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SPIRITUALISM,
AND WHY I OBJECT TO IT.

A LECTURE

BY THE

REV. T. ASHCROFT.

“Thou com'st in such a questionable shape.”—*Shakespeare.*

THIRD THOUSAND.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

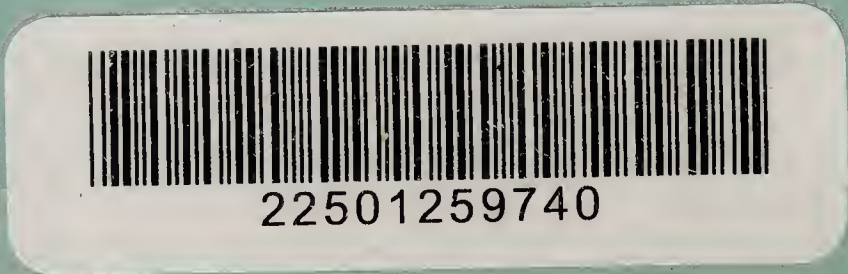
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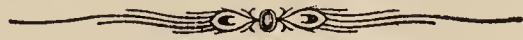
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[1875]

SPIRITUALISM, AND WHY I OBJECT TO IT.



SOME months ago, the minds of a number of members of a Christian church, of which I have the pastoral care, were disturbed by the teachings and practices of persons naming themselves Spiritualists. Repeatedly, requests came to me urging that I would deliver a lecture on the subject. Such a course for some time seemed premature. However, the recent private and public attacks on every form of Christian religion made by spiritualists, and supported by their professions of a "new revelation" conveyed by the agency of spirits, along with their evident ill effects on some persons, including several church members, led me to examine the subject more fully. At the pressing wish of a large circle of ministers, and members of the Christian church, the result of this research is presented in pamphlet form. Whilst trying to faithfully present spiritualistic teaching and practice, all personal ill-feeling is disclaimed. These, too, are presented as given in *spiritualist publications*. So that, if any spiritualists, who are not fully acquainted with such, disagree therewith, they so far oppose the system with which they are associated. May we hope they will henceforth break off the association? In the further hope that more confirmed adherents may see their error, but especially that they who are tempted to become identified with it may retrace their steps, we invite them to read the following pages.

Spiritualism, as a system, is of modern date. In the State of New York, America, there stood in 1848 a house in the village of Hydesville, occupied by a family named Fox. The house previous to their tenancy had the reputation of being haunted. The new inhabitants, we are told, were first disturbed by certain knockings, which they attributed to mice. The account, as given by Mrs. Fox, a spiritualist, under date of March 21, 1848, is as follows:—

My husband had not gone to bed when we first heard the noise this evening. I knew it from all other noises I had ever heard in the house. My daughter, who was fifteen years of age, said in sport, "Now just do as I do: count one, two, three, four, striking one hand upon another." The blows which she made were repeated. She began to be startled. I said, "Count ten;" then it made ten strokes or noises. I then asked if it was a spirit, and if it was, to give two sounds. I heard two sounds as soon as the words were spoken.

We are further told, that when it was reported that the Fox family were holding communications with disembodied spirits, many persons began to inquire into it, and that owners of haunted houses began to question the strange noises they heard, when, in many cases, they received intelligent answers. The question quickly spreading, many companies of earnest inquirers were formed. Thousands of what were termed mediums were developed, and hundreds of thousands of investigators were convinced, it is said, that no known law could account for the strange manifestations that occurred.

The subject of spiritualism was introduced into England in the year 1855, by D. D. Home, and since that period has excited considerable attention. In 1871 a report of the London Dialectical Society was published, in connection with the investigations into the phenomena of spiritualism.

This society was formed of men of respectability, science, and literature, who, after investigations extending over a period of two years, closed their report, stating that the subject is worthy of more serious and careful investigation than it has hitherto received.

The publication of this report excited increased interest in the subject. The newspaper press discussed the evidence adduced before the committee, and gave the same verdict at which the committee had already hinted, that "the testimony received by them had failed to prove the truth, &c." Large numbers have since been led to investigate the phenomena, and to try to account for them. W. H. Dixon states that about three millions were under spiritualistic influence in 1867, in America. It is impossible to state accurately how many persons are really spiritualists, no census of such having been taken; yet there is reason to believe that a very large number of persons believe more or less in the supernatural origin of spiritualistic phenomena. In this fact alone we see a reason to examine the subject more closely.

It appears that the formation of what is termed a "spirit circle" is at the foundation of what are known as "spirit manifestations." We learn that this circle may be formed by a party of from three to a dozen or more persons, of both sexes, sitting round a table, placing their hands lightly on the top of it, and engaging in conversation, or singing to secure harmony. If any member of the company is what is known as mediumistic, the table will possibly move in a short time; but, should it not move, the positions of those sitting should be changed, or some one leave the table. By a person being mediumistic is meant one who, having a peculiar temperament, throws off an atmosphere, or magnetism, through which the spirits are said to connect themselves with physical matter. The first result of sitting in a circle, after the table on which the sitters' hands are placed begins to move, is that it raps. These raps are regarded as communications from the spirit world. Gerald Massey words it thus:—

As hand in hand we sit and sing,
Magnetic currents run
'Twi'x heaven and earth, to make the ring
That weds two worlds in one.

Of mediums, the great essential of a spirit circle, there are different kinds: table-tipping, trance-writing, painting, prophesying, and healing mediums, besides many others.

Though spiritualists denounce all creeds and dogmas, and deny they have any, they accept and teach the following three articles of faith: "First, that man, as to his internal, is an organised spirit. Second, that after the event called physical death, his spirit, preserving its individuality and all its endowments, goes forward and gains a higher and better state of existence. Third, that after having become acclimated, so to say, to that world, and acquainted with its customs, and with the great recent discovery that a communication can be had with remaining relatives, that spirit can come back and demonstrate its existence, dispensing not only social harmony, but also occasional moral and intellectual feasts at spiritual tables."

Having stated as clearly and fully as our limited space will allow, the origin, progress, agencies, operations, and tenets of spiritualism, we will now state our objections to the system.

We object to spiritualism, *firstly*, because it is a *Pretentious and Bombastic System*. William Howitt, spiritualist, says :—

Spiritualism is light—the light of the universe. It is the wind of God's spirit ; it is the ocean of God's power. It is as clear as the sun that it is one of those sublime elements that no hand but that of its Creator can wield ; that needs no conductors or associations of man to advance it to its ends. * * * To-day it stands up before the face of its enemies more robust, more ethereal, more gigantic and ubiquitous than ever ! Like the angel in the Apocalypse, its feet are on the land and the seas ; its outstretched wings overshadow the poles !

John Scott, under the professed inspiration of the spirits of Robert Burns and Dugald Stewart, says :—

This fraternal, philanthropic cause will ultimately remodel society, and supersede all “isms” and “ans” in the universe ; because it will substitute the known for the unknown, the real for the unreal, the absolutely certain for the doubtful and the uncertain, adherence to which have hitherto dwarfed and destroyed humanity. Yes,

Let bigots rage, and rant, and roar,
The truth will spread the more and more,
And soon will reach from shore to shore,
With wisdom blend, and part no more.

Such professions, prophecies, and poetry, dazzle with their glory. They form, we presume, what the latter writer defines a spiritual body to be, namely, “a harmonious substance—matter progressed and ultimated!” A. J. Davies, pronounced by the author of an eminent spiritualistic work, as “the greatest of living spiritualists,” and reading whose work, “*Pentralia*,” to which we shall have occasion again to refer, you may find the truth of all our assertions. He tells us in this work, page 208, that spiritualism has been of great scientific use. He says :—

In the fields of science and philosophy, especially mental philosophy, it has revealed fresh facts, and demonstrated several great general principles.

We admit that scientific men have had their attention directed to the phenomena of spiritualism, but we are not prepared to allow that such phenomena have enriched the world of science to the extent spiritualists assert. When this is the case, no doubt, men of science will be prepared to acknowledge it ; and then, but not till then, spiritualists may boast of it. This we know, according to the journal entitled “*Iron*,” that a Massachusetts inventor having devised what he called a “*psychic stand*,” to spell out words and sentences “through an alphabet not only invisible to the medium, but the location of which he could not know,” applied for a patent, and was refused by the examiner, on the ground that spiritual manifestations were “largely mixed with ignorance, deception, and fraud.” If spiritualism has proved such a gain to science, how is it so many of the leading scientists of to-day denounce its pretensions ? But A. J. Davies tells us that “it has brought to light many important religious truths.”

Which be they ? He says—

(1) It has proved that man is an organised substantial spirit.

If by this is meant—and we do not know what else can be—that man lives as a personal conscious spirit in a disembodied state, then this is no new truth. He states—

(2) That it proves that this organised spirit is immortal.

The soul's immortality was asserted and proved thousands of years before spiritualism was dreamt of; yes, proved by evidences which spiritualism fails to give. But—

(3) It proves that his immortality consists of an infinite series of social, moral, and intellectual progressions.

And—

(4) That all spirits progress from lower to higher degrees of existence.

This is denied by the testimony of other spiritualistic writers, and disproved by the declarations of many professed spirits in seances. If spirits do progress, many of them give strange proof of it by their antics and utterances. Such progress is like that of the Irishman's—"backwards." We conscientiously object to such "progressions," and say, in the words of Professor Huxley—

Supposing the phenomena to be genuine. . . . Better live a crossing-sweeper than die and be made to talk twaddle by a medium at a guinea a seance.

But we are told that spiritualism proves—

(5) That this world is not a providentially probationary "vale of tears."

And—

(6) That the popular doctrine of hell punishment is false.

Spiritualism proves nothing of the kind. If some spirits said to come from the other world say there is no such punishment, other spirits say there is. To know there is not, we must have more reliable testimony than has yet been given. And what testimony can sufficiently and satisfactorily prove such assertions, in opposition to the plain teachings of the Bible, which carries with it evidences of a divine authority? This writer further assures us that spiritualism "is breaking up the creeds and institutions of the land." If by "creeds and institutions" is meant those of Christianity, how can he state this, when other co-workers in the spiritualist world assure us that "spiritualism comes not to destroy, but to consolidate, vitalise, and beautify the Christian religion?" Such assertions, along with many others which might be named, all of which are disproved by matters of fact, stamp the system of spiritualism as pretentious and bombastic.

Secondly.—Spiritualism is a most Ridiculous System.—That men should sit in the dark, around a table, with hands in a certain position, sometimes even for hours, and even night after night, waiting for something to turn up, is ridiculous. Especially, when this something sends its inspirations of truth into table legs. Can we imagine the Old Testament prophets, said by spiritualists to be "mediums," thus sitting round a table waiting for messages from heaven? Can we for a single moment think of Christ and His apostles in such a position for such a purpose? Never!

Then the methods by which mediums are to be developed, that spirits may communicate through them, are ridiculous. One médium, speaking of the spirit which came to him, says:—

By alternate threats and entreaties, expressed at first in writing and later in speech, he got me to yield to his wishes in every respect. The mediums were to bathe daily in the sea, take exercise in the open air for several hours, and eat only a very limited quantity of food, with an entire abstinence from pastry and sweets of every description.

A poor look-out this for the bakers and confectioners! Yet, if this advice "were not followed," the spirit said, "the mediums would not be able to eat two ounces of food for six days." Nor were they, according to this medium. The generality of mediums ought to abstain from animal food. If food for the body is limited, still more so is food for the mind. In the *Spiritualist News*, Dec. 1, 1870, we read:—

Mediums ought not to read books, and thus get the contents of other men's minds into their heads.

Such advice is stated to have been given by the spirit of Swedenborg, through a Mr. Woolragh, medium. Surely Swedenborg must have committed a great mistake, when on earth, by publishing so many scientific and theological works, and the "Swedenborg Printing, Missionary, and Tract Societies" should at once stop operations. It appears, after all counter testimony, that "Ignorance is the mother of devotion"—of devotion to mediumship. To develop spirit-seeing mediums, the medium is shut up in a dark room, blindfolded, during half an hour at a time. This is repeated daily till spirits appear. Other mediums can see in the future without this blindfolding. Hence the *Medium* contains an account of "Mrs. Dickinson, who can foretell events, not vaguely and indefinitely, but giving actual particulars of the future." We suppose it was owing to this foresight that Madame Louise and her so-called son, after somewhat successful two-and-sixpenny seances in Manchester, and securing certain articles and borrowed money, deemed it safe to convey their bodies to some unknown locality, leaving their bodily debts behind.

Trance mediums are most difficult to develop, according to the *Spiritualist News*, December 1, 1870:—

The physical condition of the medium has to be overcome, which is followed, in many cases, by a state of mind bordering on insanity.

Well might an American professional medium urge his brother mediums in England to be very careful, as

In America there were eight Lunatic Asylums supported by, and for spiritualists alone.

It is a serious look-out for humanity when its intellectual guides have to say, as the Irishman when smitten with love, "I am not myself at all, at all;" but a still more serious prospect for mediums—the Lunatic Asylum. Healing mediums are being extensively developed just now. Hence a spiritualist writes:—

When we are ill we do not apply to the medical men as we used to do, but we visit mediums, and I am glad to say that we are soon put right, and no doctor's bills.

A spiritualist told me some time ago of a quarryman who drove his pick through the palm of his left hand, and for three days the wound became a festering sore, disabling him for work; but that a healing medium hearing of it, went and touched it, when his hand was healed in an instant, and the workman returned to the quarry at once. Nor can we be surprised at a small feat like this when, according to a spiritualist organ, "Mr. Ashman, of the Psychopathic Institution, 254, Marylebone Road, London, has exercised his healing power upwards of two thousand times during last year." I wonder what sort of cases they were. We know men who have cured headache and toothache instantly, and that by other causes than spirit agency. Well, to test the power of these

healing mediums, some time since, I offered one hundred pounds to any medium who would cure, by spirit influence, a sick member of my church. As this sum has not been sufficient to bring the desired physician, I will now add another hundred pounds to the first, and promise to the successful healer a splendid temple in which to display his healing art, and an equally splendid congregation of cripples and invalids on whom to operate. And I think this modest medical fee, which shall be paid when the cure is effected, will be very timely, for in the *Medium*, December 19, 1873, Mr. Burns, the publisher, thus appeals "to correspondents and others :"—

Why do the 4,000 readers of the *Medium*, who have not contributed anything to the expenses of the Spiritual Institution, not come forward with their mite, and pay us the £200 now due to us for work done during this year at journeyman's wages, and material supplied at cost price? The fact is, notwithstanding the co-operation of about 500 friends, who have done their part well, we are literally starved out.

I too would ask a question: "Why do the powerful healing mediums of spiritualism not accept my offer, and having done their merciful act of healing my friend, receive their fee, and hand it over to the literally starved-out publisher?" If they are beyond money considerations, seeing a number of them charge only "a guinea for consultation," then we will not object to gratuitous medical attendance. If neither money nor mercy will draw them, we shall most certainly set down the development of their healing power as the consummation of ridiculous pretensions. But what about the appearance of spirits through these developed mediums? Their appearance is, judging from the testimony of spiritualistic eye-witnesses, strikingly ridiculous. Hence, we read that at one seance a girl's mother appeared, and seemed "loth to leave, until her nose, mouth, and lips were dissipated, leaving, as it were, a hole in her lovely face."

Another girl, servant to Miss Cook, a noted medium, is said to "have seen the face of her grandmother—an aged face with a pair of spectacles." Sometimes these spirits are so awfully ugly that the medium has to be carried out of the room fainting. At other times they are so comic, the mediums "nearly split with laughing, have to leave the room to preserve due decorum." At other times the spirits appear in more graceful form. In the *Medium* of Sept. 6, 1872, there is the following account of the appearance of the spirit of Katie King, the wife of John King, both of whom it is said lived on the earth in the days of Queen Elizabeth, hence are three hundred years old:—

The figure of Katie entered the room, and I observed she was clad in a loose white dress, tied in at the waist, having long sleeves, terminating at the wrists. At other times she has appeared with bare arms from the shoulders, with a close hood on her head, long lappets hanging over her shoulders, and her hair closely banded. I asked her if she had shoes and stockings on; she said, "No," and at once drew aside her dress, and showed us that her feet were naked. And to satisfy all she raised one foot on to the dress of Mrs. Corner in a most natural manner, and said, "Now, you can all see that I have bare feet, can't you?"

I guess they could; and, with bare feet, a "bare face," I fancy such a spirit as this appeared at Miss Cook's seance, when Mr. W. Volckman felt like Hamlet, when, to the ghost, he said—

Thou com'st in such a questionable shape.

On which occasion, he, having to use his own words—

For forty minutes carefully observed and scrutinised the face, features, gestures, size, style, and peculiarities of utterance of the so-called spirit, the conviction irresistibly forced itself upon him that *no ghost*, but the medium, Miss Florence Cook herself, was before the circle, and of this he was still more persuaded when, seizing the ghost, he found it really so.

Homer tells us that Ulysses, when wandering through the gloomy shades of departed spirits, saw his mother. He hastened to embrace her, but she vanished as a dream, leaving him with these words upon his lips :—

Fliest thou, loved shade, while I thus fondly mourn !
Turn to my arms, to my embraces turn !
Is it, ye powers that smile at human harms,
Too great a bliss to weep within her arms ?

Mr. Volckman fared better, for he *grasped* the materialised ghost ; and yet, not much better, for he lost some hair, and got two scratches in testing the phenomena. But, further, these spirits are as ridiculous in their utterances as they are in their appearance. For, they are said to speak. Do you ask how ? Mrs. Tappan says, “They manufacture a thorax, and other organs of sound from the emanations from the medium,” and that, “the voice is neither the voice of the medium, nor the voice of a spirit, but is due to sounds made by an apparatus temporarily.” What she means, and from whence, and how, she received her intelligence, is a secret yet to be revealed. However, these spirits when they do talk, give amazing intelligence. One that appeared in a Miss Barlow’s seance, Rhodes, near Manchester, according to the *Medium* of January 27, 1874, was a German who had come from the other world “to close the door after the ladies,” and when he had accomplished his sublime mission he said in broken English :—

Vell, mines friendsh, I vill say gooten nacht, mines train ish off.

Let us indulge the fond hope he would not take a return ticket.

These spirits are said to write. In the seance referred to, a spirit, said to be a doctor’s, wrote the sage advice :—

Read much from books of wisdom, and eat porridge every morning.

In the *Spiritualist* of January 16, 1874, there is the following account of spirit writing :—

Frequently both mediums alleged they saw a luminous hand on the table writing out the messages that were being delivered all day. When letter paper was no longer procurable, these messages were scribbled on tables, book-cases, and on the side-board, with lead pencils, and we have not yet been able thoroughly to eradicate the marks from the furniture. We were desired on one occasion to remove the piano and look under it, and, on doing so, found two long letters addressed, one to Miss Showers, and the other to Ellen (the writer’s daughters). The rapping and writing, says he, grew gradually so intolerable, that almost all the domestic work of the house was suspended for three weeks. We took our meals when and how we could ; everything like domestic comfort seemed at an end. Letters addressed to me were found in the most extraordinary places, and daily pinned to my daughter’s hair, and sleeves, and dress, &c. These letters were written to “Lovey-Ellen,” and “through dear Rosina.”

So much for the spirits’ valentines. These spirits manifest their love, not only in letters, but in more striking forms. According to the *Medium*, October 10, 1873, at a seance held in the house of Mr.

Tommy, Bristol, in which twelve ladies and gentlemen took part, to use the narrator's own words: "Almost all were more or less touched, but several were caressed in every conceivable manner, while all hands were held." Some of these spirits, in their benevolence, distribute favours. The *Medium* of September 6, 1872, gives the following account of the spirit well-known as Katie:—

Katie appeared in a seance. A lady, admiring her dress, asked: "O! Katie, will you let me cut off a piece of your drapery?" Answer: "O! yes; get scissors; be quick, or it will dissolve away." I saw Katie hold out a portion of her dress, like a flowing tunic, towards my mother. Then I heard Katie say, "Not so much as that—not quite so much." And then, after a small portion of her white dress had been cut off, Katie said, with a bright smile of *esplieglerie*, "Mind it does not melt away; but it won't, it is quite material." Then Katie, robe and all, became what we call immaterial. But the portion of her dress which had been cut off remained material, and is still in my mother's possession. It looks to me like an Indian fabric of some vegetable fibre—a kind of cotton. The ladies say the hem is curiously made with a strange kind of stitch.

We think so. Specimens of spirit garments may be seen, it is said, at the Spiritual Institute, London.

Some spirits are mischievous. Hence, in the *Spiritualist News*, Dec. 1, 1870, a person writes:—

I, who am a medium, went into a barber's shop at Hammersmith (London), and some spirits made a noise at the back of my head, as if ten drummers were thumping it. I was obliged to run out of the shop.

Some spirits are malignant. In the cabinet of a medium the spirits created a terrible row. Sitters in the circle cried out, "What are you doing with the medium?" They replied, "We are hanging him," and the medium was found suspended. These spirits, it appears, believed in capital punishment.

Some spirits are fond of stealing. According to the *Spiritualist* of Dec. 2, 1873—

When Miss Cook was trying to get what are termed "recognisable faces," small articles were often missing from the house, some stolen altogether.

Katie, the spirit, consoled her in her loss by assuring her—

That this was an ordeal which all mediums must pass through before getting "recognisable faces."

Our detectives ought to keep a sharp look out. However, we would treat these "recognisable faces" leniently, for we are told that whilst they take out they also bring in; yes, bring in much bigger things than they ever take out. The following is given as a fact by a convert to spiritualism, and was reported in the *Morning News*, July, 1871:—

"Last Sunday evening," said he, "I attended a seance as an unbeliever, and, to test the power of the spirits, I demanded that they should bring me the great cross from the dome of St. Paul's. They were absent for 16 minutes and 35 seconds; after which there was a terrific crash in the centre of the room, when the table fell in shivers, and, reaching to the ceiling, towered the giant cross!"

Such a present would be a noble compensation for the loss of any little trinket, especially when we remember that the cross of St. Paul's is 22 feet high, and would not only "tower to," but, we fancy, "tower" about 10 feet through the ceiling of any ordinary room. However, such an occurrence must have happened, inasmuch as two friends of the spiritualist "noticed at the time—twenty minutes past nine on the same July

evening—that the cross was missing from its proper place.” Certainly, not one of the hundreds of persons passing at the time missed it, but that might arise from defective vision, or else from some other cause which, no doubt, could be satisfactorily accounted for by and among the spiritualists. Then, have not equal wonders been wrought? According to an extract of a letter, signed by a Manchester spiritualist, and which appeared in the *Echo*, June 8, 1871, he attended a dark seance in London, where three ladies and eight gentlemen were present. He says :—

After various phenomena, some one asked “Katie” to bring something, whilst another, in a joking sort of way, said, “I wish she would bring us Mrs. Guppy.” Upon which another remarked, “Good gracious! I hope not; she is one of the biggest women in London.” Katie’s voice at once said, “I will, I will, I will;” and John King’s rough voice shouted out, “You can’t do it, Katie.” But she appeared to chuckle, and repeat, “I will, I will.” We were all laughing and joking at the absurdity of the idea, when John’s voice called out, “Keep still, can’t you?” In an instant somebody called out, “Good God! there is something on my head!” simultaneously with a heavy bump on the table, and one or two screams. A match was instantly struck, and there was Mrs. Guppy standing on the centre of the table, with the whole of us seated round the table, closely packed together as we sat at the commencement. Both doors were still locked. Our attention was, however, directed to Mrs. G., who appeared to be in a trance, and perfectly motionless. She had one arm over her eyes, a pen in her hand, and an account-book in her other hand, which was hanging by her side. The last word she had written at home, three miles distant, was “onions,” and this was still wet. When she came round she seemed very much affected, and began to cry.

Well she might, for a ride of three miles in the air through the smoke of London, in three minutes, along with a passage through the ceiling, and “a heavy bump on the table,” was no joke.

However, there is this consolation for Mrs. G., that while she was taken away so mercilessly, a spirit one day conveyed to her home a gentleman—of course a medium, like herself. The following is the account—*Medium*, May 26, 1871 :—

On Friday morning last, Mr. Herne had called on a friend living at Caledonian Road, London. When near Thornhill Square, about twenty past ten o’clock, he felt a peculiar sick sensation creep over him, and he became unconscious, and knew nothing till he came to himself at Mr. Guppy’s house, situate 1, Moreland Villas, Highbury Hill Park. Mrs. Guppy was in the breakfast room when she heard Mr. Guppy coming down stairs; this was about a quarter to eleven. She went to meet him, and was in the act of speaking to him when she turned round, and between herself and the window saw what appeared to be a large black bundle descending from the ceiling. She screamed out at the unusual occurrence, when Mr. Guppy stepped into the room as Mr. Herne was arising from the floor. He had been brought there by some unseen power.

What do you think of that? But even that is a small thing in comparison to the aëreal flight enjoyed by Dr. (?) Monck—of course, another medium. For he was, according to his own account, “carried out of his bed at Bristol to Swindon, a distance of 42 miles, in a few minutes, and had to purchase clothes at a neighbouring village in which to return home.” And is it possible men can believe in such spirit manifestations as these? Have we arrived at that sublime point of the world’s history when we may be picked up in our daily walks and nightly repose, and hurried we neither know whither nor why? And have we to creep

and cringe along life's pathway, as Coleridge words it in his "Ancient Mariner,"

Like one who on a lonely road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And, having once turned round, walks on
And turns no more his head ;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread ?

And are these silly spirits, said to perform such antics, to be our guardians, comforters, and guides? Such to do with our souls' destiny? Such to be entrusted with our noblest nature? Such the sources of our inspiration and knowledge? Spare us the indignity! Roll back from our common humanity the insult, and tell it no more!

Thirdly.—Spiritualism is an Unchristian System. Its advocates boast of charity, of allowing each individual a right to his own opinion, and they denounce men guilty of slander; yet, with a ferocious spirit ill becoming their professions, they attack Christ, Christian theology, and Christian professors. Burns, a great leader of English spiritualists, speaking of Christ, says:—

He was a child of intuitive genius, and at the age of twelve years he was discovered in the Temple puzzling the erudite brains of the leading theologians with his questions and answers—a feat which children very readily accomplish at the present day.

Do you wish to know from whence Christ derived His divine wisdom? Mr. Burns says:—

The general supposition is that he left his humble home and wandered forth into the world in search of knowledge; that he visited Egypt, the land of occult philosophy; and, perhaps, India; that he returned to his native land with the full intent of reforming her institutions and enlightening her children with a mind stored with knowledge.

If you want to know the kind of influence which Christ possessed as He performed His miracles, this writer thus instructs you:—

He betrayed remarkable spiritual powers. He was psychometric, clairvoyant; could heal the sick at a distance, and exercised wonderful biological influence over mind and matter.

Mr. Edmonds says:—

Running off with a distorted idea of the Trinity, our ghostly teachers have called upon us to worship Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God, in a sense in which no other human being can share with him the position in which he stood upon earth; and out of that error mankind have been miserably misled, and discord and contention have marked Christianity for ages. (*What is Death*, p. 10.)

Mr. Davis says:—

By magnifying the trials and sufferings of Joshua (Jesus) who wrought but thirty-six months for humanity, we take away our sympathy from those who need (if they do not deserve) it more a thousandfold.

Tom Paine is the great hero and model of this writer. Of Christian theology, hear its origin. Mr. Burns says:—

Christianity, with its doctrines, theologies, and dogmatic superstitions. Where did these proceed from? They have existed in the world from the earliest dawn of idolatrous priestcraft.

Hear its character. Mr. Davis says:—

It is a curious fact that old theology (as an opinion) never gets into the *upper room* of the mind. It goes far underneath—lurking about in the caves and dark retreats of the cerebellum—like a polar bear sometimes, and like a viper too, that keeps sequestered because knowing its place.

What of its influence? Hear this author:—

The modern Church exerts a stultifying influence upon the human conscience. It has forbidden the conscience to think, to reason, to become enlightened. Men may be intelligent concerning the ordinary interests of life, not upon religious questions. No; men dare not become religiously enlightened. Beware, when the churches begin to consider it profitable to invite you (spiritualists) to take a seat in their beautiful compartments. Accept this, and you are on the road to annihilation.

Of ministers of the gospel he says:—

Full of pork and potatoes, full of corruptions and excess, they stand up, maintaining commanding positions in the pulpit or through the press.

Of Christian professors he says:—

They [Christian professors] make the most tyrannical masters, the most invincible slaveholders, the most cruel parents, the most ignorant foes of science, the stoutest friends of bigotry, and the abettors of narrow-mindedness.

Such are the teachings of this, “the greatest living spiritualist,” of whose writings the author of “Where are the Dead,” p. 104, says:—

If spiritualism never accomplish any other good work, the present age will have abundant cause to be grateful for the wisdom which is to be found in the pages of this writer.

Surely men must feel deeply indebted to all such spiritualistic authors, if they only serve to show to them the aim and influence of spiritualism. Here is charity with vengeance! Here are beams of light which will, in the words of this last-named author, most assuredly “shine on the heart of human nature!” Rather, here is forked lightning, which would, if it could, shiver to atoms the entire fabric of Christianity. We pity the men who spend such force of malignant feeling in such vain efforts. And henceforth we shall know how to value that unchristian system that gathers around it such adherents and advocates.

Fourthly.—Spiritualism is an Anti-Scriptural System.

Many spiritualists say:—

That the Bible is saturated with spiritualism, and that they accept the Bible as that word from Heaven which endureth for ever.

Do they? Hear how they accept it. Mr. Burns says:—

All of the Bible is not holy writing. Much of it is a mere record of events, the same as may be found in any other history, and has to be judged by its consistency and value. In this light we attribute no authoritative importance to the statements respecting Jesus recorded in the Gospels, and we do not profess to endorse them all, or accept them all as of equal value.

Mr. Davis says:—

It matters not what Matthew, Mark, John, or Jesus said, thought, or did.

Mr. Dowlais, in the *Medium*, Feb. 13, 1874, writes:—

Much that is contained in the Bible is the remnant of an old system which the people who made the Bible did not even understand, so that any speculation thereon is worthless.

Another writer in the *Spiritualist*, December 12, 1873, states:—

Spiritualism claims to throw a stream of light on the rationale of inspiration and revelation, and promised to put the finishing touches to the work

of Colenso and his fellow critics, and finally demolish the already decaying and very mischievous and wide-spread delusion that our orthodox Bible is the infallible word of God.

Some of these finishing touches are presented by a writer in the *Pioneer of Progress*, January 15, 1874, thus:—

Spiritualism relies on no church traditions or scripture as the last ground and infallible rule; it counts these things teachers, if they teach, not masters; helps, if they help us, not authorities.

Thus spiritualism in reference to the Bible is “a pick-and-choose” system. What spiritualists find in the Bible, which, by their false rendering and misapplication, appears to favour their preconceived notions, they accept, but whatever opposes such notions they denounce. Spiritualists deny some of the leading doctrines of the Bible. For example: The fall of man, original depravity, the divinity and atonement of Christ, repentance and Divine forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, the day of judgment, and perdition for the ungodly. In all their efforts their anxiety is not to be on the side of the Bible, but to have the Bible on their side.

“What,” they ask, “will you say the Bible does not teach spiritualism?” Yes, we do, most emphatically. Modern spiritualism does not find the least authority in the Word of God. Those events recorded in the Bible which modern spiritualists say favour their views, do nothing of the kind. But, even if we admit that certain phenomena of what some would term a spiritualistic kind appears in the Bible, we must remember that God had thereby a purpose to serve, which purpose, when gained, excludes the necessity of a repetition of the phenomena. For example, when the Christian religion was first taught, men would naturally want proof that that so-called Divine message was really what Christ and His apostles and early teachers declared it to be. These proofs of a Divine wisdom, power, and love were given. These proofs were accepted and acknowledged by thousands of converts as sufficient. These proofs, sufficient then, are so even now. The foundations of Christianity were then divinely laid in, and by, Christ and His apostles, “Christ Jesus being the chief corner-stone.” So that we, to-day, have not to re-lay these foundations, but to build upon them a living faith and a godly life. If you attempt to build a house, and lay the foundation, you do not continue to re-lay it; by such a method the house would never be built. No; you build thereon. Even so, eighteen hundred years ago, the foundations and corner-stone of Christianity were laid; since then hundreds of millions of Christians have built thereon; and the fabric rises to-day, under the direction of the Master Builder of the universe, and, amid all its weak assailants, it shall rise until its pinnacles gleam in the glory of an everlasting heaven.

Not so with spiritualism. No, the very name carries with it an assumption of spirit-power, which, being diametrically opposed to the teaching of Scripture, sounds the knell of its approaching doom. Spiritualists profess to have the power to bring from another world disembodied spirits. Stranger still, they base their claim to this power on the supposed sanction given them in the Bible. This ground is false. The assumption of such a claim reminds one of the following old Latin epigram written in an old Bible:—

This is a book where every one seeks his *own* opinions, and every *one finds* them.

The Devil will admit the Bible to be of Divine authority if you will allow him to be the commentator. He did so with Christ, and he has plenty of followers to-day. Yea, some of these go ahead of their leader, for they deny the Bible to be the infallible word of God, even whilst they seek support for their system from its pages. We most emphatically say, the Scriptures do not support such claims. There is not a solitary example in the Bible of any man calling back, by mediumistic power, departed spirits. "What," asks one, "did not the witch of Endor bring back the spirit of Samuel?" No. All her spells and enchantments could never do such a thing. If Samuel did appear, God sent him for a divine purpose, even as he sent Moses and Elias to Christ. If the witch had brought Samuel would she have been so frightened as she was when he is said to have appeared? Would she not have rather rejoiced over the success of her seance? But—and which is most important to notice in this case—did God approve of Saul's wish to bring up Samuel? Hear Saul's doom :—

So Saul died for his transgressions which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, *and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit to inquire of it*, and inquired not of the Lord : therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David, the son of Jesse. (1 Chron. x., 13, 14.)

If Saul sinned and suffered thus in asking for Samuel, will spiritualists be either guiltless or safe in wishing or waiting for a spirit in a seance? They will not. Nor will any medium ; for what is wrong in the one is also wrong in the other.

If spiritualists have the power they claim, the question is, is it right to use it? If contrary to the teachings of Scripture it cannot be. This is seen in the case of Saul. Look at another case. Manasseh, the vilest and worst king of Judah, was a sort of spiritualist. In 2 Kings xxi., 6, we read : "And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards." Did God approve of this? No ; it is said of Manasseh, "He wrought evil in the sight of the Lord to provoke him to anger." (2 Kings xxi., 6.) Just look at one case more in the Old Testament, that of Jezebel, "whose whoredoms and witchcrafts were so many." Even Jehu, the wicked king, loathed her and trod her under his feet. He said, "Go now, and see this cursed woman, and bury her ; and they went to bury her," but the dogs had devoured her, "all but her skull, and her feet, and the palms of her hands."

Seeing the end of these "mediums," dare spiritualists attend another seance? The curse of heaven rests on such a gathering! If they go, they do so in opposition to the command of God. Hear :—

When they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and mutter : should not a people seek unto their God? Shall the living seek to the dead? To the law and to the testimony : for if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. (Isaiah viii., 19, 20.)

We see here that if Israel, who had the law and testimony, left these to consult so-called spirits, they aggravated their wickedness. How much more wicked the men who, having the Bible complete, still try to consult "peeping and muttering" spirits. Why, such characters were condemned to die by Jewish judicial laws :—

Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live. (Exodus xxii., 18.)

The soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people. A man also, or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones; their blood shall be upon them. (Lev. xx., 6, 27.)

“Ah, but,” say some spiritualists, “these statements refer to and were meant for the Jews, and therefore are not binding on us any more than other Jewish laws.” This is a false refuge. The Canaanites were guilty of these very sins against which the Israelites were warned. Read Deut. xviii., 9-15 :—

When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee thou shalt not learn to do after *the abominations of those nations*. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord; and *because of these abominations* the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect before the Lord thy God. For these nations, which thou shalt possess, *hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners*. But as for thee, the Lord thy God had not suffered thee so to do. The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me: unto him shall ye hearken.

Thus we clearly see that Gentiles, as well as Jews, are forbidden to consult with spirits; and that fathers and mothers who, forsaking the written word of God, allow or encourage their children to become mediums, do so at their souls' peril. “But,” say the spiritualists, “we are, according to Christian teaching, in a new dispensation.” So we are: we are in the Christian dispensation, the dispensation of the spirit, but, mind you, not of spiritualism. No; there is as great a difference between these too as there is between truth and error, angels and demons, Christ and Belial. Never more than in the New Testament do we see the demonology of spiritualism condemned. Christ has taught us, in the case of Dives, that disembodied spirits from another world could do no moral good if allowed to visit us. And even when devils—which are demons—spirits of departed men—would speak in a good cause, Christ stopped them.

The Apostle Paul also refused their testimony to his apostolic mission, (Acts xvi., 17, 18.) And when a spiritualist medium, Elymas, the sorcerer, known by the name of Bar-Jesus, opposed Paul, the apostle, “filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said: O, full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, the enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?” There is Paul's lecture on spiritualism. If here to-day, he would repeat it. Yet some will tell us that “Christ and Paul appear as spirits in seances.”

What, Christ in a seance! If so, the “spirits” would very soon be scattered to the winds, and the “circle” broken up. Christ and Paul in a seance! What a fulfilment of Paul's words to Timothy: “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.” (1 Tim. iv., 1—3.) Paul at a seance!

Hear him again : “ But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God : and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. Ye cannot drink of the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils ; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils.” (1 Tim. x., 20, 21.) The heathens worshipped their departed heroes, which were known as demons, named here devils, but which signifies, as we have just stated, the spirits of departed men. Here Paul condemns any fellowship with them. Do we ask what will be the result of consulting with spirits ? Hear Paul : “ Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these : adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, *witchcraft*, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like ; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Gal. v., 19—21.) This “ *witchcraft*,” according to learned biblical scholars, is “ sorcery, or enchantment.” Ogilvie defines sorcery as “ *witchcraft*, a divination by the assistance of evil spirits.” The same meaning is attached to the word used in Rev. xxi., 7, 8 : “ He that overcometh shall inherit all things ; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and *sorcerers*, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone : which is the second death.” Now, spiritualists acknowledge they consult these spirits, which consultation is thus forbidden and condemned of God. They have no more authority in the Bible for such a thing than they have for committing murder. And if the Bible be true, then, by such practices, men shut themselves out of heaven, and shut themselves in perdition. By the glories of the one and the miseries of the other, we most faithfully and sincerely warn them against this God-forbidden practice. And all who are invited or tempted to visit spirit circles and try to draw aside the veil which God himself has drawn over the secret things of the eternal world of spirits, we would remind of this ; and, also, that when Daniel, the prophet, inquired of God the end of the things which he saw, the Lord said, “ Go thy way Daniel : for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. Blessed is he that waiteth. Go thou thy way till the end be : for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.” (Dan. xii., 8—13.) This, and this only, is in harmony with the Bible.

Fifthly.—Spiritualism is a Lying System.

We do not mean by this assertion that all are liars who are associated with it. No doubt some search for truth, though in a wrong way. Yet spiritualism, beyond every other system of so-called religion, presents a platform for deceit, trickery, hypocrisy, and lying. Who will deny this ? Certainly not those who are intimately acquainted with professional mediums. Many mediums, in many cases, are living lies : men and women too, who rise in the dignity of their professional practice, breathing the poet’s sentiment :—

Deception is the warp and thread of being ;
 The sky is fickle, and the elements
 Are traitors all. The spider plots his living
 In deceit ; and in the air the kingly birds
 With cruelty on weaker ones descend,

And gorge their appetite. The beasts and fish,
 Who have some lordly sway, turn land and sea
 Into a stage for drama treacherous,
 Whose plot the Almighty laid. Therefore do I
 Stand up in nature's centre, and my foot feels
 Her heart beat, *while I scheme.*

Yes, it is very much by *scheming* that many of these gain so strong a foothold on the credulity of their dupes. They bring to pass the truth of Christ's words:—

There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

How many of such will ever win old Mother Shipton's epitaph—

Here lies she who never lied?

Their "spirit hands"—ladies' white kid gloves, stuffed with flour, and worked by wires fastened to the medium's toes, form one sample of scores which might be given of spirit manifestations. And, if we admitted that in some cases spirits really appear in these seances, this admission would not improve the character of the system. Of this we are persuaded, that no medium or number of mediums can by any development bring spirits from another world. If spirits are ever allowed to come it must be as in days of old, when a lying spirit came to deceive Ahab. Even spiritualists themselves acknowledge that by far the largest number of so-called spirits are lying and evil. Thus, it is a judgment upon the sitters in the circle, who, in direct opposition to Scripture teaching, try to pry into the secrets of the spirit world. To such the words of Paul are applicable when speaking of the man of sin. He says:—

Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (2 Thess. ii., 9-12.)

Such a lying spirit God permitted to go and deceive Ahab as a judicial punishment on his wickedness. (1 Kings xxii., 20-22.) "But," says a spiritualist, "I am sure that those spirits that have spoken to me have told me the truth." Then, do you suppose spirits are allowed to come from another world just to tell you what you already know? Then are you sure that your own knowledge of the facts or your own thoughts at the time had not some influence in securing the answers given to your questions? And that such answers might not be given without the agency of spirits? And if you have received any information the truth of which you found out afterwards by inquiry of absent ones, is not such a case very rare? May it not yet be accounted for by some law not as yet discovered? If you think not, and still attribute the information to the agency of disembodied spirits, is it not possible, yea, likely, granting such spirits communicate, that they are evil, and only evil? "But," says one, "they cannot be evil, for they talk about good things and tell the truth." They may talk about good things and yet be evil. Balaam did so. Satan can "transform himself into an angel of light" and deliver a grander oration than the most eloquent "inspirational mediums." Depend upon this, that spiritualism which is opposed to the *Word* of

God cannot be the *work* of God; no, nor of His angels, nor of the redeemed in heaven. Respecting the argument that these spirits must be good because of the truth they tell, how do men know they tell the truth on the weightier matters of eternity? Whatever may be communicated of earthly things, which they can test as correct or otherwise, they cannot tell whether the communications respecting their soul and eternity are true until they enter the eternal world. And, O! if they should believe a lie; and stake their eternal future on that lie, and discover it when it is too late, how sad their case! They will then curse every medium and evil spirit to all eternity. The odds are sadly against them. The system itself is unscriptural and therefore wrong. That fact alone should lead them to doubt, yea disbelieve, the truthfulness of spirit manifestations. It is a device of the Devil to tell some little truth, that he may mislead with a great untruth. He can put a small coat of sugar on the poisonous pill of a big lie, to make it go down the better.

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.

Admitting that spirits really manifest themselves and communicate to sitters in a circle, they must lie, and they do lie, when they contradict each other so repeatedly as they are said to do. Why, they differ from each other like so many Kilkenny cats! A spiritualist's circle is the biggest Babel ever built on earth. Spirits might ascend their "seven spheres," like a parrot mounts its cage, by its beak, and that spirit get to the top the first who can tell the biggest lie. You need not accept my word alone for this. Elder Evans, a spiritualist, says:—

It required experience how to treat them (the spirits), and how to manage the mediums, for the spirits were no more to be relied upon, as to what they had communicated, than the same number of persons in the body.

This does not speak much in favour of the vaunted "law of progression." W. R. T., in the *Medium*, Nov. 2, 1871, says:—

There are plenty of partisan spirits in the next world, who will teach anything and assume any form or name to gain their object; so we must be always suspicious of everything that is eccentric in a spirit writing or rapping, as well as everything which is contrary to common sense and knowledge.

Granted: our common sense objects to trust these grand guides with our souls' destiny. We will now pick a few out of scores of other lies these so-called spirits tell.

1. *Mrs. Tappan's Light Towers*.—Under the "inspiration of a spirit," Mr. Mapes, *Medium*, Nov. 21, 1873, this earthly archangel of spiritualism, says:—

If you had an instrument sufficiently powerful, you could discover that they (the inhabitants of Venus) are already aware of the approaching transit of Venus, and have erected *strong light towers*, in order to attract the attention of the scientific men of earth; and, if you had a sufficiently powerful telescope, these lights would be visible to you, and a system of interchanging lights and signals could be carried on between you and that planet.

Just as, in imagination, we were adjusting the necessary telescope, imagine our disappointment when, only three weeks afterwards, Dec. 12, 1873, the *Spiritualist* contained the following:—

A Mr. Mapes, said to be the spirit who controlled her (Mrs. T.) on the

former occasion, came again and said, "I did *not* say that the inhabitants of Venus are erecting high towers for astronomical observations."

Thus our lights were put out, and our telescope fell.

2. *Sir Roger Tichborne*.—Yes, what about him? In the *Medium*, March 6, 1871, this is stated:—

We have received a number of communications respecting the Claimant, and whether Sir Roger Tichborne can communicate any facts from the spirit world. We may say that during the last twelve months spirit communications have repeatedly stated that the Claimant was the right man; on the *contrary*, that Sir Roger Tichborne was in the spirit world.

Unfortunately the jury there are not so unanimous as the one here.

3. *Prayer*.—Should we pray? Yes:—

Pray fervently and always; for so shall good prevail, by the effectual fervent prayer of righteous men. . . . It may seem absurd to those who will not believe that we are sent to help those who pray for aid. (*Where are the Dead?* pp. 127-8.

Should we pray? No. *Medium*, March 6, 1874. A spirit is said to speak through a Mrs. Hollis thus:—

Questioner: When spirits form a circle, how is it these undeveloped spirits come? Answer by spirit: It is because they are so confoundedly religious. Q.: How is that? A.: You show me a man who prays long and loud, and as sure as he sits for communications he will find some spirit who will put him through. I would advise people not to have invocations and prayers; just let them commence. If all sitters would do this, we should not hear so much of interruptions by undeveloped spirits. Q.: That is curious. I have known heretical persons form circles, and they have never got thus humbugged. A.: That's so. A person once put on a surplice and had all the church service—hymns and prayers and all—gone through, and you bet if he didn't have all the undeveloped spirits on the other side. Q.: How would you advise a circle of investigators to proceed? A.: Just to sit down like a number of children and communicate as they would with their friends on earth. Q.: I mean every fresh circle. A.: Do just so; and have nothing to do with that praying system, and you will not be bothered with cheating spirits.

4. *The Commandments*.—Mr. Davis says:—

"There are twelve commandments." The seventh is a good sample of the rest: "Obey the gospel of *use*." This is broken, he says: "By using your tongue to moisten tobacco, or to give free expression to inelegant words; or using the lips to pray to God."

Mrs. Hardinge, an eminent medium, says:—

There are not twelve, but "only ten;" and these far different to those Davis has given; and yet more so from those which Moses received. Yet they are orthodox, as "they were given by the spirits."

5. *What about Hell?*—According to the *Medium*, March 6, 1874, Tom Paine, through a medium, Mr. Wood, said:—

I cannot believe in a personal devil, or a local hell.

But in the *Medium*, October 10, 1873, a writer states:—

I thought on first reading the *Medium* that spiritualism explained away the orthodox hell-fire doctrine, and yet, strange to say, every spirit that I have conversed with (not a few) distinctly says there *is* eternal punishment for sin.

6. *What about Forgiveness of Sin?*—According to the *Spiritualist News*, December 1, 1870—

Until a man in the other world "can get rid of the influence (caused by the sight of his victim) he cannot have forgiveness."

According to a trance-medium I heard one Sunday—

A sinner, when he meets the man in the spirit-world against whom he has sinned, must ask him to forgive him, and he will do so.

According to Katie King—

Her husband John, who “was anything but a good man during his life, is now working off his sins by breaking down the materialism of London and neighbourhood.”

But according to Mr. Edmonds, in his pamphlet, “What is Death?” page 14—

His brother obtained forgiveness of him by returning from the spirit-world, and begging for it.

Who of these four are right?

7. *What about the law of heavenly progression?*—In “Where are the Dead?” page 114, we read:—

The future life of the spirit is said to be a state of eternal progression and ascension from the lower to the higher sphere.

But in that same work, page 125, we read:—

Undeveloped spirits on arrival in the next world thought they could do as they did in earth-life, and after sinking lower and lower into degradation, returned to earth to badly influence those still in the body.

A queer sort of progressive ascension—“sinking lower and lower.” These are but a very few of the thousands of lies which these said spirits tell, and by which the victims of spiritualism are duped.

The testimony of one of these reputed spirits may fittingly close the list. According to the *Medium* of March 6, 1874, the following conversation took place at a certain seance:—

Questioner: We have spirits who come and say they are Gabriel and Michael. Spirit Answers: Do not believe it; it is merely to play upon some weak-minded, praying individual. Q.: Then we have others controlled by Job and Jeremiah. A.: Well, I should think they would be. It is just like they are in America; we have no end of controls by George Washington and Andrew Jackson. Q.: Some time ago a man came and told me that in some investigations he had pursued the Nazarene had controlled. Since then I have learned that the circle has been broken up by evil spirits. A.: Did they drive out the Nazarene? Q.: No. A.: O, I thought the Nazarene was whipped? Q.: What do you think of that? A.: Well, sir, I will tell you what it is. He had been controlled from the first by a spirit taking the name of the Nazarene. No such person controlled him. Q.: There is a great deal of fudge in all this. A.: You are right, sir. They ought not to lose their individuality in a circle. If a person comes along and gives a big name he is at once believed. There is none of that about me. I say, straightforwardly, I am Jim Nolan; was raised on a farm, and served three years in the army.

Now, what do you think to such ennobling spirit communications? What do you think to this system of lying? How forcibly it prepares us for the assertion of the medium, John Scott, who, under the pretended cumulative influence of Milton, Locke, Shakespeare, Burns, Scott, Reid, Stewart, and Johnson, states:—

You cannot now fail to discover the earnestness and exactitude displayed in this and in kindred communications; and you must be assured of the accuracy of the knowledge which they contain, as you are of the fact of your own existence.

Just so. And we add to this that we cannot now fail to assert with earnestness and exactitude that spiritualism is *one of the most lying systems under the sun.* Yes;

So comes that foul authority that wraps
 Delirious minds in midnight's lurid gloom.
 So comes the despotism that enslaves
 The devotees who, lost to manhood, fly
 At every dark, uncultured, spirit's call.

Sixthly and lastly.—*Spiritualism is an Immoral System.*—Spiritualists not only deny this, but claim the highest morality. One writer in the "Spiritualists' Almanack" for 1874, states: "The doctrine of spiritualists has great influence in directing men into moral channels." Well, so it has, if a true morality be what that Christ of spiritualism—A. J. Davies—terms it, "a living out of their own ideas and sentiments."

Listen to a few of their ideas of morality. What is their idea of *National Law*? In a spiritualists' convention, held at Providence, Rhode Island, in 1866, in which eighteen States and Territories were represented, according to W. Hepworth Dixon's "New America," page 163, Dr. H. T. Child said that—

Spiritualism has bridged the gulf between Abraham's bosom and the rich man's hell. Let thanksgiving be added to thanksgiving for every blow that is struck to weaken the superstructure of human law—law which by the hand of man punishes men for doing wrong.

Mr. Perry said :—

As a spiritualist, I have yet to learn that we hold anything as sacred, and I am opposed to any resolution that has the word sacred in it.

The following resolutions, among others, were then adopted :—

1. Abandoning all Christian ordinances and worship. 2. Discouraging all Sunday schools. 3. Declaring that animal food should not be used. 4. Denouncing "*sexual tyranny*."

What about *Drunkenness*? One man, who lived and died an impenitent drunkard in this town, was stated to have come into a seance, and declared he was "in the third heaven." Another wicked and drunken man, smitten by death one day, died the next, with no signs of penitence and prayer. At a seance, held in his favourite public-house the Sunday evening week following his death, he was said to return and tell the sitters he was "in the seventh sphere in heaven, and very happy!"

What about the *Law of Marriage*? At the Rutland Reform Convention, Mrs. Julia Branch, of New York, as reported in the *Banner of Light*, July 10, 1858, said :—

I am aware that I have chosen almost a forbidden subject—bidden from the fact that anyone who *can or dare look the marriage question in the face, candidly and openly denouncing the institution as the sole cause of woman's degradation and misery*, are objects of suspicion, of scorn, and opposition. (pp. 40, 41.)

Again, at Ravenna, Ohio, July 4th and 5th, 1857, Mrs. Lewis said :—

To confine her love to one man was an abridgment of her rights. Although she had one husband in Cleveland, she considered herself married to the whole human race. (pp. 42, 43.) Again: it is reserved for this our day, under the inspiration of the spirit world, for a quiet, equable, retiring woman to rise up in the dignity of her womanhood and declare, in the face of her oppressors and a scowling world, "*I will be free*." (p. 43.) Still further: hundreds of families have been broken up, and many affectionate wives deserted, by "*affinity-seeking husbands*."

Mr. T. L. Harris, a very intelligent Swedenborgian minister, who became a spiritualist, and lectured in Europe, said as reported in the *London Advertiser* :—

The marriage vow imposes no obligation in the views of spiritualists. Husbands who had for years been so devotedly attached to their wives that they said nothing in the world but death itself could part them, have abandoned them, and formed criminal connection with other females, because the spirits have told them that there was a greater spiritualist affinity between these husbands and certain other women than between them and their lawful wives.

In the *Rainbow* of January, 1867, we read :—

Many once devoted wives have been seduced, and have left their husbands and tender helpless children to follow some “higher attraction.” Many well-disposed, but simple-minded girls, have been deluded by affinity notions, and led off by “affinity-hunters” to be deserted in a few months.

Do you say this is in America? Yes; and this thing is repeated in England. A woman writing in the *Pioneer of Progress*, an English spiritualistic organ, January 15, 1874, applauds Mrs. Victoria Woodhull, who lectures in favour of “free love,” as being engaged in “grand humanitarian and reformatory labours.” She says she “gladly echoes the forcible words of a bold defender of hers, and of the world’s cause,” who states that Mrs. W.’s “mission seems not only the most important of the nineteenth century, but in many respects the most needed, most pressing, and most important of the nineteen Christian centuries.” She adds—“All agree that the world’s condition, socially, *needs to be reformed and cleansed from the monstrous evils connected with ‘married life.’*” A leading spiritualist in one of our large towns, anxious to “reform and cleanse these evils,” returned, along with his wife, from a seance where this law of “affinity” was expounded and enforced. Having arrived home, he wrote an agreement of separation from her, and she signed it. Since then he has lived with four other women, and she with six other men; and the man with whom she cohabits to-day is not her husband. Shall I come yet nearer home? Shall I tell you of a seance in Bury? Would you believe that a spirit spoke the other night through a certain medium, and said—

There were seven spheres in heaven; that in each sphere they are married; and that if the husband progressed faster than the wife, say in the first sphere, he ascended to the second and married another spirit; thus going up and re-marrying even to the seventh sphere.

Then broad hints were given that “what was good in heaven would be equally so for earth.”

And this is the teaching and tendency of spiritualism! And this is the new religion that shall lift up and bless humanity! My soul burns with inexpressible indignation at the vile and polluted thing! Surely the majority of spiritualists have no sympathy with such a system. Then, we ask them to rise up in the honourable disgust of a virtuous manhood, and wash their hands of it now and for ever. Can you be disgraced by remaining in contact with such a system? Surely not. No; not under the too often false pretence of being “only an investigator.” If you can, let me beg of you, never sing psalms or read the Bible; never whisper prayer, nor lisp the name of Jesus, in connection with your meetings. To be associated with it is corrupting to you, and gives it more influence over others. For this influence you are responsible, and, though you protest your innocence, though you stand

In all the fulness of joy and hope,
Washing your hands with invisible soap
And imperceptible water,

you cannot get them clean till you leave the thing altogether.

Do you still persist and still tell us, as some have done, that “spiritualism is a new religion—a new revelation from God and heaven?” If it is, it must have proofs of a Divine authority. Where are they? Where are its miracles? Let us see them. Where are its fulfilled prophecies? Let us hear them. Where is its God-like purity? Show it unto us. Where is its agreement? Make it known to us. Give us, ye would-be apostles of this new revelation, ye modern lights to enlighten our Christian darkness, give us proofs of your apostleship! We want not your miracles, seen only by yourselves and mediums. We care not for your prophecies, muttered in the mystic sentences of Delphic oracles. We heed not the empty professions of your superior light and love. We want proofs—proofs of which we can judge. Then come out of your dark seances in heaven’s broad day! Yes, show yourselves like men; and if you have a divine mission, then, like another Moses or a second Christ, play your part openly before friends and foes, that we may no longer doubt or deny, but believe!

TO THE CHRISTIAN PUBLIC.—I think that you will fully agree with me that spiritualism is, as seen in its own works, *pretentious, ridiculous, un-Christian, anti-Scriptural, lying, and immoral*, and that it was quite time to expose it. Let me urge you to have no dealings with it. Visit not its dark seances. Attend not its “trance meetings.” If you do, you enter God-forbidden ground, and you may feel its unholy witchery, and fall a victim to its fell power; for it has a witchery. Yes, like Othello’s handkerchief, “there is magic in the web of it.” But, O, how unlike the virtue in the hem of our Saviour’s garment! It has a power, but it is the twist of the whirlpool and the glide of the falls. Unhappy they who come within its influence. Then pass by it, and come away.

And allow me to ask you still to cling to your Bible. You cannot find a better book—a richer revelation. It is the word of an ever-living and an ever-loving God. It carries its credentials with it. Its miracles are the outstretching of Divine power. Its prophecies are the utterances of Divine wisdom. Its purity is a proof of Divine holiness. Its harmony is an evidence of Divine order. Its sublimity is the height of Divine truth. Its power is the outgoing of Divine love. And its preservation is the result of Divine care. From Genesis to Revelation it bears the signature and seal of heaven and God. Fear not that any form of error or sin will weaken or destroy it. As amid its enemies in the past, so amid its foes in the future, it shall be known that “it abideth for ever.” Yes; it shall still fling its everlasting arms around helpless infancy. It shall still throw beams of heavenliest light o’er the sunny path of youth. It shall still add dignity to manhood, support to age, and open to the eye of the dying believer a richer heaven than spiritualist ever knew. Then believe its doctrines, cherish its promises, practise its precepts, adore its Saviour, and journey to its heaven. With that sainted linguist, Sir William Jones, say—

Before thy mystic altar, heavenly truth,
I kneel in manhood as I knelt in youth;
Thus let me kneel till this dull form decay,
And life’s last shade be brightened by thy ray;
Then shall my soul, now lost in clouds below,
Soar without bound, without consuming glow.

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