.

Q. Suppose a person of a high order of intellect should become paralyzed so as to impair his intellectual powers to such a degree that he can not make mental or physical progress, and only for brief times realize his sad condition, and all through no fault of his own he became paralyzed; suppose during one of these brief realizations he forcibly release his spirit from his useless body, the question is, would he not be doing a commendable deed,

what the Bible says to the contrary, notwithstanding? Is he not taking a progressive step?

A. It is written, "no suicide shall enter the kingdom of heaven." When reason is dethroned, or when the spirit can no longer, in this life, use the organs of reason, it is no longer responsible for the acts committed in this life; will not be called to account for them. The suicide, if such, under the circumstances, finds no rebuke in the spirit world.

AS TO THE SENSATION IN DYING.

Q. Are the bodily sensations, while dying, of so unnatural and horrid a character as to affright the spirit beyond description?

A. They are not at all unnatural; on the contrary, are in strict accordance with nature, and they never affright the spirit, under ordinary conditions. If the process of the second birth is in perfect harmony with nature there is no fear; there can be none. There is none of that terrible torture that you might suppose there would be. There is nothing to affright the spirit. It is a pleasant passing out of one degree into another. You are aware that there are many unnatural spiritual births; or perhaps I should not speak in so broad and unqualified a sense. I will say that you are aware that there are many births to our spirit-life that are not in strict harmony with nature. These are calculated to bring fear and distress because there is the

presence of this inharmony, which prohibits the entrance of harmony, which is heaven.

LOCATION OF THE SPIRIT WORLD.

Q. Where is the spirit world?

A. Here, right here. You and I, and all of us, are in the spirit world. Since your spirit could not exist outside of the spirit world, and since that spirit is with you, you are the spirit, you must of necessity be in the spirit world here. There is no getting away from it. The change called death is but a chemical change that affects the body. It does not necessarily change the locality of the spirit. It does not rob it of anything save the body. It leaves it right here in the spirit world. When it is away—the shell—it sees the spirit of all those objects of which you see the material. It can go away, then, to the furthest star, because it is not encumbered with the flesh. It is a spirit, and therefore it is superior to all crude matter; it can float through what you call space, and by the exercise of its will, which is potent after death, it can go where-soever it will. There are no fees charged for traveling in our life.

Q. What particular good would it do a person to become a medium? Is there not danger that one would thereby neglect the commandment to work on six days?

A. Under some circumstances I should answer

in the affirmative; under some other circumstances I should not. Since we have no voice in the manner of our physical make-up, nor in the stern forces of nature that are controlling us, which are the agents of the infinite mind—God—since, I say, we have no voice in these things, we cannot determine whether we shall be made mediums in the physical or not. It is not for us to say. .

Q. Are spirits possessed of greater knowledge than we in this life?

A. Only by observation, research, and study. They have knowledge, because they have seen more, or heard more. You would have greater knowledge concerning London, if you had lived there fifteen years, than you have now.

Q. Yes, but not if I had just arrived there. Do spirits receive knowledge immediately on arriving in the spirit world?

A. No; knowledge is not shed upon us without efforts on our own part. It becomes precious to us only as it is hard to obtain.

Q. Are spirits conversant with the affairs of this world?

A. They are—some of them.

Q. Why should some be, and others not?

A. Because some are not interested in the affairs of this world. Some on earth are not interested in politics, and those who are, are much better informed than they upon that subject. So in our life,

those who are not interested in the affairs of the earth do not know so much of them as those who are.

Q. Do spirits know of the future of affairs pertaining to this world?

A. Only by comparison. They know that certain effects will follow inevitably certain causes. And they being able to see those causes, while you are not, can thus more readily perceive the future.

Q. In other words, spirits do not know any more about the matter than we do.

A. Spirits occupy a step higher, and behold spiritual things in a clearer light, but they know no more than you of these things of which you inquire, which are also beyond them.

Q. Have not spirits experienced immortality?

A. No more than you.

Q. I do not understand it.

A. Can your spirit ever die? You dwell in the spirit world to-day as much as you ever will.

Q. Is there no change at death?

A. A change of the body, but not of the spirit. As you are to-day in the body, so you will be to-morrow out of the body.

Q. Spirits know something of the future after death, which the spiritual part of the man cannot know here.

A. They know of their immediate surroundings. They judge of the future by comparison, as you do

here. You do not know of that which is around you, except as you can obtain knowledge of it by our senses physical. But when you get the power of the senses spiritual you will still perceive beyond you a future, impenetrable to you—one of which you will know no more than before. To-morrow you will know that to-morrow has come to you; you expect it to-day, but you do not know if you will reach it. Spirits are not necessitated to change locality when they change spheres. Heaven is not a locality, but a condition. Purity of spirit does not demand that you should inhabit some pure spirit world; you can have a sphere of love around you even when here in this ruder world. The spirit world with all its glories is here in your midst. As Christ said, "the kingdom of heaven is within you."

Q. Do you say the kingdom of heaven is here as much as anywhere else?

A. Yes. When you are happy you are in heaven. Do you suppose the self-murderer is happy?

LETTER XXVII.

Since my last communication, I have had several opportunities of witnessing very interesting manifestations, and some most admirable tests of the genuineness of what was given to us; but having

no means at hand of writing down, *at the time*, what occurred, I am unwilling to incur the risk of errors of memory by attempting to give them now. I am sure any one who could have been present, and heard as I did, would have felt about them just as I do; but I adhere to my often expressed sentiment, that every one should test and prove this matter for himself or herself, and not depend upon the opinion or statement of others. I am glad to know that now, lately, there is such a wide-spread attention being paid to it; that so many have their minds and attention on it; that mediums are developing at every point. To such a wide extent is it now that very soon it will be rare to find one person or one family that is not interested, and trying to become acquainted with the wonderful work of our Creator, that now seems to open to our minds the vistas beyond the grave of this world.

All classes and kinds of people, the learned as well as the uneducated, the members of our churches as well as the outside world, the poor and the rich, all are found investigating spiritualism as well as they can. The scoffer and the sneerer are taking back seats. This is right. Intelligence and right reason are now having their proper influence, and it no longer avails to denounce it without the denouncer knows something about it. Ignorance, bigotry, or thick-skulled stupidity, no longer can control men and women's minds by mere assertions.

To-day there are all around us hundreds investigating spiritualism, where a few months ago not one could be found. Day after day the light is breaking on their minds, and they are beginning to understand the divine teachings of the scriptures, and to receive through the teachings of those loved ones who have passed to the new life beyond this, full and much more perfect and satisfactory proof of the truth and value of Christianity. Let the great work go on. It is doing a great good. We are unfortunate here yet that we have so few developed mediums; but that difficulty will soon be obviated. One simple, plain manifestation is worth a hundred theories or opinions. One true and perfect medium is worth a thousand *lecturers*. Indeed, lecturers are so often humbugs—theorists, who set up their own opinions instead of facts; who make fine speeches for their pay instead of demonstrating what spirits say; who give us froth, and foam, and wind, instead of substance and essential truths (of which, in many cases, they are ignorant themselves), that it is hardly safe to rely on any. We want mediums; we want speakers—witnesses from the other life, who can speak to us through mediums, and give us proofs. Until we get them we must be patient, and gather from other sources. Many persons say, “If there is any thing that I ought to know, my Creator will, in some way, cause me to

know it. If my absent or departed friends ought to talk to me, they will."

LETTER XXVIII.

Having, from the very beginning of my examination of the truth or falsehood of the theory of Spiritualism, assumed the ground that I would require something above and beyond human testimony to satisfy my mind; that I would not receive the statement, opinion, or belief of any mortal about it; that I must be sure that any evidence, either in the shape of physical manifestations, or of intelligent reasoning in favor of it, came from spirits, or from intelligences or powers existing in the life beyond the grave of this life, and could not possibly be made or given by any human being, before I would credit them in any respect, I have adhered to this course heretofore, and yet see no cause to change it. Taking no man's word myself, I also desired that no man should take mine. I wanted each person to do as I did, examine and decide for him or herself, each from their own opinions.

My only purpose in preparing all these communications for publication was to present to others' minds those facts that had come to me—to show

how they came and where, and what they were, vouching only for those that I personally knew to be true, telling the reader of the wonders I had seen or learned, and the way I had gone to learn them, and that he or she could go and see and learn the same new and strange things. That was all. I know that many, a great many persons have gone the way I pointed out, and have learned the same things and wonders that came to me, and are most happy in their ascertainment. In my progress of investigation, there came before me, in books and papers, and other publications, many ideas and facts concerning it which were wholly new, and which, though I could not vouch for them as occurring to my own knowledge, were vouched for by others unquestionably as honest and reputable as myself, and therefore not to be ignored or repudiated, but claiming the right to be considered as in testimony, though not as conclusive proof. Wherever such facts came before me, then, and where, in any other personal proof given directly to me by any spiritual mind, these gleanings were plainly or apparently confirmed. Where I myself had, at any time, received, in those miraculous ways, corroborative proof of their truth, I determined to set them down before the reader for his consideration. This course has greatly extended these publications, but I trust not without good to my fellow men. I search, and

read, and extract that which seems good and reasonable to me, cutting off and casting aside all or nearly all that does not seem plainly useful or valuable. I thus give to the reader the gleanings from a widely extended field, covering our whole country. He gets, with little labor, what I spend much time to procure. From this source comes all of those compilations, mostly in the shape of questions and answers directly through mediums, which are found in several of my last numbers, and will be found in others to come. They are, so far as I can test them, genuine spirit speakings, and come to us through sources apparently entitled to our respect, and in most cases are, in whole or in part, confirmed, *to me*, by direct spirit evidence, that nothing this world has ever shown me yet could induce me to disbelieve or doubt. As such I give them.

They come in detached, isolated subjects, each unconnected with the other, but each giving a wide field for thought, and striking home to the human mind with an importance, which everything in this life, or the more important life to come, ought to find with us:

QUESTION. Was Christ a spiritualist?

ANSWER. Yes, he was a spiritualist, in the largest sense, and he lives to-day in your spiritual movement just as much as he lived in the spiritual movement of his day.

Q. Do you believe in the existence of his Satanic Majesty?

A. No; not according to the popular idea, by no means. I believe in one influence or element of power, which is exhibited everywhere in life, as combating with good, with that which is pure, which is just, which is moral and religious, with the highest good of nature and of divine life. We see exhibitions of it in the realm of nature; we see it in the fruits, in the flowers, in vegetables, in minerals. Chemistry proves this. Science makes it a fact. And we see it as we come into mental life more clearly; there it exhibits itself with more power, with greater strength. There is a constant warfare going on between this lesser good and the greater good; but I know of no such personage as the devil.

Q. What similarity is there, if any, between spiritualism and mesmerism?

A. There is a similarity, and it is this: Spirits, in controlling media, make use of the same agents that the mesmerizer makes use of in controlling the subject. They make use of the magnetic aura that surrounds the media, and that which surrounds themselves.

Q. Do you believe in a distinct personality of good more than of evil?

A. Yes; because I believe that good is the positive, and therefore the most powerful. I believe

that good is everywhere. Evil is not everywhere. There are some places where you can not discover anything evil. It is good. It is very good. What does that tell me? Why, it tells me that good is the greatest, the good is supreme, because I find the good everywhere, and I do not find the evil everywhere. There is no individual fallen so low in sin, in degradation, in all that makes life miserable, but what we can find some good there. I believe that God is supreme, that he is omniscient and omnipresent, that there is no place where he is not, that there is no act in our lives that is not permitted to be by this same God. If I believe this, where is the room for absolute evil? Where is the room for that personality of evil? There is none to me. When here I believed in a distinct personality of evil, but I know better now. I see that this could not be and my God be supreme in the universe.

Q. Some persons say they can see spirits. Is not this a mistake? Is it not the spirit body they see?

A. "God is a spirit, and no man hath seen God; no, not at any time." If this be true, and we have every evidence that it is true, no one ever did see a spirit. They only see the outer covering of the spirit, the instrument upon which the spirit acts.

Q. What effect have those so-called "death-bed repentances" on the spirit?

A. They affect the spirit no more than the cleansing of the body can affect the spirit. They

carry it not one step further in moral goodness or wisdom. All death-bed repentances are but conditions of remorse, and one must outlive that remorse—must pay for all the mistakes prior to that remorse by slow and distinct degrees. This can only come by action after death. The spirit finds that its death-bed repentance has not affected it as a spirit. It is precisely the same as it was before the repentance.

Q. Does it require a believer in the return of spirits to communicate to friends who have passed before?

A. No, it does not; but it does require that the seeker shall be thoroughly honest.

LETTER XXIX.

In my readings I frequently come across ideas and sentiments said to come from spiritual intelligences, which we all ponder a great deal on, and which we do not feel able definitely to settle in our own minds. I usually lay such things aside to use whenever occasion occurs. I have quite a store of such, and I do not know that I can do better than to collect them together and give them in a kind of "hotch-pot" to the reader. He will see in them a great

many subjects in a small space, and get the ideas of the spiritual world to aid his own thinking about them. It will be understood that these are gleaned from reputable sources—from manifestations as free from suspicion of fraud, and just as honest, apparently, as the transactions in human life among reputable people. I find many valuable thoughts among them, and nothing suggested that is not possible to a great organizing mind; and which may not well be, though not usually understood by our limited and mistaken, and too often perverted, human minds. I give them, then, detached and unconnected as they are. The reader can separate them. I give the questions and answers both, because, having the question, the answer can be better understood, viz.:

QUESTION. Does the spiritual body grow old as the physical body does?

ANSWER. No, it does not. Age, decay, are circumstances belonging to physical life. The spirit does not grow old—knows nothing of decay.

Q. How do we enter spirit life?

A. You are there already. You have ever been there. It is impossible to tell when or where you enter, since, in all past time, you have been there, are there in the present, and, in all probability, will be in the future.

Q. Will the belief in spiritualism better our condition on earth?

A. That depends upon how truly one believes, upon how far their belief extends. If it is a mere belief that rests upon the surface, it will amount to little; it will not change your moral lives; it will not make you better neighbors nor better Christians, better fathers and mothers, better children, better brothers and sisters. But if your belief goeth beyond the surface, and taketh hold of your divine nature, then it will show you that you are, every instant of your lives, in the presence of the angel world, and if you commit wrong deeds it must be in their sight; if you fail to do right you cannot conceal it from them; if you defraud your neighbor you will know that some angel will mourn over your mistake. Truly, then, if your belief lays hold of your diviner nature, it will do you good; it will make you better here, and prepare you for a better life hereafter.

Q. Is it good to love one's neighbor better than one's self?

A. At the outset allow us to tell you that is impossible, a thing not to be expected, and that never did exist. You may say, I love this person, or that or the other, better than myself, but you talk unwisely—you speak libelously of your own soul. It is not possible. The love which burns in one's self for one's self is greater than all other love; it may not so seem, but so it is. You may say, is not the mother's love greater for her child than for herself?

But stop and consider. What is the child but a part of herself. The mother's love is absolutely the most selfish of all love.

Q. Is the influence that we sometimes feel from those gone before, direct from the spirit?

A. Sometimes it is so; sometimes it is not. Sometimes the influence of the spirit friend is shed through numberless spirit mediums. Sometimes they come in direct contact, so near that with their spirit hands they can touch you, and their life is mingled with your life.

Q. We are told every person has a spirit guide. If this is so, by whom, or by what law are they appointed?

A. It is to be supposed that every person dwelling here in physical life has some one spirit, if not more, who, in obedience to the law of want and supply, will be attracted to him or her. These spirits take a deep interest in them, and exercise a watchful care over the frailties of human life. Such would be considered guardian spirits. They are so by virtue of spiritual law; they come to you, if at all, by spiritual attraction. All souls, as well as the atoms of life, are repelled from or attracted to each other—as the case may be—by fixed law. If a soul is drawn to you, it is drawn by law—fixed law—and becomes your guardian spirit by law.

Q. Does not the idea of a spirit guide interfere

with the freedom of our actions and our responsibility to God?

A. By no means, because these spirit guides are not your leaders. You may as well say that you are not responsible beings because you were not born such; because you had fathers and mothers who diligently cared for you till you were able to care for yourselves. These guardian spirits do not take away our responsibility or our individuality; but they only aid us when we need aid. They are to us as supporters when we need them, but they are not our leaders.

Q. Do the evil deeds we commit here come to the memory in the spirit-life and disturb our happiness?

A. They do, most assuredly; and that disturbance is more keen than it could by any possibility be here.

Q. Is there any limit to the continuance of their unhappiness?

A. There is, but no general limit. When the soul has outlived the conditions that produced the mistake here, then the remorse will pass away. Evil is transient and must pass away, while goodness is permanent and must ever remain.

Q. But suppose I do a person here some great injury, shall I ever cease to remember it? and if not, shall I ever cease to sorrow over it?

A. Yes, the time will come when you will cease

to sorrow over it, because you will see all the causes that led to it.

Q. But shall I not always feel sad that I have made the person suffer?

A. No; because you will see that even out of the suffering you caused your friend, or your enemy, has come forth a lesson of wisdom which has been of use to them; when you would have done them lasting evil the overruling power of good turned the scales and made it of good account to them in the end.

Q. Will all spirits eventually reach heaven?

A. Certainly they will. Heaven, be it understood, is not a locality, but a condition or state of mind. Whenever you are happy you are in heaven. You can be in heaven and yet be in this room, or about your business; and that perfect heaven which the soul is destined to enjoy, that full rounded heaven that is the destiny of every human soul, can come only by our having outlived all that is evil, all that is gross, having attained that pure state wherein we can at all times do unto others as we would have them do unto us. It is the destiny of every soul to reach this full rounded heaven. Centuries, cycles, perhaps untold ages, may be wanting to fill the measure of heaven to some souls, but at last it must come.

Q. Is it a necessity on the part of God that any

person should shed even one tear? If all did their duty would any need to suffer?

A. I believe that everything that is, is from necessity. I do not believe in any such thing as an accident in nature. I do not believe God ever makes any mistakes. But I believe all life attains a perfect state by growth; and while it is growing to that perfect spiritual state it must of necessity make mistakes. It cannot be otherwise. When you were a school boy, doubtless when your lessons were new to you, you made many mistakes, but after you became familiar with them, and had mastered them well, your mistakes became less and less, till finally they all disappeared. They were necessary to your growth in intellect. You never come into this world with all the knowledge of mature experience. You must be the babe, the youth, the man. You must go through all the successive stages of growth, and every one of them are possessed of sharp angles and points that need rounding off; and when they are all rounded off and your spirit has had a large experience, then you will see wherefore all these tears and mistakes—will see wherefore they were a part of your experience in soul and in body. No, no; God never made a mistake. I know he is charged with having made many. It is said that he made this beautiful world and placed man in it, and called the world and the man very good. He peopled it with thousands and tens of thousands of human beings.

He called them good. But by-and-by he finds it is a mistake; they are all conceived in sin and prone to evil. How is this? Since we expect our God to be all-wise, possessed of all knowledge, he ought to have known better in the first place. He ought to have been sure that they were very good. But ah! that is a libel upon our God, his goodness, wisdom and power. He made the world and all therein, and millions of other worlds; and he made them all very good—just right. It is only human ignorance that determines concerning the evil, the mistakes.

LETTER XXX.

I continue my compilation of extracts from the sayings, statements, and teachings of spirits, through reputable mediums, on many different subjects. It may be well to state that these things are said to be spoken mostly by the spirits of Theodore Parker, Robert Owen, and men of that grade of mind when on earth. I have not deemed it important to name the supposed spirit speaker, because it is the matter spoken, and not who speaks it, that must commend itself to the human mind.

Questions and answers as follows:

QUESTION. Is there any accountability in the spirit world?

ANSWER. There certainly is. We are accountable to the judge of our own lives for all our thoughts, for all our deeds, and we arraign ourselves at the bar of our own consciences. There we are tried, and if we have made a mistake, or committed what you here call sin, we are never acquitted, but we are always scourged till we have outlived the sin.

Q. Where does accountability come in?

A. We are accountable because accountability is the order of nature. We are accountable to ourselves for every deed we perform, for every thought we think. We are not divested of our accountability because we are connected with God, because God holds us, because he overshadows us and determines concerning our every act, by no means. Since we have reason, *that* will hold us accountable for every deed and every thought.

Q. If God works within us both to will and to do, how can we work ourselves?

A. Since we cannot separate ourselves from God, or God from us, we must work in consonance with God, if we work at all. Our works are virtually God's works—can be no less.

Q. Does everything take place by necessity? Could there be, by any possibility, a different state of things as regards human action?

A. The doctrine of "whatever is, is right," when divinely considered, is true, because all the manifestations of nature or of mind are of necessity

legitimately from the Father. That a thing is, to me, proves that there was a necessity for it.

Q. Has not our early education more to do with moulding our sentiments than anything else?

A. Yes, it has almost everything to do with it. In fact, all the religious opinions on the earth are but the result of education. Every soul possesses a religious element, and it depends upon outside circumstances or education for unfoldment.

Q. In cases where wrong is done by one to another, will there be opportunity in the spirit world to repair that wrong?

A. There certainly will. No soul can ever trespass upon the rights of any other soul without suffering the consequences thereof; and through that suffering they are brought to a knowledge of the better way, and by and through that a reconciliation takes place.

Q. Does absolute justice always require it of one from another?

A. Every soul measures justice according to its own capacity. With us, as with you, no two individuals can see justice from the same standpoint. What might be exceedingly just to me, might not be so to you. Each soul is required to obey the instinct of its own law; required to render obedience to its own highest sense of right.

Q. What do you mean by conscience?

A. I mean that subtle power of life which determines between the right and wrong of every living soul.

Q. Is it not a matter of education ?

A. So far as the earthly life is concerned, it is. It is an outgrowth of your education. Virtue is merely a term which conveys a very imperfect idea of that divine attribute which exists in every human soul. I contend that all that is called virtue, and understood to be such, can only be tested by the strongest possible opposition. They who stand high in morality because they have been educated to stand thus high, generally fall when tempted very slightly. They who stand high because of their natural organization that determines that they shall stand thus high, can stand through a greater amount of temptation, and not fall.

Q. Are spirits enabled to behold the material universe independent of a medium through which to gain an entrance to our plane of action? If so, are they not often rendered miserable in beholding the many sufferings and violations of law in this life?

A. They are able to behold the material universe, but not in precisely the same sense that you behold it. You see that part of the universe that appeals to your bodily senses; we see that also, but very dimly, unless we are in clear *rappor*t with some physical organism called a medium. But we behold dis-

tinently and clearly that which you do not recognize at all; that is the tangible to us—it is the intangible to you. To us, in our pure spiritual state, aside from mediumistic control, all the objects in life that you can recognize with your human senses are intangible to us; they are shadowy; while that which you can not see or feel, is the real life to us. “Are they not often rendered miserable,” asks the questioner, “in beholding the many sufferings and violations of law in this life?” To a certain extent they are, but not without hope. It is not that kind of midnight gloom which sometimes settles over the spirit in the earthly life. It is a keen, sharp pain, which leaves the spirit better for having passed through it. When we sometimes see our friends here in sorrow, we mourn with them—we shed tears over their sufferings. When we see them walking in paths of vice, which lead straight to the furnace of affliction, we lament over them, but not without hope; for we know that the spirit will finally overcome its weakness, and these scourges and whips will but have done their duty for them. Were they our children we might mourn to be called upon to chastise them, and yet we might feel that it was best that we should do so. We may scourge in love, that the spirit may, through discipline, attain to fairer forms, and rise to better things.

LETTER XXXI.

It is frequently asked by persons who have not examined the subject of spirit manifestations, and by others who, though wholly ignorant about it, meet it with such prejudices and hostility as show plainly that they are determined not to believe it, though proven, Why is this so? Why is not this or that so? Why can't this or that be done? To all these questions, I can give but one answer, viz: *I don't know*. It seems to me that all these interrogators are "running ahead of the hounds." We are not yet up to the point of these whys and wherefores. I have been, and still am, diligently and honestly examining to find out whether certain facts plainly given to us, facts away this side of their questions, are facts or not. The Cincinnati "Commercial," to my great surprise, the other day reported and published a long and, apparently, a very fair report of manifestations made through a clairvoyant medium, a Miss Keiser, who, it said (for I never saw her), possesses the *gift*, spoken of by St. Paul, of *discerning spirits*. The next day the editor gave us an editorial critique on her and her demonstrations, the chief point of which seemed to be, that if it was the spirit of Colonel Baker that spoke through her, he was a much poorer gramma-

rian and orator now, in his spirit life, than he was in his human life.

Now, I read the report, and I did not understand that Colonel Baker spoke there at all. The medium, it seemed, said that she saw certain spirits standing by persons in the audience, and that those spirits said so and so. I do not remember that she, at any time, said she saw Colonel Baker, or repeated his words. But if she had, I submit to the editor that the style and manner, or even the substance of the speaking, is not before us yet in this investigation. We are not so far along as that. We are on the question, does any spirit speak to us at all? When we establish that point we may move forward so as to meet his criticism. Do spirits speak to us? Do they write to us? Do they communicate with us? Can they do these things, in any way? Let us settle that. As with this "Commercial" editor, in regard to Baker's oratory, so it is with other people in regard to many other things. Why is darkness necessary? says one. Why don't they speak to me? says another. Why don't my spirit friends appear to me? says a third. Why, if these revelations are to benefit mankind, were they not given to the world long ago? says a fourth. What good will spiritualism do? say a dozen. And so on to interminable extent.

For my part, I have always been content to rest in my mind, in full faith, that our Creator had a

sufficient reason for all he did, and sufficient wisdom to do all things well, and that because I did not see and could not understand why these things were, was not a cause for denying their existence.

In these letters, I have confined myself to proofs and evidence, and matters going to show that our departed friends can and do, in their own ways, communicate with us; to describe those ways as well as they were shown to me—to glean all proof and all respectable statements as to those matters, and in my gleanings to endeavor to separate the chaff from the grain—obtain the true and reject the false. It requires great care to do so. I have two sources of information only: One, manifestations made to myself; the other, those made to others, whose statements of them I can rely on.

That part derived from others comes from a wide field, and thus it is that so much of these articles are compilations merely.

I now give you certain facts and explanations given us by spirits as to many matters which cause wonder, doubt and inquiry in our minds, as follows:

QUESTION. The flowers, then, are not formed from the atmosphere, but are taken from some neighbor's garden, and belong to the owner of the garden?

ANSWER. They have the power to form them out of the atmosphere. But such flowers soon fade away ;

that is to say, they are absorbed again by the atmosphere, perhaps while you are looking at them, but those that are a natural outgrowth of the earth of course render obedience to the law of the earth. You pluck them from the parent stalk, and they live a certain time, and then droop and fade away. Yes, they do take them from the gardens of their neighbors.

Q. How are spirit-shapes made apparent to our natural senses?

A. As I before said, the necessary power is taken from the atmosphere, and carried to the medium, and condensed or rendered objective there, and of course when it is once objective, it is apparent to your physical senses. You can use it, you can handle it. It is, to all intents and purposes, an objective form. It is a chemical process. There are many chemists in the spirit world.

Q. Then the form is not their own?

A. No, not absolutely. In one sense it is, and in another it is not. It is not their spirit form, for that you could not see, but it is a clothing for that form, that they have gathered from the atmosphere.

Q. Is it possible for spirits to be mistaken?

A. Certainly it is. I should be very sorry if it was not.

Q. When the spirit of a clairvoyant leaves the body and goes to the spirit realm, may it not see the actual spirit bodies as they exist?

A. Certainly; it is seen under spiritual conditions, but not under physical conditions. Clairvoyance may be called the telescope of mind. It reveals to your human senses what physical senses, under ordinary conditions, could not see. By the use of the telescope, you behold distant planets. You do not know that they exist without the use of the telescope. By and through clairvoyance the soul beholds disembodied spirits, and communes with them.

Q. Is spirit power communicated to physical bodies, through electricity, as a medium, or by what means are they enabled to move chairs, tables, or other material bodies?

A. Electricity is the most powerful agent we know, under the direction of spirit. It is by that power all tangible bodies are moved—all the so-called miracles are performed.

Q. Does this account for the power of healing by electricity?

A. Yes; I believe the terms magnetism and electricity are synonomous. They are only different terms of one power. It is a subtle force in the hands of intelligence, and, under the direction of intelligence, that becomes all powerful everywhere.

Q. Why is darkness necessary?

A. Because darkness is more negative than light. Light is positive, therefore overcomes, eats up the conditions requisite to these manifestations. Why

don't you see the lightning as well in the glare of the sunlight as you do after the sun has gone down?

Q. How are we to understand the verse in Scripture, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God?" In what sense are they to see God?

Q. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they are able to see God everywhere. Through the purity of their own hearts they are able to know God in everything.

Q. Do spirits know our thoughts in this life before they are uttered in speech? Do they know our secret thoughts?

A. Yes, they do.

Q. Can spirits make known our secret thoughts through the instrumentality of a medium? For instance, do they know why I ask these questions?

A. Your speaker does not know why your correspondent asks that question, but this he does know, that spirits are quite as well able to communicate what they know of your thoughts as they are able to know them.

LETTER XXXII.

I continue my compilation of extracts from the speakings of spirits through several mediums, on various subjects, as follows:

QUESTION. Does the spirit retain its material body, or does it become clothed upon anew at the change called death?

ANSWER. Your spirit is clothed with its spirit body and its material body; when the change takes place the spirit body does not become separated from the spirit.

Q. If, then, I should be shut up in an air-tight iron casket, through what manner would the spirit make its escape?

A. There are different degrees of materiality; the spirit body of which you speak is so subtle that it can readily pass through any of the substances of which your senses can take cognizance. There is no substance known to your senses through which the spirit body can not readily pass.

Q. Are the terms spirit and soul synonymous?

A. They are.

Q. Then do not you confuse our ideas on the subject?

A. Soul and spirit are the same to me. Your terms in the earth-life are so ambiguous that it is very hard to make you understand what we wish to.

Q. Does not the term body imply an inner existence of which it is the covering?

A. Certainly.

Q. What term do you apply to that existence?

A. We may call it the soul, the spirit of life,

the divine principle, and still, after all, it is only the life, the motive power of the man or woman.

Q. Does the substance of the spirit material body diminish or reduce itself in order to pass through a given enclosure?

A. It is not reduced by passing through any material substance; it loses nothing of itself; it is superior to the things that appeal to your human senses. You can not hold thought—you can not bind it in a casket; thought travels wherever it will, and this spirit body referred to is thought—thought in form.

Q. If, upon leaving the body, the spirit gravitates to a congenial sphere, how can it be unhappy? or, in other words, how can you reconcile congeniality with unhappiness?

A. I do not understand that spirits, at death, are ushered immediately into a congenial sphere. I do understand that they may gravitate, each one to their own proper sphere, whatever or wherever it may be. No one can occupy the sphere belonging to another. It is congenial to their needs, to their state, but not to their desires; therefore it does not provoke happiness. The second state of existence, or that which is so understood to be by you, is a very natural state, devoid of all the lines of castes, and creeds, and conventionalities of this state.

Q. Is the spirit world a definite locality, or is it anywhere and everywhere?

A. It is anywhere, it is everywhere. Life is spirit, and as life is everywhere, the spirit-world is everywhere.

Q. Is the veil separating the spiritual and material worlds as much an obstacle to spirits as to mortals?

A. Yes, it is precisely the same; no difference.

Q. What is the actuating principle of the involuntary forces of the body? If you say "life," we ask: What is it?

A. The body physical being possessed of two distinct sets of nerves, the voluntary and the involuntary, science tells us that the action of the subtle nervous aura, or force, when passing over the involuntary system, causes involuntary action. In its play upon the voluntary system, it acts upon the brain; its force is first applied there, and from thence it descends throughout all the voluntary nervous system. You may ask, "Is there any difference existing between the force that acts upon the voluntary, and that which acts upon the involuntary nervous systems?" I should answer, "No; I believe them to be one and the same power." We may give as many names as we please, but after all it is one force. You call magnetism and electricity two distinct forces. This is a mistake; they are one. Seen under certain circumstances, you call them magnetism, under others, electricity.

Q. In this life some have good memories, and

more have poor memories. Can those of the latter class hope to be able in the future life to recall all that knowledge of history or science that they have once acquired, but seem to have totally lost?

A. Each spirit possesses a distinct recollection of all its thoughts and of all its acts. It has an account of all it has experienced in all its past life, and of all in its present life. Memory, with the spirit, is eternal. Those who have no large faculty or gift in that direction here, have it not because of physical deformity, physical want; the bodily organs through which memory makes itself known are, perhaps, in an inactive state, so much so that the indwelling spirit can not use them with success. But it is not so in the after life; every condition through which the spirit has passed is made a record of by the spirit, and that record is as eternal as the spirit is eternal.

Q. Is there any condition in this present life where people can live free from sin?

A. That depends upon how you define the term sin. All growth involves mistakes. So long as individualities grow, so long they are liable to make mistakes. Those mistakes you call sins. Perfection, if such a state can ever be attained, shuts out all sin. But I know of no one who has ever reached that state of perfection that church people look for. Not in this life can it be found, and I have not found it as yet in the spirit-life.

Q. Is there any standard of right and wrong in the spirit-life?

A. No, none whatever, save those standards that are erected in every living soul.

Q. Is it not possible for humanity to keep God's commands, to obey God's laws.

A. It is certainly possible for humanity to obey God's laws.

LETTER XXXIII.

The following is the description of an interview had by a gentleman and wife, well known in Jeffersonville, with Mrs. Keigwin, the medium; at which the manifestations described occurred. I was not present myself, but the description was written out, as I am informed, by the gentleman himself, and from his ministerial character, and his high reputation for intelligence and honesty, there can be no doubt of its entire correctness and freedom from exaggeration in any respect. This report and statement were obtained for me by my polite and excellent young lady friend, Miss C. Southard, who, though not herself a very enthusiastic believer in spiritualism, has seen some of its manifestations, and knows all the parties concerned at the sitting

reported, and that they are, in all respects, respectable and credible. This is a history of only one occurrence—similar to dozens that I have witnessed—and the like of which can be any day witnessed by others:

“On the entrance of a well-known lady and her husband, the medium brought in a small stand, the top of which would measure about eighteen by twenty-four inches, and threw over it a woollen shawl. A slate, with a pencil on it, was held under the stand by the medium and the lady visitor. Soon a noise, as if writing on the slate, was heard, and, upon examining it, we found written on it: “Good evening, dear father and mother. I am so glad you have come here. Did you come here to talk with me?” To this the full name of a deceased son of the gentleman and lady was signed.

The question was then asked aloud: “Why do you not communicate with us at home?”

“You have no power. It takes power.”

“What kind of power?”

“God-given.”

“Have you ever been to heaven?”

“No sir, I never have.”

“Where are you?”

“I am here now, pa.”

“Where do you stay when you are not here?”

“In the eighth sphere.”

“Who are you with there that you know?”

"With grandma and grandpa A., yes, and with grandpa B. and brother Johnny."

"Is your brother K. here with you?"

"Yes, sir, he is."

"What do you do there?"

"Nothing, ma."

"Do you have to be there at certain times?"

"Yes."

"What time do you have to be back there?"

"At six and twelve."

The lady observed her grandma believed in it. Then the pencil wrote: "Yes she does, and so does aunt H."

At this the gentleman laughed, when the pencil wrote, "You are right, ma. Don't laugh at ma, pa. Yes, you are right, ma."

"Is your grandpa A. here?"

"Yes."

"Will he write his name?"

"Maybe he will. I will ask him."

"He says he can't form strength enough to write to you."

"Why not?"

"Because he passed over fifty-one years ago, and he never has written, but will before long."

The mother then played a tune on the piano, when the pencil wrote, "That is a good one. Oh, ma, God will bless you now. Play me another, for it makes me think of when I was with you here. Pa, you think

we are evil spirits, but we are not. True, there are some evil spirits also. Pa, I was with you yesterday when you went home at twelve o'clock. You did not know it, did you? You went down Spring street, and so was I with you. Good-by, now, my dear parents. May God and all of his angel spirits watch over you until called to pass over."

"What part of your time do you spend with us?"

"Nearly all."

"Were you happy as soon as you passed into the spirit world?"

"Yes, dear pa."

"Who was the first person you saw?"

"All of the folks. They were happy to meet me."

"Have you in the spirit world learned anything that is contrary to the teachings of the Bible?"

"I have not."

"Would you rather come back or stay?"

"Stay where I am."

"Would you have preferred to live to old age?"

"Not if I had known as much as I do now."

While much of this writing was going on, the medium's hands were outside of the shawl, while the slate and pencil were under both shawl and table. It was impossible the medium could have done the writing, or uttered a voice which we all distinctly heard, and which was represented to be the voice of her deceased brother. As to the source

of these communications, I need not now express an opinion, but only say that I am satisfied that they are not produced by flesh-clad human beings."

LETTER XXXIV.

Since preparing the foregoing much new evidence has arisen, of which I would say something before closing these pages. I have heretofore warned my readers against hasty conclusions, against taking as true, things "not proven," and against receiving as evidence all that is presented. I have not said much about things coming through *clairvoyant* mediums, because I regarded such evidence as not the best. It might be true and it might not. Many wonderful things have been told to me through a clairvoyant; things that I conceived to be complete *tests*, and as such, taken with the most excellent and intelligent character of the lady medium, I did not then, and do not now, see how they could be other than true. Yet these manifestations have been pronounced untrue, deceptive, and fraudulent, by writings on the slate in the hands of another medium, which writings apparently came from a spirit very dear and near to me, and who would be the last in any life to deceive me. So

strong was the repudiation of the clairvoyant to me that it almost shook the foundations of my faith in the whole theory, and if I could have had full and final proof of the authenticity of the writings on the slate I believe it would have caused me to abandon the study. But I had, before I ever saw slate writing, been told by one on whose word I relied implicitly in life as a mortal, and whom worlds could not make me doubt as a spirit, "that if she did write to me I would not know it was her;" and I remembered the charge given us in Scripture, to "try the spirits." I therefore never was *fully* satisfied. I always have believed that we would learn more and better things, and that light would come at last. I think it has come, and that, although it has not proven those clairvoyant manifestations to be true, it has proven the medium to be honest and capable, and that any suspicions of her were unjust; for since that time most wonderful developments of her mediumistic power have been shown. She now receives writings on the slate; the spirits talk to their friends through the trumpet, and without any trumpet, as loud and plain as mortals talk. You obtain, in plain and beautiful language, too, full and clear explanations of nature, of the next life and its circumstances, and of many things in this life that we do not otherwise understand. In short, let any one, ignorant or skeptical, go in an honest

frame of mind to seek light and obtain the mediumship of Mrs. Hollis, of Jeffersonville, and I feel sure his doubts will be removed. It is due to her to say that she is a most wonderful medium, apparently placed among us by the Great Father to bring the light of truth into the world. A reliable, intelligent and pleasant woman, she wins our favor by her modest and unpretending manners, and will, I think, always retain it by her honesty.

As to her, I am clear all doubt may vanish. I know that in saying this it necessarily follows that the doubt—the suspicion—must fall somewhere else, *for fraud there was, and deception*. I have an impression, not yet a knowledge, where the guilt will be found. I shall hunt it out and if I find it expose it. I think it will not fall on any medium, but on some false and counterfeit spirit who has played a wicked part, not only in regard to those charges against the clairvoyant, but in many other things toward myself and others. I will find the truth, God willing, and hereafter be more careful to “*try the spirits*.”

THE END.

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