

*Theological*  
THE  
*Spiritism*

5

NEW GOSPEL

OF THE

DEADENED BRAIN

OR,

*SPIRITISM EXPLODED.*

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1. THE NEW GOSPEL.—Spiritism is called the “new gospel.” After a lecture by Mrs Laura M’Alpine Cuppy, at Dodworth’s Hall, New York, Sunday evening, 22nd Nov., 1863, the question was asked “In what does the new gospel consist?” Answer—“The new gospel, as we understand it, is the philosophy of Spiritism, so called, and the philosophy of Spiritism embraces all the virtues, and strikes at the root of all evils, social, political, and religious.

2. IT COMES THROUGH DEADENED BRAINS.—The Melbourne hierophant of the new gospel, “J.S.” (the initials of a well-known journalist), undertook lately to defend Spiritism in a series of letters to the *Argus*. This is his account of how the new gospel is revealed through the Spirits:—“The higher intelligences work in circles or groups. They DEADEN THE BRAIN of the medium for the time being, and make use of his or her organs of speech and sight for the purpose of conversing with human beings.” To the same effect is the testimony of all the Spiritist writers. The “deadened brain” (added to the deadened conscience) is a very appropriate origin for the new gospel. But, like all else in Spiritism, it is stolen. Exactly the same claim, in the same words, was set up by the “mediums” (or priestesses) in the ancient pagan systems. The “higher intelligences”—or deities, as they named them—took possession of the female medium’s brain and senses, and spoke (or communicated) the oracles *through* her. Possession by Spirits, is a popular belief as old, and as wide, as the human race. When, therefore, “J.S.” imagined he was communicating to the world a new and astounding truth, he was simply repeating a scrap of antiquated

knowledge, pilfered from one of the ten thousand treatises on the Occult Sciences, Demonology, and Witchcraft.

3. IT IS NOT NEW.—Spiritism, so far from being new, is precisely the oldest of all delusions. The American professors of the art have tried their best to add something fresh and striking to the ancient worn-out superstition. They have simply added a mass of fresh falsehood and humbug. What is new in Spiritism is not true, and what is true in it is not new. Historically considered it is "a mare's nest." Every scrap of it might be picked out of the pages of *Le Dictionnaire Infernal*, by Colin de Plancy, a well-known and very instructive, and harmless, French book.

4. HOW IT BEGAN.—"In the little huddle of Hydesville, Arcadia, Wayne County, New York, in 1844, in a humble hamlet, there resided a small family, Mrs Ann Pulver and daughter. The mother and daughter became so disturbed by mysterious knockings around the house, they grew exceedingly alarmed and changed their residence. In 1847, Mr M. Weekman and family, having taken the same house, were visited by the same sounds, until they were likewise impelled to move. Mr and Mrs John D. Fox, with three daughters, Ann, Margaret, and Catherine, moved into the same house in December 1847, and in March, 1848, the knockings were resumed and began to excite serious attention." This is the account of the beginning of the new gospel given in the "Plain Guide to Spiritualism:" (by Uriah Clark; fourth edition; Boston, 1863). It is repeated in hundreds of Spiritist publications. Clark's book, it may be added, is the most rational and sober account of the new gospel yet published. Its author is a sincere believer in his adopted creed. Comparing his narrative with that given in Emma Hardinge's "Twenty Years' Record of Modern American Spiritualism" (third edition: New York, 1870); it is easily discovered that the new gospel commenced in credulity, was carried on by deliberate mercenary imposture, and has been kept in existence by miserable ignorance and wild fanaticism. The Fox family became its first prophetesses. They went out as "mediums" and "revelators;" and by holding *seances* in private parlors, at so many dollars a sitting, they speedily established a most money-making traffic in Spiritism, besides becoming the famous and much-followed founders of a new religion. The girls of the family, Catherine especially, were very smart at the table-rapping, and the dollars flowed in bountifully. But to this day it has never been clearly proved that the Fox girls did *not* produce the marvellous rappings by the easy trick of snapping their ankle-bones (a common trick), or by means of magnets concealed in their dresses. The charge of practising this piece of imposture was publicly brought against them many times by men of science

and intelligence; and the only real disproof of it ever offered was the Fox girls' own assertion to the contrary.

5. HOW IT WAS CARRIED ON.—Of course a game so easily played, and so lucrative, was eagerly seized upon as a profession by multitudes of smart Yankee adventurers of both sexes. The whole western continent soon swarmed with lecturers and mediums; audiences gathered in all quarters to hear the astounding revelations of the new seers and prophetesses; table-rapping circles were formed by thousands; fresh wonders were discovered, or invented, to satisfy the gaping curiosity of the gullible public; and nothing but Spiritism was talked of from one end of the country to the other. All this added immensely to the money gains of the new soothsayers. This was the first stage of the delusion—the stage of Medium imposture. The second stage was that of Immoral imposture. Crowds of disreputable characters of both sexes, but (shame to Womanhood!) especially of the gentler sex, seized on the new gospel as an easy and ready method of covering over their immoral and scandalous lives with the veil of pretended divine sanction! Then came into existence the detestable doctrines of “Free Love,” “Affinity,” and all the other fine names for promiscuous prostitution and universal adultery. Women—or, at least, human beings in female attire—were found ready to stand up before all the world and publicly preach these woman-degrading abominations. And all this helped to keep popular curiosity alive, and to “bring in the dollars” to the new apostles. It was a “paying game.” Next followed the Printing imposture. Cute printers and publishers saw a regular mine of profit in the publication of shoals of books and pamphlets about the new gospel. The books and pamphlets were, of course, written to suit the market. The public appetite (always greedy of the sensational) grew with what it fed on. Then each successive publisher “piled the agony” a little higher than his predecessor, in order to stimulate the already palled popular taste. *Banners of Light* were hoisted by the score; *Spiritual Trumpets* resounded from one end of the country to the other; and pretended *Communications from the Other World* were printed by and for the million. The enterprising and cunning printers and publishers reaped a golden harvest. When, finally, the profitable game was nearly played out, the last phase of the imposture appeared. Only one possible element of popular interest remained. Might not the new gospel be made daringly anti-Christian, audaciously irreligious, startlingly blasphemous? Would it not strangely stimulate the flagging public excitement to hear denounced, openly, and from the public platform, and without the least reserve, names associated in the minds of men with all that is sacred, holy, and divine? This stage of the imposture was exactly the one that suited itinerant apostates from the

Christian faith, atheistical missionaries, and suchlike persons; and a very gainful harvest was reaped by the tribe. The whole current of recent Spiritualistic literature runs strongly in this direction. Never were there books more openly and impudently blasphemous than those of the latest authorities on the new gospel. But this stage is the climax of the imposture. The world has seen the like before, and will probably see the like again, many times. But what the world has never yet seen is, the permanent and triumphant success of a contemptible imposture, based on ignorance and credulity, maintained for mercenary purposes by selfish tricksters, and culminating in immorality, blasphemy, and atheism.

5. ITS LITERATURE.—The enormous mass of Spiritist publications issued from the American Press within the last twenty years is an almost unprecedented fact in the annals of printing. If mere quantity of printed paper were sufficient to convert the world to a particular belief, then one-half at least of the entire population of the globe ought to be confirmed Spiritists by this time. Some simple-minded people are struck with the conviction that where there is so much said and written there must be a good deal that is true. But this inference is ridiculously false. Millions of even volumes have been printed and circulated in defence of atheism; but atheism is, nevertheless, demonstrably false. With regard to the American deluge of Spiritist publications, the explanation is very simple and ready at hand. The publications are a "good paying speculation," whilst the excitement about Spiritism lasts. As soon as it subsides, the publications will stop. Viewed from this point, it may safely be asserted that a more impudent literary hoax was never palmed off on a gullible public than is exhibited in the bulk of these same Spiritist books, pamphlets, and periodicals. More shameless specimeas of mercenary bookmaking were never published, in any country, or at any time. The same assertion may also be made of the mass of English Spiritist publications. The few stray pamphlets of like character issued in this colony are of too despicable a character to be separately noticed.

6. THE AUTHORS OF THE LITERATURE.—The authors and compilers of this vast mass of Spiritist literature are, for the most part, mercenary impostors of the very lowest class. Their ignorance of literature, science, philosophy, and all branches of liberal learning, is only equalled by their blasphemous audacity in pretending to be the mediums of a new divine revelation. Myriads of the books which contain so-called "revelations from the Spirits," are exactly such irrational and unconnected trash as is talked any day by the hour together, within the precincts of the Yarra Bend Asylum. It plainly argues a tendency to insanity, both in those who write this trash, and in

those who read it as a revelation. The voluminous works of Andrew Jackson Davis, for example—and he is looked upon as the great prophet of the new gospel—are for the most part a heap of as nonsensical rubbish as ever was printed. Another large section of them consists of the few old notions the "seer" started with worked up again in different forms. And a third section is pilfered bodily from other "seers." To set such writings beside books of the stamp of Newton's "Principia," Bacon's writings generally, Sir John Herschel's "Preliminary Discourse," or Mrs Somerville's "Connection of the Physical Sciences," is exactly like placing the burlesques of Mr Henry Byron beside the matchless tragedies of Shakespeare. But, just as there are crowds of people who doat on Mr Byron's burlesques and dislike Shakespeare's tragedies, so there are crowds of people who doat on the inflated rubbish of Mr Andrew Jackson Davis, and who laugh idiotically—with a cry of "Who was he?"—at the mention of the names of Newton, Bacon, Herschel, or of Mrs Somerville. Where ignorance is total, and strongly believes in itself, there is no limit of blind stupidity, or of lunatic folly, to which it will not go. It is but fair to add that one or two of the Spiritist writers are men of respectable character and unimpeachable motives. William Howitt, in England, and Robert Dale Owen, in America, may be mentioned in this class. But even their books on the subject are merely compilations of ancient and modern ghost stories borrowed from all quarters. Neither of them is able to show the slightest real connection between the old ghost story and the new Spiritism. On the other hand, the strongest language of reprobation is justly due to the writings of such men as J. S. Peebles, Joel Tiffany, Hudson Tuttle, D. D. Home, S. B. Brittan, and it may be added of Mrs Emma Hardinge. Considered as literary productions they are beneath contempt. The ignorance of all true science and sound philosophy displayed in them is astonishing. As a whole, they may be characterised as audacious literary forgeries. And yet the writers of such books claim to be the revealers of a new gospel, which sets Christianity aside as an old and worn-out superstition! Perhaps the whole world has never yet witnessed—out of the walls of a lunatic asylum—a more daring, or a more monstrous, piece of deliberate blasphemy than the spectacle of the author of the "Seers of the Ages"—a trashy jumble of most amusing ignorance and wholesale literary theft—authoritatively deciding on the claims of the Divine Founder of Christianity to credibility, and ruling that, on the whole, He was but a Jewish peasant, vastly less enlightened, and not by many degrees so truly inspired, as Mr J. S. Peebles, the ignorant and shameless literary plagiarist, himself!

7. THE NEW GOSPEL A "PRIGGED" GOSPEL.—The word

"prigging" has become classical English to indicate wholesale petty theft. It is exactly the word that rightly describes the true character of this new gospel. As was said before, there is nothing at all new in it,—excepting the imposture, the literary forgery, and the falsehood; and even these are but servile copies of many ancient and modern examples. That tables move in a strange way under certain conditions, is true enough: the fact is as old as the invention of wooden tables. And that certain persons when in a trancelike or magnetic state, speak and write in a curious way, is also true; and this fact, too, is as old as the human race. These two facts are the sole basis of Spiritism,—and they are both stolen from antiquity. Every separate brick, so to speak, in the edifice built on these two facts, is similarly stolen. That there are invisible spirits who converse with human beings; that these spirits make their communications through females (chiefly) in a trancelike or magnetic state; that they rap tables; that they deaden the brain of the medium; that they reveal a life beyond the grave; that they live in successive spheres in the invisible world; that the mediums sometimes float in the air; that the spirits play on musical instruments without visible hands; and all the other alleged facts of the new gospel, are stolen piecemeal from ancient pagan systems, or sometimes from the Bible itself. The very phrases used in the Spiritist books,—as "summerland," the "spheres," and so forth,—are all prigged. The barrenness of ideas evidenced in those books is not less astonishing than the gross ignorance of the writers. Even respectable writers like William Howitt and Robert Dale Owen fall into the delusion that they are revealing wonderfully new facts and doctrines, when in reality they are merely hatching together medleys of ghost stories gathered from all quarters. So, also, "J.S." in his recent letters in the *Argus*, gravely propounded, as divine revelations made expressly to himself, a series of crude and fanciful notions touching man's origin and destiny, which were simply prigged from books in common use amongst men whose range of reading extends beyond the new novels. Take it all round (as the Americans say), and the really amazing thing about the new gospel is the coolness with which a heap of scraps stolen from most familiar sources are held up to the world as bran-new, and even heavenly, revelations. Joe Smith's "Book of Mormon," impudently stolen from Spalding's novel, was but a joke to the feats of the Spiritists in literary plagiarism, forgery, and fraud.

8. THE "DEADENED-BRAIN" ARGUMENT.—When this exposure of wholesale prigging is exhibited to the Spiritists, they turn round on the exhibitor, and coolly declare that they never claimed originality for their new Gospel—that the long-continued and universal belief in its two main doctrines is proof on their side—

and that if those doctrines are prigged, all who believe them, whether Spiritists or not, are equally guilty of prigging! This, now, is exactly as if the pickpocket, just caught in the fact, were to tax the policeman who takes charge of the pilfered purse he finds in the pick pocket's very hand, with stealing the purse from *him*! There is a true touch of the deadened brain in this style of retort. Those who make it do not see (until afterwards) that they are laying themselves open to this terrible and crushing reply:—"Yes, I believe in the immortality of the soul, the future state, the ministry of angels, and all other such doctrines as they are revealed in the New Testament. But I openly and honestly acknowledge the ground and source of my belief, and claim no merit for believing. I do not go about the world proclaiming these old doctrines as a new revelation specially made to myself. I do not mix them up with a heap of antiquated and exploded superstitions stolen from many quarters, which stolen scraps of antiquity I also claim to be divine revelations to myself. I do not set myself up as a seer and a prophet, divinely inspired, on the strength of a bundle of old notions pilfered from printed books. I do not indulge in blasphemous depreciation of the Book in which the great doctrine of immortality was first clearly recorded, or of the Divine Personage by whom it was first revealed. I do not mix up this awful and solemn doctrine with trumpery ghost stories, also pilfered from books, or invented for the purpose of mendacious impostors; nor with silly narratives about tables rapped, and prigged half-crowns dropped by invisible hands. I do not go about lecturing, with the sordid design of making money by spreading this transparent humbug; neither do I write books and pamphlets on it, to suit the excited popular taste, and at the same time to put money in my pocket. I do not traffic on popular ignorance, nor pander to popular credulity. Were I to do all this, I should stand in my own estimation, and in that of all honest men, as a mere mercenary humbug, a heartless charlatan, a sordid cheat, capable of the infamy of turning a penny by unsettling the faith in the Gospel of Salvation, deranging the intellect, and possibly blasting for ever the peace of mind, of numbers of those who heard and paid me!"

9. A. SELF-CONFESSED IMPOSTURE.—That the charge of deliberate mercenary imposture is not a calumnious cry got up by the adversaries of the new gospel, the following short extracts from Clark's book will show. First, as to the immoral imposture:—"Certain men and women, unfortunate in their marriage relations and angular in their proclivities, have found the spiritual name and some spiritual ideas very convenient for them to use as a cloak to cover other purposes inexpedient to reveal except to the initiated. They talk largely of 'freedom,' 'indivi-



duality,' 'rights,' 'social reform,' &c., all of which may sound well enough; but when you come to learn their meaning, if you are so successful as to worm it out of them, you find they are where you little thought at first. Ask them if they are free-lovers, and you will get an equivocal answer. Some of these persons are prowling over the land like vultures and vampires, and the Spiritual public scents them out. Some of them, in male attire, have been the abomination of desolation, and the slime of the serpent has marked their track" (Clarke: page 137). Next, as to the lecturing imposture:—"The Spiritual public has been exceedingly long-suffering and tolerant with a class of individuals who have been wandering through the country, filled with vague ideas of some lofty mission which the very loftiest spirits had to perform through them. They abound in impressions, which seldom happen to correspond with that kind of common sense belonging to the normal plane of practical life. They drop down, here and there, all over the land, under the plea of having been sent by the spirits for some object which neither they nor anybody else ever finds out. They are always going to do some wonderful things, which are never done. Their mission turns out to be a fizzle, and common-sense people are prone to consider them as being not far from fools. They are proverbially improvident; don't care about money; the spirits will provide for them, providing they can find good easy friends on whom to sponge, and who can fork over a five, ten, or twenty dollar bill with which to close. They are lazy louts; but set up the pious plea that the spirits won't let them work; stopped them; broke up their business, and sent them off to work wonders designed to astonish the inhabitants of earth, if not heaven itself. They are wandering stars, all save the starry part, and their bungling attempts to fly off into the celestial firmament usually terminate in finding them stuck in the mud. They are a very ethereal class of beings, and very particular about their diet. The spirits won't let them eat or drink certain horribly contraband, anti-celestial things; but give them a chance at pork and beans, or a good round of beef, and they are death on the same; the spirits permit them an occasional gratification in that line—occasional whenever occasion offers. They are great magnetic subjects, and seldom get out of condition, till the housewife gets out of patience waiting to clear off the breakfast table. In short, they are vagrants, vagabonds, vampires, and ought to be introduced to wood-saws, spades, and wheelbarrows, and be made of some service" (Clarke: page 215). Thirdly, as to the Healing Medium imposture:—"There are itinerant physicians outside the Spiritual ranks, whose pretensions and charges far outstrip all those ever attributed to mediums. They carry pockets full of self-concocted puffs, ply the Press with ex-

travagant advertisements, spread out glaring bills and circulars, blow loud blasts in every public hall and on every corner, open their temporary offices, propose to cure everybody of everything except hard times; and when it comes to that point, they are ready to relieve you of your last dollar, and leave you to whistle after they have taken their departure to some new and distant field of quackish speculation" (Clarke: page 216). These portraits are drawn with so very unsparing a hand that one might suppose them to be the work of a declared foe to Spiritism. But the writer is a zealous and sincere apostle of the new gospel. It is the old story over again. "We are the genuine and only Jarley; and all the others are rogues and impostors." Types of the portraits so strongly limned by this American Spiritist have been seen, at intervals, even so far south as Victoria. Wherever there are gullible dupes to be found—and fleeced,—there will the tribe of mercenary charlatans always muster. The Nunawading Prophet had his male disciples, and his female worshippers. There are lunatics calling themselves "new lights," wandering at this moment in white sheets among the gum trees, in momentary expectation of being translated to heaven. Joe Smith led out into the wilderness a host of followers, all of whom were polygamists, and many of them Danites. A Spiritist tabernacle has just been opened at Stawell, for the propagation of antichristianity, sheer ignorance, and the practice of Free Love. Itinerant lecturers go round the suburbs of Melbourne haranguing on the miraculous event of prigged shillings being unaccountably found in egg-cups, and caricaturing the Gospel of Salvation under the nickname of "Orthodoxy." And always there are found faithful followers who believe, or pretend to believe, in the grovelling and debasing superstition:—

Yes! they believe it. Oh, the lover may  
 Distrust the look that steals his soul away;  
 The child may cease to think that he can play  
 With heaven's rainbow; alchemists may doubt  
 The shining gold their crucibles give out;  
 But faith, fanatic faith, once wedded fast  
 To some dear falsehood hugs it to the last.

10. ITS DOCTRINES.—There is no such thing as a system of doctrines in the new gospel. Each itinerant apostle frames a scheme of doctrines for himself, or invents one to suit the tastes of his audience for the time being. Set aside what is stolen from the New Testament and the ancient pagan systems, and absolutely nothing remains. But the vast mass of Spiritist books claiming to have been dictated by spirits from the spheres, contain a medley of the most self-contradictory and revolting doctrines, mingled with the vilest blasphemies. From the atheistical sentiment, put in plain terms, that "There is no

God," up to the equally abominable sentiment that "all men are Gods;" from the naked atrocity of the statement that "there is no such thing as sin," up to the still ampler atrocity that "murder, adultery, and theft, are all good and right;" from the grotesque doctrine that "all men are lineally descended from particular animals, birds, and fishes, up to the still more ludicrous doctrine that "all men are destined to become particular animals in the future state;" there is nothing too gross, too shocking, too monstrous, to be excluded from the new gospel. All these things, and thousands equally as vile—or even viler, if that were possible—are to be found in the Spiritist books. It is all very well for the itinerant apostles to disown such doctrines; but since they *are* to be found in overflowing abundance, in those books, who is to judge which are the real Spiritist teachings and which not? The old trick of "*we* are the genuine and only Jarley, &c," has been played at least once too often. The new gospel is directly chargeable with all that it has produced.

11. IT REVEALS NOTHING.—And from all this enormous mass of alleged divine revelations not one new fact, not one new truth, not one new principle, can be gleaned. The spirits have told their devoted worshippers nothing, after all! No gleam of new light has been thrown on the problem of man's origin and destiny; no new fact in science has been laid open; no secret of Nature has been explained; no new discovery has been anticipated; no new idea in philosophy has been added to the world's stock. Nay, not so much as a beautiful thought, a fine sentiment, a noble poetical fancy, such as one finds studding the pages of Shakespeare, Milton, and other great poets. Nothing: save one bewildering maze of dull, incoherent, stupid, and most ignorant rubbish, suggesting at every page the unrecorded and unrecordable nonsense which forms the staple of the conversation within the walls of Yarra Bend!

12. IT EXALTS IGNORANCE AND DECRIES KNOWLEDGE.—There is a class of books which form text-books for all men of liberal culture and independent thought—books which give comprehensive and magnificent surveys of the course of human thought and human progress from the first ages until now, or equally grand and compendious surveys of the whole vast field of human knowledge. Herschel's "Preliminary Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy," Whewell's "History" and "Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences," Lewes's "Biographical History of Philosophy," Buckle's "History of Civilisation," are conspicuous books amongst this class. No man who is wholly unacquainted with such books can claim to be an intelligent and cultured man of his epoch. They set forth as in a series

of splendid maps how the world of the nineteenth century has come to be what it is, and how science and civilisation have achieved their mighty triumphs. But the bare mention of these books and their authors before an audience of Spiritists merely provokes derisive and idiotic laughter. The true method of scientific reasoning; the lines of blended observation and experiment on which Science proceeds until it reaches the point at which it accomplishes some miracle of progress, as the railway, the electric telegraph, or the discovery of the sun's huge envelope of flaming gas, which feeds myriad worlds with heat; or the marvellous march of abstract Thought from the first dawn of Philosophy up to the latest developments of modern Psychology—all this, to the Spiritists, is mere food for fatuous jocularly. Their practice, whatever their creed may be, is to exalt ignorance and decry knowledge with a more than Jack-Cade-like zeal. If they had their will, Newton and Bacon, Locke and Berkeley, Herschel and Whewell, Lewes and Buckle, would all be banished from the world; and the only science and philosophy there should be would be the lunatic ravings of the tribe of Yankee Spiritist impostors. It is the same with literature, art, poetry, history, and every branch of liberal knowledge. The Spiritists know nothing, and care nothing for any of these. With odious ingratitude, whilst they enjoy all the material benefits resulting from the labors of the great leaders of Progress, they flout and laugh at the great men to whom they are indebted for them all. They travel by the railway, and ridicule James Watt. They send messages by the electric telegraph, and flout Wheatstone and Morse. Not a gleam of real mental light, not a ray of poetry, not one burst of wit, humor, or philosophy, lights up the dismal darkness of their wilderness of printed rubbish. Since the Printing Press was first invented, the world has never witnessed so great a deluge of the literature of delusion and ignorance combined!

13. PROOFS OF FRAUD.—That numberless instances of gross and deliberate fraud,—fraud of a kind that would subject the perpetrators of it to imprisonment with hard labor,—have occurred in connection with the movement there is an overwhelming mass of evidence to prove. For example, in the "Report on Spiritualism of the London Dialectical Society," published only a few months ago, it is stated that "Mr William Faulkner, surgeon, of Endell street, London, gave evidence to the Society that for some years past he had been in the habit of supplying magnets, which were so constructed that by pressing a small brass button, raps could at all times be produced. Some of these magnets were made for concealment about the person; whilst others were constructed with a view to their attachment to various articles of furniture. The *Athenæum*, (October 28th,

1871, page 558,) quoting this paragraph, adds: "several of the apparitions and other marvels described in the present volume are just such tricks as ordinary conjurors can perform. Of the others, those which are not referable to unconscious muscular action may be fairly attributed to self-delusion." The same journal says that the Report of the Dialectical Society is the "greatest literary *fiasco* in the shape of a record of transactions," and "the most amusing and instructive piece of absurdity," that has been published for many a day. Take another instance: an English lady named Lyon, brought an action in Chancery against D. D. Home, the famous medium, in which she averred on oath that Home had "swindled" her out of £30,000, and further accused him of "being in league with a pack of well-known swindlers." That Home got, and kept, the £30,000, is a simple fact. The process of the Chancery suit is given in full in the second part of Home's "Incidents of My Life," published so recently as March last. Endless examples of a like kind, might be cited. The truth is, the mob of male and female mediums, "revelators," seers, prophets, and prophetesses, instead of being accepted as divine messengers, would be more justly dealt with if they were sent in a body to Bridewell and kept to oakum picking for three months, as incorrigible rogues, vagabonds, and impostors.

14. IS THERE ANYTHING IN IT?—This question is incessantly put by persons who, knowing nothing about the real nature of the Spiritist movement, have yet had their curiosity excited by tales of the wonders witnessed at table-rapping and planchette parties. The answer is easily given. That tables *may* be moved in a manner which, to those who are ignorant of the elementary principles of science, appear quite unaccountable and even miraculous, is quite true. But over and over again scientific men have tested the table-turnings, and *proved*—mark! *proved*—by fair scientific experiment, that the laws of COMBINED INVOLUNTARY MUSCULAR ACTION are quite sufficient to account for anything they saw. Faraday, Sir David Brewster, and Dr Carpenter, severally proved this. Arago, the great French astronomer and man of science, tested severely and at length the case of a girl medium, named Angelique Cottin; and in a report to the Paris Academy of Sciences, printed in the records of that body, he detailed the experiments, and drew this conclusion from them:—"That under certain peculiar conditions, the human organism gives forth a physical power which, without visible instruments, lifts heavy bodies, attracts or repels them, according to a law of polarity; overturns them, and produces the phenomenon of sound." And in the "Annual Register" for the year 1871, just published, there is the following summing-up of the whole evidence against the supernatural origin of

the table rappings :—"Mr Crookes, in the "Quarterly Journal of Science," narrates a series of experiments showing physical movements in solid bodies, which he believes can be produced by the emission from the body, and apparently from the finger-ends, of a pseudo-force unknown and undescribed. His experiments have an appearance of precision. We see, however, in the primary point, that no means are taken to interpose between the mover and the thing to be moved an indicator of any kind. The index is, so to speak, attached to the wrong end of the beam; and to speak frankly also, experiments conducted by Mr Home, as these were, are by that very fact now suspicious. Mr Crookes' papers have been thought by investigators as impartial as Professor Stokes not to be worthy of discussion before serious scientific societies; but it would be well that they should be submitted to competent independent scrutiny. If they have any value, they lead to a branch of physical investigation widely different from Spiritualism. According to the existing data of science, it seems improbable that any emission of transformed electric or other currents from the human body can produce under the stated conditions the appreciable dynamic effect which his index shows; but the improbability is not inherent, inasmuch as the constant correlation of electric effects with every muscular contraction is a matter of familiar knowledge, and a part of the teaching of every physiological primer. The improbability is of that secondary character which arises from the collision of Mr Crookes' observations with those of ordinary life, and of experiments hitherto made. That the phenomena of ordinary muscular action are attended with electric charge and discharge is a doctrine developed at length in Dr Radcliff's recent studies in vital electro-dynamics, and it is just possible, though unlikely, that Mr Crooke's experiments studied in this connection may not be without value. It is unfortunate that he has accepted at the hands of Mr Cox the misnomer of 'psychic force,' and the scepticism with which they are regarded by experienced physicists deters us from giving much importance to them. In any case, however, they are rather curious and doubtful than incredible. They may be valueless, but they are at least removed from the supernatural and the absurd, and find no countenance to the ten follies which disgrace the reports of the Dialectical Society." These testimonies are final. They disprove the supernatural origin of table-rapping as clearly as the motion of the earth proves Newton's law of gravitation, or as the movements of the planets in their orbits prove Kepler's law. No man whose brain is not truly deadened either by impervious ignorance or lunatic delusion, can withstand the force of such evidence. To *disprove* it would be just as impossible as to dis-

prove James Watt's grand discovery of the elasticity of steam, or Wheatstone's law of the transmission of electric currents.

15. **THE MECHANICAL TRICK.**—Add to the foregoing evidence the fact that, at this moment, Professor Pepper, at the Egyptian Hall in London, is performing all the mechanical tricks of table-rapping and turning, spirit hands, spirit writing, &c., and showing his audiences how easily the thing is done.

16. **THE "INTELLIGENT MANIFESTATIONS."**—A favorite device of those Spiritists who are capable of understanding the force of the foregoing evidence—and they are not many—is to point to what they call the intelligent manifestations and ask, "How do you account for these?" The silencing answer is ready at hand. There has never yet been a sentence written by a medium or by a planchette that was not traceable to the UNSPOKEN THOUGHTS of somebody present at the sitting. The law of "unconscious cerebration," established by Dr Carpenter on a basis of experiment that nothing can shake, is sufficient to account for it all. Not one new truth, not one new idea, nothing coming within a thousand miles of a new discovery in any of the numberless departments of science, has yet been received through Spiritism. Is not this conclusive?

17. **FALSE WITNESSES.**—It is another trick of Spiritists to cite a string of names of well-known persons as disciples and advocates of their dismal creed. Thus, the late Professor De Morgan, Serjeant Coxe, Mr Crookes, Horace Greeley, William Howitt, and others are amongst the names most frequently given. Now, there is not one of these gentlemen, except Mr Howitt, who believes, or believed, in the supernatural origin of Spiritism. All, excepting him, expressly repudiate the idea; and even Mr Howitt, in a private letter written only a few months ago to a friend in Melbourne, speaks of a great deal of the so-called Spiritism as an anti-Christian delusion, "not fit to be thrown to the pigs." As for the parade of obscure or unknown men and women from Yankee-land whose names are eternally rattled over by Spiritists, there is not one of them worthy of a moment's consideration, nor is there any doubt that the bulk of them are mere mercenary impostors.

18. **ALL SCIENTIFIC MEN AGAINST IT.**—There is not a man of science in England, nor in all Europe, nor in America, nor has there been one for the past five-and-twenty years, who does not, or did not, scout Spiritism as a paltry humbug, unworthy of serious consideration. There is not a minister of any religious denomination in Europe, Protestant or Roman Catholic, who does not repudiate and denounce it. There is not a literary journal of any character in Europe, or in America, who does not laugh at and ridicule it. There is not a man of any eminence in any a department of practical life in Europe or in America who avows his belief in it. All the science, all the intelligence, all

the advanced thought, of the age we live in is dead against it. The estimate formed of it by all men of cultured intellect, both in Europe and America, as given by the *Saturday Review*, is that "Spiritism is one of the most unequivocally degrading superstitions that has ever found currency amongst reasonable beings."

19. ITS ADHERENTS.—The boast is made by Spiritists that they have twenty millions of believers in America and Europe. The boast is a flat falsehood. There is no proof absolutely that one-twentieth of the number hold the dismal creed. It really seems to be chiefly confined to a small number of patients within the walls of lunatic asylums, and a large number of vagrant impostors and their deluded dupes outside.

20. IT IS BLASPHEMOUSLY ANTI-CHRISTIAN.—Of this fact proofs might be cited by the hundred. Let one suffice. There lies before us, as we write, a pamphlet by the notorious J. M. Peebles, with this blasphemous title:—"Jesus: Myth, Man, or God" (London, 1870). From it we make one or two brief extracts. In page 23, a Mr E. S. Wheeler, who is said to be connected editorially with the *American Spiritualist*, is quoted as writing thus:—"According to Pytheas, Inchofer, Nanda, and present appearances, we must acknowledge not only the impersonality of Jesus, but also the non-existence of his prototype. Very good! for thus we are carried past Chrishna, past the Buddhas, past all the breed of 'Redeemers,' 'Saviours,' 'Sons of God,' and other humbugs, until we reach the centre of the lodge, inside the temple." We do not apologise for making this quotation. The pamphlet is one freely circulated amongst Spiritists here in Melbourne, and there is no pretext of secrecy or strangeness about it. Once more, Peebles says (page 25) of A. J. Davis:—"Davis, never accused of so much as a leaning towards Christianity," &c. Again, Peebles himself, summing up a malignant and wickedly false indictment against Christianity, repudiates the very name, adding (page 96), "Christian is an adjective of ill-omen," and vociferously protesting "against having 'Christian' dragged in and imposed upon Spiritualism!" In this pamphlet, Peebles fiercely denounces William Howitt for writing against "Anti-Christian Spiritualism" in the *Spiritual Magazine* (London) for January 1871, and denies to him the title of Spiritist altogether.

21. ITS IMMORALITY.—The shocking immorality that has marked the course of the new gospel has already been hinted at. Spiritists here in Victoria pretend to deny this fact; but the proofs of it are only too abundant. The apostles of the new creed in America have, in many cases, proved themselves to be the willing agents of licentiousness more monstrous than that of Mormonism, and more brutalising than that of the Nunawading sect. It is very notable that persons in the garb of females,—women it would be a degradation of the



whole sex to call them,—have been the foremost in standing up on public platforms and proclaiming these abominable principles. But in the interests of public decency it is, perhaps, better not to repeat language which stains the lips that utter it, and the pen that writes it even as evidence. Let no Spiritist, however, presume to impugn the accuracy of the statement here made!

22. **ITS EFFECTS.**—Its effects, everywhere, and taken generally, have been evil, and only evil. In thousands of lamentable cases homes have been broken up, families ruined, children brought to beggary, minds destroyed, insanity and death induced: and all through Spiritism. It is recognised amongst medical men everywhere as one of the constant causes of madness, especially in women of feeble minds and delicate constitutions. Not a few cases of insanity have occurred through it even in this colony. Of the religious desolation it has wrought it is best to say little here, as the purely religious view of the question is purposely omitted in this essay. But it may be stated that in thousands of melancholy cases Spiritism has blighted the religious faith and blasted the everlasting hopes of its victims, and shipwrecked them on the bleak shores of atheism, darkness, and despair.

23. **CONCLUSION.**—And this the creed—this grotesque and hateful compound of delusion, ignorance, imposture, fraud, and forgery, for which many thousands of persons have renounced the glorious GOSPEL OF CHRIST—which is light, and freedom, and salvation, to all who receive it! Men turn their backs on the very light of heaven, and choose to burrow, for what they suppose to be Truth, in the darkest caverns of superstition and falsehood! The terrible penalty to all who take this suicidal course is written in imperishable lines in the Scriptures of Truth:—

Hear the just law, the judgment of the skies,  
He who hates truth will be the dupe of lies,  
And he who will love falsehood, to the last  
Delusions strong as hell will bind him fast!

[NOTE.—The foregoing essay is the substance of what was intended to be the argument on the negative side in the recent discussion. But the opportunity of stating the argument clearly, fully, and in order, was not given to me. From first to last the discussion was hampered, and the development of the fitting verdict baffled, by the persistency with which the advocate of Spiritism kept away from his proper subject, and kept on pouring out a string of mere platitudes that had nothing at all to do with it. Never once was a Spiritist book of authority mentioned; never once was the scientific argument against it referred to; never once was the *real* subject grappled with. If the preceding essay be answered, the respondent will act wisely if he confines himself to the facts and arguments here set out.—D.B.]



JUST PUBLISHED,

Carlylism and Christianity,

WITH

PREFATORY LETTER TO THE REV. P. S. MENZIES.

By DAVID BLAIR.