

1 DANGER SIGNALS:

AN ADDRESS

ON

THE USES AND ABUSES

OF

MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

By MARY F. DAVIS.

"

"PROVE ALL THINGS; HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."

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PREFACE.

THE signs of the times give evidence that dangers, which threaten Spiritualism, have recently accumulated along the open sea of investigation and discovery. Among them is the fatal one of retrogression. Doctrines which prevailed in superstitious eras, are finding lodgment in many speculative minds.

Modern Spiritualism, the child of light, seems retreating into the darkness of Egypt and the Middle Ages. Metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls, a doctrine that took shape in the very cradle of the world, has been revived, in a modified form, by French Spiritualists under the name of "Reincarnation"; and certain American investigators are turning to equally ancient Theurgy for an explanation of recent mysterious phenomena.

The works of mythical Hermes Trismegistus, Apollonius of Tyana, Iamblicus, Cornelius Agrippa, and others, of a dead past, are to be explored as in the darkness of a tomb, while the mental vision is turned from the broad, clear light of the living present. A serious effort is at hand to revive the secret School of Magic; and the favored few, who will be deemed worthy of disci-

pleship, may soon startle the uninitiated by summoning elementary spirits from the "vasty deep" of the "primum mobile"—the sylphs, gnomes, undines, and salamanders of the Rosicrucians.

The pentagram, the Jewish Cabala, and the Abracadabra of the pagan theosophers may again assume their ancient significance, and the lives of Paracelsus and Raymond Lully be repeated by the modern esoteric magicians, who claim to give "directions for invoking, controlling and discharging spirits."

How far removed seems all this from a plain, simple search for truth in sincerity and humility of heart! Let the true Spiritualist leave mummery and magic, and stand fast in the principle affirmed by the gifted author of *Poems from the Inner Life*: "There are only two infallible witnesses in the universe—nature when wisely questioned, and the soul when true to itself."

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THE USES AND ABUSES OF SPIRITUALISM.

THERE is no small amount of profound ignorance in the world respecting the genuine claims of Spiritualism. It is simply a belief—

First, that man has a Spirit;

Second, that this Spirit lives after death;

Third, that it can hold intercourse with human beings on earth.

True Spiritualists agree on these three unwritten articles of faith, but in regard to everything else all are free to form their own opinions. No creed written in lines of blood holds them in its serpent coils, but daring to meet every subject face to face, they feel at liberty to measure all ideas by the line and plummet of Philosophy, and cast anchor only in the safe harbor of Reason.

This belief is an outgrowth of the religious nature peculiar to the development of the nineteenth century. It is a favorite dogma with creed-mongers, that in religion there is no progression—that the Bible holds all the information that man can ever expect to receive in re-

gard to the life to come, and that the present system of Protestantism stands on the summit of perfectability, than which nothing could more fully meet the highest aspirations of the soul. But is this in accordance with Nature? While the world is marching onward with such majestic strides in the paths of Science, Art and Literature—while printing presses, and steam presses, and railroad cars, and telegraph wires, and ocean steamers, and labor-saving machines are multiplying among us, can it be that the Soul stands still? Can it be that the light which two thousand years ago irradiated for a brief period a small portion of the moral horizon, is all that will ever be demanded by the race? Are the wings of the Spirit to be forever fettered, while mentality is seeking deeper depths and soaring to loftier heights? Friends of humanity! believe it not!

Man's religious nature is progressive—equally so with other departments of his being. During past ages it has struggled up into the various systems of faith which have simultaneously blessed and cursed mankind. According as the human idea was gross or refined, respecting man's destiny and the Divine nature, so has been the religion projected into the world. Every institution has been a necessity springing from the consociated development of the race from which it issued, and satisfying the religious needs of that race, until it was outgrown

and cast aside like an old garment, for a purer set of principles and a higher organization. The Jewish Theocracy was an improvement on the system of image worship which preceded it, and its ethical teachings satisfied the ideal of its most aspiring adherents. Buddha among the Hindoos, Zoroaster the Persians, Confucius the Chinese, and Socrates and Plato among the Greeks and Romans, introduced religious ideas that for the time being applied directly to the spiritual necessities of their followers. Mohammed instructed the wild tribes of his native soil in a purer faith than that of the Sabians, and transferred their worship from "Spirits of the Stars" to the one invisible God. He thought to introduce a system superior even to Christianity, which in his time was racked by continual and fiery dissensions among its professed adherents. He was a real benefactor to the idolatrous Arabians, abolishing barbarous laws respecting slaves, establishing the rights of women to life and property, forbidding the use of intoxicating drinks, and teaching conjugal purity as a safeguard to happiness.

In like manner, Christ established a system of morality superior to that held by the Jews. Disease had crept into their religious body—disorganization began to appear; their ideas failed at last to meet the demands of the progressed masses; and though Christ fell a

martyr to the new philosophy he taught, still it took deep root, and flourished in the earth. And why? Because it then filled the spiritual aspirations of humanity! Christianity, like Mohammedanism, has been perverted—grossly, wickedly perverted to uses which would have horrified the imagination of its founder; but when not abused, it has been, during these many hundred years, like “the shadow of a great rock in a weary land” to those whose faith needed sustenance and anchorage. But the ages during which it has prevailed have set their seal on the forehead of progression—the teachings of the prophets and apostles begin, like the writings of Herodotus and Xenophon, to be scanned by the eye of criticism; the holy horror which the sight of heated furnaces and blazing ovens once inspired in the tortured, hell-expectant heart of childhood, no longer holds its Puritanic sway; the restless soul of man, peering into the abysmal depths of infinitude, cries, “Light—more light!” and the spirit, spurning the everlasting babyhood of creeds and mummeries, and mock-profundity, concerning the God-head and the Devil-head, the immaculacy of the Virgin, the cold bath of sprinkling, pouring and immersion, and the meaning of knotty passages scattered throughout huge volumes;—the spirit, spurning all this, reaches forward to something better, simpler and purer, more substantial and satisfactory.

Spiritualism comes in to supply this demand. It is not the opposer, but the handmaid of pure Christianity. It rebukes the abuses, but adopts the essence of the sublime institution given to the world by Jesus and his disciples. It may be said to be built over Christianity, as one section is built upon another in a glorious temple whose dome reaches beyond the stars. What Mohammanism was to the Arabians, and Christianity to the Galileans, that is Spiritualism to the nineteenth century—an exponent of a clearer understanding of nature, a nobler estimate of man, and a more expansive apprehension of Deity.

At the same time this new system is only one among many great agents of progression. It appeals to man's highest nature, but in scope it is far from being universal. It is a means, but not the only means of improvement which should claim the attention of mankind. It is a branch of reform, but not *the tree*, whose fruit is for the healing of the nations. The Harmonial Philosophy affords the only refuge for those who would explore the hitherto untrodden paths of thought. It includes in its boundless sweep all the great developments of Spiritualism, as well as the unfoldings of every other science. This philosophy is predicated upon the laws of eternal progress and eternal growth. Like a colossal tower, it rises high and broad and grand over the wrecks

of past opinions, inviting the weak and weary into its pleasurable avenues of truth. The shadow of its extended wing overreaches every reform, including temperance, anti-slavery, the elevation of woman, and conjugal redemptions. It will serve to harmonize all religions, and political parties, by unfolding problems hitherto unsolved ; bring into action the laws of love and wisdom ; and teach man the road to personal and social harmony. Spiritualism, then, being the science of the soul, and the forerunner of a new dispensation, is naturally a sub-department of the Harmonial Philosophy, and it will be a blessing to the world only in proportion as this philosophy is made its basis and the expounder of its phenomena.

A NEW ELEMENT IN THE WORLD.

As a new element in the world of thought, Spiritualism has great uses.

In the first place it tends to individualize mankind and free them from the dominion of creeds. Every era has produced its great men ; whose works appear in review so original and so wonderful, that the authors have been honored by the name of genius. Poets, orators, artists, lawgivers—many there are ; but when this same species of ingenuity ultimates in new systems of religious faith the founders have been thought not

geniuses alone, but God-sent and heaven-inspired authorities. There is enough perception in the masses to create an understanding, and call forth a response, when clear-sighted, energetic and ambitious men thus electrify the world; but not enough mental industry to induce like independent action. Hence the sayings of the political and religious chieftains of a nation, though questioned and perhaps rejected by a few reasoning minds, are passively accepted by the unthinking majority, and, in process of time, become inwrought into the very bone and sinew of that nation's organization; other contiguous and tributary countries are gradually indoctrinated into these new ideas; civil laws and ecclesiastical regulations are instituted; these readily merge into customs; individualism ceases; and men become automatons, and exist for centuries on a dead level of mental slavery and conservatism.

This has been the condition of Christendom ever since the era of Martin Luther. He broke loose from the enslaving domination of the Romish Church, roused the world from its spiritual lethargy, and sent living streams of baptismal fire through all the avenues of society. But the flame soon flickered, and it needed but a Calvin to put an extinguisher on the very heart of religion. Since then, numberless churches have been built that glittered and sparkled in their cold magnifi-

cence, and gloomy forms, clad in sacerdotal robes, have moved in solemn dignity among men; but the poor—where are they? Where is humanity, with its bruises, and groans, and tearless agonies? Has the world no John the Baptist to cry in its wilderness? Is there no Martin Luther to rouse the sleeping millions of the nineteenth century? Yea, verily! Spiritualism is the harbinger of the age. Its many voices have gone forth—the words are already on the breeze which are to “touch the electric chain” and free mankind from the bondage of superstition.

“There’s a fount about to stream;
There’s a light about to gleam;
There’s a midnight darkness changing
 Into gray:
Men of thought and men of action,
 Clear the way!”

When a human being has reached that point of development where he feels responsible to himself alone—when he can bring all regulations of Church and State to the judgment-seat of his own soul—measure them by his own standard of right; then is he at once superior to law, and becomes a law unto himself.

THE TRUE VALUE OF INSTITUTIONS.

When a schoolboy can solve the problem he is master of the rule; and when man can understand and ap-

preciate his own nature, he is necessarily paramount to all institutions. Organizations, it is true, are inevitable concomitants of society. As well might human beings expect to live healthily with disjointed bodies, as the world to move onward and upward without organizations. They exist in the nature of things. All great plans for the physical, mental and moral good of the race, are dependent on systematic associated effort. The magnetism of mutual interest, sacrifice, toil and enjoyment, are indispensable aids to human progress. But it must be remembered that organizations should always be kept subordinate to man. While used only as helps to mutual development they can not fail to be beneficial, but if allowed to gain the mastery, they are the veriest persecutors of reformatory men and liberal principles. We have seen this painfully exemplified from John Huss, the Bohemian martyr, to Victor Hugo, so lately the French exile; from the good Servetus to John Murray; and from Jesus of Nazareth to Theodore Parker of America. These, and many thousands more, have been the victims of proscription. Because they outgrew an institution, it beheaded them. Because they became superior to an organization, it destroyed life or reputation, or both, in its demoniac vengeance. The most liberal of Christian Churches rejected its noblest champion, because he ignored the

petty dictum of *creeds*; but, thank heaven, this politico-theologic teacher lived on the soil which bears a monument to American patriotism, and proclaimed the everlasting gospel of freedom.

A man of sterling integrity and noble self-sacrificing benevolence, raised his voice in behalf of the Southern slave—remonstrated with government and the priesthood for this inhuman traffic; and those who were rocked in the very cradle of liberty, mobbed him in the streets of Boston.

Society needs to be freed from that slavish subserviency to creeds, and dogmas, and institutions, which leads to such diabolical deeds. It needs a new and living element interfused throughout its dead and dogged conservatism, that each individual may begin to feel the intrinsic dignity and grandeur of his own nature, and the respect due to that of every other being. Man is only noble when self-centralized—when the circumference of his sympathy enlarges by an inward expansive force until it embraces the whole race. We must learn to stand alone and self-sustained, in the dignity of manhood and womanhood, before we can be a blessing to the neighbor.

Naturally, organizations are like the chairs and tables that the little child clings to while learning to walk, and like them can be cast aside when the center of

gravity is ascertained. Like the scaffolding of a building, they can be dropped off when the temple of selfhood is complete. A weak adherence to formulas and conventionalities will forever keep the mind in leading-strings; and all hero-worship is detrimental to personal growth. The more we pay undue homage to leaders, and governors, and saints, the more do we degrade ourselves. The process is arithmetical. Everything added to them is subtracted from us, the remainder being but a small fraction of individuality.

We should use organizations, not be used by them; be always their masters, never their slaves; be positive to them, not they to us. If used rightly, they are as steps in the spiral stairway of progression, which we first build for our feet to stand upon, and then leave behind us as we advance. When the human body has performed all its mission in the development of the spirit, it dies, and the soul ascends into broader fields of action and enjoyment. So with organizations; when they have finished their work in assisting individual growth, they should be allowed to glide into natural and timely dissolution, that society may emerge into purer light and happier conditions. Now Popery and Protestantism have been dragged like dead carcases, through the long pathway of ages, and are still imposed upon us with all the deadly weight of

their putridity. Lords and Priests—the Church and State, in their combined duplicity and despotism, have held sway over the people, until there seems to be an utter stagnation of individual life—a dead level of thought and feeling. Man needs a ladder, made out of the imperishable materials of psychologic science, whereby he may climb out of this miry slough of sectarianism and selfishness, and seize upon the good which nature has in store for all her children. There must come a change! The prophet eye begins to discern a cloud in the far-off horizon, and though no bigger than a man's hand, it will ere long burst upon the earth in a golden shower of righteousness.

Spiritualism comes "with a great wakening light," to rouse the slumbering nations! It comes over the waste of centuries, with notes of music and songs of joy, to rescue man from slavery and suffering, and teach him the road to individual harmony and universal peace. But Spiritualism, in order to perform this grand mission, must be made an agent of man, not man of it. It must be used as the exponent of a new and living faith in the actual and possible, but never allowed to attain the dignity of a controlling power. Should Spiritualists yield precedence to belief, and blind obedience to external rule, even though emanating from the Spirit-land, how soon would they relapse into the abettors of new creeds,

and the tools of new organizations ! Let us beware of allowing faith to outstrip knowledge. Let us never lay aside the calm decisions of our own judgment for the dictations of authority, lest we find ourselves afloat on unknown seas, to be surely wrecked on the dismal strand of dogmatic institutions !

SPIRITUALISM AGAINST MATERIALISM.

In the second place, Spiritualism has an effect to arrest the materialistic tendencies of the age. In proportion as men become conversant with Nature, the supernatural loses its control over their minds. Knowledge precludes belief ; the presence of the actual weakens reliance on the distant and imaginary. For this reason the few who have possessed a large store of wealth in the domain of intellect, those who have been impelled by their own natures to inquire into causes, and trace effects by a system of etiological investigation, have been disseminating ideas during all this past era of Christianity, that were directly opposed to a superhuman theory of religion. Among this class we find Celsus of the second century, Helvetius, Rousseau, Thomas Paine, Strauss, Baron von Holback and others, who have from time to time made serious inroads into the huge fortifications of theology. Latterly, this number has

increased; the monstrous and shocking absurdities taught by the clergy, and reiterated by laymen, concerning the character of God and his barbarous "scheme of salvation" for man, have at length repulsed a multitude of thinking minds, and these, having no other refuge, have retreated into the wild and barren deserts of universal skepticism. A species of secret but overpowering indignation against the long-continued impositions of priestcraft and dogmatism has driven many of the noblest intellects of the present age into the extreme of disbelief in all that pertains to an immortal life. Added to this, the pursuit of the exact sciences, as chemistry, geology, astronomy and mathematics, the general spread of intelligence, the freedom of inquiry into subjects hitherto held as too sacred or too abstruse for common eyes, and the prevalence of an ungovernable spirit of democracy have led the world, step by step, toward the Dead Sea of Materialism.

The triumph of the useful arts by no means diminishes this tendency. The building of locomotives, steamships and electrical telegraphs, the improving and inventing of machinery, and the discovery of new systems of tillage and domestic economy, have given mankind commercial, manufacturing and agricultural facilities, which create an intense interest among all classes.

By these advantages, unexpected wealth is poured into the lap of industry, and speculation fattens in golden palaces. "Money is power," and the pursuit of gain absorbs all the energies of soul and body, leaving the spirit totally oblivious to its own capabilities, or even existence. Many wealthy church members, and regular attendants at Sunday worship, are utter disbelievers in a future existence. That which can not be measured by the yard or ream, or exchanged for dollars and cents, is to them intangible and unreal, and hence they make an easy conscience, pay the parson, and attend meeting to be respectable; rob the poor to build up private fortunes and public churches, and secretly discard all notions of a hereafter. These are the Pharisees and hypocrites, the solemn-faced and sanctimonious conservatives of the present, who are horror-stricken at mention of the Harmonial Philosophy, quote Bible texts to prove the right of slavery, the natural supremacy of the rich over the poor, and of man over woman, and vehemently scout all reforms and reformers.

Thus we see how materialistic are the tendencies of all classes in this age of scientific prowess. The questioning faculties are astir, but the beautiful intuitions of the soul, which see in all things sure and saving testimony of the present and eternal life of the spirit, are still sleeping in the depths of human conscious-

ness; the heart is beggared and orphaned in a universe of love and beauty; wisdom, the soul's true savior, is driven from the habitations of men, and weeps on the silent mountains, over the spiritual wants and woes of a "faithless and perverse generation."

The world needs a radical reformation; it is ripe for the introduction of a new spiritual science which will supersede all other sciences, afford a key to unlock the treasures of the kingdom of heaven, and free the struggling mind from the meshes of materialism. Many facts of such a science are well known already. *Spiritualism* has done a work which can never be undone—made a mark on the line of history, which can never be erased. "Facts are stubborn things;" and the truth of independent soul-existence has been proved; first, in human magnetism; second, in clairvoyance; and third, in spiritual manifestations; by a mountain-weight of evidence, which the most ingenious sophistry will never be able to remove.

FRATERNIZING INFLUENCE OF SPIRITUALISM.

In the third place, Spiritualism has an influence to unite mankind in interest and affection. Society has long been held by the iron law of force. It is based on antagonism instead of harmony. A low and narrow selfishness has hitherto been the moving spirit of nations

in their municipal and commercial arrangements, and this same spirit, in a more subtle form, has permeated the whole body of ecclesiasticism, giving rise to frauds and policies, and numberless dissensions. Hence religious factions have been multiplied until not less than five hundred sects can be counted that have founded their faith on the Bible; sectarianism has prevailed, and bitter animosities have arisen to a fearful height, even among the meekest of Christian bodies.

The question is, not what *is* this or that man, but "what does he believe?" and he is consigned to hell, or elected to heaven, by each different order of religionists, in accordance with his acceptance or rejection of its peculiar dogmas. A sane man would hardly be ambitious in these latter days to attain to the title of "Christian," inasmuch as it is given by the partisans of each sect only to those who adopt its own particular doctrines. The malicious and alarming cry of "Infidel," and "Humbug," is raised against all dissenters; and shallow and indolent bigots save themselves the labor of investigation, and attain position by applying these opprobrious epithets to all earnest, truthful, and pure-minded reformers!

A Thomas Paine is traduced and belied, outraged and anathematized from the pulpit of Christian churches, and a Frances Wright is crushed under the

ponderous wheels of this theological Juggernaut ! But we falter not :

“ For yet the world goes round and round,
And the genial seasons run—
And ever the right comes uppermost,
And ever is justice done ! ”

Spiritualism is to be a harmonizing element in this world-wide chaos of feud and antagonism. Its teachings, like those of the gentle Nazarene, are pointing toward “ peace on earth and good-will to man.” From many an earnest soul, newly awakened from a life of selfishness and discord by the startling demonstrations of Spiritualism, this beautiful prayer daily and hourly ascends to the Father :

“ God of the mountain ! God of the storm !
God of the flowers ! God of the worm !
Breathe on our spirits thy love and thy healing ;
Teach us content with thy fatherly dealing ;
Teach us to love thee ;
To love one another—
Brother his brother, and make us all free ;
Free from the shackles of ancient tradition ;
Free from the censure of man for his neighbor ;
Help us each one to fulfil his true mission,
And show us 'tis God-like to labor.”

In the fourth place, *Spiritualism has sanitary uses :*

It is a healing power for disordered bodies as well as souls. Its work in this respect has been truly marvelous, notwithstanding the malignant efforts of opposers to make its name synonymous with "quackery" and "insanity." A multitude of examples are known of those who have been rescued from certain death, or excruciating agony akin to death, by the friendly aid of clairvoyance, mediumship, or direct angelic ministration.

These examples, which are well authenticated, reveal three important truths. First, that Spiritualism seeks out the destitute and helpless, as the objects of its tender and saving solicitude; second, that it entirely transcends medical skill in discovering the condition of the human system; and third, that it has the power of curing disease, independent of all the medicines made use of by the "Faculty!"

Fifth, the use of Spiritualism is manifest in its *prevention* of accident, misfortune, and crime. Persons, on account of premonitions from their guardian angels, have avoided the crash of falling houses and other heavy bodies, collisions on railroads, explosions, shipwrecks, and all manner of disasters; others have been saved from pernicious habits of long standing, such as profanity, intemperance, gambling, and the chewing and smoking of tobacco; and others still, have been

led from low pursuits and vicious companionship, into the pure and pleasant paths of knowledge, virtue, and progression.

It is when the heart is most teachable and child-like, that these invisible arms are thrown protectingly around it. It is when the soul is prayerful—when it feels through the darkness for a guiding hand, and earnestly seeks angelic aid—that these blessed messengers come near, to strengthen, sustain, and save. To be receptive of divine influences, we must cultivate within us willing and harmonious natures, otherwise our Spirit friends will be repulsed, and can afford us no assistance. This is in accordance with an immutable law, of which the simple expression is, “Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.”

GROSS PERVERSIONS OF SPIRITUALISM.

But Spiritualism, with all its sublime uses, is liable to gross perversions. “With the talents of an angel a man may be a fool;” and that which is an exponent of man’s highest nature, and capable of yielding him the purest and deepest satisfaction, may be abused by ignorant and selfish natures, until it becomes to many the direct curse. Thus it has been with Christianity; and thus with some of the noblest institutions of civilization.

To save this new system from a like ignoble destiny, those who love its truths and beauties should frankly and boldly expose all the hydra-headed monsters of error and deformity which lurk along its borders.

In the first place, then, it is an abuse of Spiritualism to make it an avenue for the gratification of a love of the marvelous.

So strange are modern developments in the line of Spiritual science, that those educated according to the supernatural theory—taught to believe in a hell and devils, and haunted with a dim and dreamy apprehension of legendary ghosts and hobgoblins—have some difficulty in gaining a rational idea of angelic intercourse, even when convinced of its reality. Hence this class are apt to become wonder-seekers, and rush abroad in quest of mediums and circles, and stare and gape at the banging of tables and the tooting of trumpets; while the quiet but most needful work of self-development, by means of self-reformation, is entirely lost sight of.

This soon degenerates into uncouth and unworthy conceptions of our beautiful Spirit Home and its inhabitants; and the names of wise and honored men, now disembodied, are used with all the vulgar familiarity of insolence and irreverence. It may well be inferred that the Spirits thus addressed are far from the scene of ac-

tion, and are simply personated by certain undeveloped and mischievous individuals, who have but lately passed into the second sphere.

Such impudence and misapprehension as above described are only equaled by that of a half spurious class of mediums, who palm off on the credulous self-made manifestations in dark circles ; or worse than that, a species of Spiritual literature, over celebrated signatures, that is found on examination to be the merest bombast and nonsense. This condition of things has been humorously but truly expressed in a recent poem delivered in one of our literary institutions, from which the following is a brief extract :

"Prosaic after death, our Spirits then
Invent machinery to talk with men ;

* * * * *

And Shakespeare's Spirit visits earth, to tell
How he and Washington are very well ;
And Lindlay Murray, from the body free,
Can't make his verbs and nominatives agree ;
Ben Franklin raps an idiotic dream,
And Webster scrawls vile twaddle by the ream ;
That splendid knave, Lord Bacon, has turned fool,
And Penn's great soul is busy keeping school.
Well may the living poet heave a sigh,
To think his Spirit, stooping from the sky
When he is dead, can rap, at mortal call,

Bad rhymes and wretched meter on a wall !
Well may the hero shudder in despair,
Whose soul can choose to animate a chair ;
And the great statesman, sinking in the tomb
To rise, and wheel a table round a room ! ”

God forbid ! that we should refuse to accept a just criticism of this nature, even from our enemies ; but it should ever be borne in mind that true Spiritualism is no more responsible for such absurdities, than are the genuine gold and silver coins from the United States mint for the counterfeits upon them. Its real teachings are elevating, harmonizing, and ennobling, and as far removed from all this vulgar trash as is the Anglo-American from the wild man of the Patagonian forest.

A CLOAK FOR LOOSE SOCIAL PRACTICES.

Another abuse of Spiritualism, is to make it a cloak for intellectual chicanery and loose social practices.

There are many people of deeply religious natures, who, just bursting away from the bondage of theology, seek with irrepressible yearnings for testimony concerning Spirit life, and regard with affectionate reverence all the utterances of modern inspiration. Taking advantage of this goodness, and confidence, and desire for spiritual aliment, there are some few persons of base and selfish natures—mere spiritual mountebanks—who, by insinuating address and some talent, grossly deceive,

perhaps mislead their friends, and at the same time inculcate in a private way the most pernicious sentiments in regard to social freedom!

There are others who boldly and openly declare that Spiritualism endorses what they call "Free Love," and assert their determination to advocate by lip and life that ungodly and pernicious error. But there is a great gulf forever fixed between the pure and steadfast conjugal devotion enforced by the Harmonial Philosophy and this criminal and revolting system of sensuality, into which some professed believers in Spiritualism have too surely degenerated, and which they dignify by smooth-sounding, but to us most repulsive terms.

As in the days of yore, there now arise false Christs and false prophets, who are but mockeries of the true; and what we need is, to cultivate that self-possession, individuality and power, which will enable us to detect all error, resist all evil, and reject all falsehood. Thus shall we save our beloved science from the serpent-fangs of fraud and imposture, and go forth rejoicing in its sublime prophecies of sure and speedy triumph over all its foes.

SURRENDER OF REASON AND WILL.

Again: It is an abuse of Spiritualism to *yield up selfhood* in the absorbing investigation of its phenomena.

While we are self-poised, and accept our spiritual guides as friends and teachers only, we are safe. Life is all divine, Nature all irradiated with tints of supernatural beauty, while we enjoy such pure companionship.

At eventide, or in the stilly morn,
When summer glories all the skies adorn;
When sunset hues stream o'er the golden west,
Enwraught in Spirit-arms, we rest—we rest!

But if we allow this tide of inward joy to sweep away our strength, if we become entirely passive to the will of spiritual beings, and instead of cultivating within us positive goodness, content ourselves with negative only, we open the avenues through which low and discordant influences can easily reach our natures. It is dangerous and destructive to lay aside our own judgment in obedience to any authority outside of ourselves, to allow our Spirit-guardians to become our masters, and no high and advanced Spirit would ever encourage such a course; its evil effects are painfully apparent in the mad schemes which have in too many instances been blindly projected in accordance with supposed Spirit-direction, and which have involved both mind and means in certain and swift destruction. But when a danger is once seen it is easy to avoid it; and with its friends on the alert, Spiritualism will pass un-

harmed through all the shoals and quicksands of error into the boundless ocean of eternal progression !

DISCORD INCIDENT TO TRANSITIONS.

The present is a transition period. We are passing over from the old to the new by means of this highway of spiritual science. As every birth is a struggle, as the earth, during its transition from old chaos to order and symmetry, was rent with terrific convulsions, with earthquakes and volcanoes, and the tremendous war of elements, so we, in passing from the chaos of old opinions into the divine principles of the HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY, see the moral phase of society apparently rife with disorder and anarchy. Dissensions are abroad, the air is rent with execrations against despotic rule, and restless and impetuous natures are disposed to cut loose from all restraint, scatter to the winds all traces of order and system, and fly off to the extreme limit of individual independence and arrogance ! This is the storm of thunder and lightning, and earthquake terrors, which will surely be succeeded by the calm, and sunshine and glory of the golden age to come. Wrongs and abuses, and impositions *now* beset the pathway of the true reformer ; but friends of progress, rejoice in my joy :

For I do see a change,
All rainbowed in the far-off future time,
When men shall stamp their demon creeds to dust,
And know the evangel in its very heart,
Regardless of the form!

Spiritualism comes, its broad wings bathed in the sunlight of the spheres, to proclaim the approach of that glorious hour. It does not bring it, but it tell us that it is to be! It tells us how sublime a joy it is to hold communion with the departed, to be comforted, when the light of the heart has gone, by its return amid the evening shadows, to be brought to feel that death hath a friendly arm, and a kindly smile, when he opens the door to the Father's mansions, and to have the Book of Nature unsealed by angels' hands, so that the mysteries of the universe roll out into forms of living light and immortal beauty. But Spiritualism, while it brings all these blessings to the pure in heart, points to something purer, nobler, grander in the coming time! It is the herald of a new dispensation, the first morning beam of a golden day in which earth will be vocal with spherical harmonies, and humanity find repose in the everlasting light of LOVE, WISDOM, and LIBERTY.