

*Modern Christian Spiritualism*

**MODERN**

# **CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALISM.**

**SELECTIONS AND EXTRACTS**

**FROM**

**RECENT PUBLICATIONS RELATING TO SPIRITUAL SCIENCE.**

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“Read not to contradict, nor to believe; but to weigh and consider.”—BACON.

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Dear Sir,

Received of you  
of Philadelphia.

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THE present compilation of subjects relating  
to Spiritual Philosophy has been made with the  
most earnest desire that it may greatly assist  
many *honest* and *candid* inquirers in their  
search for truth.

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# MODERN CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALISM.

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## MODERN SPIRITUALISM.\*

BY T. B. HALL.

### ARTICLE I.

“The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipper shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.”

IT matters not whether we adopt the theory that this globe has, from its infancy to its present state, progressed out of chaos by separate acts of creation, under the fiat of the Almighty; or whether we believe that the process of growth has been one of development out of the life principles so impressed upon the new world at its birth, that time could not go on without their unfolding, gradually, according to a law. The great fact is admitted by all, independently of these theories of growth, that there have been what are conveniently called creative epochs in this world's history, which are distinctly marked as divisions of time, though their precise beginning and ending have eluded the research of the best of our science. There was a time, *we know*, when this earth, now so beautifully clothed with vegetation, was bare of all growing things. So there must have been, and was, a time when this vegetation began to creep over the earth's surface. There was a time when there was no animal life sustained by breathing the earth's atmosphere, and there was a time when animal life had its beginning. There was a time, too, when man was not, and a time when he began to people the earth. These epochs have come gradually, not only in reference to the whole process of the earth's development, but, judging from all we can learn by scientific investigation, and from all analogy, each epoch has, in itself, been the subject of a gradual introduction and growth, and a gradual decay and disappearance as it has given way to its succeeding epoch; or rather seems to have been the foundation on which the epoch succeeding has been built up. Each new epoch has sprung into being, not complete and full grown, but from germinal beginnings that have found their life and sustenance in the ashes of the past; each successive epoch furnishing, in its ashes, material for a higher growth in the scale of being.

These epochs have proceeded in regular series, and the last so-

\* This excellent little volume by a Bible Spiritualist, published January, 1863, will be forwarded to any address by Crosby & Nichols, 117 Washington Street, Boston, on the receipt of 50 cents, by mail.

called act of creation was the coming of man. Of man's beginning we know nothing. Far back in the East we discern glimmerings of light upon the questions when and how the human race begun its career upon earth; but they are merest glimmerings, and convey to us nothing more than the beautifully simple record of the Bible, that God created man in his own image, and he called their name Adam. Through what vicissitudes of life, what changes and varieties of condition, what growth and refinement, physical and spiritual, this race of beings has been brought to its present development, cannot be stated in any brief compendium. That this world is, however, progressing as heretofore, to some higher condition, and that the beings who are ultimately to inhabit it will rank higher in the scale than its present occupants, is inevitably inferred from all analogy, and is received by all Christians at least, if not by all civilized people, as an event which awaits only the sure fulfilment of prophecy.

No wise man will dare to say that, even in his lifetime, there may not be developments promising things yet to be, which were never dreamed of in his philosophy. We know not when to look for the signs of the coming great change, though we perhaps do know through the Christian dispensation, what the signs shall be, when the great change approaches. That it will be gradual, we argue from analogy—that it will come silently, without proclamation, “like a thief in the night,” we believe from revelation.

It is but a few years since the American public were surprised and amused with the tidings of what was first known as, the “Rochester Knockings.” By most persons the story was entirely disbelieved, and deemed unworthy of a second thought, much less a sober consideration. From that little beginning, what a strange progress and development the thing called Spiritualism, be it true or false, has attained! Subjected to ridicule the most sarcastic that could be invented; to examinations and tests of as various kinds as there are variety of conceits in the human brain; explained, over and over again, by as many different theories as learned minds to examine—theories frequently militating against each other, so that the defender of the cause can often find his best arguments in the mouths of those who think to condemn; the most educated classes of the community, with old Harvard at their head, arrayed in opposition; the Church issuing its anathemas against it with a bitterness that, had it been sustained by public opinion, would have brought the early votaries of Spiritualism to a fiery stake; little understood, often entirely misunderstood, used and abused in every conceivable way, still the glaring fact remains, that no cause, moral or intellectual, civil or religious, physical or spiritual, ever made such progress in securing the attention, and the more or less enlightened faith, of men, than this same cause of Spiritualism. Its active opponents seem to have pretty much given up their fruitless attempts to stop it, and to have sunk back from their

labors, seeking consolation in the thought, that, if it contained no truth, it could not prevail; they have left it, where indeed they found it, in God's hands, to manage according to his own wisdom and high behest. The result is, as far as our observation goes, that the community is divided upon this subject into two large classes; namely, those who believe in Spiritualism, in the broad acceptation of the term, and those who do not believe it, but think there must, or may be, something in it. The number of those who utterly reject all its facts and phenomena as trickery, is too small to be named as a class.

Such a subject demands something more than an occasional notice from the pen of journalists, in the ordinary course of comment upon matters that may interest the public. It is, therefore, with no wish to write a passing criticism, or merely to offer a readable article, that we have undertaken to present our views upon Spiritualism; but from an earnest desire to help others to know something of a mighty cause, through the highways and byways of which we have been laboring in the search after truth. Like all pioneers, we have had our experience, which ought to be of value to those who may desire to know the truth like ourselves; and if we can point out any of the dangers, the rocks, on which some poor mortal's bark might otherwise be wrecked, we shall feel that we have done some good, whilst we do humbly trust that, as we seek God's blessing on our work, there may be other more positive fruits of our labor. Perhaps what we have to write might be called, the "Confessions of a Medium;" not confessions of our own sins, though God knows we have fallen into errors enough, but confessions of the wonder-workings of an all-wise Father, who rules these things, and all others—confessions of a deep experience, that has awakened our spirit to new life, and leads it to pray daily that it may be so privileged of God as to do its humble part in bringing his kingdom upon the earth, in seeing to it that his will be done here, even as it is done in heaven. We write what we do know, not what we have heard others tell of. We would be humble as a little child, seeking the truth, with God's blessing on our prayers.

It is about ten years, a little more, since our acquaintance with Spiritualism began through David Hume, of whose medium qualities most persons have heard something. The subject was new then, and people would not believe their senses. Upon his departure for Europe, he was playfully called "Hum-bug." But those who win may laugh; his powers, whatever they were, opened the way for him to the inner chambers of the man who, of all men of this day and generation, has ranked, and still ranks, the shrewdest, sharpest, the veriest juggler, whom nobody could deceive, and whom nobody could find out. This man, the present Emperor of the French, with wit and capacity to detect fraud equalled by few, and with position and power to punish it when detected, without

appeal, did not, could not, find the key to Mr. Hume's wonder-workings, except in the explanation which the phenomena have ever claimed for themselves. Before his departure, we had many opportunities of meeting Mr. Hume in private circles and family gatherings, which offered every chance for testing the reality of the phenomena, so that we became fully convinced that they were no ocular delusion, no mistake of our senses, and perhaps might be, what they purported to be, the works of spirit power. It is enough here to say of them, that they combined a variety of physical manifestations, mind-readings, and what purported to be spirit communications, which is not often found in any one medium. He left us wondering; and we looked round for other proofs, other mediums, other experience.

Having advanced so far as to believe in the actuality of the phenomena, doubt not, reader, we soon found ourselves in a very sea of perplexities, and that we were often tempted to give up our inquiry in despair. But remembering that we were pioneers, we determined to brave all hazards, to meet all difficulties, for the sake of truth. Our first great trouble was, that we had ever attached to the word "Spiritualism" a sense of something high and holy; whilst we found neither in the mediums, nor in the phenomena, any special characteristic that marked the high, or the holy; for they partook of all degrees, from the highest of Heaven's blessed truths to the lowest of Hell's horrors. It seemed to us then that the wrong term had been used, and that it should have been Spiritism, or Demonism, in the original sense of demon. And this was, after all, the most natural; for if the good spirits could come to bless us, why could not the bad ones come to plague us; or if the low could come, why not the high? God works by general laws and special providence, in Spiritualism, as in all other things.

Satisfied so far, still we found ourselves continually perplexed, sometimes beyond endurance, by the absurdities, the contradictions, the follies, nay, the wickedness, that broke out upon the community under the guise of Spiritism. With what gratitude did we receive the book published in 1855, by Rev. A. Mahan, President of Cleveland University, entitled, "Modern Mysteries Explained and Exposed." Weary and worn with our labors, ready to sink in the turmoil of doubts that surrounded us, we welcomed that explanation, incomplete though we knew it to be, as sufficient to furnish a retreat wherein we might at least have some rest. He did not pretend to deny the facts of the manifestations, which we knew could not be denied, and so gained our willing concession to his theory of "odilic force." It was sheer fatigue that enabled us to find any rest in this poor shelter; but it sufficed to give us a moment's respite, only to renew the inquiry with increased earnestness, determined, with our own good-will, and in God's own time, to find the truth which we felt assured must be waiting to rejoice those who would strive after it. "Knock and it shall be opened unto you,"



"Seek and ye shall find," were blessed words of encouragement, which seemed to bring us a new strength. Seeking the truth only for the truth's sake, we trusted that God would guide us, and guard us, through all our deviations from the true path. We prayed to him, that, if there were truth in these things, we too might know, in our own experience, the mysteries of mediumship. We asked that we might know in our own consciousness, through external or internal sense, the actual presence of the spirit world about us. At last the answer began to come. We became sensible of slight touches upon the head, as though a hand were gently passed over it. We had not expected this manifestation, and at first doubted it; but frequent recurrence of the sensation, often under circumstances that caused us much surprise, proved that it was not the work of our imagination, but a real touch from some body or thing, some power or spirit, that thus informed us of its presence, and was perhaps communicating some mysterious influence.

It is unnecessary to describe the stages of development through which we have passed. Suffice it to say, that, though yet far short of the goal, if indeed there be any limit, we have been carried, sometimes quite imperfectly, into enough phases of mediumship to give us an understanding of all these things from our own experience. Each day as we have advanced, the importance of prayer has been urged upon us, and we have felt its power wonderfully in guiding our search for truth, and saving us from the errors committed by others who have not known the wonder working of a true appeal to the Great Father of all spirits. Especially have we been saved from too rapid development, which has so often led men to commit follies that have brought ridicule, and sometimes disgrace, on the very cause they had most at heart. In this, as in all other subjects that may interest and occupy the human mind, too much, or too sudden knowledge, topples the reason, and opens the way for folly to enter in. We have often thanked God in gratitude for the reply made through a medium to our earnest prayer for development: "You shall have the truth as fast as you can bear it; for if it should come as fast as it could be given, it would craze your brain."

We have spoken of passing through certain stages of development *imperfectly*. By this we learned that, whilst such forms of mediumship have their use, particularly for the purpose of introducing Spiritualism to the world's notice, they are not the highest forms. We believe that the highest form of mediumship is that where the individuality of the medium is the most developed and the most active, so that the medium's self, being a spirit in the body, may draw directly from the spiritual fountains of God's eternal truth and power, as mankind has generally believed the spirits of the departed would be privileged to do, according to their spiritual deserving and capacity. In other words, the highest mediumship is what has been heretofore vaguely known as *inspiration*, and some-

times called *genius*. We mean inspiration in its broadest sense, in every kind of knowledge to which the human mind has been permitted to give expression. Religious inspiration, in its various phases; the inspiration of the fine arts, music, poetry, painting, sculpture; the inspiration of the mechanic arts in all the phases of invention; the inspiration of the philosopher; the inspiration of what is often called plain common-sense. They all flow from the same source—God's great fountains of knowledge. As Solomon said, there is nothing new under the sun. All knowledge exists in spirit life before man slowly elaborates it for external expression on this earth plane, and the degrees of so-called genius are marked by the varying capacity to receive and express it. This idea is involved in the word *impression*, so often used by men in their everyday business affairs. They have "impressions" so and so; sometimes against the convictions of their reason. Where do these impressions come from? What are they? They are the result of influences from spirit life that surround every human being, that "cloud of witnesses," of which we read in Scripture; and they will be of a higher or lower character, exactly according to the spiritual condition of each individual. God works through agents more or less directly. The spirits in the spirit world are the messengers which bear tidings of good, and of so-called evil, to every one according to his desire and capacity to receive. As this desire and capacity to receive depends, under God's blessing, upon each individual will, so each one of us has to work out his own salvation in very truth. But not without aid: the power of prayer is mighty; the Father of spirits will send us such influences as we truly ask for. Ask, and ye shall receive—even the desired presence of the blessed spirit of Jesus.

This principle of individuality is one of the most important teachings of Spiritualism, though, we admit, nothing in itself new, and offers, at the same time, the simple explanation of one of the serious difficulties in the way of the public acceptance and acknowledgment of the reality of spirit presence and power. It is the first and last objection of the educated classes, that Spiritualism has given to the world so little, if anything *new* in science, or indeed in any of the ordinary matters that have heretofore occupied the educated mind. It is true that very little has been given to common mundane science, in distinct propositions, through ordinary mediumistic communications, and it is for the reason, now beginning to be understood, that when God permits the spirit world to draw close to the earth life, he does not intend that the spirits out of the form shall assume all the responsibilities, do all the thinking, perform all the labors, bear all the burdens, of those in the form. Such a course, if permitted, would have directly taken away man's accountability; his individuality would be gone; and so experience has taught very many inquirers that they cannot long act with safety in matters of worldly interest under the sole direction of mediumistic com-

munications. The cause of Spiritualism has seemed to suffer, as unbelievers have had opportunity to point the finger of ridicule at the sad and absurd errors committed by Spiritualists, who have been working out this result of their experience, earning this wisdom for their own, and the world's benefit. It is only when the medium's own spirit is developed, so as to receive impressions direct, that he can with safety act them out through his own enlightened mediumistic consciousness; but even then the promptings must ever be brought to the bar of conscience, God within us; whilst the reason must sit in external judgment to determine pure questions of external prudence and policy. We must ever, as St. Paul says, "try the spirits," that we "may prove them."

At the risk of some repetition, we will endeavor to explain more clearly what may perhaps be called the philosophy of mediumship. When the man of so-called genius finds new ideas crowding into his brain, it cannot be said that he makes them. All the results of the scholar's study is to bring the mind into condition to receive the thoughts that are ever waiting for admission, when the mind is ready and able to accept and comprehend them. It is no mere play of fancy, when the poet begins his labor with an invocation to the muses. It is an act of preparation, to lift the poet's spirit into a condition to receive the poesy that is ready to flow in upon him. The most hard-headed philosopher must be in what he would call, the right spirit, or he cannot think (receive thoughts) effectively. A genius, then, and there are as many kinds of genius as subjects to occupy the human mind, is the medium through whom the ideas floating in the spirit world, existing in the spirit life, are given external expression, so as to be more or less comprehended by the minds of others. The man of genius gives expression to the thoughts which are given to him, and commits them to paper. They are printed in a book. This book in turn becomes the medium for the transmission of the ideas to the ordinary reading minds, which, on their part, must be developed to a condition able to receive the ideas, or the words read are hieroglyphics without meaning. The man of genius gets the ideas by inspiration from the world of spirit: the ordinary man of talent must wade through the printed pages, and receive the same ideas by slow induction, word by word. Precisely as the man of genius receives, and gives expression to the ideas which are given to him, so Spiritualism teaches us, truth is handed down by gradation from the central fount of eternal knowledge and truth, through the various conditions of spirits in the spirit world, who progress and rise from one to another of those "many mansions," each nearer to the source of direct inspiration.

Now spirit mediums, as commonly recognized, are supposed, by outside observers, to be the mere instruments used, or purporting to be used *wholly* by *other spirits* for purposes of manifestation and communication. The fact is that there are all degrees of medium-

ship, from this entire absence of the medium's self, to the complete inspiration, where the medium's consciousness and individuality are in full action. They are mediums in this latter case as much as in the former; the difference being that, in the latter case, the medium's own spirit uses its own organism to express the inspiration which is given to it more or less directly, whilst in the former case, another spirit controls the medium's body, and is itself the communicator of thoughts, to which it has been receptive, and now seeks to express. We believe that those mediums will give to the world the most new things, and the highest truths, whose individuality is never lost, and is in the highest state of development. Of course those forms of mediumship which only afford tests of spirit presence, resulting in the identification of friends who have passed on, are desirable, if not indispensable, to satisfy the preliminary inquiries of those who begin by being either curious, or anxious, to know whether the world of spirits is really so near this earth as it professes to be. But these tests are given quite independently of any consideration of the medium's own development. Indeed, the most remarkable tests sometimes have come through those of low condition, physically and spiritually. These tests are given in a great variety of forms. A very striking form is in the appearance of the names of departed ones, in letters of red on the arm; a phenomenon which has astounded many hundreds of persons, as shown in two mediums recently in Boston. This class of mediums has been, and still is, essential to the introduction of Spiritualism to man's notice and comprehension—it began with table tipping and rapping, the first rude alphabet of communication—it will disappear when it has done its work. Already many mediums who have been used only for tests are losing their powers, or falling off into neglect.

Let it not be supposed, however, that the tendency of Spiritualism is solely to intellectual development and manifestation. In accordance with the spirit of this age, it has found its introduction to the world's notice, in a great degree, through the intellectual faculties and purely intellectual observations. It could not have been introduced in any other way to a people like the American nation, which had become so eager in the pursuit of material prosperity through intellectual development, that the nation's heart has needed its present fearful awakening under the hands of an all-wise Providence, which, in our belief, is but the beginning of a mighty struggle for dominion between the powers of good and the powers of evil, that is yet to sweep over the face of the whole globe. This consideration leads us to the higher, or what in common acceptance would be deemed, the more spiritual development of Spiritualism, which is now gradually unfolding to the wonder and delight of all its truest advocates.

Whilst it is admitted that an equal development of heart and head are necessary to make the perfect man, we believe that the heart must be first cultivated, or the head cannot receive true wis-

dom. Without an understanding of the heart, the knowledge of the head is full of errors that lead the spirit to its ruin. This is no new proposition; the philosophy of it is simple. True heart development brings that *peace* of mind which fits it, the mind, for the highest intellectual conceptions, makes it receptive to the highest truths. Yet the nations who boast of their Christian civilization have ignored it, and set up intellectual idols that have received their souls' devotion for six days in every week, and been hardly forgotten in the midst of their would-be sacred observance of the seventh. Wonderful has been the intellectual and material progress of the nations, and particularly of this people, during the past century; but is it not true that spiritual culture and development have been retarded, if not retrograded, in the same degree? Witness the practical results; see, for example, the utter selfishness of the trading, commercial classes. With few exceptions, every man of them is striving, with his whole soul, to find out, *not* how he can help his neighbor, but how he can get ahead of him. Alas, for such Christian followers! We fear the Founder of their religion would hardly recognize his disciples among them. But this is no place for a homily upon the sins of the nations. We should shrink from such a task under any conditions; to catalogue them only would be a fearful undertaking, for their name is legion.

The feeling that true Spiritualism should have something, if not everything, to do with the understanding of the heart; and the fact that it has thus far, to the view of external observers, seemed to have so little to do with it, has been one great cause of the severest opposition it has experienced. For reasons which we shall hereafter endeavor to state, it appears to us to have been necessary, in the present condition of the world's development, that the near approach and communion of the spirit-world should be brought to the knowledge of mankind in the way it has been. Believing, as the Christian world professes to believe, in the second coming of Jesus, how many are there who would be able to recognize him now in our streets in the humble garb of the Nazarene? The difficulties are immense in the introduction of any really new phase in the world's development, arising out of the conditions of head and heart, into which such new development must gradually work its way. We are able now to see the wisdom that directed events, when the infant Jesus was laid in a manger, he "the Prince of Peace," "the Saviour of the world." As time goes on, the wisdom will be recognized which has directed the course of Spiritualism to its present unfolding, itself but the germ of what is yet to be.

We have spoken of our own continuous and unsatisfactory search after true spiritual mediumship, in the first years of our inquiry. We did not feel that we had arrived at the beginning of the truth, until, some two years ago, we made the acquaintance of a medium who had been developed as such after an anxious study of the Bible. This was a young person, born of true New England parent-

age, in one of the best of New England homes, of large, healthful physique, with fine intellectual powers, a broad head and large understanding, who had been drawn into the cause against external convictions, as well as the wishes of family and friends; but who could find happiness in no other direction, and alone, before God, trusting the inmost dictates of the still small voice, after many struggles, much wrestling with the spirit, had determined to go forward with the work, whatever it might be, so long as it did not militate with the highest sense of right and duty.

This person, called a healing and developing medium, was not under the control of those who purported to be our relatives, or particular friends in the spirit world, but was wholly influenced by a few choice spirits, who announced, through their unconscious trance possession, that their medium had been selected as an instrument of great good to the world. What that good was, we did not at first understand; we had yet to learn it. The communications were addressed wholly to our physical and spiritual condition, and the work of regeneration that was to be done amongst the people. They were not given in tedious homilies, but came in quiet, natural suggestions, warnings, and advice, accompanied at times with a manipulation of the head, which had a strange soothing, yet invigorating power, easily and early recognized. It was indeed a healing power, and imparted a pure vitality, which by a mysterious process gradually reached the spirit within, and we felt that the old heathen maxim of "sound mind in a sound body," had a spiritual meaning beyond its ordinary acceptance. By slow degrees we began to perceive the refined influence that seemed to rain down upon our heads as we sat in silent waiting. Not knowing what to expect, the light of Heaven gradually illumined our heart, and we were ready to acknowledge that we could perceive a spiritual influx, as we sat for development, which seemed to give us, or itself to be, the true riches of which the Scriptures teach, for it brought with it, in very truth, that peace which passeth all understanding. This is no idle fancy of our own, no mere play of the imagination; others have known it as well as we; it is difficult to describe or explain, but when realized by experience, brings with it a sense of reality such as nothing else seems to give. It seems almost the only reality of life.

At intervals the spirits, through this medium, would reason with us, as Paul, of righteousness; but whenever we asked for tests, such as are given through other mediums, they refused, for the reason that it would be a waste of powers which were dedicated to higher uses, as we have above endeavored to explain. We did not, we could not, accept the full meaning of this at once. Tempted in our progress to pursue comparatively idle inquiries, our prayers, and the kind words of the medium, saved us from dallying by the way-side. Purely intellectual investigation seemed to be for a time forbidden. Our business was with the heart alone. To purify

that, to become as a little child, to sit at the feet of Jesus, and receive from his hands something of the Christ-spirit with which he was filled, this was our work, this the present object of life. It was (and is) a realization of the patriarch's dream, in which the angels, God's messengers, are eternally ascending and descending, bearing up to the throne the petitions of his creatures, and bringing back the responses of His mighty love—responses which teach us to throw away selfishness utterly; to live and labor for others; to dispense widely unto all; to give freely, as we have freely received, these treasures of God's love; to so explain these things, and illustrate them in our lives, that they shall show forth His goodness and glory.

These lessons could not be learned till we had given up our conceit of knowledge obtained through purely intellectual culture; and now, humbled as a child before God, but a man amongst men, we feel ready to begin a good work, rejoicing that we find the yoke so easy, the burden so light.

If we are asked, how can these things be known to all, we say to all, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlettered, gather yourselves in small circles, two or three together, cheerfully, but soberly, reverently, in the name of Jesus, pray for the light you need, and it shall be given to you. Let as nearly as possible the same persons meet at each successive gathering; let the surroundings be fit for such communion. If the circle be in a family—and where better can it be?—let the place in the house be selected which is freest from contaminating influences. It would be well for the world if there could be a "holy of holies" in every dwelling-house, where the best influences could be poured down upon those in waiting. Let not the father of the family, the man of business, object that it will interfere with his daily avocations; it will rather give him new strength for all his duties. It is not for the Sabbath only, but every day in the week; whilst it teaches still the true value and use of the great day of rest. But chief of all, let not the man of education, of learning, fancy that his time for study cannot be interrupted for these things. Let him rather forget his pride of intellect, and as an humble member of the circle, let him ask for that true light which will illumine his soul, and send its quickening rays into the most hidden corners of his deepest searches. It was in the highways that Jesus found his first believers and disciples;—must it be so still?

But be assured, that to follow these things with trifling curiosity is to expose one's self to the penalties of sacrilege. By laws to which we have referred, you will get just what you seek after. Beware lest you bring to the inquiry too careless a heart, or a head too vain of its understanding. Do not, however, think that you can turn away and neglect these things for one motive or another with impunity. Your likes or dislikes cannot change the orderings of Providence. If the near approach of the spirit world be a fact,

then it remains a fact whether you like it or not. On the other hand, if it be true that these influences, for good or for evil, are around about, and so near you, it behooves you to understand their powers and mode of action, lest in your wilful ignorance you suffer approaches to which you would not knowingly be subject. In familiar phrase, if you wish to know what company you keep, ever influencing your feelings, your thoughts, your actions, sometimes much more than the friends and companions seen by your body's eye, look closely into your heart, for as that is, so shall your unseen companions be. You cannot escape it. Understand yourself rightly, make yourself what you know you ought to be, and you will learn to thank God for the sweet angel influences that guide and guard you through every hour of your life.

Let not Spiritualism be rejected by outside observers, because they cannot see any good yet accomplished by it. Misunderstood as it has been, much silent good has been done that is not proclaimed aloud to the world. By it many doubting minds have been established in a faith in the future life of the spirit; whilst many more have been relieved of the most depressing fears of the everlasting retribution, the relentless eternity of punishment, by learning that progress is the law of God's universe in the spirit world, as in the earth life; and the blessed consolation of a divine hope has given them new courage to try to attain a higher, better, holier condition, according to their capacity, and not according to the dogmas of their theology. Still more good has been wrought out of Spiritualism, through the very errors of its early converts. Good has come out of the wrongs committed under the name of Spiritualism, by showing the sad inefficiency of the Christian Church of this day. We say it not in unkindness, but in sadness; we say it not of any particular denomination or sect: it is true of all, as out of all have come those unhappy victims of their own weakness, who have, in the name of Spiritualism, thrown off the cloak of religious observances under which they had concealed the rottenness of their hearts from the world's knowledge, if not from their own, and, availing themselves of the assumed authority of false teachers and prophets, have in their actions confessed their little faith. It is a fearful proof of the want of true Christian grace, of vitality in their faith, that so many professors of the religion taught by Jesus, have been so easily led astray. Let them not make recantations, and lay the blame on Spiritualism, for it is but their own sins which have found them out; they may rather thank God that anything has come to show them their spiritual condition.

Angels are about us, the spirit world has, in this nineteenth century, been brought near to the earth life to mingle its influences for good, or for evil. Not, as it would seem, by an entirely new law; for these things have been before; but to an extent, and in a manner, which indicate, and are proclaimed as showing, a new dispensation in the providence of God. Exactly what this new dispensa-



tion will unfold is not for man to know yet, but that it is ushering in one of those great epochs in the progressive history of the earth and its creatures, to which we have in the beginning referred, we do believe. Far be it from us to presume to reach too far into the plans of the Almighty; but it is our solemn conviction, that these things do announce that *second coming* of which the Scriptures teach. The condition of the earth and its people, the signs of the times, indicate this more than ever before; whilst the near presence of the spirit world brings with it holy influences which must elevate and spiritualize all of earth's creatures who will receive them, and, as good is ever stronger than evil, will, sooner or later, drive off into outer darkness all who wilfully reject and oppose them out of the ignorance, or the wickedness, of their hearts. *If God's holy angels can and do so come, why may not the blessed spirit of Jesus come too? Has he not come already? Is he not in the midst of us even now, and we know him not?*

## SPIRITS VERSUS ODYLE.\*

BY WILLIAM HOWITT.

WEST HILL LODGE, HIGHGATE, May 9, 1861.

DEAR SIR: You ask me to give you a few facts witnessed by myself which support the position in your essay, "No Antecedent Impossibility in Miracles," as directed against the reasonings of the Rev. Baden Powell, in his article in the "Essays and Reviews." In your note you suggested that we may differ as to the nature of the power which is called spiritual. You have adopted the theory of the Rev. A. Mahan, of America, that this power or agent is the Odylic Force, and not spirits, to which you say those "ignorant of the real cause" ascribe this agency. Now I am one of those—one of many millions—who ascribe the phenomena called spiritual to spirits; whether in ignorance of the real cause remains to be seen.

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I am glad to see Mr. Hughes—"Tom Brown"—in a "Tract for Priests and People," speak brave words for the Bible. He admits the frightful growth of infidelity amongst our youth, and he thinks that he can charm them back to belief without a faith in the historic evidences of Christianity. I admire his enthusiasm, but I prophesy his failure. I, too, have mixed a great deal with the young, both in this country and abroad; I have gone, too, much

\* The above letter is taken from Mr. Forbes' pamphlet in reply to the late Rev. Baden Powell, reviewed in No. 11, Vol. II., of the *Spiritual Magazine*.

amongst the working classes, and found at home and abroad the same deadly infidelity. A church spiritually dead has brought forth dead children, and I never yet found the magic word—that music of Amphion—which could rebuild the temple of faith when its historic foundations were torn up. Men of this age are not trouts to be tickled, or to be caught with *artificial* flies. They demand not logic, but facts. They are true Baconians; they care nothing for the postulates of any Aristotle; they demand nature, that they may draw their own inferences. As I stated in the *Critic* long ago, “Sceptic materialists always turn round with this pertinent remark, ‘It is all very well to tell us of miracles and a history occurring nearly 2,000 years ago; but if God then condescended to convince souls by the reality of a spirit-world, by unquestionable physico-spiritual manifestations, why should He not now? Is God grown old? Is He less regardful of humanity? Don’t *preach* to us, but give us *proofs*.’” And men not being able to produce those proofs, never did convince the sceptic; and till they do produce them, never will.

I rejoice, sir, that you and other clergymen are now disposed to approach these proofs in any degree. It is not for me to say how long, or how carefully, or with what opportunities you have examined these phenomena, but I have examined them steadily, cautiously, perseveringly, and with ample opportunities for more than six years; and I am prepared to say and to prove that the so-called spiritual phenomena are produced by direct spirit agency, and that the Odyllic force is totally inadequate to elicit them. Whilst, therefore, prepared to support your proposition ~~that~~ there is a power proceeding from the world of mind which does control the action of matter, and completely knocks on the head all the reasonings of the Rationalists, I am equally prepared to show that the ignorance does not lie on the side of the Spiritualists, but on that of those who, yet bound in the fetters of a materialistic education, tremble to advance beyond the precincts of physical law.

Amongst the facts which I have to give you, let us first determine this. The Odyle force, then, is a mere physical, unreasoning force, and consequently cannot adduce or refute arguments. They who ascribe the powers exercised by spiritual agency to Odyle force, betray an equal ignorance of the real properties of that force, and of the present status and facts of Spiritualism. Search through Reichenbach’s essay on this force, and you will find no trace of a reasoning power in it. He ascribes no such properties to it. He says it throws a flame in the dark, visible to sensitive persons, such as the Spiritualists call mediums; that this flame is thrown from magnets of great power, from crystals, from the light of the sun, &c. That by passes made with magnets, or crystals, or by water, impregnated with the sun’s rays, certain sensations, agreeable or disagreeable, as the power is applied, are induced, but not a trace of any reasoning in this power, of any revelation of facts, of any

pictorial vision, of any faculty of prognostication. It cannot tell you what will take place to-morrow, much less at the antipodes, or in the spiritual world. But spirits do all this, and more. It does not attract iron, or other physical substances, which, as far as iron goes, its cognate, magnetism, does. But spirits lift iron or any other body of very great weight, and not in one direction only, but carry them about from place to place. Spirits lift heavy tables; I have seen dining-tables, capable of accommodating more than a dozen people, lifted quite from the ground. Spirits play on all musical instruments; they can carry about hand-bells, and ring them in the air, *as I have seen them*. The music which they produce is often exquisite. Spirits will draw or write directly upon paper, laid for them in the middle of the floor, or indirectly through the hands of people who never took a lesson, and never could draw. *I am one of them*. These are things which are not only going on in England, and amongst my own friends every day, but have been going on for these forty years; ten years in America, and thirty before that in Germany. But in America, the wide diffusion and constant repetition of these phenomena have convinced some millions of people, and some of them the first men of scientific and legal ability in the country. Those persons have not believed on mere hearsay, or mere hocus-pocus and delusion, but upon the familiar evidence of facts; and as I have observed, for thirty years before that in Germany, there existed a considerable body of the most eminent philosophers, poets, and scientific men, familiar with most of these things. Amongst these no less a man than Emanuel Kant; and also Görres, Ennemoser, Eschenmayer, Werner, Schubert, Jung Stilling, Kerner; and pre-eminent amongst women, Madame Hauffe, the seeress of Prevorst, whose history Kerner has written. The seeress of Prevorst is a sort of antitype of everything which has occurred in Spiritualism since; and after intimate observation of the laws and phenomena of this power, now again, through ten years, every Spiritualist recognizes the truthfulness of her statements. She always professed, not merely to have spiritual communications, but to see and converse daily with spirits, and she gave continual proofs of it, as any one may see who reads her story.

Now, it is useless to tell us that the Odyle force, acting somehow mysteriously on the brain, can produce these results. It cannot enable people to draw, and write, and play exquisite music, who have no such power or knowledge in their brains; for on the old principle *ex nihilo nihil fit*, no such things being in, no such things can come out. It cannot come from other brains, for there are often no other brains present. If it could do such things, it would be *spirit*, endowed with volition, skill, and knowledge, and there would be an end of the dispute. The condition, therefore, of those who ascribe these powers to Odyle force, is that of one ascribing the telegraphic message to the wire, and not to the man

at the end of it. Odyle force may be the wire—for spiritual communications are, and ever have been, made through and under certain laws, as all God's works always are—but it certainly is not the intelligence at the end of it; as I shall soon show. They who believe in the Odyle force, and not in spirit operating upon or through some such force, believe in the staircase, but not in the room for which it was erected.

I should have said that not in Germany alone, fifty and more years ago, were there great Spiritualists, but in many countries of Europe. In Switzerland, Lavater and Zschokke were Spiritualists. In France, the pious and learned Oberlin. When he went to his living in the Ban de la Roche, his parishioners used to talk of spirits and ghosts, and he told them it was all nonsense and superstition; but after his wife died she reappeared to him, and he used to sit an hour with her nearly every evening for, I think, nine years. Then the tables were turned upon him, and his friends told him it was a delusion. "You are welcome to think so," said Oberlin quietly; "I know that it is as real as any other part of my life." In fact, is not the world full of Spiritualists? Is there a man who does not from education ridicule the belief in ghosts? Is there a family that has not its authentic story of one? Scholastically they disbelieve; in their inner hearts they believe and tremble. Thus the world goes on living in a laughable see-saw betwixt the influence of a false education and the omnipotent power of nature in the human heart; blowing hot and cold; believing and disbelieving; without courage, from the bugbear of superstition, to come out of this fool's labyrinth, and admit that God's eternal laws are forever in the ascendant above all school theories.

And, in fact, are you not all Spiritualists? Does not your church and creed call upon you to believe in the direct influence of the Holy Spirit, and in the communion of saints? If you do believe that God—a Spirit—influences your hearts; that He hears your prayers, and turns events in accordance, as He has promised; that by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit you are actually born again; that by the vitalizing and detergent essence of the Spirit you are made "new creatures," or have no hope of entrance into heaven; then, you are essentially Spiritualists, every one of you. If you do not believe in this constant living influence and celestial metamorphosis, then you are no Christians. Your religion is a dead religion, not a vital principle; not a transforming, renewing, divinely-creative principle, but a mere dry husk, a mere hopeless and worthless tradition. Do you believe that all God's angels are "ministering spirits, sent to minister to all those who are heirs of salvation?" Then where is the difference betwixt you and those at whom you say your friend will "smile," betwixt you and avowed Spiritualists? The only difference is that Spiritualists are consistent with themselves and their professions, and whilst you take these broad and substantial declarations in a vague metaphysical sense, they believe

and know that they have tangible evidences of the fact; and have not all good men and women in all ages been more or less believers in these open evidences of the fact? What say the works and lives of the Reformers—of Luther and Melancthon? Of your own bishops and clergy, many of them educationally denying present miracles in their works; but recording them as special providences in their lives. What of a Bishop of Gloucester, who records an apparition? What of Bishop Seale of Norwich, with his “Invisible World?” What of John Wesley’s father, and the occurrences in his parsonage at Epworth? What of Wesley himself, and all the records of his “Armenian Magazine?” What of Fletcher of Madeley? What of the avowed doctrine of continued miraculous power in God’s church, in Hooker’s “Ecclesiastical Polity?” Are not all these full-length Spiritualists, admitting and showing evidences of these things? New modes of evidence may have been added to meet the stern necessities of the times, but the principle is absolutely the same. And let me ask you, do you think that the three millions of Spiritualists in America, and the many millions in Europe and elsewhere, including the whole population of the East, the native region of revelation, who have been always and are, confirmed unshakable Spiritualists—are likely to be all “ignorant”—so ignorant as not to be able to distinguish between the operations of a magnetic fluid and those of living and intelligent souls?

You say that many religious persons think that the devil is seen in these phenomena, but that “it is God and not Satan who rules in this world.” But these religious persons are nearer the truth than you suspect, for undoubtedly the devil takes care to have a finger in this matter, as he does in everything on earth. God rules indeed, but the devil rules too; and such is the marvellous patience of God till His own good time shall come, that many think that the devil rules in this world more than the Almighty. Look at all the wars in which the *soi-disant* disciples of the Prince of Peace are engaged all over the world. Does God or the devil rule in them? Spiritualism, therefore, claims no exemption from the inroads of the devil. It is an open general influx from the spiritual world, as universal, as inevitable as the influx of light from the sun; but like the world, it has its two sides, its day and night; and the dark side is the devil and his sorcery, the light one is the power of God teaching Spiritualists by prayer and faith in the Cross to trample Satan under foot.

Whilst the odylists and automatists speculate about an action on the brain, we cut the matter short, and say, there stand the spirits themselves, seen, heard, felt, and conversed with. As to Mr. Mahan’s theory, Professor Hare, the great American electrician, has completely demolished it. Using almost the words of the celebrated treatise of Andrew Baxter on “The Nature of the Human Soul,” he first demonstrated Odyle to be matter, and then, as a consequence, “that no inanimate, imponderable principle can be, *per se*,

a moving power; that inanimate matter does not move itself." To satisfy himself whether he was dealing with Odyle force or a spirit, Hare took this course: being at Cape May, nearly a hundred miles from Philadelphia, and a deceased sister having repeatedly announced herself to him, he asked her to go to Philadelphia, and request Mrs. Gourlay, a medium, to get her husband, Dr. Gourlay, to go to a certain bank and inquire whether a certain bill had regularly passed through it. The spirit promised to do so, and in half an hour came back and said that it was done. On Dr. Hare's return to Philadelphia, some weeks afterwards, he asked Mrs. Gourlay, whether she received any message from him during his absence? She said—Yes, and under very extraordinary circumstances; that she was holding a *séance*, and receiving a communication from a spirit, when it suddenly stopped, saying that another spirit was anxious to deliver a special message; that his sister announced herself, and gave the message about the bank, to which Dr. Gourlay attended. Dr. Hare then went to the bank, and found this quite correct. This quite satisfied him that he had been dealing with a spirit, and not with a fluid and lying force.

Having now shown you why I reject Odyle as the agent in these transactions, I will proceed to the facts from my own experience. More than six years ago, I began to examine the phenomena of Spiritualism. I did not go to paid, nor even to public mediums. I sat down at my own table with members of my own family, or with friends, persons of high character, and serious as myself in the inquiry. I saw tables moved, rocked to and fro, and raised repeatedly into the air. I saw a small round table, whenever touched by a medium, lay itself down and crawl, as self-moved, all round the room; and this was continued daily for a fortnight, the table refusing to perform any other motion. The absurd spirit which was supposed to be moving it was then solemnly exorcised in the name of God, and the table was immediately all right. A most sensible and obedient Odyle, you must think. I heard the raps; sometimes a hundred at once, in every imaginable part of the table, in all keys, and of various degrees of loudness. I examined the phenomena thoroughly, though I knew every person present treated the inquiry not only with a serious but sacred feeling. Silly, but playful spirits came frequently, and drew the most laughable life-scenes on paper, and told the most rhodomontading stories. I heard accordions play wonderful music as they were held in one hand, often by a person who could not play at all. I heard and saw hand-bells carried about the room in the air; put first into one person's hand and then into another's; taken away again by a strong pull, though you could not see the hand touching them. I saw dining and drawing-room tables of great weight, not only raised into the air, but when placed in a particular direction, perseveringly remove themselves, and place themselves quite differently. I saw other tables answer questions as they stood in the air, by moving

up and down with a marvellous softness. I heard sometimes blows, apparently enough to split the table, when no one could have struck them without observation; and breathed perfumes the most delicate. I saw light stream from the fingers of persons on the table, or while mesmerizing some one. As for communications professedly from spirits, they were of daily occurrence, and often wonderful. As I have said in my note to you, our previous theological opinions were resisted and condemned, when I and my wife were alone. This, therefore, could be no automatic action of our own brains, far less of the brains of others, for they were not there. We held philosophical Unitarian opinions, but, when thus alone, the communications condemned them, and asserted the Divinity and Godhead of our Saviour. When we put questions of a religious nature to the spirits, they directed us to put all such questions to the Divine Spirit alone. They recommended us, in opening our *séances*, to read a portion of the New Testament, and promised to select passages, and they did it through the means of the alphabet, naming the book, the chapter, and the particular verse, and the selections were most *à propos* to the communications which followed. They exhorted us not only to constant reading of the Scriptures, but to constant and earnest prayer. Many persons that we know, draw, paint, or write under spiritual agency, and without any effort or action of their own minds whatever, some of them having never learned to draw. Several of my family drew and wrote. I wrote a whole volume without any action of my own mind, the process being purely mechanical on my part. A series of drawings in circles, filled up with patterns, every one different from the other, were given through my hand, one each evening; the circles were struck off as correctly as Giotto or a pair of compasses could have done them; yet they were made simply with a pencil. Artists who saw them were astonished, and, as is generally the case in such matters, suggested that some new faculty was developed in me; when, lo! the power was entirely taken away, as if to show that it did not belong to *me*. The drawings however remain, but I could not copy one of them in the same way if my life depended on it. A member of my family drew very extraordinary and beautiful things, often with written explanations, but exactly in the same mechanical, involuntary manner. In fact, most of these drawings are accompanied by explanations spiritually given, showing that every line is full of meaning. I may add that I have never visited paid mediums, but I have seen most of the phenomena exhibited through Mr. Home, Mr. Squire and others. *I have seen spirit-hands moving about; I have felt them again and again. I have seen writing done by spirits by laying a pencil and paper in the middle of the floor, and very good sense written too. I have heard things announced as about to come to pass, and they have come to pass, though appearing very improbable at the moment. I have seen persons very often, in clairvoyant trances, entering into communication with the*

dead, of whom they have known nothing, and giving those who had known them the most living description of them, as well as messages from them. And to put the matter at rest whether they are actual spirits who make these communications, though not clairvoyant myself, I have tested two ladies who, from childhood, have professed, in their normal state, to see spirits, and have always found that they could prove what they asserted beyond doubt.

One of these, the first time that she was in our house, said that she saw the spirit of a young man, and described his dress and person, which corresponded so exactly with the gentleman who had occupied the house before us, that we all instantly recognized it. On another occasion we showed her several portraits—amongst them that of the young man whose spirit, according to her description, she seemed to have seen—but without making any remark. The moment she saw this portrait she said, "That is the young man that I saw when here before." In a dozen other ways I have seen her prove the reality of her assertions, besides that she is a person of a most truthful character. She is the same lady who saw the apparition of Captain W—— the day he was killed at Lucknow, and was told by him that he was just killed there, though she never knew him before. On the same day Captain W——'s wife in a distant town saw the same apparition, these ladies being unacquainted with each other. The fact, well known to us and all her circle of friends, is related by Mr. Robert Dale Owen in his *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World*.

The other lady, a very extraordinary medium, saw the spirits at the old house at Ramhurst mentioned also by Mr. Owen, and that when no one in the place knew that such persons had lived there, for they had lived there only in the reign of Queen Anne or George I. Now it is idle talking of Odyle force in the face of facts like these, which are occurring all over America, and in various parts of Europe, and which accord with the attestations of men of the highest character in all ages and nations. In Greece, Plato, Socrates, Pythagoras, and numbers of others asserted this spirit action. In Rome, India, Egypt, Scandinavia, and aboriginal America, as well as in Judea, and amongst the most eminent Fathers of the Church. The leading minds of every age but this have but one voice on the subject. It is the last vain clutching at shadows to avoid coming to the substance, which makes those educated in the anti-spiritual theories of the past century seize so eagerly on the Odyle as their forlorn hope. It will be torn by advancing truth from their grasp. The cry that all is imagination is gone already; Odyle is the present stage, and it must go too.

And here I could give you a whole volume of the remarkable and even startling revelations made by our own departed friends at our own evening table; those friends coming at wholly unexpected times, and bringing messages of the most vital importance—carrying them on from period to period, sometimes at intervals



of years, into a perfect history. But these things are too sacred for the public eye. All Spiritualists have them, and they are hoarded amongst the treasures which are the wealth of the affections, and the links of assurance with the world of the hereafter.

Now, I ask, what right have we, or has any one, to reject the perpetual, uniform, and voluntary assertions of the spirits; to tell them that they lie, and are not spirits, but merely Odyle, or some such blind and incompetent force? Nothing but the hardness and deadness of the anti-spiritual education which has been growing harder and more unspiritual ever since the Reformation could lead men to such absurdity. As I said to you in my private note, Protestantism, to destroy faith in Popish miracles, went, as is always the case, too far in its reaction, and not content with levelling the abuses, proceeded to annihilate faith in the supernatural altogether. Now it is a striking fact that Protestantism is the only faith, Christian or Pagan, that has systematically combated and rejected the miraculous. The Old and New Testaments are built altogether on the miraculous—they are that or nothing. Christ appealed to the miraculous of 4,000 years as true. If that were not true, then He is not true. If He be not true, then our faith is vain, and, as the Apostle says, we are of all men the most miserable. The early Fathers appealed to the miraculous of Christ and His Apostles as true, and to the miraculous still existing amongst themselves. The Greek and Roman Churches, the Waldenses, the Vaudois, the Cevennois, have to this day maintained the existence of the miraculous in the Church of Christ. What mean then these "Essayists and Reviewers," thus limping up half a century after Paulus and his disciple Strauss, and clad in their worn-out rags, talking of the 'course of nature?' If the Bible be true, and surely the Jews must have been rather more competent judges on this point than Strauss or Mr. Baden Powell, the course of nature for 4,000 years was regularly miraculous. This was clearly perceived by Bishop Butler, who, in his *Analogy* (Part ii. chap. 2), says that "it might be part of the original plan of things, that there should be miraculous interposition." That there is an *ordinary* and an *extraordinary* course of nature, to the latter of which miracles belong, as comets and the imponderables do, being so contrary to the properties of other bodies.

But Protestantism having taken up the doctrine that miracles had ceased, having once proved the truth of Christianity, and being, therefore, no longer necessary, the great theologians, both Churchmen and Dissenters, have grown more dogmatic on that head through all succeeding years. The French Revolution, with its culminating infidelity, unconsciously hardened this temper in Protestant writers. We see to what a length it went in Farmer, Bishop Douglas in his "Criterion," and his disciple, Paley. The present generation of educated men in all departments, clergy, lawyers, legislators, men of literature and science, were all regu-

larly moulded in this anti-spiritual school. They are petrified in it, and oh! how hard will it be for them to burst their thralldom, and open up again their spiritual organs to that influx of the heavens which has never ceased through all ages, and never will. But having cut the cable of its belief in the supernatural, Protestantism must drift towards utter negation, utter spiritual death, till God, with His inevitable Nemesis, shall horrify it by the view of the gulf of perdition, which it is approaching, and compel it to fly back, and seize once more on the vital spirit of faith in our kinship and communion with the unseen. Being spirit as well as body, we are dead if we do not keep open the avenues of perpetual influx from the spiritual world. This modern race of theologians and *savans* stands amid the ages as a thing out of joint; an excrescence on the genial growth of the world—an anomaly. It is not in harmony with any age that has gone before it, or any church that co-exists with it, and cannot, therefore, be a true birth—it is an abortion.

Mr. Baden Powell sees such insuperable difficulties in accepting the miraculous history of the Bible with our present knowledge of the laws of nature. He should say our present ignorance of those laws. In this little nook of flesh, is it likely that we can know a tenth part of the laws that are operating in and on the infinite universe? The difficulty lies in him, not in God. Men may tie up their own hands and minds in a network of syllogisms and doubts, but they cannot tie up the hands of God. Bishop Burnet, in his *History of his Own Time*, saw that: "Those who hate the very name of a miracle, in reality suppose the greatest of all miracles, the tying up of the hands of the Almighty from disposing events according to his will."

If Mr. Babbage can so arrange his calculating machine that it shall go on registering a regular succession of numbers of hundreds of millions of figures, and even for ages, as he contends might be done, and for it then to change, according to his pre-arrangement, is it not downright imbecility to suppose that the Creator of the universe cannot much more wonderfully vary, by pre-arrangement, his machinery?

But why ask the question? Here stand the phenomena of the higher course of nature ready to put their stamp of verity on all the past—to grind to dust all this sophistry. The angel of God stands in the way against it. The Balaam of imagined sagacity does not see it yet, but his ass does. Common sense swerves aside and seeks "a more excellent way." Spinoza declares that if he could have been persuaded that Lazarus had been raised from the dead, after lying four days in the grave, he would have broken his system to pieces, and have embraced Christianity. The late Baden Powell, it has been said, made a similar remark in regard to the present spiritual phenomena. But whether he said so or not is not of the slightest consequence, for these phenomena do break the

systems of Spinoza and Mr. Baden Powell to atoms. Their conviction would after all have been but that of two individuals; these phenomena have convinced millions, and, therefore, stand broadly independent of any isolated cases of belief or unbelief in them.

Instead of your philosophy, that there is a law which does control matter, being broken, I trust you will find it greatly invigorated; that a deeper insight into Spiritualism will show you that you have in it a more efficient weapon against scepticism than you imagined.

Yours faithfully,

WILLIAM HOWITT.

The REV. G. H. FORBES.

## THE IMPOSSIBLE.\*

BY ROBERT DALE OWEN.

"He who, outside of pure mathematics, pronounces the word *impossible*, lacks prudence."—ARAGO: *Annuaire du Bureau des Longitudes*, 1853.†

THERE was enacted, in April of the year 1493, and in the city of Barcelona, one of those great scenes which occur but a few times in the history of our race.

A Genoese mariner, of humble birth and fortune, an enthusiast, a dreamer, a believer in Marco Polo and Mandeville and in all their gorgeous fables—the golden shores of Zipango, the spicy paradise of Cathay—had conceived the magnificent project of seeking out what proved to be an addition to the known world of another hemisphere.

He had gone begging from country to country, from monarch to monarch, for countenance and means. His proposals rejected by his native city, he had carried them to Spain, then governed by two of the ablest sovereigns she ever had. But there the usual fortune of the theorist seemed to pursue him. His best protector the humble guardian of an Andalusian convent, his doctrine rejected by the queen's confessor as savoring of heresy, his lofty pretensions scouted by nobles and archbishops as those of a needy foreign adventurer, his schemes pronounced by the learned magnates of the Salamanca council (for when was titled Science ever a pioneer?) to be "vain, impracticable, and resting on grounds too weak to

\* From "Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World." Philadelphia, 1860.

† The original, with its context, is, "Le doute est une preuve de modestie, et il a rarement nui aux progrès des sciences. On n'en pourrait pas dire autant de l'incrédulité. Celui qui, en dehors des mathématiques pures, prononce le mot *impossible*, manque de prudence. La réserve est surtout un devoir quand il s'agit de l'organisation animale."—*Annuaire*, p. 445.

merit the support of the government,"—he had scantily found at last, even in the enlightened and enterprising Isabella, tardy faith enough to adventure a sum that any lady of her court might have spent on a diamond bracelet or a necklace of pearl.

And now, returned as it were from the dead, survivor of a voyage overhung with preternatural horrors, his great problem, as in despite of man and nature, triumphantly resolved, the visionary was welcomed as the conqueror; the needy adventurer was recognized as Admiral of the Western Ocean and Viceroy of a New Continent; was received, in solemn state, by the haughtiest sovereigns in the world, rising at his approach, and invited (Castilian punctilio overcome by intellectual power) to be seated before them. He told his wondrous story, and exhibited, as vouchers for his truth, the tawny savages and the barbaric gold. King, queen, and court sunk on their knees; and the *Te Deum* sounded, as for some glorious victory.

That night, in the silence of his chamber, what thoughts may have thronged on Columbus's mind! What exultant emotions must have swelled his heart! A past world had deemed the Eastern Hemisphere the entire habitable earth. Age had succeeded to age, century had passed away after century, and still the interdict had been acquiesced in, that westward beyond the mountain pillars it belonged not to man to explore. And yet he, the chosen of God to solve the greatest of terrestrial mysteries, confronting what even the hardy mariners of Palos had regarded as certain destruction—he, the hopeful one where all but himself despaired—had wrested from the Deep its mighty secret—had accomplished what the united voice of the Past had declared to be an impossible achievement.

But now, if, in the stillness of that night, to this man, enthusiast, dreamer, believer as he was, there had suddenly appeared some Nostradamus of the fifteenth century, of prophetic mind instinct with the future, and had declared to the ocean-compeller that not four centuries would elapse before that vast intervening gulf of waters—from the farthest shore of which, through months of tempest, he had just groped back his weary way—should interpose no obstacle to the free communication of human thought; that a man standing on the western shores of Europe should, within three hundred and seventy years from that day, engage in conversation with his fellow standing on the eastern shore of the new-found world; nay—marvel of all marvels!—that the same fearful bolt which during his terrible voyage had so often lighted up the waste of waters around him should itself become the agent of communication across that storm-tossed ocean; that mortal creatures, unaided by angel or demon, without intervention of Heaven or pact with hell, should bring that lightning under domestic subjection, and employ it, as they might some menial or some carrier-dove, to bear their daily messages;—to a prediction so wildly extravagant, so

surpassingly absurd, as that, what credence could even Columbus lend? What answer to such a prophetic vision may we imagine that he, with all a life's experience of man's short-sightedness, would have given? Probably some reply like this: that, though in the future many strange things might be, such a tampering with Nature as *that*—short of a direct miracle from God—was IMPOSSIBLE!

Arago was right. With exact truths we may deal in a positive manner. Of a hexagon inscribed within a circle each side is of the same length as the radius of that circle: it is *impossible* it should be either longer or shorter. The surface contained within the square of the hypotenuse is exactly of the same extent as the squares, taken together, of the two other sides of the same right-angled triangle: it is *impossible* it should be either greater or less. These things we declare to be impossible with the same assurance and the same propriety with which we assert that we exist; and there is no more presumption in declaring the one than in asserting the other. But, outside the domain of pure mathematics, or kindred regions of abstract or intuitive truth, cautious and modest in his pronouncings should be fallible and short-sighted man. By what warrant does he assume to determine what God's laws permit and what they deny? By what authority does he take upon himself to assert that to him *all* these laws are known? The term of his life but a day, the circumference of his ken but a spot, whence derives he his commission, groping about in his little span of the Present, arrogantly to proclaim what is and what is not to be in the illimitable Future? Does not History bear on every page a condemnation of the impiety? Does not Experience daily rise up and testify aloud against such egregious presumption?

Not thus is it that those speak and reason whom deep research has taught how little they know. It occurs to the humble wisdom of such men that laws of nature may exist with which they are wholly unacquainted;\* nay, some, perhaps, which may never, since

\* I translate from La Place's "*Théorie analytique des Probabilités*:" "We are so far from knowing all the agents of nature and their various modes of action, that it would not be philosophical to deny any phenomena merely because in the actual state of our knowledge they are inexplicable. This only we ought to do: in proportion to the difficulty there seems to be in admitting them should be the scrupulous attention we bestow on their examination."—*Introd.*, p. 43.

From a widely-accepted authority still better known among us I extract, in the same connection, the following, in the last line of which, however, the word *possibility* might have been more strictly in place than *probability*:—

"An unlimited skepticism is the part of a contracted mind, which reasons upon imperfect data, or makes its own knowledge and extent of observation the standard and test of probability."

"In receiving upon testimony statements which are rejected by the vulgar as totally incredible, a man of cultivated mind is influenced by the recollection that many things at one time appeared to him marvellous which he now knows to be true, and he thence concludes that there may still be in nature many phenomena

man was first here to observe them, have been brought into operation at all.

Sir John Herschel has aptly illustrated this truth. "Among all the possible combinations," says that enlightened philosopher, "of the fifty or sixty elements which chemistry shows to exist on the earth, it is likely, nay, almost certain, that *some* have never been formed; that some elements, in some proportions and under some circumstances, have never yet been placed in relation with one another. Yet no chemist can doubt that it is *already fixed* what they will do when the case does occur. They will obey certain laws, of which we know nothing at present, but which must *be* already fixed, or they would not be laws."

And what is true as to rules of chemical affinity is equally true of physiological and psychological laws. Indeed, it is more likely to be a frequent truth as to the laws of mind than as to those of matter, because there is nothing in the world so constantly progressive as the intelligence of man. His race alone, of all the animated races with which we are acquainted, changes and rises from generation to generation. The elephant and the beaver of to-day are not, that we know, more intelligent or further developed than were the elephant and the beaver of three thousand years ago. Theirs is a stationary destiny, but man's an advancing one—advancing from savage instinct to civilized sentiments, from unlettered boorishness to arts and sciences and literature, from anarchy to order, from fanaticism to Christianity.

But it is precisely in the case of a being whose progress is constant, and whose destiny is upward as well as onward, that we may the most confidently look, at certain epochs of his development, for the disclosure of new relations and the further unfolding of laws till then but imperfectly known.

There is, it is true, another view to take of this case. To some it will seem an unwarranted stretch of analogical inference that because in the department of chemistry we may anticipate combinations never yet formed, to be governed by laws never yet operating, we should therefore conclude that in the department of mind, also, similar phenomena may be expected. Mind and matter, it may be objected, are separated by so broad a demarcation-line, that what is true of the one may be false of the other.

Are they so widely separated? Distinct they are; nothing is more untenable than the argument of the materialist; but yet how intimately connected! A pressure on the substance of the brain, and thought is suspended; a sponge with a few anæsthetic drops applied to the nostrils, and insensibility intervenes; another odor inhaled, and life is extinct.

and many principles with which he is entirely unacquainted. In other words, he has learned from experience not to make his own knowledge his test of probability."—*Abercrombie's Intellectual Powers*, pp. 55 and 60.

And if such be the action of matter on mind, no less striking is the control of mind over matter. The influence of imagination is proverbial; yet it has ever been underrated. The excited mind can cure the suffering body. Faith, exalted to ecstasy, has arrested disease. The sway of will thoroughly stirred into action often transcends the curative power of physic or physician.

But it is not in general considerations, such as these, that the argument rests touching the intimate connection between material influences and mental phenomena. The modern study of the imponderables, already productive of physical results that to our ancestors would have seemed sheer miracles, has afforded glimpses of progress in another direction, which may brighten into discoveries before which the spanning of the Atlantic by a lightning-wire will pale into insignificance. Galvani's first hasty inferences as to animal electricity were to a certain extent refuted, it is true, by Volta's stricter tests. But in Italy, in Prussia, and in England, experiments of a recent date, following up the just though imperfect idea of the Bolognese professor, have established the fact that the muscular contractions, voluntary or automatic, which produce action in a living limb, correspond to currents of electricity existing there in appreciable quantities. The discoverer of creasote has given to the world the results of a ten years' labor, it may be said, in the same field; distinguishing, however, what he terms the *Odic* from the electric force. Arago thought the case of Angélique Cottin (well known under the name of the "Electric Girl") worthy of being brought under the notice of the Paris Academy of Sciences; and, speaking, seven years afterward, of "the actual power which one man may exert over another without the intervention of any known physical agent," he declares that even Bailly's report against Mesmer's crude theory shows "how our faculties ought to be studied experimentally, and by what means psychology may one day obtain a place among the exact sciences." Cuvier, more familiar than Arago with the phenomena of animated nature, speaks more decidedly than he on the same subject. "It scarcely admits of further doubt," says that eminent naturalist, "that the proximity of two living bodies, in certain circumstances and with certain movements, has a real effect, independently of all participation of the imagination of one of the two;" and he further adds that "it appears now clearly enough that the effects are due to some communication established between their nervous systems." This is conceding the principle lying at the base of Mesmerism—a concession which is sustained by countless observations, little reliable in some cases, but in others, especially of late, carefully made by upright and capable experimentalists, on the contested ground of artificial somnambulism and kindred phenomena.

Without pausing here to inquire to what extent these various startling novelties need confirmation, or how far the deductions therefrom may be modified or disproved by future observations,

enough of indisputable can be found therein, if not to indicate that we may be standing even now on the shores of a Great Ocean, slowly unveiling its wonders, and the exploration of which is to bring us richer reward than did that of the Atlantic to Columbus, at least to convince us that Herschel's philosophical remark may have a wider range than he intended to give it; that in physiology and in psychology, as in chemistry, there may be possible combinations that have never yet been formed under our eyes; new relations, new conditions, yet to exist or appear; all to be governed, when they do occur, by laws that have obtained, from the creation of the world, but have remained until now, if not inoperative, at least concealed from general observation.

From *general* observation; for, though unrecognized by science, they are not therefore to be set down as unknown. It is one of the objects proposed in the pages which follow, to glean, from the past as well as the present, scattered intimations of the existence of laws under which it has been alleged that man may attain, from sources other than revelation and analogy, some assurance in regard to the world to come. And since it is evident that no abstract truth is violated by the hypothesis of the existence of such laws, may I not adduce such names as Arago and Herschel to sustain me in asserting, that they lack prudence who take upon themselves to pronounce, in advance, that whoever argues such a theme has engaged in a search after the impossible?

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## TESTIMONY OF N. P. TALLMADGE,

LATE U. S. SENATOR, AND GOVERNOR OF WISCONSIN.\*

WHEN these manifestations were first announced to the public as the "Rochester Knockings," like most others, I paid no heed to them; they were so incredible and so marvellous, and not having the support of names known to me, that I passed them by as a delusion, and had no inclination even to investigate them. This feeling with me continued till May, 1852, when I accidentally saw in a leading newspaper in the city of New York a communication of JUDGE EDMONDS on this subject, copied from some other paper or periodical, and accompanied by the editor with remarks very severe and denunciatory of the Judge for the avowal of his belief in such an imposture and delusion. I had known Judge Edmonds intimately for more than thirty years—had practised law with him in our

\* Extracted from his Introduction to "The Healing of the Nations, by Charles Linton," N. Y., 1855.



highest courts—had been associated with him in both branches of the Legislature of the State of New York—and also as members of the Court for the Correction of Errors. After my election to the Senate of the United States, he was elected a Judge of the Supreme Court, and subsequently became a Judge of the Court of Appeals. I knew him as a man of finished, classical education, a profound lawyer, astute in his investigations and in analyzing testimony, unsurpassed in his legal opinions and in the discharge of his high judicial duties; and above all, I knew him to be a man of unimpeachable personal integrity, and the last to be duped by an imposture or carried away by a delusion. Under these circumstances I felt that I should do great injustice to him and to those with whom my opinions might have weight, and still greater injustice to myself, if I should longer hesitate to investigate the subject. I felt that however strange and improbable these manifestations might appear, I could not, as an honest man, after they were thus vouched for on the authority of a responsible name, any longer, even tacitly, unite in the denunciations of them. I felt that something was due to human testimony—that testimony on which our belief in all things is founded—that testimony on which the Sacred Scriptures themselves have been handed down to us through a long series of more than eighteen hundred years, and without which we should have no authentic evidence of their existence. I felt that I should despise myself, and that I ought to be despised by others, if, without investigation, I should presume to express opinions against these manifestations after such authority for their truth. This feeling has been corroborated by my own experience; and I have looked on, "more in sorrow than in anger," at the thoughtless, flippant, and vapid assaults which have continued to be made, notwithstanding the manifestations have been piled up, "like Ossa upon Pelion," and backed by an array of names which would adorn the history of any science or of any cause. Under these impressions of duty I commenced my investigations, which resulted in a thorough conviction of the truth of spiritual intercourse, as will be more fully evinced in the course of these introductory remarks.

No cause in the history of the world has made such rapid and unprecedented progress as "Spiritualism" since its first introduction. Unaided, and without an effort on the part of its friends and advocates, and with an opposition unparalleled for its perseverance and its bitterness, it has moved onward with a momentum as irresistible as it is overwhelming. It already numbers in its ranks talent of the highest order in every department of science and the arts, the most distinguished of the legal profession, the most elevated of judicial functionaries, the most eminent of legislative bodies, the most enlightened of the press, and the most pious and learned of the pulpit; and above all, it enrolls among its votaries the purest and most intellectual of the female sex, whose modesty and whose virtues would sanctify any cause, and whose advocacy,

when openly proclaimed, will put to flight and to shame the unmanly attacks of ignorance and bigotry, and tear from the great "MOKANNA" of hypocrisy the unhallowed veil which has so long concealed the horrid deformity of its features! It already numbers more ably edited and better sustained newspapers and periodicals than any religious sect or denomination in the country; and it has presented to the public mind specimens of "spiritual literature" unsurpassed in beauty of style and sentiment, and unequalled in profundity and sublimity of thought.\*

Notwithstanding all this rapid progress and wide-spread belief in "Spiritual Manifestations," there is nevertheless a pervading ignorance on the subject amongst the masses hardly to be anticipated in this enlightened age. At the same time the fault is not theirs, but is chargeable to those whose duty it is, and whose position requires, that they should enlighten and instruct their fellows in what concerns their temporal and eternal welfare, namely, those who control those mighty engines for good or evil, the Pulpit and the Press.

As I have already said, there are high and honorable exceptions in both these departments. But the public press, as a whole, is without excuse for the manner in which it has treated this subject—a subject presenting phenomena the most extraordinary in the history of the world, and vouched for by names, whose testimony, if the facts were in issue on the trial of a man for his life, would convict and execute him. Yet with these facts staring them in the face, and with this testimony before them, they have in the most violent terms denounced not only the subject, but the investigators. When called upon to publish the views of its friends upon which their comments have been made, they have not only refused, but have made that reasonable request the ground for renewed attack, and still more violent assault. Their readers have therefore remained in ignorance not only, but have been plunged into deeper darkness by reason of the one-sided and distorted views which have been presented by the boasted intelligence and the enlightened liberality of the American press! Whatever may be the origin of these extraordinary phenomena, whether they be spiritual or philosophical, they are equally entitled to the consideration of every intelligent mind, and more especially of those minds that control and direct

\* The following remarks, from a recent publication against Spiritualism, prove the correctness of my statement. Its opponents will not contradict the evidence of their own witness.

"In the city of New York, to which circle our personal investigations have been confined, there are, at the least calculation, forty thousand sincere believers in spiritual rappings. We cannot pretend to give the number of the disciples of this new spiritual doctrine scattered throughout all parts of the United States. It is sufficient to say that it is immense, and far greater than the public generally imagine. These believers are to be found in every class of society, from the highest to the lowest, and among minds of every degree of capacity and cultivation, from the most accomplished scholar to the most ignorant of the ignorant."

the public press, because to them the masses look for information on all subjects, whether spiritual, philosophical, or political.

In saying this I say it in all charity, and in a forgiving and Christian spirit. At the same time, charity, the brightest gem in the crown of Christianity, requires that the truth shall be told, let its crushing weight fall where it may. The following remarks of Lord Bacon to me and others are peculiarly applicable to all denouncers of "Spiritualism" without investigation, and were given by him whilst recommending charity toward those who did not, for want of information, believe.

"Let the dog bark, the cat mew, or the ass slavishly toil for mere animal existence, still nature will assert its just claims whether in man or brute. And to him who, without evidence of either right or wrong, can denounce that as untrue which he has not investigated, you may justly attribute the true prerogatives of his nature. He will bark dog-like to the compulsion of his brute-like organization, and he will toil like the ass to perpetuate the slavery of opinions to which he is bound by error and prejudice."

But a still more gentle rebuke, and a still higher sense of responsibility on the part of the conductors of the public press, will be found in the following extract from the book itself, which these remarks are intended to introduce:—

God requireth no uncertain action. Thou must know, else write not, neither speak nor act. \* \* \* The man who can govern a press, and that which flows from it, hath great chances to instruct almost numberless parts of this great sum—man. And let him take good notice of all that cometh from his great distributor of knowledge.

Let him watch every word and be sure that truth is therein, for his labor is filed in heaven, and if his deeds be not good he hath condemned himself.

Would the managers of the press remember that there is an All-seeing eye, who knoweth not only every printed word their press utters, but the spirit and intention in which it was uttered, before whom their sheet is either pure and spotless, good intentions, or smeared with the dark ink of darker passions than ink can express, they would be less reckless of their individual responsibility.

The pulpit, too, has lent its aid to confirm this ignorance, instead of attempting to dissipate it by wise counsels and discreet conduct. Its denunciations have been hurled against the cause and its advocates, regardless alike whether they struck down friend or foe, and without reflecting that the rebound might injure much more the assailant than the assailed. Instead of attempting to enlighten the bigotry of the age, its efforts have only tended to sink it still lower in the scale of progressive intelligence, and to prevent its further advancement.

The believers in "Spiritual Manifestations" have been denounced as denying the truths of the Bible, and the manifestations themselves have been cited as confirmation of the truth of those denunciations. All this has been done against the protestations of the most distinguished advocates of "Spiritualism," and against their earnest assertions, that the manifestations prove the Bible, and that

the Bible proves the manifestations. These protestations have been made after a patient and thorough investigation of the whole subject, whilst the denunciations have been uttered without investigation, and consequently without knowledge.

I have always maintained, and still maintain, the Bible as the word of God; and I agree with that accomplished scholar and jurist, Sir Wm. Jones, who declared that "The Scriptures contain, independently of their divine original, more true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, more important history, pure morality, and finer strains both of poetry and eloquence than could be collected within the same compass from all other books that were ever composed in any age or idiom." And when I hear clergymen denounce "Spiritualism" as denying the truths of the Bible, I can only say, "they know not what they do." They might with greater propriety denounce all denominations of Christians except their own, because they differ from each other as to what *are* the truths of the Bible. The Roman Catholic believes in transubstantiation—in the real presence—that the real body and blood of Christ is contained in the consecrated wafer. He goes to the Bible for the truth of this doctrine. Some Protestants go to the same book to prove this doctrine rank blasphemy. Most of the Christian world find in the Bible the doctrine of the Trinity, whilst the Unitarian sect, one of the most intelligent and intellectual in this country, finds in it the unity of the Godhead. The same might be said of all the various doctrines of the different religious sects and denominations—they are all, according to their respective advocates, to be found in the Bible, however inconsistent or antagonistic they may be. When, then, these reverend gentlemen tell us that "Spiritualism" denies the truths of the Bible, will they be so good as to agree upon and inform us what those truths are? Christ never taught sectarianism. That has been taught by the creeds of men. Out of these creeds has sprung up the antagonism of the Christian world—an antagonism which brought Cranmer, and Latimer, and Ridley, and Servetus to the stake—and which would bring Spiritualists to the stake also, if we were not so far advanced in the light and progress of the nineteenth century.

" All bliss

Each claimed as his alone, denouncing one  
The other : both all warning that fierce fire  
Burned for their sake who swore not by a creed  
Garbled, patched up, and contradictory;  
Confounding text and comment, with no rule  
Interpretative; now as literal;  
Now figurative, holding laws like plain,  
Which, where most true, impracticable were,  
Where possible, intolerable."

I believe that all the truths necessary for salvation are contained in the Bible. But in this conflict of religious opinions it is impossible to ascertain what those truths are, and each sect must deter-

mine that matter for itself. What is wanted, then, on this subject, is more light to bring out and elucidate those truths. That light has been shed, from time to time, during the Christian era. The doctrine of the Trinity, in which by far the largest portion of the Christian world agrees, was not distinctly settled till the fourth century.\* If this doctrine is founded on truth, that truth is contained in the Bible, and existed no less before than after this doctrine was established as an item of the Trinitarian creed. Why was it thus established? Simply because its advocates thought the lapse of centuries had shed new light upon it, and had made that plain which before was enveloped in doubt and darkness.

“What though the written word be born no more,  
The Spirit's revelation still proceeds,  
Evolving all perfection.”

## THE REDEEMED BODY.†

### PRELIMINARY PRAYER.

O THOU who reignest in the infinitude of Thine own affection, self-centred in Thyself, and art the Fountain of joy, of love, and wisdom, and beauty to all Thy creatures,—yea, to all Thy universes of creatures,—Lord Jesus! our Father in heaven, let Thy blessing rest on us this morning. Let the radiance of Thy divine influence shine in upon us. Open Thou, we pray Thee, the windows of the spirit to the east of heaven; and let the rays of Thy divine presence that convey light and life, be imparted so copiously unto us that we shall realize a more than natural power,—that we shall feel the stirrings and the quiverings of the latent affections within the breast that long to plume their pinions and soar upwards in this golden brightness, pouring out toward Thee a ceaseless song of gratitude and adoration.

Oh, that the full-bodied and living powers of the inner man might arise this morning to worship Thee! Oh, that we might realize that we are spirits, and that we, renewed in Thy Spirit, and quickened by that which Thy divine life supplieth, shall live on in joy and glory for ever and for ever. Oh, that we might realize that to those who love Christ Jesus there is no death; that every

\* And even then, says a learned writer, “The first attempt, at the Council of Nice, to establish and make universal the Trinitarian creed, caused disturbances and dissensions in the Church which continued for ages, and which produced results the most deplorable to every benevolent mind which exalts *charity* over faith.”

† Extracted from *The Millennial Age*, Rev. T. L. Harris, London, 1860.

hour receives a richer glory of life from Thee; that every moment is winged by the passage of some scintillant and joyous ray of Thy divine affection to the brain and heart; that every hour beholds a richer tinting and a more beautiful unfolding of the corolla of the spirit; that every hour beholds an interior increase in the plenitude of spiritual gifts; that every hour causes us to receive more fully from Thee, and in that reception to possess the ability of more and more imparting Thy divine life to others in the world.

Lord Jesus, may we take home this great truth to-day, that we are made to be the recipient and the distributing organs of Thy Holy Spirit; that as the star pours out its light to make the night-time beautiful, as the flower breathes forth an effluence to fill with its aromas the wealthy spaces of the summer, so man is made to communicate in all his quickened loves the joy-imparting affections of the Father-Deity; that the hands are made for Thy hands to outwork Thy wonders; and the eye to serve as the medium for the transmission of Thy infinite illumination; the ear to thrill to the harmonies of Thy divine utterance; and the lip to pour them forth in choral music, in the sweet eloquence of material tenderness and trust; and the brain to serve as an orb of immortal thoughts, each fashioned in Thy divine likeness, and glowing with Thy boundless resplendence of eternal truth; and the heart to be an Eden world, a paradise of living affections, joyous and beautiful, unfolding their faculties in the beam of Thy morning smile;—and so the whole man to be the organ for the transmission to earth of more than the life of angels, of more than the life of archangels, of that infinite life wherein all forms of being receive their fresh and full supply, the life of Deity, the present God with man.

God and Father of our spirits, move Thou with Thy divine hand over us, and call from the dormant or slumbering faculties of our spiritual powers that new song, that jubilant anthem and aspiration of the new age, that vocal prophecy of the New Jerusalem.

Oh, may we discern that we can walk the world with Jesus!—that we can dwell in our homes with Jesus!—that we can engage in all the avocations of life with Jesus!—that we can possess Jesus in the heart for the Inspirer of every great and generous affection; that we can possess Jesus in the mind, the Source of all truth, the Creator of all knowledge;—and so living, dying, rising to immortal life, unfold in Thy divine likeness from glory unto glory, for ever and for ever. Amen.

#### CONCLUSION OF THE SERMON.

One word here in conclusion: and I touch now the trenchant disease of what is called Spiritualism at the present day. The mistake is this, that persons imagine that they can develop themselves into Biblical spiritual gifts as a pastime or an experiment—that

they can call out within themselves tremendous faculties of conception and execution, unroll organ after organ, as Night when she comes up with all her multitude of stars, and at the same time be hand-in-glove with all the corruptions of the moral or the social world. It is infinitely impossible. God could not do it, because it would be against the laws of moral rectitude and infinite harmony.

Now, those who make a mere play of Spiritualism (it is made a play of almost everywhere) will find that in the long-run it will do one of two things—disgust them, or ruin them. A large class will fly back disgusted with the miserableness or meanness of the result. The fault is not in God; the fault is not in the universe, which is a revelation of the infinite affluence of God; nor in heaven, which is a sublime art-picture of the beauty and the perfectness of God; the fault is, that they utterly mistake the conditions upon which depend the accession of spiritual faculty.

When my own spiritual faculties had begun to be quickened and unfolded, I discovered that every step required a new self-sacrifice, a more deep interior investigation of my own aims, and ends, and motives;—I discovered that I came in my spiritual journey to barrier after barrier; and when I would look to external agencies in the invisible or heavenly world for the removal of that barrier, I perceived that the bolt and the bar were in myself,—I found that only as the barrier fell in myself could I tread up to liberty. Now, at the present time, when I long for access of power—when, if I have influence, I desire influence ten thousand times greater than I possess, influence for good and truth,—now, when, if I possess some little spiritual faculty, I desire to have that faculty amplified and intensified, as from one rose to a whole summer and paradise of roses, still I discover that there must be daily a moral dying within myself, a dying of the old man, a passing away of the old state, a more complete and infinite annihilation of selfhood before my infinite and majestic Lord. If I am not more than I am, it is because I am not as good as I should be.

And so you will find, as you tread this path, that it all depends upon the moral rectitude of purpose, on the virgin purity of will, on the strict simplicity with which in all our powers we yield the being, not for our own ends, but for divine ends. Men cannot have divine spiritual gifts for their own ends, they can only have them for divine ends. Those whose gifts are used for the ends of self, find at last their inspirations to be infernal. If a man kneels in prayer to God for the artist inspiration in order that he may merely paint a picture, he will never receive it; but if, having the artist faculty, he open himself to God that the Lord may perfect him in the art-use which He has created him for, and ushered him into the world for, then if he will give himself up to the discipline of the Spirit, the Lord will, by-and-by, make him in the world of art just what He would have him to be.

The same thing applies to wealth. It is true that a man in the Spirit can gain more money than any other man, if the Lord's end is that he should be made a medium for the attraction and the accumulation of wealth; but I tell you, men of capital, here this morning, if any of you seek the gift of the Spirit merely for the purpose of adding house to house or fortune to fortune, the spiritual influences, as they come in upon you, will end in making you bankrupts; and this is the reason why Spiritualism does result in so much material bankruptcy. Men seek the gifts of the Spirit in order that they may gather possessions to themselves, and these gifts of the Spirit turn against them.

Here is the sword of the Spirit; it lies before every man; he can grasp it if he will, and carve his way to victory; but if he wishes to have that sword of the Spirit for the purpose of carving the way to any selfish aim and end, it will not be the hilt that God will hold towards him, but the point; and as the man rushes on towards his end, he only rushes upon the point of that blade, and falls transfixed before the presence of the Creator.

And here a word. You will find, as these spiritual manifestations go on, that those wondrous individuals who have exhibited such faculty of communication with the invisible world, will either become the best men, wholly given up, and transparent for the shinings of Jesus upon the world, such doers of righteousness as we have no parallel for in human history since the times of the incarnation; or, on the other hand, they will go, marked with a Cain-brand upon the forehead, because they have murdered innocence within themselves, outcasts and vagabonds before the nations, from the face of God and man. You will see them dying in heart-agonies; you will see them withering down into shameless impurity and idiocy, until at last their very garments drip with corruption, and before death they are stamped with all the foulness of the grave.

I am in earnest in saying these things, because modern Spiritualism is on the one side the most glorious, and on the other side the most terrific, of all things the recent world has seen. There seems to be but one door into spiritual gifts, and the good and evil press toward it alike; but as soon as you come near that door, you discover that there are two entrances: On the one side is written—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you;" and in that door stands Christ. The blazing, burning eye of the incarnate Infinity looks upon man as he approaches, and if there is in the man pride; if there is in the man supreme love of self,—a desire for spiritual gifts for the acquisition of wealth or fame, or for the gratification of mere personal desires within himself,—as the blazing, burning eye of the Lord Jesus Christ falls upon that man he shrinks away; he feels that this is not the door for him; he feels that this path is all barred up to him.



But close to it there is another, and in it stands a form which is more beautiful than Jesus wears to many an unregenerate man; in it stands the form of the tempter of the lower world. "Progression," "Development," "Self-love," "Nature"—inscriptions like these are over it. The lesson is, "Never mind conscience—seek development! Never mind regeneration—seek progression!" Broad is the way, and wide is the gate that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat. As soon as a man in this unsanctified state feels that influence attracting him he goes towards it, yields himself up to it. At first he is all steeped in a sweet delirium of passion, or rapture of fancy—a charm of imagination, a dream of beauty, a seeming perception of invisible realities. That is the beginning of it. The next step is that he finds himself putting forth faculties upon the surface of his nature, and entering into communication with spirits, giving communications from them, and performing wonders in their name. That is the second step. But the last of it is that he discovers that this process has been self-exhaustive, and so ruinous, and he sinks finally into a condition in which, unless the Spirit of God interposes, it would have been far better for him if he never had been born. Now, the whole world is pressing, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, to a new Christian condition, a spiritual state, supervening upon the material state, and as we come up towards that door-way, we have to choose whether to the right or to the left—whether to the right with life everlasting, or whether to the left with death eternal.

To those who accept the former alternative, will open, by degrees, the sublime verities of the New Christian Age. Scaling the mountain heights of love and liberty, inaccessible to the natural man, they shall stand at last upon a vast plateau of health, life, joy, and power, as glorious types of future fraternal nations. The promises of the gospel will in them put forth a twofold fulfilment, celestial and natural.

"When the perfect man has come,  
Earth and Heaven shall be his home;  
With material senses fine  
He shall dwell in space and time.  
Soul and body then shall be  
Modulated harmony."

God and Father of our spirits, whose love is infinite, and whose promises are sure, inspire us by Thy breath to embody Thy Spirit in all our frame, and so to serve Thee, in boundless obedience, to eternal life. Amen.

## REV. JOHN C. CLOWES.\*

## ADMONITORY REMARKS TOUCHING THE FIRST ADVENT OF OUR LORD.

LET it be supposed for a moment, that you had lived in Judea at the time when the incarnate Word appeared there *to give light to them who sat in darkness*; and that your names at this interesting period had been enrolled in the Jewish priesthood: it is very plain that under these circumstances your duty would have called you to form a judgment of that wonderful person, his pretensions and his doctrine. But in forming this judgment, would you have thought it sufficient to hearken only to the voice of the multitude? *Some said, he is a good man, and that never man spake like him; others said nay, but he deceiveth the people; he has a devil and is mad, why hear you him?* The voice of the multitude, therefore, was divided, and might lead you right, or lead you wrong, according as you received your report from this or that quarter. But would you have thought it safe, or prudent, or conscientious, or becoming your characters as members of the Sanhedrim, entrusted with the oracles of God, and the interpretation of prophecy, and the instruction of the people, and peculiarly called at that period of time to discover the marks of Messiahship, to detect false pretenders, and point out the true Christ—would you, I say, have thought it safe and equitable under these circumstances, to see with another's eyes, and hear with another's ears, instead of using your own? Would you not rather have thought it your duty, and have made it your business to see and hear the wonderful man yourselves? to examine his doctrines and pretensions impartially? to acquaint yourselves with the tenor of his life and conversation? to remove from your own hearts every unreasonable suspicion, jealousy, or prejudice which might pervert your judgment? in short, so to consult by sincerity and purity of intention the divine will and wisdom in yourselves, that you might *know of the doctrine whether it were of God, or whether the speaker spake of himself?*

\* Extracted from his Affectionate Address to the Clergy. Boston, 1846.

## OPINION OF REV. H. W. BEECHER.\*

I NEITHER allude to, nor express any opinion of, the modern developments called Spiritualism. I can say only this in regard to them: if there be such a thing, I thank God for it. I am not one that wants to know less. I would that the windows of heaven might be opened. Even if some back door were open I should be thankful. And if there are any that know more than I do, I will not attempt either to revile or discredit their knowledge. I only say that I know so little that I dare not say that I know it from that source. I do not say that I disbelieve in spiritual intercourse; and I cannot say that I believe in it. I say one thing: that if the encyclopedias of unmitigated trash which are said to come down from spirits do have the origin that is attributed to them, I can account for it only by supposing that as when we are taking up the floor of an upper story we get more dust and plaster than anything else, so there is a preliminary work going on in the world above, which is accompanied by the letting down of an immense amount of trash, by-and-by to be followed by something better. And I do not hesitate to say in respect to the mass of stuff and crudity which, like the oozings of the Nile, has been swept into the world under the name of spiritual revelations, that when I take it to be revelations of truth from the other world, I will sit down and be a dirt-eater. The idea revolts every moral feeling. It revolts our sense of honor. It revolts our sense of wisdom. It revolts every one of the nobler inspirations of the soul. And if any one that desires to believe in the power of spirits to communicate with men, and that brings to the force of the desire his whole sense of immortality, revolts at the alleged fruit of spirit communion, it is not to be said that he revolts at the fact itself of such communion. I am not, therefore, expressing any opinion as to the philosophical verity—namely, the power of those beyond this sphere to communicate with us. I reject, so far as the evidence that I have had of their reality is concerned, the communications that are claimed to have been received from them. I do not reject the doctrine that they may hold communion with us. I would rather wait before making up my mind on the subject; and I think it would be wiser for the world to wait.

But whether spirits can communicate with me or not, I can

\* Extracted from a Sermon preached at Plymouth Church, Sunday morning, March 31, 1861, by Rev. Henry Ward Beecher. Reported for the Independent.

almost communicate with them. It is not so much the stalactites as the stalagmites that I am looking after. Those crystalline columns that hang down from the roof of the cave are stalactites; but there rise up also from the floor equally crystalline columns, which are stalagmites. Now in my thoughts spring up the longing of my soul for honor, the longing of my soul for perfect love, the longing of my soul for a sense of rectitude and purity, the longing of my soul for the society of the spirits of just men made perfect; and I know that these longings spire upward; and in clear days, exceptional days, I think that I can see the light of heaven glisten, and that my thoughts go to the gate, and almost within the sacred precinct. I know not that their thoughts are able to reach down to me. I hope they are; and when there is evidence that they are, I shall be glad to receive it.

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## DISCOURSE ON THE TRINITY.

RECEIVED THROUGH THE ALPHABET BY RAPS.\*

It has been said by disbelievers in modern spiritual manifestations, that the supposed communications, as they call them, from the spiritual world never transcend the intelligence of human beings, and are often indeed of an extremely trivial or even ridiculous character. In answer to such objections I may observe, that if these communications did completely transcend the power of our understanding, they would of necessity be incomprehensible, and consequently valueless; while I leave it to the candid judgment of my readers to decide whether the specimens of spiritual communications which I have already presented and am about to offer, do or do not, in the majority of instances, quite touch the highest point of sublimity which the popular mind is prepared to comprehend or appreciate.

That many of the stories concerning spiritual manifestations which have been current in newspapers and periodicals present a painful amount of profanity and puerility, I am as ready to admit as the staunchest anti-spiritualist can be to assert. But what does this fact prove? Only that by the law of affinity like attracts like, and that if persons are so light-minded and irreverent as to use the gift of mediumship for merely the idle purpose of eliciting the wonderful, and put themselves in the way of receiving manifesta-

\* Taken from *Light in the Valley*, by Mrs. Newton Crosland, London, 1857.

tions without prayer, and without solemnity of heart, they will assuredly by their frame of mind—by the condition of their personal spiritual atmospheres—drive far away the angelic hosts whose mission is to guard, to teach, and to purify, and at the same time will attract “undeveloped spirits,” who appear to delight in cheating and misleading human beings.

It has been said that the dead still “rule our spirits from their urns;” but if it could be generally realized that the Spirits of the Just made Perfect find part of their beatitude in carrying out God’s purposes, still basking in the light of His countenance, though descending to help their fellow-men; that Heaven, instead of being a place of selfish rest far removed from human interests, presents conditions of happy activity and endless progress—I think many a careless liver would be urged towards amendment, and cheered forward by bright hopes, and at the same time ardent desires for his own instant regeneration. There is warrant in Scripture for this faith, the faith that the departed do appear on earth in a guise that is recognizable. Witness the appearance of Moses and Elias talking with our Lord.

Let me repeat that all we have been taught concerning the laws of the spiritual world tends to show that disembodied spirits are attracted to us while we are still embodied by a principle of affinity; and that the greater degree of elevation and purity our own souls attain, the holier will be the nature of those ministering spirits who are sent to help us. Does not this fact, if it once be acknowledged as a fact, give a new meaning to the words of our Lord, “Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath?”

If, therefore, people seek spiritual manifestations merely from a desire to witness the wonderful; if they ask silly, worldly questions, instead of reverentially, and with prayer to be defended from evil, awaiting the manifestations which may be vouchsafed, they will, in all probability, be misled or deluded, or receive communications of so puerile a character, that the occasion and the privileges, which ought to be considered solemn, will appear profane or ridiculous. But that communications of a sublime character may be made through the much-scorned method of the raps, the following discourse will, I think, testify:—

#### DISCOURSE ON THE TRINITY RECEIVED THROUGH THE ALPHABET BY RAPS.

“God the everlasting Father and His coeternal Son the Christ are indeed one and the same Being, God the Incomprehensible.

“But the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of love and truth, is an influence or emanation proceeding from the Father and the Son, pervading all space continually, and for ever proceeding from the one God, and acting on the souls of all men.

"By the influence of the Holy Spirit the angels themselves are upheld in righteousness. And thus God does indeed reveal Himself to His universe as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

"As light from the sun so the Holy Spirit floweth from the Lord God.

"Who can discern, who can imagine the love of God the Redeemer?

"Having chosen to suffer for the sins of His creatures, His sufferings were, like His attributes, infinite and incomprehensible.

"All creatures in the universe, high and low, if united in one body, could not have borne that weight of woe.

"He suffered for the sins of all worlds, wherever His erring creatures were scattered, and this He told us when He said: 'And other sheep I have which are not of this fold.'

"All goodness is of God. He is the one Fountain whence all love, truth, and wisdom for ever flow. No creature hath any merit of his own; all that the most exalted angels have, they received and yet receive continually of God.

"But God is pleased to impute merit to His servants. He rewards the virtues which Himself inspires. Jesus Christ, the Lord of Glory, is the cause of all real happiness—the giver of all love, friendship, and affection, all kind and generous feelings. If there be any holy joy, Jesus is the cause. All evil is of Satan, but in Christ is plenteous redemption.

"It was not the number of the transgressors that moved the Almighty to compassion, for the Lord Jesus would have suffered and died to save but one immortal soul from misery, so great, so wonderful is the love of our Redeemer. Who can describe—who can imagine—the agonies of a suffering God? Having chosen to suffer for the sins of His creatures, His sufferings were infinite.

"All creatures are or have been sinners, therefore the Lord Jesus took upon Himself the sins of a whole universe; being omnipresent and almighty, He suffered for sin in all worlds at one and the same time. Thus Christ has exhibited the profound depth of infinite love. No other way of pardon could have moved man to so ardent a return of love. No other way of reconciliation could have so well shown forth the holiness of God, and His hatred of all sin.

"No other scheme of Providence could so wonderfully and so beautifully have displayed the love of God. In a word, man's Redemption by Jesus Christ the Righteous exhibits all the attributes of God in full perfection, and will for ever move the hearts of an adoring universe.

"The hearts of saints and angels as they look on Christ will for ever burn with ardent gratitude, and for ever glow more and more intensely with a flame of holy love.

"Christ's whole life on earth was one continued scene of pain and sorrow. He was the Man of sorrows, so styled in dread pre-eminence.

"He, for our sakes and for our transgressions, unrobed Him of His glory, to live the life and die the death of man.

"Yet He was still the mighty God, the Prince of life, the sovereign Lord of the universe, the unfathomable and mysterious One. He hath said of Himself, 'I am that I am.' For ever and for ever He will still be wonderful and alone.

"He is thus the Redeemer as well as the Creator of a universe. Give, then, as the royal David exclaims, 'Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!'

"The Lord Christ is seen in the form of man in heaven; but there is a glorious light around Him. He is the Lord of Glory.

"None can see the Father but by looking on the Son.

"It was the substantial part of God, the glorified and eternal body of Christ, called the Son of God, which took flesh and dwelt with men on earth, not the spiritual essence or soul of Jehovah.

"Yet the Father dwells in Christ, and Christ in Him: they are inseparable. No man hath seen Jehovah at any time. He is unfathomable, eternal, invisible, mysterious, wonderful, and incomprehensible! Yet hath He revealed Himself to men in the person of His eternal Son;—and God and Christ are one. They are one and the same Being, and can never be divided. And as is His majesty so is His mercy. The Holy Ghost is an influence proceeding from God and Christ—from the Father and the Son—from the soul and body of God—from the eternal essence and the eternal substance. The Holy Spirit therefore dwelt in Christ while He was upon the earth, and kept the Father and Son united; yet the eternal essence of Deity remained unobscured and undefiled—the life and light of the universe, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto.

"How God the Father could thus separate His essence from His substance is even to us, His angels and ministering spirits, a mystery.

"Christ alone can comprehend the Father; and the everlasting Father reveals Himself to His creatures through the Christ.

"The body of Christ is substantial and eternal; so also is the spiritual essence of God, which is God the Father. Yet is this essence beyond conception pure, and different from all substance. All nature exists but in God. He made all that is. God is the only absolute and real existence. All other beings have derived all their powers from Him, and still exist in Him and through Him.

"The Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, and He reigneth for ever and ever. By His will He made all worlds. He spake and the universe was created. All things sprang to life and light at His sovereign word. All in heaven bow down in adoration of the Lamb that was slain!"

## A VISION OF THE LORD.\*

[Extract from MS. of the "Cross of Fire."]

"To be, or not to be!" the player said,  
 "To be, or not to be!" A mightier One  
 Than Shakspeare, with great words, that, like the sun,  
 My very heart intents have glorified,  
 In my deep bosom bids the life-thought run—  
*To be*, with Christ; or evermore undone!

Oh human brothers! 'tis a sad, sad sight!  
 The law a mesh, where cruel worms delight:  
 Preaching a trade where men of basest life  
 In fierce polemics loose the tongue of strife;  
 Or dainty bed where Sybarites repose,  
 Nor feel Christ's thorn in Sharon's rifled rose.  
 Trade a deceit, prismatic to the sun—  
 Sham's crystal palace arched o'er Babylon!

Oh human brothers! hear me ere I die.  
 ONE stood beside me; soft I heard him sigh,  
 As when the mildest of the orbs of space  
 Thrilled bosom-deep at the first orphan's face,  
 Jesus has many forms to body forth  
 Infinitude. I was heart-weary of the earth.  
 My sighs caught up thrilled with responsive flow;  
 "I bore," he cried, "oh child, this planet's woe,  
 I will redeem it though my Spirit-form  
 Finds, in the nations, but one willing man.  
 I will redeem it, though the phenix pyre  
 Shall gather Europe in one seamless fire.  
 Not one soul-breathing man will I deny;  
 For him alone renew the earth and sky;  
 And plant the tree of life for him again:  
 Lo! my heart-word, decipher it for men!  
 Patience and courage!"—Sleep o'ercame me, sleep  
 Most exquisite; as when the sowers reap,  
 In happy dreams, earth's coming age I saw,  
 And Christ was throned in spirit-breathing law.  
 I looked for serfs, but free was every thrall;  
 For kings I looked;—Jesus was Lord of all!

\* Taken from the *Herald of Light*, By Rev. T. L. Harris, New York, 1861.