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Spiritualism;

THE ARGUMENT IN BRIEF.

BY REV. AUSTIN PHELPS, D. D.



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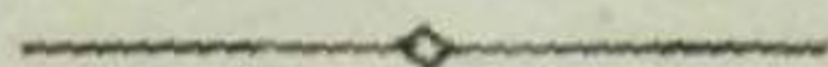
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I.

SPIRITUALISM.—WHAT IT IS NOT.

LORD MANSFIELD used to say, that a good Saxon statement of a case in court was the best argument for it or against it, as its merits might be. Such is pre-eminently the fact respecting Spiritualism. For the practical purposes of sober men, the case lies in a nutshell.

1. Spiritualism is not *science*. It has never yet assumed the order, the self-consistency, or the dignity of a science. Open its authorities, and what do you find that will bear the searching of such investigation as that which has built up astronomy, chemistry, geology, or even the more mobile science of political economy? In comparison with these, Spiritualism plunges us headlong into "chaos and old night." Specially, its laws of evidence are not those which science is wont to honor in other things.

4 *Spiritualism. — What it is not.*

The first thing which repels a sober inquirer who dips into it, if he is able to suspend his moral sense and his æsthetic taste the while, is the glaring substitution of ultra-mundane testimony in place of that which common sense commends to men of affairs. Take the question of the personal identity of "spirits," for example. How can you answer it? Who is wise enough in the laws of spiritual being to tell us what is logical evidence of spiritual identity? How do I know the resources of chicanery in other spheres of existence? I have tolerable means of protection against the trickery of this world; but, when it comes to the possible trickery of the "seven spheres," woe is me! Nothing but downright miracle can settle this elementary question of identity. Yet, till this is determined, we have not the first cobble-stone for a foundation of such a superstructure as shall deserve the name of science.

Have Bacon, Newton, Franklin, their messages for my private ear? Very well: my vanity is hugely pleased at the notion of a call from historic dignitaries; but the identity of the per-

sons, — how about that? They come in ghostly fashions to me who have no ghostly tests. Your credentials, gentlemen, if you please! Till you come solidly within range of mundane laws of evidence, I must ask for some celestial token, equivalent to the human face, voice, gait, figure, by which questions of identity are determined in earthly courts. Am I referred to the internal evidence of the message? Worse and worse. Bacon I know, and Franklin I know; but who are you?

Dr. Franklin, timed exactly by good chronometers, with allowance for the difference of longitude between the two cities, lectures to wondering circles at the same moment in Albany and in Chicago. How is this? We are told, in answer, that “spirits have power to assume any appearance at will,” and that it is the “*Eidolon* of Franklin” which appears. What is that? There is a cheat here at any rate. Which of him is it? Who would stand a lawsuit on the testimony of witnesses who should swear to such an astonishing *alibi*?

Yet it is amazing that multitudes of inquirers,

6 *Spiritualism. — What it is not.*

quick-witted in other things, ignore this whole question of spiritual identity, in testing the Revelation of the Séance. Men not used to the melting mood break down in tears at the assurance that a departed mother, wife, child, is addressing them in the harangue of a medium; but, when pressed for the proof of identity, they point to things which they would laugh at if used as evidence of fact in the sale of a horse. They would not buy so much as a jack-knife on such evidence.

The late Jeremiah Mason was once engaged in a famous trial, in which some good Methodist brethren were concerned. One morning when the court opened, an over-zealous friend of his client came to him, and in solemn whisper said, “Mr. Mason, Mr. Mason, I had a vision last night. Gabriel appeared to me, and told me that Brother A. was innocent. No mistake about it.” — “Very well,” said the man of law, not so much as lifting his huge head from over the table on which he was writing, — “very well; better have Gabriel subpœnaed immediately.” So we say to the Spiritualists, “With all due

respect to your intuitions, we would like to have Lord Bacon and the rest subpoenaed, and put into the witness-box. Your craft is not a science till it can stand a trial by jury." The most scholarly of American defenders of Spiritualism is evidently staggered by this questioning of identity. He honestly says, "If spirits have the powers attributed to them by many seers, of assuming any appearance at will, it is obvious that some high spiritual sense must be developed in us before we can reasonably be sure of the identity of any spirit, even though it come bearing the exact resemblance of the person it may claim to be." And again, "it may be that we must be in a spiritual state before we can really be wisely confident of the identity of any spirit." But this seems to us to yield all that we affirm as to the claims of Spiritualism to science. If, where identity is asserted, it can be neither trusted nor tested, except by some unknown spiritual sense undeveloped in ordinary mortals, what is all the rest good for? Pardon us, if, in our poverty of "spiritual sense," we have to fall back on our common sense.

2. Spiritualism is not *religion*. It commends itself as feebly to the religious instinct as to scientific research. A system of religion, to be worthy of a sane man's faith, must, in the first place, *be* a system. It must have concinnity. It must have a beginning and a middle and an end. A jumble of incoherences commands as little honor from faith as from reason. Then it must also be from God. It must be worthy of God in its aims; it must be worthy of God in its internal evidences; it must be worthy of God in the occasions of its revelation; it must be worthy of God in the choice of its instruments; it must be worthy of God in its methods of working. Above all, it must be consonant with other revelations of God to mankind. God cannot contradict God.

The modern soothsaying does not bear any one of these tests. As a source of religious knowledge, its witnesses contradict each other. The best that can be said of it, even on the credit of its own authorities, is, that it is a discordant muttering of voices from over the

gulf which secludes us from the dead. “We are taught that God is a person; that he is impersonal; that every thing is God; that there is no God; that we are gods. We are taught that the soul is eternal; that it commences its existence at conception, at birth, at maturity, at old age; that all are immortal, that some are immortal, that none are immortal; that the soul is a winged monad, in the centre of the brain; that it gets tired, and goes down into the stomach to rest; that it is material, that it is immaterial; that it is unchangeable, that it changes like the body; that it dies with the body; that it develops the body; that it is developed by the body; that it is in but one place at a time; that it is in all places at the same time; . . . that all spirits progress, that some progress, that none progress; that all spirits are good, that some are bad; . . . that there is no high, no low, no good, no bad,” and so on.

Moreover, it patters about things infinitesimally small; yet even in these it finds crumbs for wrangling between lying spirits and true, of whom we mortals have no means of determining

which is which. The song of the witches in Macbeth, —

“ Black spirits and white,
Blue spirits and gray,
Mingle, mingle, mingle,
You that mingle may,” —

is a symbol of much of the material which the modern necromantic oracles furnish as food for religious thought.

Who, in any sober, not to say prayerful mood, can find any thing *like God* in the peculiarities of their teaching? Who or what is there in them to worship? What they borrow is nothing to the purpose. That they recognize a spiritual world goes for nothing. Why make so much ado about that? We knew it before. Are we to be wheedled into the belief that it is a discovery just now bursting upon our astonished vision? If we hear not Moses and the prophets, are we to be persuaded by one risen from the dead, and capering in the fashion of these modern ghosts? In the things *original* to Spiritualism, who feels the presence of the God-like? Is it like God to reveal himself in dancing tables, battered win-

dows, uneasy pokers, the rattling of knuckle-bones, and the falling of turnips from the sky? Is it like God to set going the machinery of the supernatural world, for the sake of recovering a lost ear-ring? Is it like God to send "spirits from the vasty deep," as in the case of one of the afflicted, to discourse upon pumpkin-pies?

Are there more respectable phenomena than these among the divinations of the new faith? Very true. But these are a veritable part of its vagaries. I have as much reason to accept these as the rest for a divine revelation. And as for the rest, what am I to do with my old Bible? It has done some service to the world. A good many men and women have died for it. It deserves a respectful, if not a reverent handling; but the hostility of Spiritualism to the Scriptures is boastful and truculent. Using what it pleases of the Christian oracles, it scouts the remainder as only the relic of an effete superstition. We hear one of its prophets gravely questioning whether the world would not have been happier and better if Jesus Christ had never been born. In another of its tangents, it

flies off in a deification “of the forces of Nature, formerly called God.” A Parisian gendarme, in the fury of an atheistic revolution, has shocked us with some such blasphemy; but it has been left to Spiritualism to make worship out of it. Excuse us, gentlemen. Whatever else this may be, it is not religion. It hoots at our grand Biblical theology. It degrades our beautiful Christian ideal of heaven. It bedraggles our most sacred hopes of immortality.

3. Spiritualism is not *good morals*. Good men and women are among its believers, no doubt. Afflicted ones seek in it communion with their sainted dead, with no thought of wrong. Restless inquirers search it for some wiser adjustment of nature to the supernatural than they have found elsewhere, with no profane curiosity. Christian believers, of pure lives and Biblical faith, think they can accept a fragment of it here and there, in an eclectic fashion, without damage to their holier experience. But after all, and to these exceptional believers it should be said in sad faithfulness, the drifting of this modern theurgy is to loose morals.

Some of the "spirits" teach, in theory, the sinlessness of revolting crimes. Whatever is, is right. Man is a machine. Responsibility is a fiction. Punishment is tyranny. Sinner or saint, it makes no difference: both are only working out the destiny of development. Thieves, drunkards, liars, murderers, are only victims now, and angels in the end. We are all angels, if we can only think so. The eternal mill must grind out just such angels. In their place, nothing else would do as well. Repentance, atonement, redemption, are myths; for there is nothing to repent of, nothing to atone for, nothing to redeem. The world is outgrowing theologic whims: Spiritualism is the herald of its manhood; and Jesus Christ was only the Prince of mediums.

We find, therefore, as such a theory would lead us to expect, a huge vein of practical immorality running up and down and across this new religion. In this respect, it is singularly like the old mythologies.

Profaneness is one of the piquant elements in its despatches from the other worlds. The

“spirits” come chattering about us with a great deal of impish talk. They jeer, with old-fashioned infidels, at the sacredness of the sabbath. Their inspiration shows a malign bearing towards the restrictive morality of the Bible. More than all else, they breathe a deadly antipathy to the Christian theory of the relations of the sexes. Where else do denunciations of the servitude of marriage find so congenial a home as in a spiritualistic library? Where else such loose theories of divorce? Where else so much nonsense about “affinities,” “spiritual unions,” “twin-spirits,” and the like?

Not that the majority of its adherents are attracted to the new gospel by this obliquity, but that the thing itself somehow wallows by instinct in this kind of mire. Whoever else may dabble with it, free-lovers are sure to do so. Set it going in any community, and, if there is a man of sensual life or prurient imagination there who has brains enough left to feel intellectual curiosity about any thing, he is sure to find his way to the *séance*, and to get from it some quietus to his conscience. I fling no charges

broadcast ; but, as a “looker-on in Venice,” I see this fact, and make a note of it. Is there any other development of modern thought which men of easy virtue and a certain gushing, erotic temperament take to with such loving spontaneity as to this?

4. Spiritualism, taken as a whole, is not *good sense*. Not that the admission of a certain modicum of fact in its alleged phenomena is unreasonable. A man is not to be browbeaten out of trust in his own eyes. A belief in phenomena as historic facts, explained or unexplained, is one thing ; religious faith in those phenomena, as the vanguard of a new and revolutionary disclosure of truth from heaven, is another. This faith, and nothing less, is Spiritualism. And this, I repeat, taken as a whole, is not good sense, whatever may be true of an eclectic dose of it.

Here should be observed, in passing, a singular stretch in the reckoning of the apostles of this faith, by which they multiply enormously the numbers of their alleged followers. Their arithmetic is as marvellous as that of political

bulletins before election. They have a cool way of appropriating, as proselytes, all lookers-on who admit the phenomena in question as facts of which they attempt no explanation. Physicians, scientists, clergymen, statesmen, noblemen, kings, emperors, are claimed as believers, simply because they have not denied the evidence of their own senses to physical facts. In the statistics of the new sect, the numbers are thus swelled to millions. Not a tenth part of them probably would concede more than that they have seen what they have seen, and heard what they have heard. Multitudes thus claimed have, like Lords Lyndhurst and Brougham, explicitly denied the charge. In Spiritualism, as a revelation of scientific and religious truth, they have no more faith than in alchemy. Their good sense revolts when they are asked to accept the sum total of the thing, as set forth by its devotees and seers.

It is not good sense to accept as science that which can bear the tests of no other science: we might as sensibly believe in astrology. It is not good sense to trust religiously that which

scorns or burlesques some of the deepest religious instincts of mankind: we might trust Mormonism as well. It is not good sense to receive the rhapsodies and incoherences of clairvoyants as a substitute or a supplement of the Christian Scriptures. It is not good sense to interrogate a modern witch of Endor, to get something better than Paul's testimony to the immortality of the soul. It is not good sense to ask or answer the irreverent question whether Jesus Christ was any thing more than a spiritualistic medium, and whether his miracles were like the table-tippings. Is the whole history of Christianity for eighteen centuries to go for nothing to the judgment of a man of sense? More than all else, it is not good sense to be cozened by that which is not sound in the grain of its moral affinities. If a man is known by the company he keeps, a sensible man will judge of a system by the company it draws. A certain *mental* obliquity is implied in a faith which ignores such tests as these. The links of logic in a man's mental constitution are unriveted by such a faith. The vagrant whimsies of the brain are set to

capering by it, like the *muscæ volitantes* of a sick-headache. It is not compatible with that full, hearty, balanced health of the mental faculties, which Locke calls “large, round-about sense.” Spiritualism, therefore, builds on the road to the mad-house. Let it become pervasive and chronic in the social temperament of a country, and one might say, as Mr. Pettigrew said of South Carolina at the outbreak of the rebellion to a stranger inquiring the way to the insane asylum, “Go anywhere, sir: you cannot go wrong.

The notion, for instance, that our old philosophy is to be uprooted, our medical science to be shelved, our jurisprudence to be reconstructed, our Biblical religion to be antiquated, and our practical outlook upon life in this world and the next to be revolutionized by the “circles” and the “mediums” and the “clairvoyants” and the “psychometricians” and the “prophets” and the “seers” who go up and down in the earth in these days, — what is it but the fantasy of an addled mind? Ignorant men may believe it till they know better. Silly

women may be led captive by it till they are wiser. Sick nerves may dance to such music till their possessors get more protoxide of iron into their blood. Minds of eccentric orbit, tangential minds, minds afflicted with a chronic inability to believe with majorities, may naturally enough form an intellectual comet of this sort, the tail of which shall be very large and proportionately thin. To these may as naturally be attracted a certain proportion of idle minds, and of those whose intellectual processes are tangled by their moral obliquities. But solid, sober, sensible men and women, whose fathers and mothers were of healthy stock, and who have inherited a right to large, well-balanced brains, "looking before and after," have no proper place in that assemblage.

II.

SPIRITUALISM PROBABLY OF SATANIC ORIGIN.

PROBABLY, we say, because it is one of those anomalies in history of which we may be able to form only a hypothetical theory till time has sifted them, and cleared them of excrescences.

At this point, candor requires some concessions to Spiritualists on the part of their opponents.

We must concede to them a certain basis of phenomenal facts. Precisely how much must be yielded may not yet be certain; but fair criticism will grant something. Bad and foolish as the modern necromancy is, it is not an unmitigated humbug. Bees do not swarm upon nothing. Neither do believers plunge in crowds into an absolute vacuum.

We should be unreasonable, for instance, in a denial *in toto* of the credibility of testimony as

applicable to the phenomena in question. Believers in Biblical miracles on the evidence of testimony must not question the possibility of credible testimony to necromantic marvels. The Egyptians did something with their enchantments. The spectators saw what they saw. Come what may of it, eyes and ears and fingers are tough witnesses to facts. The eyes and ears and fingers of a hundred other men are of *more* value than the solitary evidence of yours or mine. We practise an unconscious evasion of the point in logic when we say, "I will believe when I see." We lose vastly more than we gain by any *a priori* reasoning, or by any very recondite reasoning, against the blunt testimony of the senses of a regiment of men.

As little reason have we to cavil at the *character* of a certain portion of the testimony by which the toughest facts of Spiritualism are supported. Some of that testimony, so far as it respects the sanity, the culture, the integrity, and the opportunities of the witnesses, would convict a murderer in any court in Christendom, outside of New-York City.

It is too late also to set down the spiritualistic phenomena as only a re-vamping of old, or an invention of new, feats of jugglery. Their advocates are not to be censured, if they decline to argue with a man who comes to them, as from the detective police, with the logic of invisible wires, and of sleight-of-hand, and of leaden plummets concealed under crinolines. We might have been excusable for such innocence twenty-five years ago; but it will not do now. Signor Blitz, who probably knows as much as most men of the capacities of jugglery, has been heard to say, that nothing on record in the history of his profession could account for that class of facts on which Spiritualism chiefly builds. Robert Houdin also, who claims to be the inventor of most of the tricks performed by the fraternity of modern jugglers, has declared his inability to equal or to account for the so-called spiritual occurrences which he has witnessed. Similar testimony is borne by M. Hamilton, a Parisian expert in legerdemain, and by M. Rhys, a maker of the conjuring implements used by Houdin.

Moreover, the theories of scientists thus far announced cannot fairly be held to cover all the facts of the case. Electricity, magnetism, odic force, nervous disease, unconscious cerebration, — do not any or all of them exhaust the demands of candid science in explanation of the phenomena? They are adequate causes of many of them. How many is yet an open question. Its decision will depend largely upon the intelligence of the observer, and probably still more largely upon his temperament, and his predisposition in the matter. The history of Spiritualism illustrates signally the tendency of the human mind to believe what it wishes to believe. We may not say, with Sir David Brewster, “Spirit is the last thing I will give in to;” but a temperate thinker, accustomed to judge by weight of evidence, and not given to gaping at the marvellous, will probably attribute the immense majority of these phenomena which are not impostures to the working of disease and of the elements and laws of nature. To this view, the more considerate Spiritualists give their assent. One of their authorities admits that

“ seven-tenths of the alleged spiritual phenomena may be of mundane origin.” An intelligent committee of Spiritualists, who met at Cleveland in 1867, reported, that “ what at present passes for spirit-communion among the people is a mixed, and, for the most part, unanalyzed mass, rendering the identity of spirit-presence very uncertain.

. . . Many, if not all, of the disorderly manifestations your committee deem wholly unspiritual, having their origin in half-controlled diseased nerves, poor digestion, torpid liver, and general discord of mind and body. . . We cannot suppose that a majority of the phenomena under consideration is projected and directed by spirits.” So much, then, is clear.

But the case which Spiritualism as a religious system presents to us concerns chiefly a certain residue of facts, after very abundant deductions from its claims as a whole. Take the crude mass of the phenomena alleged, and set aside a certain proportion, large or small, as you please, to the account of the rascality which the system somehow attracts to itself as a ship's bottom does barnacles. Strike off another por-

tion, as probably due to the honest exaggerations of credulous or prejudiced observers. Cancel another section, as explicable by electric laws, or by principles of the animal economy, and specially by laws of disease well known to science. Ignore, if you must, every thing else which is purely physical, as likely to be one day explained by physical laws yet to be discovered. Eliminate something more for the incertitude of psychological research, when pressed beyond the facts of the general consciousness. After all these deductions, Spiritualism is apparently right in claiming that a residuum of fact remains, which goes straight to the point of proving the presence and activity of *extra human intelligence*. For one, I must concede this, at least, as a *plausible hypothesis*.

The unmanageable difficulty with any purely naturalistic theory of the case is, that elements and laws of nature cannot create mind. I must deny this power to occult principles of matter, as well as to those now known to science. If, then, the spiritual theory explains this otherwise inexplicable residue of fact, why should I not

admit it until physical or mental science, or both in concert, suggest some more probable hypothesis which commands the situation as well? I must do so on the same principle on which, if I receive an intelligent message at one end of a telegraphic wire, I infer, even if I know nothing about electricity, that there is an intelligent mind at the other end.

Two things should here be specially noted by Christian inquirers. One is, that it will not do to overlay this whole subject with a scepticism which begins and ends in metaphysics. When you talk of the possible workings of human minds beyond and beneath the consciousness of everybody concerned in them, you talk of that of which nobody knows any thing at all. It is a practical nullity. You and I know as little of it as the most illiterate disciple of Jackson Davis. We can never hang up his illiterate faith on that erudite horn of the dilemma. If that is all that we have to offer him, the common sense of the world will side with him rather than with us. The other fact is, that no very *attenuated* hypothesis of any kind, in explana-

tion of the phenomena in question, can meet the case as it presents itself to the popular mind. Shadowy conjectures on the subject will seem so glaringly inadequate, that they will only shift the charge of credulity to ourselves. We must see to it that we do not swallow the camel on our own premises.

But we are perfectly safe in conceding, at least as a probable theory, that of extra-human intelligence. Why should we not stand upon the admitted principle of philosophy, that we are not bound to go beyond a *sufficient* cause for a given effect? We may push to the front, then, the old Biblical doctrine of a personal devil. How stands the case now? What are the facts of our faith on this doctrine? On the same testimony on which we hold other Scriptural facts, we hold these : that a malign being exists in the universe, who is distinct in his personality ; that he is at the head of a vast organization of subordinate kindred spirits ; that they have a limited, yet immense, spiritual power ; that they are especially malignant towards the person and doctrine of Jesus Christ ; that they have pecu-

liar affinities with the most grovelling of human vices ; that to a certain extent the elements and laws of nature are subject to their use ; that they have access to the abodes and hearts of men ; that a prescribed range of freedom is permitted to them, to tempt and to afflict mankind ; that they have been, and that the Biblical evidence does not affirm that they are not now, concerned in certain pathological affections of the human body, even to the extent of personal possession ; that this possession is evinced by at least a partial surrender of the mind to their control, its thought answering to their thought, its will to their will, and its speech an echo, therefore, to their words ; that, by the powers and liberties thus permitted to them, they are able to work marvels resembling miracles ; that they work largely by fraud, assuming the disguise of human graces ; that they thus extend a colossal empire over the whole earth, by which the probation of man is intensified ; and that some periods in history have been, and some in the future are to be, signalized by their infernal campaigns. Such are the well-known facts of the Biblical doctrine of evil angels.

Now, do they not fit in with admirable correspondence to the facts of the case in hand? What more do we need to account for those phenomena of Spiritualism which are inexplicable by natural and mental science? What is more probable than that, under such a system of things, the facts of the Biblical demonology should be confusedly intermingled with the facts which are cognizable by science? Why should it be thought incredible that evil angels may use and disuse, intermittently, diseased or abnormal states of the human body, or peculiar conditions of the mundane atmosphere? Such instruments thus used should seem, as they do seem, to be endued with extra-human intelligence. At other times, when not thus used, they should fall, as they do, into dormancy; or should frisk in meaningless phenomena, as the lightning plays with the telegraph in a thunder-storm.

Have we not, then, in the "devil and his angels," of whom the Scriptures forewarn us, the "sufficient cause" which philosophy requires for all that there is in Spiritualism which science cannot otherwise explain? Are we, on the one

hand, asked to imagine unknown and unknowable laws of mind and of matter? What for? Are we, on the other hand, required to muddle ourselves with extra-biblical conjectures of the organization of Hades? What for? Must we be set trooping through the "spheres" of Swedenborg? What for? If the old Biblical faith explains all that we know to be true in these modern soothsayings, and a good deal more, why not be content with it? Enough is enough in all good logic.

But it is claimed that Spiritualism is not devilish in its moral spirit. Not only do some good men and women believe it, which is nothing to the purpose, but some inspiring truths, it is said, are affirmed by it. Some benign sensibilities are cultivated by it. Some benevolent deeds are fostered by it. The spirits themselves say and do some very worthy and beautiful things: they are really genial and comforting fellows. Hence the claim that they are good spirits. Very eloquent they are too, — what sublime effusions! what poetry! what music! what art!

Well, tastes differ ; but be it so. Admit that the query is a pertinent one, “ If evil angels come, why not good angels ? ” We answer, they do. “ Are they not all ministering spirits ? ” But not after this table-tipping, lying, swearing fashion. The evidence of evil in the phenomena is superabundant : *the evidence of good is no more than a device of temptation must have.* Do you suppose that Satan would aim at any thing less than this, if he should set about creating a wide-spread delusion for the capture of souls ?

“ Oftentimes, to win us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray us
In deepest consequence.”

The devil and his subordinates may do a great many silly things, but they are not fools. He will never concoct, nor they execute, a system of temptation which is *all* falsehood or *all* vice or *all* nonsense. He will never organize a set of agencies which shall show themselves up at the outset as pure malignants. That would tempt nobody, and would make him the laugh-

ing-stock of the universe. He knows better than to paint himself with horns and hoofs.

No: if Spiritualism be the work of Satan, it must be so contrived as to work in human ways, by human modes of thought, through human affections, and very largely with the help of human weaknesses and vanities, in order to accomplish any thing. It must make some show of goodness, of truth, of beauty. It would be unlike Satan if it did otherwise. Specially, if he would succeed in it on any broad scale of numbers, he must aim low in his range of expedients. He must set his minions of the rank and file at work on a certain fantastic level of character, at which men are won by the childish, the petty, the silly, if sugared with a coating of the marvellous. Men who would feel no interest in the cure of a blind man will stand agape at the feats of a juggler. Lord Rosse's telescope, on Boston Common, on a Fourth of July, would stand no chance by the side of Punch and Judy. So the fooleries and antics of "the spirits" beguile a volatile class of men and women who could never be caught by a lofty or a recondite delusion.

Spiritualism, then, we claim, on the hypothesis, that, so far as it claims religious authority, it is of Satanic origin, is cunningly adapted to its end. Senseless as it seems to sedate and Christian logic, it is very crafty as a compound of temptations. Look at the ingredients. What are they? Here are some truths for the honest ones, — converse with the dear departed for the bereaved, gushing messages for the affectionate, marvels for the curious, revelations for the credulous, gossip for the idle, mummary for the frivolous, swelling words for the mystical, a loosening of marriage-ties for the impure, and an anti-Christian supernaturalism for minds famished by life-long scepticism. Surely, so far as it goes, it is a cunningly-laid snare. Very foolish it may be to be caught in it, yet it is a subtle thing in the hands of the fowler. Considering the material he has to deal with, is it not worthy of the great hierarch of evil?

Let the case be put plainly to those Christian men and women who are dazed by it; is there any more in it of truth, of beauty, of sublimity, of comfort, or of any thing else which

your souls crave than it is reasonable to suppose that Satan would put into it, if he contrived it as a device of temptation? Does it not, in the graver developments of it, bear the marks of one of those predicted delusions in which false prophets should “show great signs and wonders”? If any thing more is to come of it, may it not be the precursor of such marvels that, “if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect”?

When the late Pres. Day, of Yale College, first had his attention called to Spiritualism, a quarter of a century ago, said he, “Either nothing is in it, or the devil is in it.” No candid man, who knows its history during these twenty-five years, will now affirm the first wing of the president’s alternative. The second is as philosophical as it is Scriptural.

It is confirmed also by the testimony of missionaries who have been long familiar with the old idolatries. To their converts these modern prodigies, which are so novel to us, are an old story. They recognize them instantly, as the “signs” of the old religions of their youth.

Dr. Gulick, late of the Hawaiian Islands, says that American Spiritualism has no marvels which equal those of the Hawaiian Paganism, testified to by eye-witnesses of them not long ago living, and used by the Pagan priesthood as miracles in support of the national religion. *That religion was distinctly recognized as devil-worship.* Hawaiian Christians of to-day are beginning to inquire whether America is about to re-establish it.

