

HOW AND WHY

I BECAME

A SPIRITUALIST.

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## INTRODUCTION.

THREE and a half years have passed away since I commenced the investigation of that which is now called Spiritualism.

The phenomena presented for my observation were clearly supra-mundane; were evidently produced by invisible, intelligent agents; and, not fearing to express my convictions, because they were unpopular, I, after careful scrutiny, announced my belief, **THAT THE SPIRITS OF MEN AND WOMEN WHO ONCE DWELT ON EARTH COULD, AND DID, COMMUNE WITH MORTALS.** This fact appeared to me to be the most important one which had ever been given to man. If immortality is man's destiny, surely, the *knowledge* of that life which is eternal far transcends in value any mere earthly and, consequently, transitory acquirement.

The theological ideas presented in the following pages are not the elaborations of my own brain. I have been but little more than the amanuensis. Two friends, who have long been dwellers in the land of light and love, passed the *thoughts* to my mind; I clothed them with the drapery of language, and transcribed them upon the paper. Such is the extent of my participation in the production of this volume.

This explanation is offered, not from a desire to lessen any responsibility which may attach to the promulgation of those ideas, but simply, because I deem it improper to claim that which is not my own.

WASH. A. DANSKIN.

BALTIMORE, June 1st, 1858.



# How and Why I became a Spiritualist.

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## CHAPTER I.

“ELABORATE are the workings of the Divine.” Effects unanticipated are constantly springing forth from causes unseen. Man, finite in his nature, comprehends not the operations of the Great Infinite Mind, but in his efforts to penetrate the future, finds the limit of his capacity so small, that he falls back in despair upon the present and the past. He cannot even trace with precision the lines which mark his own checkered career. Starting in youth with the fires of ambition glowing within the inner temple of his soul, illuminating his path to deeds of greatness, which shall cover his manhood with renown, how soon the dense atmosphere of worldly strife deadens the brilliancy of the flame, and he finds himself groping through the winding avenues of selfish cupidity, instead of standing erect upon the lofty eminence which was the aim of his unsullied spirit.

Thus was I led, from boyhood's early days, through many pleasant paths, looking forward with eager eyes to the hour when, in the strength of manhood, my mental and physical energies should be devoted to the elevation of my fellows. How often, in the visions of childhood have the achievements of maturity been so vividly presented to my mind, that the heart swelled with emotions of gratitude to Him Who had opened so broad a field of mental labor, where such rich harvests could be gathered? But, alas! how changed the dream. As the passions of youth lit up their fires in the soul, and the desire for wealth crept stealthily into the channels of the mind, which had been dedicated to deeds of high emprise, the purer light was dimmed in the vapors of selfish desire, and the spirit wandered amid the tangled mazes of the sensuous existence.

No bright and glowing thoughts descending now from the realms of purity and love: no sweet flowers of affection giving forth delicious perfumes to fill the soul with delight; no bright visions of future glory to cheer the the dull hours of toil; but all a dreary void, a dull waste, without a tree or flower, a murmuring stream or warbling bird, to enliven its barren soil, life seemed purposeless, worthless. The most unbounded success in any mere worldly pursuit, but proved the

inability of such attainment to satisfy the interior longings of the immortal spirit. The attempt to gratify the earthly desires but led to the *appearance* of enjoyment—the reality had fled. The mind once concentrated upon the duties of the domestic or social relations, now became listless and inactive: or strayed into forbidden paths seeking that excitement which it seemed to need. The mind that had heretofore exhibited so much of steadiness and calm composure in its pursuits, now became restless, uneasy, and dissatisfied. The accomplishment of its purpose produced not the anticipated enjoyment; the *reverse* was the fact. The more ardently an object was desired, the more unsatisfactory it appeared when obtained.

There was an intense longing for knowledge of the superior, or after-life, which found no satisfactory response in the teachings of the sectarian church.

The crude ideas which were advanced with so much dogmatic confidence from the pulpit, were deficient in their power to illustrate the character of the Wise and Loving Father. The thought that God had created a Being or principle of Evil which was forever to dispute with Him the dominion of His own most glorious work; which was forever to mingle his poisonous breath with the atmosphere that surrounds the children of earth; which was to draw within his influence and consign to

endless and infernal torture the most exalted creation of the Great Father's hand, was to my mind repugnant. Enshrined, as it was, in all the sacred mystery of the past, enforced by all the fiery eloquence of the most fervid apostles of this diabolical theory, still, my reason revolted at the reception of so foul a representation of the action of Deity, and thus I felt a want, a pressing need of some purer light, by which to investigate the arcana of the celestial world.

The disappointed spirit then cast its longing eyes beyond the boundaries of this circumscribed sphere for visions of another life.

Man, as the mere denizen of earth, was too imperfect a work to emanate from the Great Source of wisdom and love, therefore, it seemed to me that in the vast domain which is the dwelling-place of the Father, the immortal spirit, freed from the trammels of the sensuous life, must unfold nobler powers and more comprehensive capacities, than are displayed in this rudimental condition.

Man, in the earth-form, struggling and striving to secure that which he cannot consume; grasping with the sinewy fingers of avarice that which would give comfort to the hungry, rest to the weary, and relief to the oppressed; gathering with avidity the fruits of others' toil; drawing within his control and thereby

depriving his brother, of the bounteous harvests which the Father bestows upon all His children. Man, in this phase of his existence, was not, in my view, the perfect work, the crowning glory of a master-mind; but, rather a tantalizing burlesque, an abortive effort to produce a noble structure which had resulted in hopeless failure on the part of the Great Designer of the Universe. But when I looked upon man as the eternally progressive child of God, I could then perceive a creation worthy of the Great Author of life.

The germ of the flower when only partially unfolded does not display the artistic power of Him Whose breath adds perfume to its beauty; but when the growth is complete, and the beauteous but fragile structure appears in all its glory, then the wisdom of the Creator is seen. So with man. While in the rudimental state he displays not the wondrous powers and faculties with which the Father has endowed him; but when, in his progressive unfoldment through the eternal ages, he throws off the dull habiliments of the lower life and appears clothed in robes of light and love, then is seen the harmonious workings of the Divine Spirit; then the master-piece of His wisdom is comprehended, and the doubts of the past disappear in the perceptions of the present and the glowing visions of the future. The spirit of man is the germ of the

angel, the affections of the heart, the powers of the mind in their earth-bondage are like the leaves of the bud when enclosed in the outer covering which surrounds them ; but when the heavenly dew of love and the bright sunshine of wisdom descend from on high then they burst from their confinement and bloom forth in beauty, shedding sweet fragrance on the surrounding atmosphere.

Thus, when the first announcement that the spirits of the departed, the dwellers in the home of purity and peace, had opened channels of communication with the mortals of earth, met my sight, I was not, as some were, struck dumb with amazement, or betrayed into denunciation or ridicule of those who received the statement as truth ; for, to my mind, it seemed the much needed link in the chain of the Divine economy. When invited, in a spirit of levity, by one who was to some extent familiar with the physical manifestations, to unite in " Circle " for the purpose of observing those phenomena I declined, alleging, as my reason for so doing, that Spirit-intercourse, whether true or false, was not, could not be, to any rightly constituted mind, a suitable subject for jest. If true, and the spirits of our dear friends who had been separated from us by death, were permitted to join us again in this lower sphere, jesting or



levity would surely be inappropriate at such a meeting. . If untrue, and the claim that spirits could mingle their thoughts with ours was a fraud or a delusion, it was then too serious an evil to approach in a merry mood. I therefore declined the invitation that had been tendered in kindness, though in manner not suited to my feelings. Subsequent conversations led apparently to a better or more appropriate condition of mind on the part of my friend, and eventually, a "Circle" was formed. We were but four in number, the lady, who first proposed our sitting, her husband, Mrs. Danskin and myself.

Soon we discovered that one of our number was susceptible to impressions from the spirit world, or, in other words, that he possessed the suitable mental and physical organism to constitute him a "Medium." Through the magnetism emanating from this person, vibrations or tippings of the table were produced, and while one of us would repeat the alphabet slowly, the communicating spirit would move the table at the appropriate letters, which, being recorded would be found to form words and sentences, perfect in their construction, and conveying to us the thoughts or wishes of the inhabitants of another sphere. This was the mode in which I received my first messages of love from the unseen world. In a short time there-

after we procured an instrument, intended to facilitate the reception of thought, or rather, the expression of it, through the medium. This was the "Dial," a simple yet ingenious piece of mechanism, constructed in accordance with directions from the spirit land, with *disk*, on which were printed the letters of the alphabet, and *index*, which, revolving in obedience to the movement of the table, pointed out such letters as would form the sentence which the communicating spirit designed to impart. This acquisition dispelled much of the tedium and monotony of our previous sittings, and with increasing interest, our little party pursued its investigation of the spiritual phenomena. Ere long, sufficient control was obtained by our spirit friends over the medium to enable them to give correct replies to mental questions and speak of things heretofore unknown either to him or ourselves.

The pioneer in our movement, she who had led us all into the investigation, was an earnest and devout adherent of the Roman Catholic Church. Believing in the Divine origin of her faith, and the infallibility of its expounders, she was not prepared to cast aside the impressions of her childhood, and the convictions of her maturer years, and receive in their stead the teachings which were given in this novel and startling

manner, though they did purport to come from the spirits of her own dear friends.

To her mind it appeared, that a communication really emanating from the world of spirits would not be given to man, by an instrumentality apparently so simple as the mere movement of a table. The means seemed inadequate to the end. To her, the thought was just as absurd and impossible of belief, as in the days of old, it was for the High Priests and people of the Hebrew nation, to acknowledge as their King and Saviour, the son of an humble carpenter; or to receive as truth the inspired words which fell from the lips of illiterate fishermen.

Consulting with her spiritual adviser, he instructed her to abandon at once all connection with the "Circle," and especially enjoined upon her to prevent her children from being drawn within an influence, which was only and altogether evil, and which emanated directly from his sable majesty, the terrific monarch of the infernal regions. Her husband, our "medium," was not so closely bound by the authority of the church, but in compliance with the wishes of his domestic partner, he withdrew from the further investigation of the subject, and thus, at the expiration of some three or four weeks, our spiritual communings were abruptly brought to a close.

No one, unless subjected to a similar disappointment, can conceive of the unhappiness which then filled my soul. It seemed as though the dark curtain which had so long closed from my vision the glowing beauties of the home beyond the skies, had been raised for an instant, and the previous gloom been rendered more profound, by the momentary radiance which had met my longing sight.

Dwelling with painful tenacity upon this unpleasant view of the matter, and feeling as though all hope of renewing our intercourse with the denizens of higher spheres was lost, I became sad, gloomy, irascible. I felt, that he who could thus cast aside the heavenly boon of mediumship, was unworthy of the gift; I wondered why one, so vacillating and unsteady of purpose, should have been so richly endowed.

Thus feeling and thinking, as I sat alone one afternoon at the table, with paper and pencil before me, I earnestly prayed that some avenue might be opened through which I could satisfy the deeply cherished wish of my heart. Suddenly, I felt an irresistible impulse to, and did write the following words: "*Rest satisfied;—you will soon meet with one who is reliable and true*"

Strange as this appeared to me, emanating, as I

supposed it must, from my own mental organism, yet, it calmed the tumult of my soul.

Had an Angel of Light appeared and assured me of the realization of my wish, I could not have felt more entirely satisfied, that the promise would be fulfilled. The clouds had suddenly disappeared, the sun once more cast his effulgence round about me, and all nature, so lately shrouded in gloom, now wore the bright mantle of the genial spring time.

A day had passed, another nearly waned, and still no prospect of the promised blessing. My confidence was nevertheless undiminished. I felt assured that my ardent desire was about to be gratified. The sequel proved that I had not been deceived.

Late in the afternoon of the second day, we received the welcome information, that a youthful "medium," the daughter of a member of the Society of Friends, had learned of our interest in the subject, and had proffered her aid to re-establish our interrupted communion with our spirit friends.

## CHAPTER II.

ON the following eve we made our first visit to the kind family, with whom we afterward passed many pleasant hours, and who, by their cheerful manner and genial welcome on this occasion, soon made us feel at home within their domestic circle.

The young lady who was usually controlled by the spirits as an *impressional writing* medium, was still pursuing her studies at one of our Female Collegiate Institutions, and had been deterred from the prosecution of her investigations, by the ridicule of her companions and the denunciations of her preceptors. Being young and sensitive, this estimable girl had been diverted from the beautiful path which leads to truth and wisdom, by the jeers and scoffs of those *who knew not what they did*. Consequently, for some months previous to the date of which I now write, she had, in a great degree, abstained from intercourse with the denizens of the spirit home. But hearing

how deeply I was interested in the subject, she had kindly proffered, through our mutual friend, to afford us an opportunity to resume our investigations.

During the first evening that we passed with our newly found friend, the manifestations were principally of a physical or mechanical character. The medium, my wife and myself were seated around a small table made of hard wood, weighing, I judge, some twelve or fifteen pounds. Assembled within, and seated around the room, were the father, mother and sister of the medium, my mother and the mother and sister of my wife, making nine of us. After sitting a few moments in quiet, there came gentle sounds, such as would be produced by the leather covered hammer of a piano striking against a solid substance. Rap after rap was heard on different portions of the table; sometimes in the centre, then directly under our hands, then running as it were across. After this had continued some time, the table rose a short distance and turned completely over, the top of it resting upon the floor: presently, it rose again some two feet in the air, and passing across the room approached a larger table upon which vases, musical instruments, books, and nick-nacks of various sorts were lying. This movement seemed to indicate a desire on the part of the spirit, that we

should remove some article among the many upon the table. I, therefore, selected one and another until nearly all had been named, without having found the right one, when, finally, I took up the card-receiver, and the movement of the table seemed to indicate great pleasure on the part of the Spirit, at my having discovered the desired object. Wondering what could be meant by this singularly expressed wish, I laid the basket upon the table, and immediately it moved to the other side of the parlor, and striking against the door with considerable force, plainly showed the desire to pass into the hall beyond. The door was opened, and approaching a secretary which stood within the hall, the table again rose several feet and struck gently against one of the smaller drawers. As yet, we had no idea of what could be intended by this very curious manifestation, but it was soon explained by the sister of the medium, who exclaimed, "I know what is wanted; I removed to-day from the card-receiver a note of invitation to the funeral of William Ridgaway, fearing that the sight of it might cause pain to his mother and sisters, who were to spend the evening with us." The mysterious movement was now understood. The note was taken from the drawer, placed again in the basket, and, by swinging and rocking the table in the air,



the Spirit seemed to express satisfaction at having been able to convey to us its thought.

Returning to the parlor, the table approached the mother of the deceased and gave signs of joy, such as can scarcely be conceived of by those who have not witnessed such manifestations. The legs of the table were laid upon the shoulders as if with the desire to embrace her; the under side of the table top was pressed against her lips, and other movements indicative of great pleasure, were made while the table remained in proximity to one so much beloved by the communicating Spirit. Passing from the mother the sisters were approached, and a lesser degree of affection was manifested; then, others who were present received, as it were, a hearty shake of the hand. Some half hour or more had been passed in this manner, when the table approached one of the young ladies and with the extremity of one of the legs touched her gently upon the lip. I supposed it to be the expression of a wish that she should sing, and so remarked, urging compliance on the part of our friend with the request so delicately made, but she begged to be excused, saying, that although she sometimes sang when alone, she did not feel equal to the effort before others. The intelligence controlling the movements of the table seemed unsatisfied with

this apology, and repeated some five or six times, with much rapidity, the gentle touch upon the lip; insisting, as it were, upon the gratification of his desire. Refusing no longer, the young lady sang very sweetly, some simple melody, while the table waved back and forth through the air, keeping time with the music. After this a desire for a tune on the accordeon was indicated in like manner, and given with similar accompaniment; the table was then elevated until it reached nearly to the ceiling,—the end of one leg was used to write the names of deceased persons upon the wall, and various other manifestations were given, alike in character, but varying in detail.

I desire it to be understood, that during all these manifestations through the table, the hands of the medium, my wife, and myself were in contact with it, but, at no time, in such position as would have enabled either one or all of us to control its movement.

After the physical manifestations had ceased we seated ourselves again at the table, the hand of the young medium was controlled and a communication written, purporting to come from the Spirit of Mr. Ridgaway, the same who had been with us all the evening. If the previous manifestations had been surprising, this was not less so, for the chirography

corresponded with his, and the signature was almost a *fac-simile* of that which I had so often seen him write.

To me, this manifestation was the more satisfactory, from the fact that Mr. Ridgaway's writing when he dwelt upon the earth was almost illegible. Few could read it with facility; indeed, I knew of no one but myself who could readily decipher his hastily penned paragraphs. The idea, that this young lady was capable even had she been willing to practise an imposture, of imitating *such* writing, was preposterous, and not to be for a moment entertained. In what manner then, could I account, under any other than the spiritual hypothesis, for this written communication purporting to be the veritable thoughts of my departed friend, conveyed through the instrumentality of another hand?

This interview with our spirit friends was exceedingly gratifying, and led to many subsequent meetings at the home of the pleasant family, where our first *reliable* communications from the world of light had been received.

A "Circle" was now formed comprising usually the medium, my wife and myself; occasionally we would be joined by one or other of the family. A shower of raps or sounds would greet us upon gathering

around the table, thereby, indicating the presence of our unseen friends. Sometimes, we would question them and receive negative or affirmative replies to our queries by means of the raps; *one* rap or sound being understood to be negative, while for the affirmative *three* were given.

The hand of the medium would then be controlled by the spirit of my wife's sister, who had passed from earth some ten years before, and messages of love and admonition would be written for us. These communications contained advice and directions concerning our own development as mediums, which was foretold by this kind spirit-sister, who, in union with others that were bound to us by the ties of kindred and affection, would descend from her bright abode and cast around us the gentle and soothing influences, which emanate from the realms of purity and bliss.

No one, who has not undergone this process of spiritual unfolding, can have the slightest conception of the delightful, calm and deep felt serenity, that gradually o'erspread the soul as the influences of the spirit-home gathered strength within.

The trials, the disappointments, the petty annoyances of the earth-life seemed to lose their power to ruffle or disturb the mind. Dwelling in a region above, we felt not the agitation of the waves beneath,

but grew strong in reliance upon Him, Whose love and wisdom were thus brought so clearly before our mental vision.

The world, which before had seemed so confused and unfinished a production, now stood forth in symmetry and beauty, wearing in every feature the impress of the master-hand that had moulded it into form. The gloomy doubts of the past now disappeared, the consistency, the beauty and the harmony of what had before seemed so antagonistic, was made apparent to my mind, and with more expanded views of the Creator's work, my feelings rose in love and adoration to the Great Source from which it sprang.

Dwelling, as I had heretofore, in the world of externals, I now passed gradually into the interior life; examining minutely and with growing interest and pleasure, the principles which underlie the various formations of nature. Rejecting, as I had, the Mosaic account of the Creation as impossible and absurd, or rather, refusing credence to the literal interpretation of that account as received by the sectarian church previous to the discoveries of Geologists, my mind was somewhat prepared for the reception of a more rational, and philosophical history of the formation of our globe, and the unfolding of the mineral, vegetable and animal substances that appear thereon. Having

formed no theory upon this subject, nor adopted the speculations of others, I was, mentally in a position to consider impartially any views which might be presented in relation thereto.

I had not received from our spirit friends any intimation of their intention to impart thought upon this subject, through myself. Nor had I ever desired or anticipated that an effort to that effect would be made by them, until one morning in the month of January, 1856, awaking suddenly, I found myself in the midst, as it were, of a prolonged contemplation of the principles and forces, which evolved from chaos the beautiful forms that every where meet our gaze. It was not like a dream. It seemed as though there had been a continuous action of the mind during the hours of slumber, which ceased not upon my waking. There appeared to be a sudden illumination of the chambers of the brain. That which had before seemed so dark and mysterious as to be entirely unapproachable by me, was now clear and free from difficulty, easy to be comprehended and wondrous in its perfection.

Pleased, yet almost bewildered by this strange awakening, I could scarcely understand its purport. There was surely an influence beyond myself—an unseen intelligent agent who had produced this effect,

for, as I have before said, a subject to me involved in deepest mystery had suddenly been made clear. The mists of superstition and ignorance seemed all at once to have melted away, and a pure and brilliant light shone upon the works of the Divine hand.

The avocations of the day removed these impressions of the early morn, and finally the scene which had caused me so much surprise and pleasure, gave way for other thoughts and passed from my memory.

A few days after, while at the table with my wife and some friends, I was requested by the circle of spirits controlling the medium to sit every evening at twilight, in company with a gentleman who, like myself, felt much interest in the subject of Spirit-intercourse; and if conditions were favorable, an effort would be made, they said, to write through my hand a work upon the subject, which had been so strangely presented to my mind. "The Creation of the world."

Obedient to this request my friend and self seated ourselves at the table in a quiet room at the appointed hour.

I must confess that I had many misgivings as to the power of the "Communicating Spirit" to express thought upon a subject so profound, through so uncultivated an organism. I did not consider myself suitably prepared by my previous studies or contempla-

tions, for such a purpose. Being unread in Geology, Chemistry or Natural Philosophy, I felt that I was deficient in the mental culture, necessary for the desired purpose.

It was, however, not very difficult to perform the task that has been assigned me—to *sit an hour with a friend*. Therefore, I yielded a ready compliance.

After sitting in silence some fifteen minutes, I suddenly felt a thrill, or, as it were, an electrical current pass into and down my arm, while at the same moment, thoughts were given to my mind, which I, with an agitated hand, transmitted to the paper before me. Thought followed thought in quick succession, and was written with wonderful rapidity. Two or three pages of foolscap were thus written over, when the impressions ceased as suddenly as they had been given, and the electric sensations left the hand and arm.

Upon examining what had been given, my friend pronounced it satisfactory, and to me, it conveyed the assurance of power to accomplish in time, that which my spirit friends desired. Reflecting upon this strange occurrence the next day, I came to the conclusion that it would be well for me to acquaint myself with, at least, the technical terms, used by Geologists, and consequently I purchased a work upon that science, which I proposed studying at my leisure. Using the



first favorable opportunity, I retired with my Geological work to a quiet apartment, and began my labor. Patiently, and attentively, I scanned the page before me, deliberately examining each sentence, so as to draw within my mind the idea, and fasten in my memory the phraseology of the writer; but what was my astonishment to find, after reading nearly a page, that my mind was a complete blank. Not one thought had been retained, not a single impression had been received.

I was quiet and composed before I commenced reading, not having anything to disturb the mental action, or prevent the exercise of a naturally retentive memory. I could not comprehend this matter. After another attempt with similar result, I abandoned the effort, concluding, that something must be wrong with myself; and, that I was not then in condition to prosecute my researches. At a more advanced period of the day I resumed my book, and after repeated failures to accomplish my purpose, abandoned it in despair, reluctantly coming to the humiliating conclusion, that my mental powers were not equal to the comprehension of the rudimental lessons in the science of Geology.

I must confess, I was somewhat annoyed. Heretofore, I had found myself equal, in some degree at

least, to the reception of knowledge as profound as that which now seemed to baffle me. I was at a loss to comprehend that which had occurred.

The mystery was soon unraveled. Just before the twilight hour when the writing was to be resumed, I received the following elucidation of the matter from my spirit friends.

Controlling the medium, they said: "We desire that you should not fill the mind with the teachings of others; we will, in time, impart to you that which we wish to give to the world, therefore, we erased from your brain the thoughts which you attempted to draw from the book."

Thus, was satisfactorily explained, the perplexing difficulty which I had encountered. Since that evening I have not looked through a book, unless for pastime, being convinced that knowledge more accurate, and thoughts more profound, may be received by direct influx from the higher spheres. The aspirations of the mind for light and truth, the earnest desire for knowledge, will attract to the individual possessing such aspirations and desires, spirits, elevated in wisdom, who have learned in the etherial home, the truth of His words, Who said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The hour arrived for the continuance of the work,

and I found that increased power had been gained, by the controlling spirit, thought being more freely given, and more perfectly expressed than at my former sitting. Occasionally while writing, the influence would suddenly leave my arm, the impression pass at the same moment from my mind, *and a sentence be left unfinished*. Sometimes when this occurred, I would suppose the Spirit-communication ended for the hour, but would remain at the table in conversation with my friend, and after the lapse of twenty minutes or half an hour, the electric influence would suddenly again be felt in my arm, the impressions be distinctly given to the brain, and the unfinished sentence be properly completed.

On one occasion, while illustrating the power of the law of attraction, there was written—“*Essences the most refined are withdrawn from gross—*,” here the inspiration ceased, and, having no idea of what was intended, I found it impossible to extract a suitable continuation of the sentence from my own mental laboratory.

After making many efforts I had given it up in despair, and was about to retire from the table, when my hand was again seized, the letters *e r*, added to the word *gross*, and followed up by—“*contact, and moulded in forms of beauty by its power,*”—the sen-

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tence when completed reading thus: "Essences the most refined, are withdrawn from grosser contact, and moulded in forms of beauty by its power."

In this strange manner the writing of thoughts which did not originate in my own brain continued day after day, for a short time; I was then informed that it would be discontinued for a season, to be resumed at some suitable hour in the future.

## CHAPTER III.

FRIENDS desirous to investigate the mysteries of spirit-intercourse, now began to drop in frequently to see us. The development of my wife's mediumistic powers was daily progressing, and communications of a satisfactory and convincing character were freely given through the "Dial." Our "Circle" began to increase in number, and those who sat regularly with us found a gentle influence being gradually thrown around them, and felt the presence of their loved ones, who had preceded them to the spirit home.

Many communications were spelled out through the "Dial" which seemed almost meaningless while coming letter by letter, but, which, when connected and punctuated, were found to be replete with beauty of thought and diction; conveying messages of love from those who had been supposed to be shrouded in the darkness of the tomb, dwelling amid the torturing

flames of the regions of despair, or closed in from the approach of all sorrow or sadness by the emerald gates of the golden paved Paradise.

Sitting around the table one afternoon, with four or five friends, my hand was suddenly moved with violence, and upon taking the pencil there was written with great rapidity,—

*“Be calm Danskin, and I will give you an acrostic.”*

POE.

Upon reading it I laughingly remarked: that if Poe supposed he could pass rhyme through my brain, he must prepare himself for a disappointment, for, surely, he would find it impossible. All were amused at the idea of poetry being given through my organism, and as no poetry followed immediately, we soon became interested in the communications from the spirit friends of other persons present, which were being received through the mediumship of Mrs. Danskin, and Poe, the poet, with his rash promise, was forgotten.

We had been sitting an hour or more, the party was about to break up, and my hand was again suddenly seized and with increased velocity was written:—

Earth had no joys for me,  
 Dark was my fate below,  
 Grief, like the boundless sea,  
 And limitless as woe,  
 Rolled o'er the poet—POE.

These lines were written with a rapidity that would seem incredible to any but those who witnessed the movement of the pencil.

After this time, short pieces would be written in metre whenever I sat at the table, not remarkable for any merit, or similarity of style to that of him from whom they purported to come, but only curious and interesting when viewed as coming through one whose life had been passed in the dull sphere of business facts, and not in the brighter realms of poetic fancy.

It would as soon have entered my brain to write a dissertation on Astronomy, or one of the abstruse sciences with which I was totally unacquainted, as to attempt to express thought in rhyme, yet, it had now become an almost daily occurrence.

I remember one occasion when we were about retiring to slumber I was directed, through Mrs. Dan-skin, to take the pencil; a spirit being present who wished to give a thought through me. Without knowing upon what subject I was to write, or having

an idea what form the communication would assume, I submitted passively to the influence. It proved to be that of my eldest sister, whom I had never seen, she having passed from earth when an infant, and having been for many years an angel of brightness in the land of beauty and bliss.

The sensation in the arm and hand now was not violent, as when Poe wrote, but gentle and pleasant; the impressions came not in complete sentences, but word by word, or sometimes two or three words would be given together. When finished, it read thus:—

The Spirit who, with earth-bound eyes,  
Looks on the changing scenes of life,  
Sees not the one grand purpose rise  
From out the never-ceasing strife;  
But He, Whose simple thought outspun  
The gorgeous realms of endless day,  
Will blend all shadows into one  
Effulgent light,—a heaven-born ray;  
Whose radiant glory shall outshine  
The brightest Orb that rolls in space,  
Diffusing light, and love Divine  
O'er all of Earth's benighted race.

The thought here expressed was not within my mind when I sat down to write. When my hand



began its work I knew not whether poetry or prose was to be the result, nor did I know, until it was before me on the paper, what was the idea contained in the lines which I had written.

Here, then, was evidence, positive and unquestionable, that some foreign intelligence was using my organism to give expression to that which did not, and could not have originated within myself; that it was not evil in its nature is evinced in its works. Clear streams flow not from unclean fountains;—pure thoughts spring not from impure minds. The teachings which were now, almost daily, imparted from this source, breathed only the purest morality, the most unselfish devotion to the good of others, and the most profound adoration of the Deific Mind.

The objection which has been urged against Spiritualism by many of the earnest adherents of the church, that it was demoralizing and vicious in its tendencies, and led by easy steps down to the dark pool of infidelity, would not be sustained by aught that has ever been given in speech or manuscript through the mediumship of either Mrs. Danskin or myself. A calm reliance upon the Love and Wisdom of the Great Father, and elevation of thought to His Divine attributes, a perception of His handiwork in all the beautiful creations of the natural world, was

the result of our daily communion with our much-loved, though unseen, friends. Our minds, previously occupied by the cares, the pleasures, and the desires of earth, seemed gradually withdrawn from accustomed contemplations,—and purer thoughts, higher aims, and nobler impulses filled the vacated chambers of the soul.

Many losses, trials and disappointments crossed our path during the period of which I now write, but seemed not to leave their accustomed impress. The idea had now become imprinted upon the mind, that the Father, in His Wisdom, had so ordered the affairs of life, that evil as a positive principle could not exist; that adversity had its uses, which when understood, gave brilliancy and beauty to that which otherwise seemed only dark and gloomy.

The lessons learned in the ordeal through which we passed were, perhaps, not unneeded. We were taught, that the vanities, the pomps, and the pleasures of the external existence were fleeting and transitory; that there was within us an immortal, or spiritual essence that would not be content with the shadows of earth, but which strove, with eager eyes, to penetrate the realms of the real life.

To acquire true knowledge of the spiritual existence was now our earnest desire. We were not

actuated by mere curiosity, nor did we desire to secure the aid of the immortal ones in our earthly pursuits; but, with simple, unalloyed aspirations for *Truth*, we meekly and reverently asked knowledge of Him Who has said, "Seek, and ye shall find,—knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

Our petitions were not unheeded. As time passed on the susceptibility of Mrs. Danskin to spirit-influence increased, and the development of her mediumistic powers steadily progressed. The "Dial," at length, became unnecessary. The thought, which the Spirit might desire to convey, would be impressed upon her mind, and written through her hand; the style of expression and chirography varying in accordance with the character of the "Communicating Spirit." At times, the communications would be written in the bold, masculine manner of the rough man, and again they would be traced in the delicate lines of the graceful and accomplished woman.

Her sister, of whom I have before spoken, was the attendant, or guardian spirit, who seemed to superintend and direct the progress of her development; accompanied, usually, by one who announced himself, as delegated by higher powers, to aid in advancing the benign and elevating truths of Spirit-intercourse to the world. Through the hand of the young lady,

the medium heretofore referred to, communications would be written, giving us kind advice and counsel in regard to the manner in which our investigations should be pursued. Predictions, foretelling the course of the development, and the character of mediumship which would be displayed by both Mrs. Danskin and myself, were also written through her during the earlier portion of our intimacy, and have since been realized, or are at present in course of fulfilment. The *development of others* was clearly indicated as a part of the duty which would devolve upon us. It was said, that magnetic influences would be passed from the spirit world through our organisms, and cast around those who came within our "Circle." The power of healing the sick was also promised as one of the gifts that would be bestowed upon us; and other phases of the receptive, or mediumistic, condition were indicated which have since then appeared.

During the past six months, almost every one who has been introduced to our little social, spiritual gatherings, has felt the spirit-influence manifesting its powers in greater or less degree. The first manifestation of this kind occurred during the autumn of 1855. We, at that time, established regular tri-weekly sittings, with the members of a family that

had been previously engaged in the investigation of the spiritual phenomena. At almost every sitting some one, or all, of the persons present, except Mrs. Danskin and myself, would be thrown into a gentle slumber. Sometimes, without any apparent effort on the part of my wife, and at other times, she would be controlled by the Spirit or Spirits who desired to develop the mediumistic powers of our friends, and manipulations, similar to those used in producing mesmeric conditions, would be made.

In the month of September, 1855, while sitting one evening with the "Dial" before us, a communication was spelled out, which, when properly arranged, was found to come from my wife's sister, and plainly foretold the early removal from the trials and sorrows of earth, of one whom they both held dear—their much-loved mother.

It seems proper for me to say, that at the time this communication was received there were no indications of disease more prominent than had been exhibited for several previous years. Our newly awakened interest in the Spiritual manifestations had so much engrossed our thoughts, and time, that Mrs. Danskin had not been as regular in her visits to the home of her parents as was her previous custom. The spirit, when giving this intelligence, stated that it was not

given to cause sorrow to the heart of her sister, but to impress her with the thought, that it would be well to let nothing interfere with her duty to their mother.

Nothing, of course, was said to other members of the family about the communication which had been received, nor was there any indication until the commencement of the following year, that the prediction would be fulfilled.

In January it became apparent that the most insidious foe of the physical welfare of humanity, Consumption, was about to strike a fatal blow. This cherished parent was suddenly prostrated, and, although naturally delicate and feeble, she lingered until near the close of April before she passed into that realm where sorrow has no dwelling-place.

During her illness Mrs. Danskin was her constant attendant; day and night, with short intervals of repose, she watched at the bedside, cheering the patient sufferer as the weary hours slowly passed.

It was not until after the final event that I perceived symptoms of the same disease being exhibited in the system of my wife. The hollow cough, the hectic flush, and other indications of confirmed disease, became painfully apparent. During her attendance at the bedside of her mother the thought had not

occurred to me, that my wife was in danger, but a moment's reflection should have shown me, that one so frail could not inhale the same atmosphere that was being breathed by the decaying system of an aged consumptive, without having the impurities with which that atmosphere was impregnated lodged within her own lungs.

This knowledge had come too late to prevent the results; my care now was to procure the best medical advice, and use every effort to stay the progress of the disease, if we could not entirely expel it. An eminent physician informed us that one of the lungs was seriously affected; and he left what he believed to be a suitable prescription. This, however, was never used because, shortly after he took his leave Mrs. Danskin became entranced, and the Spirit of one who, when in the earth-form, was known as the philanthropic and learned Doctor Rush, of Philadelphia, controlled her organs of speech, and advised, that her system should not be subjected to the action of any strong medicine. The open air daily and a generous diet, he said, were better suited to her condition.

Had this kind advice been followed I have no doubt but that much subsequent suffering would have been avoided. Mrs. Danskin's tastes and habits

being domestic, I found it difficult to draw her from home; no inducement could lead her to take the much needed out-door exercise. A few weeks after this we received a visit from some friends who passed the month preceding Christmas with us, and, consequently, Mrs. Danskin was more confined within doors than ever. The result was what I feared it would be. Early in January, 1857, she was completely prostrated,—losing strength and animation, and being apparently on the brink of the eternal shores.

A physician and friend, whom I had highly esteemed for many years, was at the time in attendance upon my aged and infirm mother. Contrary to *my* wish, this gentleman was consulted in relation to my wife's condition, and immediately commenced a course of active treatment, according to the best formulas of the Allopathic School. My position was now painful in the extreme. Having implicit confidence in the judgment and skill of *our medical adviser, who had passed the portals of the inner life*; and knowing, by previous experience, that he could penetrate with the spirit vision more deeply into the interior, and perceive more clearly than could any mortal eye, the real condition of the sufferer, I desired to be guided solely by him; and, I have not



the slightest doubt that, if I had acted according to the dictates of my own feelings in this matter, much suffering would have been avoided, and an early restoration to health have followed. But I was overruled, and some six months confinement to her room was the unpleasant consequence. During the period of her illness she would sometimes pass into the interior or entranced state, and certain views of her case would be given me, through her own organs of speech, that manifested knowledge of anatomy and physiology entirely beyond her normal acquirements. In order to test the accuracy of the information thus received, I would sometimes suggest certain views of the case and modes of treatment to our earthly physician, and in every instance they met his approval. So much was he impressed with the correctness of what I suggested, that he several times remarked to his patient, "If I am not present at any time, and you should be in doubt as to the propriety of any particular course, consult Mr. Danskin, *he understands your case, and will direct you aright.*"

At last I made the impression upon the mind of my wife, that our spirit-guide was more thoroughly acquainted with her condition than any mortal, no matter how skillful, could be; and she then aban-

doned the drugs and plasters which had been profusely exhibited, and relied upon pure air, cold water, and the other simple remedies which had been prescribed by our unseen friend.

A carbuncle, which caused sometimes intense pain, appeared upon the ankle, and drew the inflammation from the lungs downward, affording an outlet to the impurities which had so thickly settled within the chest. The pain from this ulcer was very great, amounting at times to agony. Many applications had been made but produced no good effect, seeming only to irritate and inflame, instead of soothing. On one occasion, during a quiet interval, I asked, if our spirit-friends could not suggest a remedy.—Mrs. Dan-skin was immediately entranced, and the direction given—“*Send for a Healing Medium.*” I knew of no person in Baltimore to whom that appellation could be properly applied except Mr. Benjamin S. Benson, the proprietor of an extensive Iron Foundry; who had been made the instrument of several wonderful cures by the simple “laying on of hands.” These cures were well authenticated; some of them having occurred in the presence of large family circles, and all of them having been performed without fee or reward, other than that which arises from the consciousness of having done a generous or benevo-

lent action. I immediately addressed this gentleman a note, desiring him at his earliest convenience to call upon us, and in about two hours thereafter was gladdened by his presence.

It may be proper here to remark, that Mrs. Dankin is one of the least imaginative persons that I have ever known; she has, all her life been noted for plain, matter of fact, common sense; not addicted to the marvelous or wonderful, not caring for the fanciful or extravagant, but sedulously devoting herself to her household duties, and seeming to take but little interest in what was passing beyond her own immediate circle. The relief which was experienced, when Mr. Benson placed his hand upon the diseased spot, could not properly, therefore, be attributed to the force of imagination, as might have been in the case of a person differently constituted.

It is a fact, account for it as we may, that this dreadful ulcer, which was so inflamed that it was most sensitive to the touch of her own hand, however gentle she might be when dressing it, yielded almost immediately to the magnetic influence which seemed to emanate from the hand of the "Healing Medium." He placed his hand directly over and upon the sore, and yet *his touch produced no pain*; the fiery and inflamed appearance soon was changed, and, gradu-

ally, the color of the flesh became more natural and healthy.

The visits of Mr. Benson were continued during four or five weeks, averaging perhaps twice a week. A great improvement was visible from the commencement. Sometimes other friends were present and we would be directed, through Mrs. Danskin, while entranced, to join hands; thereby increasing the force of the magnetic influence, and manifestly imparting much strength to the invalid. She now grew better rapidly, and our spirit-friend, Dr. Rush, who had directed the course of the "Healing Medium" at nearly, if not quite, every visit, again recommended the open air as absolutely essential to her restoration.

The immediate danger which threatened the lungs had been withdrawn by the issue which had been formed at the ankle; the pain of the ulcer had been removed by the magnetic influence which spirits had imparted through the mediumship of Mr. Benson, and now, pure air was needed to restore the lungs.

In accordance with this advice, I made arrangements for her to ride each day, an hour or two.

The wisdom of our spirit-guides was manifested in the marked improvement which followed. Soon I was cheered by appearances of returning health, and

renewed usefulness. As she gained strength, the character of the spirit manifestations became more distinctly marked, being more varied than before, and embracing a wider range of thought. Spirits would now control her organs of speech, and talk with us as they did when on earth; exhibiting the peculiarities by which they were then distinguished, and, by their conversation and the emotions which they manifested, giving to us more clear and correct ideas of the conditions and circumstances of the Spirit-life.

## CHAPTER IV.

ONE, who had lived to an extended period on earth, accumulating and hoarding with avaricious mind, until her fortune had grown to nearly half a million, came to us one evening, and by her tone and manner made herself known before giving us her name.

The mind which, on earth, had sought happiness in the acquisition of wealth; which had concentrated all its powers upon the one object, did not undergo an immediate transformation when freed from the physical body. The train of thought was the same. Money; wealth; the adulation which its possession secured to the holder; the power it gave to control the destinies of others; the consideration which it gained from all,—these were the thoughts which filled the mind when clothed with the earth-form, and those thoughts were still the companions of that mind in the spirit world.

Relating, at my request, the circumstances attending her entrance into the spirit home, she said:—"All was barren; a wide extended plain, without a tree or shrub, dreary and cheerless was the aspect of all that met my eye; but," said she, "I had my treasure, my wealth was still mine; I seemed to clasp it even more closely than I did when on earth; I thought, that with wealth I would have power; that with it I could command the services of others, as I had done heretofore. After wandering, lonely but self-reliant, for a time, I became weary, and with my treasure-casket for a pillow, composed myself for slumber. At length I was aroused by the sound of a voice, whose clear sweet tones seemed to fill the air with melody. Casting my glance upward, I discovered, in the distance, a radiant form, glowing with beauty, and looking kindly upon me, as I lay, reposing upon my highly treasured pillow. Soon the angel, (for she was one of the bright messengers of God) spake, saying: 'Come sister, come with me; I will lead thee where flowers bloom, where birds sing, where murmuring waters flow; come, let me bear thee to the garden where knowledge will be given to thee.'

"This pleased me not. Knowledge be given to me! I, to whom so many on earth had looked up with reverence, because of the superior knowledge I had

displayed in the accumulation of wealth; I, to whom even the ministers of the Gospel, the chosen ones of the Lord, had bowed down; hoping thereby to secure contributions from my well filled coffers to their sectarian enterprizes; knowledge be given to me, as though I was one of the ignorant or lowly; I felt indignant at the thought, my anger rose, and in reply I said: Away, away, you know not to whom you speak. I am no common person, seeking favors from others; I am Miss R——— C———, the wealthy Miss R——— C———, I ask no aid—I seek no help; I have treasures; I have wealth; away, away, you know not to whom you speak! With a look of sorrow, the bright spirit departed, and again I was alone, amid the dreary expanse. Alone did I say, nay, not alone. I yet had my much loved treasures, and, surely, I could need no more.”

This communication and the peculiarities of manner exhibited during its recital, were so natural and life-like, that any acquaintance of this most eccentric lady would at once have recognized her presence.

Desiring to awaken her mind to a sense of the present worthlessness of her much valued treasure, I said: “Do you not perceive how useless are your accumulations of the past, when a single flower, which in its simple beauty would be so pleasant to



your eye, cannot be purchased, even in exchange for *all* your wealth. It cannot procure for you a single gratification; in your present state of existence it is but a useless burden, and the sooner you free your mind from the bondage in which it has dwelt, the sooner will you be fitted to enjoy the rare beauties, and never fading pleasures of that home which the Great Father has prepared for all his children."

My counsel was rejected with scorn, and telling me that I was ignorant of the value and power of wealth, she withdrew her influence from the medium, and passed again to her barren home, in the world of spirits. Subsequently she came many times to us, and through the instruction, which was offered to her in kindness, and with an earnest desire to dispel the hallucination which seemed to possess her, she was, at length, led to look upon her condition in its true light and seek from "the angel" that aid and guidance, which had, at first, been so rudely rejected.

The conversations with this spirit, of which the above is a very meagre and imperfect sketch, were most interesting and instructive. They taught us, that when the faculties of the mind become engrossed in any one pursuit; when the heart and the soul are neglected, and the intellect is kept actively employed during the earth-life in the acquisition of gold, that

the perceptions of the spirit are weakened, and, when transferred to the eternal home, it has no power to recognize the beauties by which it is surrounded ; no capacity to enjoy the pleasures which flow from the exercise of the affections. They proved to us, clearly, that man, when entering upon the spiritual life does not cast aside the impressions which have been received by contact with the world, but that the mind still retains the habits of thought which have been cherished on earth.

It does not follow, however, that because the mind has been misled on earth, and enters upon the spirit life in ignorance and consequent suffering, it should forever thus remain. Oh no ! The kind and beneficent Father, the Almighty and All-Wise God, has not thus left incomplete this beauteous fabric, the out-growth of His own great mind. The child, once breathing the breath of life, once bearing the image of the Father, can never wander beyond the reach of His all-seeing eye ; can never pass beyond the boundaries of His infinite love. Influences, kind and gentle, are ever being cast around the darkened ones by the bright spirits which dwell in peace and glory, and when those influences once reach the heart, and penetrate the soul, arousing the unhappy to a sense of their errors, then comes a desire for knowledge,

and earnest aspirations for a higher and purer life; and, in accordance with the promise given in the past, the seeker ever finds—to the one who knocks, the door is ever opened. The child of God, whether dwelling on the material earth, or breathing the atmosphere of the world beyond, never seeks in vain; never asks, and is refused. No. The good Father never turns a deaf ear to the supplications of His offspring. The mere span of life in this rudimental sphere is not the arbiter of man's eternal destiny. The term of the earth-life, to the immortal spirit, is but as the infant-school to the man of science. The knowledge here obtained, or neglected, may influence his future career, but cannot check forever his onward progress. He is not compelled to remain uneducated through life, because, in childhood's hours, he has not given heed to the admonitions which were intended for his good. If, when the day of youthful folly and caprice has passed, the mind feeling its wants, applies its energies to the acquisition of knowledge, no impassable barrier impedes its progress; the doors of the Temple are thrown wide open to receive the tardy guest, late though he come to the banquet. Thus it is with the spirit which has passed the hours of the rudimental existence in the pursuit of frivolous pleasure, or useless hoards of wealth. When, on entering

into the interior life, he discovers how much has been lost, how many precious hours have been squandered, and how little of real value has been obtained, he bows meekly, in penitence and sorrow before the throne of love and wisdom, and asks that strength may be given him to follow steadily the path that leads to higher and holier conditions. Is his prayer rejected? No. The Father, Whose love is co-extensive with His power, casts around the repentant child that light which will illumine the darkened chambers of his soul.

The love of the Divine Father, for the offspring of His own omnipotent will, is not variable, nor fleeting, like the affection of man. Circumstances, times, and seasons change not the purpose of God. The love, which descends in copious streams upon the favored children of earth is free to all the many peopled spheres; it permeates with its effulgence the boundless expanse of the universe. No creature can be so low, so degraded, so debased, as to sink beneath the reach of God's infinite love; no archangel can shine in golden hues but as he reflects the radiance which flows from the Supreme. God's love is ever present; knowing no diminution, needing no expansion; it is sufficient for all the innumerable intelligences which fill His boundless empire.

Following, the spirit of this avaricious female, came others, almost daily. Some, whom I had known personally, and others, with whom I was acquainted only by their public life, or private reputation. One who had been a leading member of the Baltimore Bar for years, came, and with a mournful eloquence portrayed the sorrows of his spirit life; bewailing the hardness of his fate, and imploring annihilation. He could not bear the sting of an awakened conscience. On one occasion, while conversing with us, he said: "Often, often say I now to myself the words which once I used to others—Guilty, guilty thou art."

He at times, would endeavor to cast the faults of his life upon his Creator, saying, that *God, in His power, had created and ordained all things*, therefore, it was destiny that made men what they were. Desiring, as it seemed, to throw off the responsibility of his own actions, and attributing to the circumstances which had surrounded him, the follies and vices that had marked his career, and which were the choice of his own free-will.

By kind advice and gentle admonition he was, at length, led to a more rational conception of his relations to the Great Father; and possessing originally a brilliant mind he soon progressed in knowledge of the spirit life, and by the aid of pure and holy angels, he

was advanced from a condition of darkness and almost despair into one of comparative light and joy.

Since this change in his condition he has several times controlled the medium, speaking with the force and rapidity by which he was distinguished when on earth, and exhibiting both mental and physical power far beyond the capacity of the medium when in her normal state.

Another spirit, a friend of the one of whom I have just been writing, formerly a representative in Congress, and also Judge of one of the Courts of Maryland, came to us one evening when Mrs. Danskin and myself were sitting alone together. She was quite unwell, and so weak as to be scarcely able to sit up in her chair. He controlled her, in defiance of the efforts of *our spirit friends* to prevent him. They, fearing that in his then excited condition, he might exercise too great an amount of force for the medium to bear in her weak state, interfered, and cut short his communication when but a few sentences had been spoken; telling us, they feared his influence would prove detrimental, and had therefore intercepted his thoughts as they were being concentrated upon her mind. He was, when on earth, a man of indomitable self-will, and on this

occasion his conduct afforded another exemplification of the fact, that a change of condition does not necessarily result in a change of character; for, after our friends had ceased to communicate and had withdrawn their influence from the medium, he again took possession of her vocal organs, and with some violence exclaimed, that he *would* give utterance to the thoughts which were in his mind.

He then spoke of the unutterable agony which filled his soul when contemplating his wasted life, and the prostitution of the talents with which God had so richly endowed him.

When in the earth-form, he was universally admitted to be a highly gifted man, possessing a brilliancy and scope of intellect rarely found combined; he was profound as a jurist, and almost unequaled as an orator, winning by his eloquence the hearts of all who listened to his fervid appeals; but alas! like many of the gifted ones of our land, he had sipped from the wine cup the fatal poison that sent madness thrilling through his veins, and a career that might have been honorable to himself and useful to his fellows was brought to a close when, in the prime of his manhood, with all his faculties matured, he should have been the pride, and the ornament of the society in which he moved.

This man had believed that there was no life after the grave had closed upon the mortal frame, and oh, how horror-stricken was he to find, that he was an immortal spirit—knowing no death; feeling a life more vivid, more intense than his imagination had ever previously conceived. Was his present condition unchangeable, how dark and gloomy would be his fate; but it is not so! Communion with the spirit-world has taught us, that the gentle influences of angel-friends will dispel the shadows which now enshroud him, and, in time, unfold to his vision the radiant beauties of that home which has been prepared for *all* the children of our Father.

Soon after this, another spirit came to us; one whom I had known during many years. Proud of his distinguished ancestry, having the appliances of wealth and station to cherish his self-esteem, he had grown pompous and arrogant. His earth-life had been a continuous scene of sensuous indulgence; the affectional nature had been polluted, and the intellectual neglected, but he entertained the idea that he possessed superior mental capacities.

He came to us sneeringly, telling us that our "Circle" was not composed of the class of intellects suited to a man of his ability. *He* desired to commune with minds more cultivated—with men of



science, literature and philosophy. If we would draw *such* minds around us, he would be pleased to mingle thought with *them*.

Following him, came the gentle breathings of a loving wife for the *lonely one* whose heart was clothed in sadness, because *she seemed* lost to him. She spake in soft accents of the love which had united them, of her prayers and watchful care for him now, and of the joy with which she would welcome him to the home of ineffable beauty, which awaited him in the skies.

The little child would sometimes come, with its infant prattlings, telling of the many pleasures by which it was surrounded, and in its simplicity asking—Will not father come? we wait for father; oh, father come! Mamma, and I, pluck rare and lovely flowers from our beauteous garden to lay on papa's pillow, so that the fragrance may penetrate his soul, and blend his thoughts with ours. The Angel-Mother would thus tutor her spirit-child to express their love for him, whose coming they awaited.

Spirits, who had filled every grade of life on earth, came to us now in rapid succession, exhibiting the same diversity of thought and condition in the spirit-life which meets our view in this rudimental sphere.

The suicide, clothed in gloom, feeling the horror, the despair which filled the mind previous to the commission of the rash act which had sent him uncalled, into a life for which he was all unprepared, manifested his presence; bewailing in tones of anguish the sad fate he had sought; describing the horrors which met his gaze when, as he said, "*the spirit leaped forth from the mortal frame, and stood within another world.*"

The gentle girl, whose life had been guarded by the tender care of a loving mother, and the watchful eye of a doting father; whose pure mind and uncontaminated heart rendered her a fit companion for the angels of light, would pour forth her feelings in silvery accents, thrilling our hearts with her transcendantly beautiful descriptions of the land in which she dwelt.

The PHILANTHROPIST would come, with open heart, and mind filled with the desire to relieve the sufferings of his brethren of earth; and, in language and manner characteristic, would manifest to us the ruling principle which had governed him through life.

The STATESMAN, whose mental vision had been bounded by the limits of his party's creed, would, with enlarged views and broader scope, portray the destiny of his beloved country.

During a “*seance*” of two and a half to three hours I have seen manifestations, or received communications, from twelve or fifteen spirits; all differing in character, and some of them widely separated in feeling and condition.

The Medium, when in her normal state, being totally incapable of such versatility of thought, and power of personation, what theory is there by which the series of manifestations that I have here related can be explained, other than that which comes from the source of all the manifestations?

The intelligence communicating has invariably claimed to be the disembodied spirit of some one who had formerly lived on earth. Many “Circles” have been formed in various parts of our country, and in Europe—all classes and conditions of people have devoted time and thought to this subject—the untutored mind, filled with delight at the antics of a moving table, at length asks—What is it makes the table jump and rock, and spell out sentences? Has the reply ever been—Humbug—or the Devil? No. The name of some departed friend is given, who says, “I come to let you know I am *not* dead, but live; and still feel for you the sympathy and love which I felt when on earth.” The man of science calls together his friends and forms a “Circle,” desiring to

learn something of this wonder which has caused so much commotion in the world. Soon the medium, some uneducated girl perhaps, is entranced, and answers are given to abstruse questions, displaying knowledge more profound than even the scientific mind has mastered after years of laborious study. This course of scientific questioning is followed closely for an hour or two, and all are amazed at the mental phenomena which has been thus presented. It occurs then to ask—What is the source of this wonderful power? Has it ever been said in reply, that Electricity, Mesmerism, Psychology, or Odic force were the fountains, whence these streams were flowing? Oh, no! The response is promptly given.—It is a spirit, or a circle of spirits, men and women, who once dwelt on this Planet, and whose fondness for searching out the hidden laws and forces of nature has not been lessened, because the spirit, having laid aside its mortal covering, has become more free to roam throughout the vast domain of the Great Father, and more subtle and capable of penetrating, and perceiving, and comprehending the interior principles which govern and unfold all material forms.

The widowed mother calls her children about her; seating themselves around the table a hymn of praise is sung, and a request is sent from loving hearts to

the Infinite Father, that His messengers of peace may be permitted to bring glad tidings to those who sorrow. The prayer is answered. Gentle sounds are heard; the eyes of all brighten; the shadows of sorrow disappear; joy gleams forth in every countenance; the question is eagerly asked—Who is it that desires to commune with us? The hand of some member of this little family circle is then controlled by the Spirit, who writes thus—“My dearest wife, and children of my love, think not that Father is *dead*—he is ever hovering over you; giving pleasant thoughts to your minds, endeavoring to purify your hearts, and lead you into that path where virtue and peace will ever be your companions.”

Thus has it ever been. Wherever, and whenever a manifestation from the spirit world has been presented to mortals, the enquirer after the source of such manifestation has invariably received the same reply.—“I am a Spirit, or, we are Spirits, who once dwelt on Earth.” If this is not the true solution of the matter, would not some discovery of its falsehood have been made ere this?

Ten years have now passed away since the mysterious rapping was first heard in a small village in the western part of New York, and from that hour to this, through all the various phases of the phenomena, no

other cause has ever been suggested by the power communicating, or discovered by those who have most carefully investigated, but THE LIVING SPIRITS OF THOSE WHO ONCE WERE MORTAL.

## CHAPTER V.

THE Clergy have denounced Spiritualism with even a more ardent zeal than they have exhibited in their fulminations against each other. Divided as Sectarianism is upon many points, it is truly wonderful to behold its unanimity of feeling upon this particular subject.

The Baptist, who shuts out all from his communion that have not been immersed in the pool of salvation,—the Presbyterian, who prides himself in the belief, that God has especially elected himself and his friends to be saved,—the Methodist, who, with a more enlarged view of Divine grace, still leaves an ample harvest of God's children to be gathered into the granaries of the Devil,—the Protestant Episcopalian, (I beg pardon, the Apostolic Catholic,) who looks with pity, but complacency, upon these, as flocks that have wandered from that fold, the shepherds of which are the genuine successors of the Apostles,—and, the

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old mother of them all, the Roman Catholic, who, without a shudder or a sigh, consigns the others to eternal flames, as heretics beyond the reach of God's mercy, because outside the pale of the only true church. These, conflicting as they do, ready, whenever the civil law permits, to hunt each other from the earth, with one accord unite in fierce denunciation of that which underlies their whole superstructure. The argument which contravenes the power of spirits to hold converse with mortals in the present era, controverts with equal force the entire range of Spiritual manifestations in the past. The laws of Jehovah are immutable. God, in his infinite perfection, is not variable like man, doing to-day that, of which He repents to-morrow; but seeing, from the beginning, the end of all His labors, He has so organized the elements of His universe, that perfect harmony and unity are the necessary results of their combined action.

Sectarian division and political estrangement among men are caused by the same principles, or laws, being brought into action upon differently constituted organisms. A thought given to the masses will lead a portion to one conclusion, the others to a contrary one, because of the different conditions of the brain upon which the thought is received. There is no



want of unity in the idea, but the impression it produces depends upon the structure and state of cultivation of the mind to which it is transferred; consequently, the *many* contradictory theories which have been advanced, as fully and entirely equal to the satisfactory elucidation of the spiritual phenomena, have not been unexpected by those Spirits who have been unfolded in Wisdom, and who have power to penetrate with their vision the chambers of thought which are the abodes of the mortal mind. It could not indeed have been otherwise. Like the fluid, which necessarily assumes the shape of the vessel by which it is contained, so, thought receives its form from the organs through which it must pass.

When this principle is properly understood among men all sectarian hate will vanish, all political rancor must subside. Man will understand why his brother differs from his view of any particular subject, and, thus understanding, will cease to condemn or persecute,

The true conception of this law will dissipate the great source of contention and strife among men. When each mind is willing to pursue independently its own researches for truth; not leaning upon the authoritatively expressed opinions of others, nor consigning to eternal torture and despair those who travel

by other paths; then, instead of desiring to destroy the temple erected by another, which suited his needs when he sought its shelter, and which may be dear to him from its reminiscences, it will be seen, that a better, a more practical method will be, to erect a structure so much more grand in its dimensions, so beautiful in its adornments, so harmonious in its proportions, that it will necessarily attract those who have grown weary of the narrower confines of their more circumscribed homes.

The mind which, from childhood, is led to look with reverence upon the appointed teachers of a gloomy theology;—which is impressed with the necessity of receiving certain dogmas as ultimate truth, or paying the penalty of their rejection in the eternal flames of Hell; the mind so fettered in its action has not capacity to go forth in freedom and love of truth, seeking throughout the vast domain of the Great Father for knowledge with which to adorn and beautify the chambers of the soul. The world of thought beyond their prescribed limits is dark and gloomy—filled with imaginary monsters, who wait in angry impatience to catch each wandering soul, that may be so heedless of the admonitions and warnings of the pulpit, as to venture within those forbidden grounds.

Man, though giving evidence of progress in science, in art, in all the various fields of knowledge pertaining to the earth-life, must still be limited to the imperfect conceptions of the past in his views of the Celestial existence. The same people that hail with delight any new application of a principle in the world of matter—who shower honors and emoluments upon him who is so fortunate as to be the instrument of its promulgation—will, with an inconsistency most glaring, heap condemnation upon his head, who has the temerity to avow that he has perceived a new light in the Spiritual firmament.

Confine your thoughts to earth; let the operations of your mind produce that which will enable man to carry his Cotton or Corn with more rapidity and less expense to the market where it can be exchanged for Coin, and your name will be held in remembrance by the race who accept you as its benefactor; but dare not ask your brother to look with you upon a more pure and perfect picture of the Great Author of our being;—dare not say to him, my mind, in its search for truth, hath discovered that our Father delights not in torture, in vengeance and in wrath;—say not, at your peril, that the dawn is approaching, when the dark shadows of the theological midnight must disappear, and be superseded by the effulgence of the

coming morn, when the radiance which fills the home of light and love will descend in richest streams and penetrate each soul. This great Truth—that our Father is not a God of Hatred, Vindictiveness and Revenge, is more important to the human race than all the Cotton Gins, Steamboats, Locomotives and Telegraphs, that now aid man in his material labors; but what is the reward of him who fearlessly announces this opinion to the world, and asserts his ability to demonstrate its truth by the evidence of those who have passed beyond the physical into the spiritual life, and who, in their own experiences, have learned, that a repentant soul who seeks for light and truth with meekness and humility is never cast aside, although his repentance comes not while in this rudimental sphere? Do those to whom he brings these glad tidings extend to him the meed of praise? or hail him as their deliverer from unutterable woes? Oh, no! Language is too feeble to give expression to their scorn. The cry is, Imposter—Visionary—Fanatic—Insane One, or Agent of the Devil. The power of the law is invoked to crush the Monster, and that mightier engine the Press is put in motion to asperse the reputation, falsify the acts, and cast ridicule and vituperation upon all who have the independence to extend to him the hand of fellowship.

That Theological system which suited man in the past, before his mind had reached the perception of the Divine law of love, is still exerting its influence on the present, and casting its dark and gloomy shadow along the pathway of the future; but the time has surely come when it must lose some of the power which it now so perniciously wields.

While the man of earthly nature has been delving with unflagging energies in the work of *his* choice; the purer, the more spiritual mind has been soaring amid the heavens and gathering precious thoughts, with which to give happiness and peace to the weary toiler. Thus the blending of the mortal and spiritual spheres has been effected.

The man of stocks and lands—of glittering wealth and earthly power has had no aspirations for a better home or purer life. His appetites have been appeased, his desires have been gratified;—his mind has been satisfied with the accumulations of cupidity;—the world has honored him;—the mean in spirit have looked up to him, and in the enjoyment of the present he has had but little leisure to contemplate his probable condition in the future.

Wealth and power, when they absorb the mind and satiate the heart, hang like a heavy pall, obscuring the beautiful landscape which extends beyond the

material sphere; but when these are but the concomitants of life—not the chief end and aim of man's efforts; when the mind rises in freedom to a region where the gauds or griefs of earth have no entrance, then, the spiritual nature becomes unfolded in wisdom and love, and the resplendent beauties of the spirit land are ever present to the mental vision.

Thoughts such as these were the natural out-growth of the manifestations and communications of the Spirits who now gathered in concourse around our "Circle."

## CHAPTER VI.

As this great truth—Spirit-intercourse—grew more distinct and beautiful in its proportions, I became desirous that all minds might be brought to a perception of it. Among my friends and acquaintances I proclaimed my convictions, relating the facts upon which they were based, and urging all to investigate carefully for themselves. It seemed to me, that no rational mind could be so obtuse as to reject that which was the great want of humanity. In my zeal to present this new philosophy to the world I frequently brought condemnation and censure upon myself, and, instead of convincing the person whom I wished to serve, only caused him to think that I had grown visionary or fanatical. Soon, however, I saw that proselyting was unnecessary, nay—worse than useless, in this matter. Throwing pearls before swine was, I perceived, a very similar operation to offering

spiritual truths to those who had no range of thought beyond the material existence.

Then, in place of eagerness and zeal came calmness and composure—a full reliance upon the wisdom of Him who in His own good time unfolds His thoughts to His children of earth, and, without omitting to present my views of Spiritualism whenever an opportune occasion offered, I did not with the same indiscreet zeal thrust them upon all classes and conditions of men.

Withdrawing as much as possible from our former associations, Mrs. Danskin and myself, in the quiet of our own chamber, sat daily and nightly alone together, receiving high and holy thoughts from the spirits of those who had cast aside the impurities and imperfections which appertain to the earth-life.

In one of the earlier communications, received through the mediumship of our school-girl friend, the “controlling intelligence”—he who was the developing spirit of the band which guided us; gave me as my motto: “Patience and Perseverance.” This now was needed. I discovered that development in mediumship, which I had supposed to be the work of a few days, was not to be attained with so great rapidity. The process of withdrawing from the mind the prejudices of education and the crude ideas received by



contact with the world is, necessarily, gradual, but as the beauty of the subject unfolded itself to my mental vision, and the perfect harmony and true proportions of this Divine Philosophy became more distinct, I felt that no time given to its reception would be misspent; that each hour devoted to such a cause was worth an age spent in the frivolities of pleasure seeking, or the more dull and stupifying pursuit of gold. Under the quickening influences of our angel friends, I found the powers of the mind expanding; the ability to grasp that which before seemed beyond my comprehension appeared to increase daily. As one new truth was encompassed by the mind, it seemed but the pioneer or prelude to others which followed in quick succession. I saw opening before me, vast fields of knowledge which had previously not been perceived even by my imagination. *The purpose of man's existence now became manifest.* God had endowed His children with the desire to attain, the capacity to comprehend, and the power to enjoy in an ever increasing volume, the knowledge of His laws, and the wonders of His Universe which will expand and unfold forever, throughout the countless ages of eternity. I saw that when freed from the cares of the material life, the spirit which has developed its faculties in the proper performance of

the earthly duties and the cultivation of the intellectual and affectional nature, will drink in with avidity the beauteous scenery, the gorgeous landscapes, the crystal lakes, the flowing fountains, all the radiant glories of the new abode ; it will perceive that the discipline of the trials of earth was a necessary preparation for a proper appreciation of heavenly joys. The spirit which, when in the earth-form, sometimes felt doubt and fear, will now see the Love and Wisdom of the Father manifested in every form of life and beauty by which it is surrounded.

The reader will please remember that our spirit-friends came to us, not with theories or speculations based upon the facts which have been recorded in the past, but they brought to us their experiences of the present, they told us of the conditions which surround them in the spirit home.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE Theology of the sectarian church provides comfortably enough, though rather indefinitely, for the saint, but what provision does it make for the sinner? He, too, is a child of God—made in His image—animated by His breath, he is a creation of the same All-Powerful, All-Wise and All-Loving Father; and what provision, I ask, does this religious system make for him? It consigns him to the unquenchable fires of an eternal Hell; giving him damned souls for his companions, and fiends and devils for his tormentors. This is the wise disposition which creed-bound churches makes of the human race. A few—the number is but small, pass from a life of many sorrows into mansions of unimaginable bliss, while the vast masses of God's children add lustre to His glory, and magnify His name by shrieks of agony, and curses of despair throughout the endless ages.

Is the picture too highly colored? No, it is simply true. This vast establishment which o'ershadows Christendom, exercising potential sway amid the Empires of the old world, and ever retarding the steps of progress in the new, absorbing a large proportion of the products of labor, and claiming one day in every seven as its own; this costly fabric; this stupendous structure can afford shelter only to the few, while the many are left to utter desolation, without a refuge or a hope.

Spiritualism, as it is termed, on the other hand, divests God of the dark mantle in which the church has enshrouded Him. In the light shed by angels upon the world, the Father is seen in His infinite perfection, and all the offspring of that Father, find peace and happiness within His boundless domain.

In the rudimental sphere, where life begins, the circumstances by which we are surrounded exert much influence in directing our course. The child whose parents are united in bonds of harmony and love, with affections pure and minds unfolded in wisdom, will, naturally, be so constituted and educated as to render him a useful and esteemed member of society, and insure him a peaceful and pleasant passage to the eternal shores; his life here will be serene, and his spiritual life will consequently be supremely

happy. But he is not the artificer of his fate, he only avails himself of the advantages within his reach, and enjoys the blessings which are the necessary result. Another child comes into this world scarce half made up; his body diseased, his mind enfeebled; his perceptions indistinct, his reflections imperfect; his father, perhaps a felon, his mother something worse; led early into crime, his proclivities all vicious, he is hunted through life by the ministers of the law, and terminates his career in a prison, or upon a scaffold. In the world of spirits, his condition is but a continuation of wretchedness; but he is not permitted thus to remain forever.

In the bright and beautiful abodes of the blessed, idle enjoyment is unknown. Active, untiring and ceaseless in their efforts to rescue the unfortunate, to enlighten the ignorant, to soothe the sorrowing heart, the angels are ever seeking to draw the unhappy ones from their sad estate.

The atmosphere surrounding and emanating from the impure and corrupt spirits is so dense and foul, that no being of angelic purity can penetrate their dark abodes; nor could the undeveloped mind hold communion with, or comprehend the teachings of the angelic spirit, therefore some intermediate agent was necessary to establish a chain of sympathy and inter-

course between the two. The advanced spirits, dwelling in the sunlight of a Father's love, were not willing that their brethren, children of the same Father, should remain forever in wretchedness and gloom. *The "gulf" which separated Dives from Lazarus must be rendered passable.* The rich man in hell, praying, in meekness, and humility, that Lazarus, the beggar, might be permitted to approach and, with even a single drop of water, cool his parching tongue; asking, in kind consideration for the brethren whom he had left on earth, that if Lazarus could not penetrate the dark abode in which he dwelt, at least he might be sent to warn them from his unhappy fate. This man—subdued, submissive, and, even in the midst of torments, thoughtful of others, was, surely, not a fit inmate for a hell; was certainly not a suitable companions for fiends and devils.

Could he but be withdrawn from the associations surrounding him, and be brought under the influences of the pure and bright, how soon might he be elevated and purified, and sent on missions of love and mercy, which he evidently had the desire to fulfil, if the power had only been granted unto him.

Can any rational mind, whose conceptions of the Divine Father have not been distorted by images of terror imprinted upon the mind in childhood,

accept the thought, that a God of infinite love could thus abandon one bowed in humility and repentance? I hesitate not to aver that such belief is impossible.

The mind which thus conceives of Deity, bows not in worship to a kind and loving Father, an infinite and perfect God; the object of its adoration is simply an Omnipotent Monster.

Leave this man, with his meekness, his penitence and his sympathy for others, in a burning hell of endless duration, and you despoil God of all that would make Him lovely in the eye of any rational creature. But such is not a true conception of Our Father. His Love, His Justice, His Mercy, His Wisdom, His Power, all forbid it. His immutable law provides, that suffering shall surely follow transgression, but His love is displayed in the fact, that the experience gained by such suffering teaches us to avoid like transgression. His justice would not permit an eternal punishment to be inflicted for a transitory error. His mercy would certainly cause Him to look with compassion upon the child who had discovered the errors of his life, and acknowledged them in humility. His wisdom would prevent a creation so imperfect in its structure, that the larger portion must necessarily fall into ruin and decay. His power forbids the thought, that evil as an eternal, self-existent principle

should find a habitation in His vast dominions. Therefore, I say, the angels could not look across this apparently "impassable gulf" upon their brethren in the home of woe without having their sympathies excited, and their energies aroused to discover some means by which the sorrowing ones could be rescued from their sad condition, and drawn to a home of peace.

Man, in the earth-form, has long sought, and at length found means by which his thoughts can be conveyed to a point many miles distant, with the rapidity of the electric flash. Even now he is engaged in a noble effort to throw a *thought-conductor* across the great gulf of the Atlantic; and shall Angels, in their work of love, fall back in despair before difficulties with which man, urged by the force of cupidity, successfully grapples? No. The power of love is greater than the power of avarice. The desire of the Angel to rescue a brother from suffering would excite him to at least as great an intellectual effort as that made by man to increase his hoards of coin;—consequently, the instrument was finally discovered by which the bright inhabitants of the spheres of love and wisdom could reach the benighted spirits who dwelt in an atmosphere too gross for them to penetrate.

Looking upon the earth, (whence both the Angel



and the unhappy spirit had passed,) that earth which had been their common home, the Angels saw the aspirations of men and women, who, wearying of the artificiality of their material surroundings, looked upward with earnest prayer for light from the Divine. This aspiration of the human soul was the *first link* of the heavenly telegraph, which was to connect the distant shores of that once impassable gulf with those who were dwellers in the inner temple of the Most High. Still the electric-chain was not complete. *Man* was elevated, his affections were purified, his intellectual faculties were expanded, but the poor sinner: he who had in ignorance and vice and crime passed to the immortal land, was yet beyond the reach of angelic influences, until man, by his association with the Angels, had his sympathies for these sufferers so aroused, that they, by the power of that sympathy, were drawn to earth, seeking the consolation and comfort which was denied them in the abode of darkness. *Then was the electric cord complete.*

Find a human mind looking upward in earnest aspirations for truth, joined to a warm and loving heart, and blending in unison with a trusting, God-relying soul, and the "Gulf" that was impassable no longer asserts its power. Intellect—that bright emanation from the Infinite One—when lit by the fires of

unselfish love, can sweep before it all the barriers that oppose its progress.

Thus, it will be seen, that while man, as we before said, had been making the effort to stretch his *thought-conductor* across the great gulf of the Atlantic, his more advanced brother, the Angel, has successfully accomplished his mightier design,—that of bridging the “impassable gulf” which Dives saw, and Abraham knew not could be crossed.

And this is the work called Spiritualism! It brings the man into communion with the Angel; expanding his mind, and purifying his heart; it draws the demon into the presence of his brother-man, thereby implanting hope and love in that breast which had only held hatred and despair. Let the skeptic, besotted by vice, bound by bigotry, benumbed by superstition, or blinded by prejudice, scoff, sneer or cavil as he may—the Great Father looks on this work with an approving eye, and Archangels shout for joy when they behold the certain union of all God’s children in one common brotherhood.

The Demon—the Man—and the Angel—all, children of one common Father, separated by a no longer impassable gulf, but linked in one infinite chain, the one above drawing up the one below until all are united in one harmonious band, circling forever around

that Great Centre, the Source of all life, whence they sprang.

Contrast this picture with the discordant work of Sectarianism, and how brightly gleams the one against the dark and gloomy shadows of the other. Here, we see the All-Wise, the Omnipotent, the Ever-Loving Father; there, we have presented to us a Being—Variable, Vindictive and Vengeful.

Man has now reached a point in his progressive career, where he needs a more perfect God than Sectarianism has offered him. The time has passed when the hireling priest may paint a monster or a fiend, and hold the picture up for the blind adoration of his followers.

The artist will find critics carefully scrutinizing his work; the colors must be blended with more skill; the dark masses fill too much of the canvas; the speck of light which glimmers in the back-ground is too much obscured by the sulphurous smoke, and lurid flames which ascend, with such volume, in this masterpiece of Sectarian Art. This picture of the Infinite One will no longer satisfy the human soul. The time has come when this *imperfect God* must be laid to rest with the Gods-Many of the past, in the sepulchre of oblivion.

The soul of man, filled with adoration, unmingled

with fear, will *then* look upward to a Father—infinite in love—infinite in wisdom and infinite in power. No vain terrors to paralyze his onward steps; no dread of wrathful frowns and withering curses, if perchance he err; no gulf of flame in which to plunge, should one misstep occur; but ever, in his upward glance the bright smiles of Angel-countenances shall meet his view, the sweet tones of Angel-voices shall cheer his heart, and the out-stretched hands of Angel-friends shall guide him in his path.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THIS new unfolding, now termed Spiritualism, which will be known as the DIVINE PHILOSOPHY, unfolds to man a higher destiny, a nobler life, a more beautiful existence, than has been even dreamed of in the past. The gates of Paradise open wide at its approach; the portals of the Infernal Hells close forever at its command.

By the light of this DIVINE PHILOSOPHY, man will be enabled to trace his steps from the days when, according to the ancient record, he and the partner of his joys were dwellers in the beautiful garden of Eden. Monarch over all that met his gaze; having dominion given him over the fishes of the sea, over the fowls of the air, and over all the earth; POWER was liberally bestowed; but WISDOM was denied him. The tree of knowledge was planted in the midst of this Paradisean home, and, with

its luscious fruit hanging within his easy reach, man was forbidden to partake under penalty of sudden death in the day when his desire for wisdom should induce him to transgress this tantalizing command.

But was that penalty enforced? No. Prompted by the gentle, loving one, whom the Father had placed at his side, he ate of that fruit which, the record tells us, was denied him; and what was the result? He did *not* die; he still lived; and his eyes, which had been blinded by ignorance, were now opened. He saw that the mere cultivation of a garden gave not exercise to the faculties which had been bestowed on him. He saw the nakedness of his condition. Appointed ruler over the beasts of the field, and over the fowls of the air, *without knowledge* he was but a superior animal; higher in degree, but partaking only of the nature of those below him.

This condition no longer gave him content. That bliss, which was the child of ignorance, was no longer his. That happy estate, of which poets sing and theologians preach, was no more to be enjoyed. A wider field, a broader world beyond, invited his labors; and the Angel of Progress drove him forth from the narrow confines of his garden-home, and placed the flaming Sword of Aspiration at the door, to

prevent his return. Sorrowing these new-born children of the Infinite One went on their way. Beyond the boundaries of their fruitful home the earth looked sterile; the flowers sprang not in rich profusion from the verdant sward; the fruits hung not in luscious ripeness, falling at their touch. The days of ease had passed. The fiat had gone forth:—"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." This seemed to them a bitter sentence. Gladly would they have returned to the garden of luxurious repose, and dreamed away that life which now had *action* as its purpose.

In the path, which knowledge had opened before man, lay many obstacles to obstruct his passage, and, faint and weary with the struggle, sometimes he would feel ready to abandon the effort and sink in despair before the mighty task which seemed beyond his strength; but in his hours of sadness the gentle tones of the dear one who accompanied him in this rugged path fell sweetly on his ear; the soothing influence of her tender love gave comfort to his heart, the thought, that she too would enjoy the fruits of his labor infused new life into his sinking soul, and with renewed energy he would recommence those efforts which were destined, eventually, to mould all matter into forms of use and beauty, and develop all those dormant faculties of the

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soul which, when aroused and brought into activity, awakened and unfolded, would ultimate in the Angelic-Spirit.

As time rolled on, the earth, which had at first seemed sterile, began to blossom under the culture of his hand. The food which was the product of his labor was sweetened by the toil that brought it forth; the sympathy and love of his beauteous helpmate were augmented by the sight of his unceasing efforts; and confidence in his own powers grew by his successful endeavors to provide for, and protect the one who was the object of his love and care.

'Twas thus, Man first learned the power which the Father had bestowed upon him. Had he remained in the beauteous garden, surrounded by all that could gratify the sight or give pleasure to the other senses, his energies would never have been awakened. He would have lived a simple cultivator of the soil; tending and watching the growth of plants and flowers; or he would have sunk into indolence and apathy, waiting for the earth to put forth her fruits so that he might supply his needs by merely reaching out his hand. Now, he found himself the master of faculties of which, in his hours of ease he had not even dreamed.

The sterility of the earth had brought into action



that portion of the brain which directed the intelligent culture of the soil, and thence sprang all the agricultural science of to-day.

The rude blasts of winter came and drove him to seek shelter for himself and those he loved. Caverns and forests were homes suited to the beasts who had but instinct to guide them in their choice, but man, now feeling and asserting his superiority to the animal, was not content to share with the lower creation the rude shelter with which nature had provided them.

His reason, now urged into activity, led him to gather the boughs and branches of the forest trees, and by planting some upright in the ground, weaving others around, and above them, the first house for the habitation of the human race was erected.

Thence sprang every beautiful structure that now adorns the world; every magnificent temple of art; every gorgeous Cathedral, with classic dome and graceful spire; every beloved home, around which cluster the holiest affections of the human heart.

Here was another result of man's transgression. Had he not eaten the forbidden fruit, of the ancient allegory, the trees which served as shelter to the fowls, or the caverns in which the beasts sought refuge, would have served him for repose; his faculties

would have lain dormant, because they would not have been awakened by necessity.

In the garden of Paradise, where the air was ever balmy, and cold and frost were unknown, clothing was not needed; and, like the savages who now dwell on some portions of our globe, the progenitors of the human race had lived in a state of absolute nudity; but, after partaking of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, their eyes were opened and they saw that they were naked, and they were ashamed; and the fig tree was despoiled of its leaves to make for them aprons.

Had this garden of ease, with its mild and balmy atmosphere, forever been their home, the apron of fig leaves would still have been sufficient for their needs; but now more elaborate forms of dress were required, and the denizens of the forest were slain, that their skins might be converted into clothing.

Adam was yet monarch over the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air, and over all the earth. His supremacy, however, had to be maintained by the exercise of the faculties with which he had been endowed. His empire was not to be preserved without energetic effort; his wants increased daily, and could only be supplied by the constant exercise of his mental and physical powers. That which at first

was intended merely to cover our first parents, or to protect them from the keen blasts of winter, at length became a means of adornment, and added dignity and grace to the once naked form.

The simple fig leaf—the undressed skin of the animal, which were the initial articles of human clothing, have given place to the many beautiful productions of art which are now interchanged among the nations of the earth.

The silk, glistening in resplendent hues; the delicate fabrics which come from the hand of the weaver of laces; the softly tanned leather, which protects the foot; the woollen cloths; the cambrics; the beauteous ribbons; the fairy-like head gear; the thousand and one adornments of the human form, which give employment to millions, and bring into active exercise the countless fibres of the human brain, would not have been, if man had not partaken of that fruit which gave knowledge to the world.

All these powers of the mind must have lain dormant, had not necessity first called them into action.

As man increased and multiplied, and spread abroad over the face of the earth, he grew clannish; selfish interests sprang up; the welfare of his brother became a secondary consideration; the feeling of

isolation grew strong upon him. The thought came to his mind: "I will supply the wants of my own household, and all others must do the same for themselves. If God has given me superior power, or strength, he surely intended that I should use it for my own good. He would not have bestowed upon me these gifts had I not been more worthy than my brother, therefore, I will use that which has been freely given, and enslave him who has not power to resist my will." Thus arbitrary governments were formed, or rather grew; might assumed right, and the weak and helpless became the victims of the strong and powerful.

But man's nature was now awakened. As centuries rolled on, the many said: "We must combine our force, and then we will more than equal those who have oppressed us; by concerted action we can overthrow the tyrants who have ruled us for their own selfish aggrandizement, and we will thus regain our rights, and assume the equal position to which, as children of the one Great Father, we are entitled." Then from the human mind came gradually forth the representative or republican system, which now gives freedom of thought, freedom of investigation, and freedom of expression to many millions of the human family.

Having reached this condition of freedom, man has not been at rest. The mind, once awakened to a sense of its power, has never ceased to expand. One new thought but forms a link with another above or beyond; and man, who went forth from his Paradisean home, scarce knowing how to draw from the earth the sustenance which his body required; scarce knowing how to provide for himself a shelter, or even clothing for his form, has now, through the power of his *unfolded intellect*, become master, not only of the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, but even the elements are his servants; paying reverence to his will, doing obediently his work, and growing, daily, more subservient to his command.

Man, who *then* walked forth upon the earth seeing only barrenness and sterility, *now* looks, by the eye of science, beneath the surface; there he sees the unsightly ore, to the untutored mind a simple lump of clay; he finds embodied rich veins of dark hued minerals! Streams of water flow freely at his feet; and he who, in his days of allegorical innocence and bliss, knew naught of the mighty forces which the earth contained, now, by the power of his unfolded intellect, combines the Iron, and the Coal, and the Water, and the *Mighty Engine* stands before him, to do his bidding; fleeing like the winds at his com-

mand; carrying his heavy burdens, and swiftly hurrying to and fro to minister to his wants.

In his days of ignorance, naked, feeble and impotent; now, he calls upon the earth and the air, the waters and the fire; he speaks to the lightning, and they all hasten at the sound of his voice.

Man hath *not* fallen. Oh no! Error hath no place within the works of the Infinite. He saw the end from the beginning. He hath done all things well.

## CHAPTER IX.

AND when it is asked—"What is man, or the attributes of man, that God should be mindful of him?"—

We answer:

Man is the master-piece of the Divine Artificer, the most perfect work of His hand. Man contains within himself all the essences, all the elements that are found in the material world, all the principles that give life and intelligence to animal nature. Man combines the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral in his physical form; the affectional, the intellectual, and the spiritual in his mental structure. He is the epitome of all above, below, beyond himself. The animal, the vegetable, and the mineral kingdoms lay their treasures before him, and he partakes freely thereof to give strength and vitality to his physical structure. The realms above and beyond him send their countless myriads of disembodied intelligences to

give thought to his mind ; to awaken the sympathies of his heart, and to unfold the interior perceptions of his spirit.

Such is man—the child of an Omnipotent Father ; formed in His image, partaking of His nature ; concentrating within himself the material, the intellectual and the spiritual ; commencing life the helpless infant, growing in physical strength and beauty, gathering in knowledge, which is power, expanding and unfolding throughout the endless ages, he ever becomes more and more like unto Him, who gave him being.

Man is a direct emanation from God. His physical form is the ultimate point of refinement to which matter can aspire. His spirit is of the Divine Essence ; a spark thrown off from the brilliant Central Sun ; a scintillation from the Soul Divine. From all nature he gathers in that which gives vitality to his physical and mental structure. The atmosphere is filled with the essences which give strength and force to his body ; the inspirations from the spirit-land are ever adding brilliancy and beauty to his intellect ; while the associations of the earth-life bring into active exercise the sympathies and affections of the heart.

Thus man derives that sustenance which he needs. All nature is tributary to his wants. There is no department of the Universe but is intended for his



use, therefore he has been endowed with capacities which enable him to appropriate and apply to his service all the forces, and elements contained in the boundless domain.

The mind is the machinery through which each individual spirit gives expression to its thought; makes manifest to the world its desires. *Each mind, no matter how seemingly defective, contains every faculty which God has implanted in any other mind.*

The germ is perfect; the soil upon which it falls may be uncongenial; may not be reached by the dews or sunshine necessary to give strength and beauty to the plant; its growth may therefore be sickly and immature, but, as we have said, it contains all the elements which, under other influences and conditions, will unfold it in beauty and perfectness.

In the earth-life circumstances surround the individual which tend to stimulate one portion of his nature, and leave inert and listless other faculties which he possesses, but which are not apparent, because no sufficient motive has aroused them into action. But man's earth-life is but as a speck upon the great ocean of eternity; as he passes onward throughout the endless ages, one power after another is brought into exercise by the new fields of thought and labor which open before him; and the mind which, on earth,

seemed so defective, so imperfect in its structure, grows in strength and beauty; ever unfolding new capacities as it rises from one plane or condition to another more elevated and comprehensive.

Thus the man whose earth-life has commenced amid poverty and hardship, continued in ignorance, and ended in obscurity, manifests none of the glorious attributes with which he has been so richly endowed. This man, dull, ignorant, and gross as he may appear to the more cultivated and refined, possesses every mental faculty and power which shines so brightly in his more advanced brother. Circumstances have not unfolded these powers, therefore *they* have lain dormant while his physical strength has been developed in the effort to procure bread for himself, and those dependent on his care; but when the material body and its wants are laid aside, the aspirations of the soul lead to other and higher associations, new wants are felt, and the latent powers of the mind are awakened to comprehend and enjoy the more elevated conditions by which the man is surrounded.

The Poet, the Painter, the Philosopher, all, owe their eminence in the particular sphere in which they move, to the undue exercise of a portion of their faculties at the expense of the harmonious development of the whole nature. Thus it is, that the most

exalted of earth's children have almost invariably exhibited defects which materially marred the perfect beauty of the entire character. But this condition does not continue in the world beyond. The Poet, who gave his sweet strains to the world and sought recompense in gold or fame, finds, in the home of love, a higher motive, a holier purpose for which to pour forth the effusions of his soul. The love which is free from all selfish taint, which springs spontaneously from the heart, and flows in gushing streams toward *all* the children of the Infinite One, that pure, angelic love will awaken a nobler song, a loftier strain than ere the greed of wealth, or lust of fame could give, and will draw around the Poet associations that will bring into active exercise the faculties that have been repressed by the meaner aims which were the limits of his earthly ambition. He will find that, beautiful as is the poetic expression of thought-sublime, the immortal spirit will not rest content with the laurels to be gained in this one field of mental labor; but will reach forth all its varied powers to gather knowledge and happiness from every source; to draw in from every department of nature that sustenance which will give strength and vitality to his entire being. No longer content to be a mere Poet he will aspire to be a man; and this aspiration will

give activity to each latent faculty of the mind, until all become harmoniously unfolded, and the masterpiece of the Father stands revealed in His unblemished child.

So with the Painter—when he no longer works for the applause of men; feeding his heart upon the words of praise which fall from human lips; when his spirit soars into realms where a purer atmosphere will impart to the nobler impulses of his soul the breath of life, then he too will find that, to be a Painter, no matter how skillful, how perfect may be his power of delineation, is not to be, all that God designed him, is not to fulfil the destiny that awaits him; and with eager hope will he press onward, to gather in the rich treasures which he knew not of when the pallet and the brush were the only instruments of his power.

The Philosopher will find, that wide as is the range of his mental perceptions, still something more than mere philosophy is required from one who has been endowed with many powers. He will find, that he too possesses the genius of the Poet; the skill of the Painter; the subtlety of the Chemist; the eloquence of the Orator; the melody of the Musician; the deep heart-felt sympathy of the Philanthropist.

These, together with all the other varied powers displayed by individuals, and many faculties unknown

to man, because not brought into use by the necessities of his earth-life, *are the inheritance of every human creature*. No child of the Great Father has been overlooked in the distribution of good gifts. Each has received all that has been given to another. We start from different points; are surrounded by different influences on our road to the eternal home; present different aspects, and exhibit different combinations of force and feebleness while on our journey; but, eventually, the incidents of the travel, the difficulties to be overcome, and the pleasures to be enjoyed arouse all the latent faculties of the mind, and when the life of earth has been fulfilled, and the boundless fields of the eternal world have been explored, then will be seen the symmetry and beauty of the human structure.

This noble work of the Divine Artificer, which He pronounced *good* when in the germ, will be recognized as *perfect* when in the fullness of its fruition.

No.—Man did not fall from a high and holy estate to one of death and degradation. Since his creation by the Master-Hand his career has ever been progressive; growing in knowledge, and wisdom, and power; and ever in his onward march will he unfold nobler capacities, and higher aspirations, until having eaten of the tree of life, he will indeed become like unto his

great prototype—he will indeed be recognized as the true image of his Divine Father.

This is the picture which the DIVINE PHILOSOPHY, now called Spiritualism, has opened before me; in striking contrast to the gloomy, discordant, and irrational view of that Theology, which presents the Deity as an Angry, Vindictive and Variable Being. The one picture glowing with the radiant tints of the Divine Love and Wisdom; the other, a gloomy mass of hideous fancies, with but one bright spot to illumine its darkened surface.

In the preceding portion of this little volume I have related the mode in which my investigations were conducted; a few of the many manifestations of power and intelligence which demonstrated to me the presence of invisible agents; and, in conclusion, I have presented the beautiful, the rational, the sublime view of man, and his relations to the Great Father, which has been opened to me through the medium of Spiritualism; and thus I have told you “HOW AND WHY I BECAME A SPIRITUALIST.”