

# THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

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## ARTICLE I.

### THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 1872.

#### ORGANISATION.

This body held its sessions in Richmond, Va., beginning May 16th, at 11 a. m. Forty-eight ministers and fifty-four ruling elders were in attendance. Two more ministers and six more ruling elders would have made the Assembly completely full. The absentees were nearly all from very remote Presbyteries—one of these Presbyteries being in Brazil. Grace Street church, where the Assembly met, is a spacious and beautiful edifice, and was often filled with attentive and interested crowds of people gathered to witness the proceedings. Old Virginia hospitality was still itself, and was enjoyed as freely as afforded. The Moderator, Dr. Plumer, was assisted in the introductory services by Dr. Van Zandt, of the Reformed Church, a delegate; and by Dr. Porter, of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, not a delegate, but simply a casual visitor. The text of the opening discourse was from Isaiah liii. 11: "He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied." Dr. Armstrong nominated Dr. Welch, of Arkansas, for Moderator; Dr. Hendricks nominated Dr. Samuel R. Wilson; and Dr. Jacobs nominated Dr. Adger, but

VOL. XXIII., NO. 4.—1.

reach almost of their noses, and what they said was going to happen. But if he were to venture upon a speculation, when every one was asking the question what was to be done with the Church of England to preserve its Protestant principles and Protestant administration of its services, he was disposed to say that he thought *they would have to look to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church for the means of giving new life and new energy, and of preserving the truth itself within the pale of the Church of England.* (Cheers.) It was therefore a matter of great interest to watch the progress of the Presbyterian Church in this country, and he need hardly say they would not be able to see it in its full efficacy, unless disconnected to a large extent from the Establishment, and in a self-sustaining condition."

May it be given to Old England to know the things that make for her safety, her honor, and her peace! May it be given to her to recognise the sole Headship of Christ her Lord, and to place around her brow that crown so long rejected—the peerless crown of a pure, unsullied, scriptural Presbyterianism! This would be her crown of glory far surpassing in splendor and value the jewelled diadem of kings and queens!

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ARTICLE VI.

SPIRITISM AND THE BIBLE.

1. *The Debatable Land between this World and the next.* By ROBERT DALE OWEN, Author of "Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World." New York: Carleton & Co.; and London: Trubner & Co. 1872. Pp. 542.
2. *The Clock Struck One, and Christian Spiritualist, being a Synopsis of the Investigations of Spirit Intercourse by an Episcopal Bishop, three Ministers, five Doctors, and others, at Memphis, Tenn., etc., etc.* By the Rev. SAMUEL WATSON. New York: S. R. Wells, Publisher. 1872. Pp. 208.
3. *Sundry Papers in the Scientific American, beginning Aug. 12th, 1871, on "Psychic Force," as an explanation of the*

*Phenomena of Spiritism.* By W. CROOKES, F. R. S., London; and Prof. VANDER WEYDE, late of the Cooper Institute, New York.

4. *The London Quarterly Review for Oct., 1871. Art. I., "Spiritualism and its Recent Converts."*
5. *The Answer of Science to Spiritualism.* By EDWARD W. COX, S. L., F. R. G. S., (London). New York: Henry L. Hinton. 1872. Pp. 79.

The philosophical student of human nature will not be content to pass by unexamined that irrepressible impulse to seek communion in some way with the invisible world. It has been limited to no one period, country, or race, and is surely among those facts of experience which philosophy is bound to coördinate and explain. If any trait of man's nature is entitled to be termed universal it is this. It appears in the Gree-gree Fetish of the African, in the "Medicine Men" of American savages, in the Runic Rhymes of the North of Europe, in the beautiful but sensuous Mythologies of the Greeks and Romans, in the Sorcery of Ancient Egypt, and the Magic of the Chaldeans, as well as in all forms of religious belief, true and false, ancient or modern. If Cicero was correct in making *universality* a test of reality, then does this craving in man for the super-human satisfy the canon: "Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus." Where there is much smoke we are justified in expecting some fire, though it be hidden from the careless glance beneath piles of rubbish. The dogmatic infidel may sneer at the weakness of the multitude. He may point out contradictions between rival faiths, and difficulties encompassing all. But experience ought to assure him by this time of the utter hopelessness of persuading mankind to abandon a belief in, and long after, the invisible. If he insists upon the entire falsity of those cravings of the heart and those processes of the reason, which lead mankind to the supernatural, then he must hold that man is the solitary instance in nature of an animal whose deepest instincts ever lead him into delusion. He must imply that the root of our nature is a lie, and that truth is an impossibility.

In this fearful chaos of thought, however, the foundation of dogmatic unbelief is cut away, for it has no other basis than the assumed truthfulness of the very faculties whose necessary conclusions he recklessly calls in question. Thus his infidelity perishes by a *felo de se*. But if with the more subtle Hume he should assume the role of "negative doubt," mother nature abhors a vacuum. An earnest mind cannot continue to be an indifferent sceptic upon great issues, concerning which it has any knowledge at all. Hume confessed that *he* was not; and if he had not, his very speech, like Peter's Galilean accent, would have betrayed him. *Credendum est tibi* is a necessity of rational natures, yet more imperative than Cicero's "philosophandum est tibi." Every man who thinks must have his creed, Jewish, Pagan, Christian, Mohammedan, or infidel as the case may be. Hume had his creed as truly as the Apostle Paul had his. Which of the two was the more enlightened and rational, must be decided by an appeal to right reason. We frequently hear the apothegm, "Superstition is the mother of infidelity," and experience testifies its substantial truth. But the maxim is equally true read backwards—Infidelity is the mother of superstition. Dr. Whately in his notes to Bacon's "Essay of Atheism," justly attributes to that great thinker a perception of a yet nearer relation between those two great enemies of religion—that of identity of essence despite the variety of outward shape. He traces them back to the same bad habit of forming opinions without due regard to the evidence. Unbelief and credulity may thus be viewed as the same force, but applied in opposite directions. It is *infidelity* when it rejects the evidence for the truth. It is *credulity* when forming a substitute for the truth.

Reflections like these, laying no claim to originality, must frequently occur to the reflecting mind as it watches the ebb and flow of the ceaseless struggle of the truth with its old enemies infidelity and superstition. How exciting is the spectacle! There is Atheistic science, busily interweaving the false metaphysics of Positivism, with her glorious discoveries concerning the Creator's wisdom and power in nature; and yet all the while

she ignorantly scorns Comte and his metaphysics.\* In the East we behold the decaying trunk of Islamism, in Italy that of Romanism, in Utah the carcass of Mormonism. The wild dreams of Swedenborg are being sedulously propagated among the unevangelised and the half-evangelised in both hemispheres. And with these protean shapes of error appears the last religious mania in the shape of necromancy, or Spiritism, which appeases the cravings of man's heart after the supernatural without interfering with his love of sin. Surely "science falsely so called" is making slow progress in the boasted work of exorcising the demon of superstition from the modern mind. She may perhaps be content after a while to leave the work to her elder sister Revelation. It is only the other day that we had placed in our hands "The To-Morrow of Death," in which a disciple of physical science proposes to revive the old Hindoo doctrine of the transmigration of the soul.† He is sadly ignorant of Christianity, poor man, save as it is misrepresented by Romanism. But he has the indestructible religious element of our nature. He is in deep distress at the calamities which have fallen upon France, dismembered by Prussia, and distracted by the Commune. He feels the irrepressible longing after another life, and so not having the fear of Mill, Baring-Gould, and Huxley, before his eyes, he dresses up the old doctrine of Brahminism afresh, substituting for the Brahminical finale of absorption into the ocean of Deity, a French view of the soul's return after weary wanderings and diverse incarnations in the bodies of men and animals, to its final rest in the warm regions of the central sun. How mortifying must the religious aspect of the modern world prove to Scientists, who proudly remind Christianity of her failures, and promise a scientific millennium of exemption from all concern for a hereafter!

Our pastoral duties have lately brought us into nearer contact with Spiritism, and have forced upon us the discussion of its re-

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\*For example: Prof. Huxley in his Edinburgh Lecture on *Protoplasm*.

†M. Figuiet.

lations to Christianity. And in discharging that duty we have consulted the volumes and essays found at the head of the Article. Experience assures us that the apparent attitude of Spiritism toward evangelical Christianity, depends upon the degree to which the new belief has become developed in the individual mind or in the community. When that development is complete, bursting through the restraints of previous education, and casting off all disguises, it stands revealed the *avowed* enemy of the Bible. Till then, however, in the transition stage, it is content to seek alliance more or less intimate with Biblical Christianity, as Swedenborgianism, Mormonism, and even Mohammedanism, have done before it.\* The two volumes first named in our list, signalise the tendency to coöperation; the leading periodicals of the new sect openly scoff at the Churches and the Scriptures, while their travelling preachers retail all the filthy blasphemies of Thomas Paine to motley groups of illiterate hearers.

“The Debatable Land” presents itself as the second effusion from the pen of Mr. Robert Dale Owen on the same theme. It is a stout duodecimo, full of miscellaneous scraps from the four quarters of the earth, showing that the writer has dipped into many books but mastered none. Mr. Owen dedicates his book curiously enough “to the Protestant Clergy.” As one of the acknowledged leaders of Spiritism, he definitely tenders the olive branch of peace to us upon certain conditions, which we shall examine. A golden moment has come, he thinks, in the protracted struggle between Protestantism and Popery, such as it shall be unwise and criminal to neglect. Protestantism had one such during the life-time of the great Reformers, but the opportunity was lost. The reason is apparent—Luther and Calvin were unfit to become the Moses and the Joshua of the spiritual Exodus. They burdened the new enterprise with too many of the old dogmas, among which we find the Protestant form of “Human Infallibility,” by which he designates the belief in the

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\*The Koran and Mohammedan Traditions allude in respectful terms to “Mousa” and “Issa,” (Moses and Jesus.)

supernatural inspiration of Scripture. He therefore favors us with "Book I., Touching the Communication of Religious Knowledge to Men," in which he handles the offensive dogma of Infallible Inspiration, without gloves. In the preface he had already assumed that the march of science had swept away every vestige of miracle from the world of reality and possibility. And upon this accomplished fact, of which we hear a good deal, he grounds the great need of Christianity for new help in maintaining the doctrine of a future life, and whatever else is worth preserving in the system. This timely help comes up, like Blucher at Waterloo, in the shape of "Spirit Revelings," phenomena, we are told, of the same sort, but strictly under the dominion of natural law.\* Having laid the foundations of the new Evangel without the old rubbish of miracle and inspiration, our author treats us now and then to a choice bit of exegesis,† in which he respectfully protests against the Pauline view of the doctrine of vicarious atonement. He also discards the theology of the Fourth Gospel in favor of the simpler views of the three synoptics, without caring of course to inquire how much of the objectionable matter is really peculiar to John. Our author no doubt is aware of the ignorance exhibited in America as to the cast off clothes of Germano-French infidelity, and so he cites without stopping to name his sources. Having thus bestowed his free criticism upon Church and creed, having served up once more the stale slanders against Calvin and Luther, having set Paul and John down upon their proper level, and given us an uninspired Bible, a human Christ, and a Gospel without an atonement, Mr. Robert Dale Owen sails off like the witches in our story books, in search of wonderful stories of haunted houses, "writing mediums," "spirit touches" (under the table of course), with which he is quite as familiar as with the contents of the Gospels, and, it is evident, far better pleased.

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\*P. 154.

†P. 268, Note on the manner of Christ's birth by natural law of a Virgin mother, etc.

We mention one point more in the volume. It is the estimates of Spiritists as to the numbers adhering to the new religion. A Spiritist of some intelligence recently replied to our question upon this topic by claiming in round numbers 12,000,000. Mr. Owen cites from several sources, testifying the wide diffusion of the sect in both hemispheres, and then gives 15,000,000 as a moderate estimate of the adherents of Spiritism.\* One-half of this aggregate (7,500,000) he supposes to live in the United States. But if he cared to claim all who have been rescued from Materialism through the agency of spirit-intercourse, he thinks it probable that the amount would reach 30,000,000. And this he adds is a growth as rapid as the wiser friends of Spiritism could desire or the world can bear. In this last, while rejecting the count as absurdly extravagant, we heartily concur. Mr. Owen does not favor us with the list of periodicals published in this country in avowed advocacy of these doctrines, but he names five which have come into being during the past ten years in the city of London alone. Which fact shows the importance of Christian ministers being on the alert against these inroads of superstition.

In "The Clock struck One" we meet the same proposal for an alliance between Christianity and Spiritism, but from a very different sort of mind. In Mr. Watson, despite his grave errors, we recognise a mistaken but earnest friend of Evangelical Christianity. As a near neighbor we can testify to the high repute of Mr. W. as a man, honorable, truthful, and generous. We entertain no doubt of his perfect sincerity in affirming to us in private, that his purpose is to use what he regards as the facts of Spiritism to uphold the faith "once delivered to the saints." In his eyes these spirit-communications discover a special providence, unmasking just in the critical moment a powerful battery, with which the "Christian spiritualist" shall utterly demolish the strongholds of Materialism, and usher in the millennium. Our author has serious fears for the safety of Zion, from the bold

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\*Pp. 232-6.



assertions of infidel science and the progress of its anti-scriptural opinions. Our neighbor's fears would be greatly calmed, we think, by a closer study of the history of God's Church. Materialism is only one of the many foes who have, like Goliath of Gath, defied the armies of the living God. Apostate Judaism, Pagan Rome, Papal Rome, Infidel Criticism of the Inspired Text, subtle metaphysics in all its hues—where are they? History will tell you they have fallen before the cross, in illustration of the Master's word, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The citadel of our faith is in no peril, though men who refuse its shelter may die. The "Sword of the Spirit"—God's almighty Spirit, not the feeble spirits of men—has always been more than a match for the darts of the wicked one. There is no need of sending down into Egypt for help. Christ has furnished us with weapons which have shown themselves mighty through God against his enemies and ours. The second error of Mr. W. is even more serious. It is his failure to inquire of God concerning the matter, instead of going like Saul to the Witch of Endor. But of this we shall speak anon.

The book bears almost upon every page the traces of a hasty pen. Had it been anonymous, we should have experienced considerable difficulty in receiving it as the mental effort of a sturdy Methodist preacher whose words have instructed and pleased the most intelligent ears. Our author traces back the title of his book to the eccentric freaks of an old time-piece, which, perfectly silent and motionless on other occasions, persisted in notifying the family of an approaching death by one ominous stroke upon the bell. The title is a guarantee to Mr. W.'s sincerity, if such were needed, for no designing man would choose an incident of such a character as the foundation of his faith.

In the main body of his volume, Mr. W. finds a point of contact between the scriptural doctrine of angelic ministries (Heb. i. 14), and intercourse with the dead upon the asserted identity of the angels with the souls of the departed. In proving this important point, he expounds certain texts in which the human form and name are ascribed to the apparitions of these ministering spirits. We wonder that it did not occur to him to see

whether the human shape *only* was assumed by these angelic spirits. A little examination would have undeceived him. Revelation assures us that, to Elisha and his servant, they appeared as "horses of fire and chariots of fire" (2 Kings vi. 17). Isaiah saw them (chap. vi.) as winged figures, like the cherubic forms over the mercy seat, but entirely unlike men. While to John upon Patmos the living creatures about God's throne (Rev. iv.) had severally the face of a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle, understood to be emblematic of dominion, strength, wisdom, and speed. The argument from shape falls to the ground. But a more formidable objection is found in the implied parallel (asserted indeed in the communications of the spirit "Mystery"), that evil spirits or demons are also the souls of dead men. If so, whence came that disguised evil spirit called "the old serpent" or Satan, who tempted the *first* man and woman? We affirm that angels are represented in Scripture as an order of beings totally distinct from men (see Heb. ii. 16). There is no point in common between angelic ministries and "Spirit Intercourse." And with this clear refutation falls what Mr. W. seems to regard the strongest point in his book. Of the interview between Samuel and Saul we shall have occasion to speak hereafter. It is the solitary instance, it seems to us, in which the inspired text appears committed to intercourse between the living and the dead. Samuel's foreknowledge of Saul's fate was evidently *miraculous*, being inspired prophecy. This, on Mr. W.'s principles, places the case entirely beyond what he claims for the knowledge communicated by spirits. "We once asked Mystery"—a spirit whom our author admires extravagantly—"if the spirits could tell of future events. His reply was, 'They cannot.' . . . He told us emphatically that no human intelligence can know with certainty the future. None but the Infinite God, who comprehends time and eternity, could see what was in the future."\* He then gives an extract from a book by Judge Edmunds and Dr. Dexter, presenting a communication from the spirit of Lord Bacon, (very unlike his old style of communicating

\*P. 114.

on earth however), in which he affirms the same position. Spiritists, therefore, cannot appeal to Samuel's interview with Saul to give authenticity to their alleged communications. For the scriptural case is *miraculous*. We wonder that Mr. W. has overlooked the fact that this very interview, being an act of wilful disobedience to God's law, helped to hasten on the doom of Saul. *So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; and enquired not of the Lord: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David, the son of Jesse.* 1 Chron. x. 13, 14. We wish to express in most unmistakable terms the clear separation which we discover between the supernatural of the Bible, and the phenomena claimed for Spiritism or Necromancy, as it is now practised amongst us.

Our space does not suffer us to follow Mr. Watson into the curious confusion of ideas exhibited in his copious citation of authorities, whom he understands to agree with him as to the reality of our communion with the dead. The probable cause of this confusion lies in his firm persuasion that he had clearly shown the identity of angels with the souls of departed men, and hence felt free to claim everything upon the subject of "angelic ministries" for his side of the question. But the confounding of the human with the angelic order of beings leads, as we saw, to absurdity, especially in the case of Eve's temptation. The Bible says absolutely nothing of the *dead* revisiting this world upon ministries of love to the living. The suggestion, indeed, chimes in with the promptings of natural affection, and when made is eagerly seized upon by the sorrowing heart. But Scripture is not responsible for it in any way, and it must stand or fall upon its own merits, without affecting at all the scriptural doctrine of angels and their being employed by their Lord and King on occasional errands of love to man. We have been informed that the friends of Bishop Otey claim that Mr. Watson has not correctly represented his real opinions upon "Spirit Intercourse." We are sure that any such misrepresentation would be unintentional, for Mr. W.'s reputation for veracity is unques-

tionable. However this may be, it is generally believed that the late Bishop was, for some time previous to his death, laboring under serious disorders which impaired his judgment. And with those who know the facts, the claims of Spiritism will not be strengthened by the free use of his name in the title-page of Mr. W.'s book. One feature of the book we notice with surprise and pain—a disposition to accuse the ministry of hiding what they know to be the truth on the matter of spirit-intercourse, from motives of self-interest and fear. Such sentiments are not natural to a brave and generous man like Mr. W., and we set them down to the influence of *evil company*. “Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners.” It is a well known trait of the errorists with whom our friend comes in contact and from whose books he quotes, to bully those who hold the old views as being deficient in courage and candor. It is a cheap way of getting a certain class to sympathise with them. But we are sure that one who feels so keenly anything which seems to reflect upon his motives, would not of himself resort to such hasty and wholesale charges. He possesses ample materials to revise and correct his hasty expressions, and we trust he may do himself the justice to give public expression to his better thoughts. Mr. W. knows that the ministry have as deep an interest in the truth as he has, and that in the noble body of self-denying philanthropists, the Methodist ministry, of which he has been an honored and trusted member for forty years, there are hundreds, yea thousands, that would face infinitely greater perils than he alludes to, for the sake of truth, which they regarded necessary to the happiness and salvation of men. And such being the case he should learn to watch these “evil communications.”

The literary blemishes which thrust themselves upon our attention, might expose the author to sharp criticism by a pen less friendly to him than ours. For example: the unaccountable blunder of putting “theol” for the Hebrew word *sheol*, which occurs more than once, if our memory is correct—“darmenes” for the Greek *δαίμονες*, daimones—the curious specimen of philology on page 52, intimating a serious difference between the

*English* word *spirit*, and its corresponding terms in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, which has no foundation in fact. But among all the proofs of haste and immaturity, none is more patent than the list of "Christian Fathers" given us in chap. III.

We now come to consider the specimens given us of the communications sent to Mr. Watson directly from the spirits in what we call heaven, but which he is pleased to consider a sort of intermediate world, as if half-conscious all the while that they are hardly worthy of the real heaven. These communications were received through a certain professional medium, residing at No. 361, Sixth Avenue, New York. He has been a class-leader, we learn with surprise, and has held a great many hundred class-meetings during the past thirty years. We may be permitted to express a timid wish that the brother adheres more closely to God's written Word in class-meeting, than he does in his business as "Medium." And we are sure that written communications from David, Isaiah, and Paul, made before death, would be more edifying to the faithful than his messages from John Wesley or Bishop Otey across the river, are likely to prove.

Two ideas are found in all these "communications." One of these is the most intense satisfaction, rising often to rapturous ecstasy, at the privilege of speaking with Brother Watson. Hear this, for example: "Bless you, bless my dear son, for the assurance I have, you allow me a place in your heart of hearts," etc. "Can I see you, dear Brother Watson, where I can thank you for your good feelings toward me in life. Again, even in death, you did not forget to speak kindly of me." "Oh, my dear, dear, ever kind and loving husband! have you thought of your dear Mary. . . . And did I not know, Samuel, we should meet again, and that never to be again dissevered, *then I would be wretched indeed!*" (Italics ours). "Dear Brother Watson— This is more than I had anticipated or hoped for, and you may say more than I really deserved. . . . One hour after I had awaked to consciousness in the spirit land, I would have been willing to have given all the treasures of earth," (and a poor sacrifice it would have been to a spirit in his circumstances, too), "were they mine, could I have but returned to you and

begged your pardon," etc. "Do not scold me, brother," pleads another eager spirit "for taking time you intended your precious consort should have improved, but she is not present this moment." "Bless you, darling one, for this, another call." "Oh, my dear, dear father, this is more than I could have hoped for—at least at this sitting. Dear Judge Poston sent a messenger for me, saying: 'Allen, my dear young friend, do, do hasten and talk with your dear father, who is just outside awaiting you? *At this summons my soul shouted glory to God in the highest! etc.!!*'" In fact, the commotion excited among the spirits by Mr. Watson's condescension and sociality, is at times boisterous. They gently complain that they have stood by quite ruefully while others "controlled" the medium. And one nearly explodes with delight when others come up to his help and enable him to use the medium's nerves and muscles. The scramble sometimes becomes undignified, and we are reminded of the scene in Virgil's Iliad, where the disembodied mourners on the sombre banks of the Styx struggle wildly for a place in old Charon's boat. Such messages are doubtless thrilling appeals to the affections of the initiated, but to lookers on they seem to be cunning schemes for lining the medium's pockets.

Another feature common to nearly all these messages is, the astounding estimate placed upon Mr. Watson's forthcoming book. "Go on, my son; mind not what the would-be wise may say or think." "Your forthcoming book will be criticised by the Church; but care not for that, it is a step in the right direction." "I then wrote for Bishop Otey; when it was written: 'Dear Brother Watson—Your dear friend, the Bishop, is not at present with you; but Stephen Olin is, and he says your book will be a success. He has been with you while you have been weaving it; and so has Mr. Wesley. They say the book will not only produce a sensation, but great good will result from the widespread of the truths therein contained. I have not looked it over, nor was there need of it so long as those two God-gifted spirits *have the management of it,*' (i. e., Mr. Wesley and Bishop Otey). Again: "I asked for Bishop Soule's opinion of it." This is the reply: "Dear Brother—If my judgment on the matter of your

book is worth seeking, allow me to say it will be to the conscientious soul thirsting for more light, apples of gold in trays of silver. Brother Taylor told me he believed the book would be the medium through which the South and the North would be again united.(!) Well, brother, time works wonders. You are in safe hands and keeping." "I then wrote: Will my dear mother speak to me, and tell me who made the clock strike 'one' before each one of four of my family died? 'Well, Samuel, my son, no one in particular, but it was by the combined influence of C'oke, the Wesleys, Channing, and the band that surrounded you at that time, to see what they could produce.'"(!) One more: "I tell you, Bro. Watson, you have not only done yourself justice, but the work you have prepared. Tell Judge Edmunds the name he gave the book is one so befitting the matter it contains."\* Our readers may be ready to cry out in the words of Horace, "Ohe jam satis!" But we wish to give a clear conception of what profound disclosures the world is likely to get from the oracles of Spiritism. Here we have the combined wisdom of spirits and Spiritists. Our friend, who can preach excellent sermons when he interprets Scripture by the light of his own common sense; Dr. Mansfield, who is the great medium referred to above, besides being a class-leader for thirty years; and Judge Edmunds, who seems to be "facile princeps" among the Spiritist theologians, counsel together on earth; while Bishops of the Episcopal Church, and Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Wesleys and a throng of lesser stars unite the rays of their now glorified intellects in producing this one book which is to illuminate the world and reconcile jarring nations! "Parturiunt montes, nascitur ridiculus mus"! Intelligent persons who have enjoyed ample opportunities for recognising Mr. Watson's style, have suggested that these replies prove that Dr. Mansfield *mesmerised* our author, thus getting control of his thoughts, and making him give the "communications." Several things seem to render the supposition plausible. Such things have been done by skilful mesmerists. The thoughts are such

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\* Chap. XIV., *Passim*.

as we might suppose Mr. W. to indulge, in his natural enthusiasm upon the eve of publishing this new volume which was to vindicate his favorite opinions. Authors no doubt often indulge fond anticipations, which, like the air-castles of a certain milkmaid, whose picture in the spelling book instructed our youthful eyes, are not always realised. These readers think that they detect Mr. W.'s style in these messages. It is easy to trace such correspondences as the phrase, "Well, so and so," the constant omission of the particle *that* where the English idiom requires it, and other sins against grammar. Mr. Watson is not devoid of gentlemanly modesty, as we know upon good authority, but we advise him to keep away hereafter from mesmerists and mediums when he is about to publish. However, another theory might explain just as well as the persistent sameness of style in the messages to Mr. W., viz., that Dr. Mansfield's mind fathered them all. It would be easy for him to catch the cue from an honest, frank-hearted man, as we believe our author to be, especially when excited upon the subject of his book. If so, he has been guilty of over acting, in our judgment, by fatally committing the highest intelligences of the spirit-world to such opinions of this book and its career. And as prophesying is the order of the day, we venture to predict that Dr. M. and his art will pay the penalty in the estimate of every sensible reader. For our excellent neighbor we are heartily sorry.

One other communication we must notice. It is found on pp. 190, 191, and purports to come from "Gen. Thomas Rivers," whose history is well known in Memphis. We quote the "spirit's" language: "When I took my breast-plate and sword, and walked out to defend my country, I little thought my life was to be sacrificed as it was; but the cause was a just one, and could I live my life over again on earth, I would lay it on the same altar again." Here we have a somewhat antiquated, but unmistakable description of death in battle. But we learn upon the highest authority that Gen. Rivers was never in either of the armies during "the late unpleasantness," and therefore of course his death which occurred in his bed at Memphis could in no wise be described as a "sacrifice" "on the altar" of his country.



But more: Gen. Rivers is made to say, that he has met his "parents" in the spirit-world. But it turns out to be a premature announcement. The Rev. Dr. Jones, of Memphis, testifies in print, that the excellent mother of the deceased General has not yet passed over the river, having been seen "in the flesh" since this message came, in the aforesaid city of Memphis. Now here are two errors upon matters of fact. Who is at fault, Mr. Watson, or the medium? It can hardly be that Gen. R. has mistaken some one else for his own mother, and that in the presence of all the family—father, brothers, sisters, and *wives*, who, it seems, are living quite comfortably in a house with their husband! But it is not that "house not made with hands eternal in the heavens," of which the Apostle tells us; for one of the spirits testifies, that their custom is to construct their own abodes in the spirit world. The same authority assures the surviving Mrs. R. that apartments have been prepared for her in the same abode! So it seems that our generation exceeds that which lived in the days of Noah, for while they continued "to marry" and to be "given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark," men now-a-days continue something very like it under decidedly greater difficulties, and apparently in a very questionable form.

This brings us to consider the question, (which we would earnestly recommend to the serious attention of all who respect the Bible as the law of God), What has Scripture to say as to the lawfulness and the expediency of Christians resorting to spirit-manifestations as a means of gaining information about the state of the dead, or the duties of the living? The question is easily answered. And, let it be said with all due regard for erring brethren, the plainness of the reply magnifies the sin of disobedience to God's revealed will. Protestants are agreed upon the truth, that Scripture is a complete revelation of faith and duty. We may differ among ourselves as to the interpretation of some things contained in Scripture, but there is no difference among us as to the sufficiency and completeness of God's Book for all the religious wants of man. This agreement is built upon the declarations of Scripture itself. "Secret things belong unto the

Lord your God, but what is written belongs unto you and unto your children." How frequently were the Israelites forbidden to add anything to what God had spoken. And in the closing book of the New Testament a special woe is denounced against the man who adds unto or takes away from the words of God. But how can a man consistently profess his belief in the sufficiency of Scripture, who in fact goes elsewhere for religious knowledge? Besides this, our Lord teaches us in the Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man (Luke xvi, 19-31,) that *exactly* such forms of communication with the dead as we now speak of shall not prove beneficial to the living. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, *though one rose from the dead.*" What have brethren to say to these sound words? How can they expect such splendid results from that which has been pronounced useless by such authority? But even this is not all by any means. The Law of express prohibition is published against the practice. God's holy revelation repeatedly encounters "the Hidden Arts" known by the various, but nearly allied terms—sorcery, magic, witchcraft, and necromancy, or dealing with the dead, and the tone of Scripture towards these baleful superstitions, is ever that of unsparing denunciation and condemnation.

Let us hear the law, which all believers are bound to obey. Lev. xix. 31: "Regard not them that *have familiar spirits*, neither seek after wizards to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God." Chap. xx. 27: "A man also or a woman that hath a familiar spirit, or is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them." (We understand of course that *bodily* punishment belongs, under the new dispensation, exclusively to the civil magistrate; but its severity, under the Mosaic law, shows the enormity of the sin). Isaiah viii. 19: "And when they shall say unto you, seek unto them that *have familiar spirits*, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter; should not a people seek unto the Lord their God? For the living to the dead?" Also Chap. xlv. 25: Wherever these "Occult Arts" came in contact with the inspired servants of God there was instant warfare, like that

between Israel and Amalek, *forever*. For example: Moses and the Sorcerers of Egypt, Peter and Simon Magus, Paul and Elymus, or the dealers in necromancy and magic at Philippi and Ephesus. And in the two closing chapters of the Bible (Rev. xxi. 8; and xxii. 15) "sorcerers" are classed along with the worst sinners, who are expressly excluded from heaven. The law of God is plain and unmistakable. The whole class of "Occult Arts," of which "seeking unto the dead" is expressly set down as one branch, is denounced as sin against God and injurious to mankind. They had the same effect then as now— withdrawing men's attention from the all-sufficient Word of God, and opening a wide and effectual door for all manner of superstition, delusion, and false doctrine. The remedy is, touch not the unclean thing.\*

Such is the decision of Scripture viewing the practice in its *moral* and *religious* aspects chiefly, if not exclusively. As to the totally different question, "How far superhuman power and intelligence was really involved in these dealings with the dead"? we do not see that Scripture intends to give an explicit answer. That cunning deceit and audacious fraud were practised *then*, as

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\*A critical examination of the Hebrew Text brings out, if need be, yet more clearly the fact, that the *precise thing condemned* in the Divine law is what men do in consulting "Mediums." Writing at a distance from our library we have not a Lexicon at hand; but turning to Deut. xviii. 11, we find that the phrase rendered "Necromancer," by our version, reads "dhoresh el-hammethim." (דָּרֹשׁ אֶל־הַמֵּתִים); lit.—*one who seeks unto the dead*. In Isaiah viii. 19, the last clause: "For the living (perhaps better 'instead of to the living'), unto the dead?" is evidently elliptical. The preceding clause supplies the verb which is omitted in the vehemence of the prophet's question—"el-Elohav *yidh-rosh*," (root, *darash*, he has sought), as above. But, moreover, the prior member of the parallel in Isaiah viii. 19, has the term "ba obhoth," (in our version well rendered, "have familiar spirits"). That expression is thus seen to be equivalent to "*darosh el-hammethim*," *seeking unto the dead*. "Obh," or in plural "obhoth," is the legal term in Lev. xix. 31, and in xx. 27. It is also used of the Witch of Endor (1 Sam. xxviii. 8; and 1 Chron. x. 13); and of the wicked King Manasseh (2 Kings xxi. 6). The precise identity of the acts cannot be doubted, consulting "Mediums" is the sin condemned in Scripture.

now, Scripture clearly implies, and history expressly teaches. The words in Isaiah, "Wizards that peep and that mutter"—"that frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh the diviners mad," imply fraud and trickery. Some have argued for a supernatural power in the wise men of Egypt, from the words so often repeated, they "did so with their enchantments" when so and so happened. But if we examine Ex. viii. 18, the same form of words "did so with their enchantments" is used when an utter failure resulted. We may not therefore press the words farther than an indefinite description of their doings. And, in truth, they did nothing beyond the power of a first-rate juggler. The concealed passages, stairways, and machinery discovered in their monuments leave us free to infer, that whatever power they may have possessed did not raise them above the trickery in which they have been faithfully imitated by their successors of our time. And with regard to the celebrated interview between Saul and Samuel's spirit, as we have already said, there is every appearance of a miracle. God was about to execute his declared purpose of wresting the sceptre from Saul and giving it to the house of David, the family of Messiah. It was a great occasion worthy of such a miracle. And it was befitting that Samuel, who had foretold the downfall of Eli's wicked house in his childhood, and of Saul's in his old age, should appear from the grave to repeat his fateful message. How can created beings of themselves name the day of one's death? And if God gave him the message, why should we imagine that a wicked old woman, who exhibited marks of terror and astonishment, could compel him to come at her bidding? And if the case of the demoniac girl mentioned in Acts xvi. teaches that "spirits" were then engaged occasionally in giving "communications," the spirit was not human as we have seen, unless we maintain that Eve was tempted by one of her own children. And Cicero says that lying was so much the fashion of Necromancers and Augurs in his day (about B. C. 40), that one could not look another in the face without laughing.

The Bible, then, does not intend to commit itself to any explanation of magic, witchcraft, or necromancy, as practised

during the age of miracles. It treats these questions in the far more important light of their *moral and religious* bearing. And from that highest of all stand-points, with which alone Scripture cares to concern itself, it pronounces a sweeping condemnation upon the whole mass, deceit and reality alike, if reality there be. This is the view which we are bound to take so long as we receive Scripture as the law of God, and that irrespective of any explanation which may be offered of the "Occult Arts" at the present. Scripture takes cognizance of the workings of the mind engaged in "seeking to the dead," and condemns the superstitious act, which is not dependent upon the outward fact at all, except so far as it is viewed by the transgressor as a means of gaining forbidden knowledge.

And here two questions require answers at our hands. The first is: Do not your arguments go far to justify the hateful practice of witch burning? To this we render the obvious reply of an emphatic negative. That wicked and cruel custom was handed down to early Protestantism as a relic of the "Holy Inquisition." It was the result of confounding the Church and State which had long been the Papal theory, and only lasted until sober reflection had opened men's eyes to the abolition of the civil laws of Moses, by our Lord's declaration, "My kingdom is not of this world." When the study of Scripture had progressed to this point the Church ceased to appeal to the sword and resorted to her only lawful weapons, the keys of doctrine and discipline. Besides this error of principle, the bloody tragedies enacted at Salem and elsewhere, are rendered shocking by the inhuman cruelty of confounding the innocent with the guilty. It was a period of turbulence, when men's hearts had been hardened by suffering and savage war. We yield to none in our abhorrence of witch-burning. As a Church we have no bodily chastisements for any sin. Our weapons are purely spiritual. If the civil government chooses to punish men and women who, by their trickery, wring money from the poor and weak-minded, it may be proper to proceed against such establishments, as against faro banks and the keno dens, by fine and police regulation. But, as a Church, our resort must be to

spiritual means. And we do not hesitate a moment to express it as our judgment, that Church-members, who, after due remonstrance and instruction, continue these superstitious practices which are expressly forbidden by God's Word, should be dealt with judicially and excluded from sealing ordinances until they forsake their evil ways. And the law not only applies to the "Mediums" who make a dishonest living, but to those who, like Saul, superstitiously resort to them. The issue is not a purely speculative one with some of us. Like the nettle-down, these hurtful superstitions are being borne southward on the passing breeze. Since beginning this article, we have heard of a minister, occupying a responsible position in Georgia, who has from the pulpit inculcated the boldest ideas of Spiritism. But, for him, there is at least the palliating circumstances, if not excuse, that his judgment is probably impaired by a recent bereavement. We hear of foolish people running with their five dollars to such mediums as Foster, to have their heads turned by a dose of his ghost stories. Credible witnesses inform us of large swarms leaving their churches in the North to become adherents of the new religion, whose prophets are Home, Foster, Mansfield, and the Fox Sisters, and whose theologians are Messrs. Owen and Edmunds. Disobedience to the commands of God is a punishable offence. The wise and firm administration of wholesome discipline has ever proved an effective barrier against heresy and schism. It is Christ's own method of recovering stray sheep who are yet within hearing of his authority.

The other question is: "Are you to be understood as forbidding a full and free examination into the alleged phenomena of Spiritism, for the purpose of discovering whatever basis of reality there may be in them?" By no means. Let men of proper qualifications, whose leisure allows them to pursue the investigation, look into these matters. There is no need of confounding superstitious desires to gain knowledge from the dead, with the lawful aim of adding to our knowledge of any powers of body or mind which may be concerned in these curious appearances. Any rational man can tell his own true purpose in observing the alleged manifestations. If it be to pry into the

world of spirits, (whether he can or cannot do so, makes no difference in this respect), he offends against God. The purpose is evil, because God has given us all needful light on these subjects, and forbids us, in his wisdom, from incurring the hazard of injury by attempting to add to what he has done.\* If however the inquiry be, what natural powers are involved in these manifestations, the investigation violates no law of God. Only let it be understood, that if the investigator should come upon facts which in his deliberate judgment involve superhuman intervention, just there natural science would cease *for him*. We see nothing as yet in such investigations likely to lead to any such result, and heartily welcome the researches of competent men, of which we have something in the three last items in our text. As yet these investigations are not full enough to satisfy curiosity fully, but they are ample to save any man not actually insane, from the baleful influence of superstition, or, what is nearly as bad, the avaricious clutches of the professional mediums. Christianity has nothing to lose or to gain, so far as her evidences are concerned, in such a sifting of Spiritism. The alleged phenomena have nothing in common with the miracles of the Bible. Between the two sets of "manifestations" there is a great and impassible gulf fixed, like that between Dives in torment and Lazarus in Abraham's bosom. The parallel has been attempted in the interests of Infidelity as well as of Spiritism, but reason will not tolerate such an insinuation. "Go on with your investigations," Christianity may be understood as saying to these gentlemen of science, "make out of it what you can. If it be nothing but tricks of legerdemain, I have already charged it with trickery and deceit long ago. If it be produced in part by unconscious action of muscle and brain, or by 'psychic force,' it is no concern of mine. Or, if you should discover the feeble, erratic actings of invisible beings, it may serve to confirm the scriptural testimony to the reality of such a world of spirits, as

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\*The parallel of Paul's discussion of "meat offered to idols" in 1 Cor. viii., at once occurs to the student of Scripture. The *intention* constitutes sin, and doubt lays prohibition.

the faint remnants of that power which was fearfully active during the presence of Christ on earth." The hypothesis of this supposed agency of the spirits of dead men, cannot however be considered as demonstrated until natural causes utterly fail to account for the facts after full and fair trial. And then the supposition of demons, totally distinct, as we have seen from human spirits, which has precedence on the ground of the historical facts of Scripture during the age of miracles, must be disproved. Scripture does not demand physical manifestations from such evil spirits *now*, but such intervention being a fact of *past* experience should have the prior credibility, until distinctly disproved.

With regard to the researches of science into the phenomena of Spiritism, it is well known that the distinguished Prof. Faraday, of London, whose recent death caused universal sorrow in the civilised world, was induced, in 1853, to examine into the facts connected with "Table Rappings." His experiments, and the conclusions reached, were published in his "Letters" on the subject, which we have not seen. We are not aware that the mental facts, said to be connected with these rappings, came distinctly before him. But his conclusion regarding the physical manifestations was, that they were referable to "unconscious muscular action." The great experimenter in physical law invented a simple apparatus, called an "Indicator," with a set of rollers, and a movable arm which visibly obeyed the slightest impulse, indicating so clearly the muscles from which that impulse came, that when put in contact with the table, no motions took place while the eyes of the operators were directed to this infallible guide to the unconscious movements of partially benumbed muscles. Here the question rested so far as science was concerned, until very recently, when Mr. William Crookes, F. R. S., and editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Science*, London, and Dr. Huggins, an astronomer of considerable repute, on account of his skill in the use of the Spectroscope, published his views in the above-named journal, which proposed to give a new explanation. The *British Journal* we have not been able to find, but Mr. Crookes has published his experiments in the



*Scientific American*, for Aug. 12th, and Nov. 11th, 1871. In his papers he claims to have demonstrated the existence of a new force, connected with the human organisation, for which he proposes the name "Psychic Force," (*i. e.*, that force which is peculiarly related to animal life). The instrument invented by him is given in the plate accompanying his letter. His object was to measure the new force and to meet Faraday's view of "unconscious muscular action," by arranging the apparatus so as to exclude the possibility of muscular action of any kind. For this purpose a stout board four feet long was selected as a lever with a fulcrum very near one end; the long arm of the lever was connected with a spring-balance; over the fulcrum was placed a vessel of water, and into the water a cup of wire-gauze fastened to an immovable iron stand near by, in such a manner that it could not be pressed against the bottom or sides of the vessel; the "Medium" or "Psychic" placed his hands in this immovable cup of gauze filled with the water displaced by it in the larger vessel. Mr. Crookes contends that this arrangement effectually cuts off muscular action. And the trial indicated the presence of a material force of "about 5,000\* grains," which Mr. Crookes accounts for by a new force, to which he applies the above name.

Surely it is a feeble force to accomplish the feats of table-moving, much less to work the miracles of Christianity. But these experiments have been severely criticised by Dr. P. H. Vander Weide, in the same journal, and by the *London Quarterly Review*. Dr. Vander Weide (late Professor in the Cooper Institute, New York) objects chiefly on the ground that Mr. D. D. Home, the "Medium" or "Psychic," employed in Crookes' experiments, is known to be a professional "expert." Dr. V. has studied his legerdemain very closely, (as he has that of quite a number of others, thoroughly exposing the famous tricks of the Davenport Brothers), and he sees nothing in the feeble results yielded by those experiments which an expert may not readily produce by *conscious* muscular effort. The *London Quarterly*

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\*Nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a pound.

maintains that Mr. Crookes has not shown that the *friction* of the water displaced by Mr. Home's hand, might not produce the result which he ascribes to the "Psychic Force," while the much greater results produced without the vessel of water on a similar apparatus, might have been produced by the "accumulated force of persistent vibrations," for which no allowance was made.

And while alluding to the jugglery employed by the noted "mediums," we cannot forbear giving an extract from the *New York World* of Feb. 6th, 1870, which we have before us. Want of space compels us to give brief excerpts only from the complete exposure of the Davenports and other "mediums" given in the *World*. We could wish that some friend of deluded humanity might gather up such articles and republish them in a pamphlet for gratuitous distribution :

"Two young men, known as the Davenport Brothers, have obtained a very extensive notoriety as 'physical mediums.' They are natives of the city of Buffalo, New York, where, when they were mere boys, their 'wonderful powers' were originally developed and manifested. Their first performances in this city were given under the management of their father at Union Hall, 195 Bowery, in the year 1855, most of which the writer attended. The audience being properly seated, the entrance door was locked and the hall darkened, when various manifestations—fully described and explained in another place—were produced.

"At the request of the 'controlling spirit,' made through a horn, the hall was lighted up at intervals during the entertainment, at which times the mediums looked particularly innocent and demure, as if they had never once thought of cheating anybody.

"On one of these occasions, however, a gentleman suddenly lighted the hall by means of a dark-lantern, without having been specially called upon to do so; and the boys were distinctly seen to be doing what they had claimed to be done by 'the spirits.' The audience, with the exception of a few spiritualists, left in disgust. The latter were favored with further demonstrations and an explanation through the horn, quite satisfactory to most of them, of what the rash sceptics, with too much faith in their

sense of sight, had hastily concluded to be an exposure of the mediums as impostors.

“To give more positive evidence of their claims to ‘mediumship’ being well founded, the boys ventured upon an extra ‘manifestation’ shortly after the occurrence above described. At a private seance about a dozen gentlemen, several of whom were members of the press, were seated, together with the mediums, at one side of a long, high table, the mediums being midway of the row. This time a little dim, ghostly gaslight was allowed in the room.

“What appeared to be a hand was exhibited partly above the edge of the vacant side of the table, and opposite the mediums. Several of those present had a feeling, as they afterwards expressed it, of chills creeping over them. The fingers of the ‘spirit hand’ seemed to move; and one Spiritualist present with a vivid imagination, admired the ‘beautiful proportions,’ his observation extending even to the finger nails.

“The humbug would have been a success, probably, if John F. Coles, one of the party, had not suddenly turned on a full head of gas, and pounced on Ira Davenport, from whose foot he took a nicely stuffed glove! The glove had been drawn partly over the toe of Ira’s boot, and by a movement of the foot the fingers were made to move. The Davenports suddenly left for home, disgraced even in the estimation of the most confiding Spiritualists.

“With some change in their mode of operating, and having become more expert by practice, they were quite successful at their subsequent exhibitions in this city.

“Their ‘manifestations’ are produced in either a cabinet or a darkened room, and in no instance while the operators are in full view of the audience.

“In a darkened room their ‘manifestations’ mostly consist of the thrumming (without music) of guitars, ringing of bells, rattling of tamborines, etc., while at the same time the instruments are moved—as indicated by the sounds from them—with considerable rapidity about the room. The same sounds and movements also occur to a limited extent after the operators have been bound by a committee from the audience, the reintroduction of light disclosing them still in bonds as placed by the committee. They usually extricate themselves from the tying after the light is again extinguished, in less time than the committee occupied in binding them. During their entertainment they are also bound with ropes by what they assume to be a spirit power, without mortal assistance. To all appearance the

tying done by 'the spirits' is as methodical and secure as any that a mortal could do. Yet the very instant that darkness supervenes, after the knots have been examined by the committee, the musical instruments are sounded, and various 'manifestations' made that could not possibly be accomplished without the use of hands; immediately on the cessation of which light is produced, and the 'mediums' are ascertained to be bound as they were before the extinction of the light. Sometimes, while he is thus situated, one of the mediums will have his coat removed from his body in a few second's time."

Then follows a detailed description of their "*Mysterious Cabinet*," a sort of cup-board, ingeniously devised for concealing, with the aid of a darkened room their dexterous manipulations of guitars, horns, coats, gloves, knots, etc., etc. The amazing feat of the knotted rope with which they are "securely" bound by a committee from the audience consists in a dexterous "twist of the wrist," by which the "square knot," usually considered the most secure, is converted into "two half hitches," through which part of the rope enclosed by them may be readily slipped. With a little slack in the rope almost any knot can be made into a noose, and this once done leaves their hands free for rapid work to which they have been long trained—such as thrumming guitars, opening doors, slipping coats, exhibiting hands, etc., etc.

"The reader will be able to understand how easy it is for one of the mediums to have his coat taken off after he has tied his own hands together. He can throw the coat in the air and get his hand back into the ropes without their movement being seen, even though a light should be produced soon enough to enable the audience to get a glimpse of the coat before it has quite reached the floor.

"If, after the spirits have bound the Davenports, and hands have been shown at the aperture in the door of their cabinet, the committee should unite the ropes, the secret of the knots would be discovered. But they would not consent to having the ropes untied by the committee.

"Were they really passive, as they claim to be, while the 'manifestations' are going on, they could not reasonably object to having the door of the cabinet opened at any time; but their manager does not permit of the opening of the door unless it is requested by the mediums.

“The performances of these young men are interesting on account of the ingenuity and expertness exercised by them, and would not be in the least objectionable was it not for their pretended ‘mediumship.’

“These mediums once exhibited what they doubtless supposed would look like the hand of a negro; but it was of uniform blackness, palm and all. At one of their entertainments when, in addition to the exhibition of ‘spirit hands,’ a naked arm was protruded from the aperture, an old lady, who, on account of the dimness of her vision, was permitted to stand close by the cabinet, saw, notwithstanding her defective sight, what made her exclaim, ‘Well, I declare! They must practice *vaccination* in the other world, for I see marks of it on that spirit arm!’ When the ‘spirit arm’ was shown at another time, *rope-marks were seen on the wrist!*

“It takes these mediums but a few seconds to get their hands back into the loops, and draw the knots close to their wrists, ready to be examined by the committee.”

Dr. Vander Weide says that practice has enabled him successfully to go through with every one of these performances. And the *Scientific American* of Jan. 6th, 1872, contains an account of an exhibition by these renowned Brothers, which was brought to a ludicrous termination by some mischievous students of Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. “During the dark *seances*, when the Davenports purported to be, and the audience supposed they were, bound hand and foot within their closet or cabinet, and when the guitar was floating in the air and playing musically around the aforesaid students, (who came prepared with balls of phosphorus) struck their lights all of a sudden, when the “spirits” were found to be the Davenports themselves, who were dodging about the stage brandishing the guitars and playing the tunes. The music suddenly ceased, the committee declared the performance a humbug, and the players departed from Ithaca by the first train.”

We have in our possession articles from the pen of our friend Gen. E. P. Alexander, lately Professor of Mathematics in the South Carolina College, published in the *Southern Presbyterian* newspaper of Feb. 3d and 10th, 1870. In these papers Gen. A. describes a *seance* with the celebrated Sisters Fox, in which he

detected one of them in the base imposture of ringing a bell, (*beneath* the table of course), with her toes, while claiming that "spirits" did it. In the other he shows how completely Foster, of New York, who has gotten so many spare five dollar notes from impoverished Southerners, was foiled by a little forethought and self-possession. Gen. A. took the precaution to write the names at his hotel and carefully seal them up in envelopes, as Foster directs to be done *at his table*. By this simple forethought, the danger of having the names detected by the sound or the motion of the pen, (or by accomplices looking down from the ceiling and signalling the information) was avoided. When the sealed envelopes were produced, Mr. Foster passed them successively between his eyes and the gas light, (a very unnecessary proceeding surely, upon the supposition that the "spirits" were to read them), and after much shuffling and many blunders, with no results worth speaking of, (including a stupid attempt on Mr. F.'s part to imitate the motions of an Indian's spirit, upon being told that one had been named in the envelopes), the time had expired and the *seance* was declared at an end, and other hands eagerly laid down the five dollar notes, which seem to come pouring into Mr. F.'s treasury. Gen. A. had seen a poor woman upon the cars, under escort for the insane asylum, who had not only lost her money, but, like many others, her reason, from Mr. F. and his juggleries.\*

The writer in the *London Quarterly* confirms the suspicion of Gen. A., that Foster might have the faculty of interpreting the strokes of a pen from seeing the top move when the point is hidden from him.

"We were not introduced to him by name," says the *Review*,

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\*Mr. F. said to our friend when he was going away, "I have failed with you, because you have drawn so many influences around you by planchette, that they confuse me." A very probable explanation indeed! "Credat Judæus Apella." But he was at the same time very careful to take the five dollars, for which confessedly he had rendered no equivalent. But, however, it may be because there is "good in every thing," the casual remark shows us *to what source he was looking for his information*, viz., our friend, and not "spirits" outside of him.

page 177, "and we do not think that he could have had any opportunity of knowing our person. Nevertheless, he not only answered, in a variety of modes, the questions we put to him respecting the time and cause of the death of several of our departed friends and relatives, whose names we had written down on slips of paper, which had been folded up and crumpled into pellets before being placed in his hands, but he brought out names and dates correctly, in large red letters on his arm, the redness being produced by turgescence of the minute vessels of the skin, and passing away, after a few minutes, like a blush.\* We must own to have been strongly impressed at the time by this performance; but on subsequently reflecting it over, we thought we could see that Mr. Foster's divining power was partly derived from his having acquired the faculty of interpreting the movements of the *top* of a pen or pencil, though the *point* and what was written by it were out of sight; and partly from a very keen observation of the indications unconsciously given by ourselves of the answer we expected. For though we were fully armed with the knowledge . . . and did our utmost to repress every sign of anticipation, we came, on reflection, to an assured conviction, that Mr. Foster *had* been keen-sighted enough to detect such signs notwithstanding our attempt to baffle him. For, having asked him the *month* of the death of a friend, whose name had previously appeared in red letters on his arm, and the *year* of whose death had also been correctly indicated in another way, he desired us to take up the alphabet card and point to the successive letters." (Query—Why should the *inquirer* point to the letters rather than the *medium*, or any other person supposed not to know the facts at all, unless this *previous knowledge* is to be made available, rather than a revelation from "spirits," usually that of the dead man himself?)—"This we did, *as we believed*, with pendulum-like regularity; nevertheless, distinct raps were heard at the letters J, U. When,

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\*Who that has read the published exploits of noted conjurors, sees in the dexterous substitution of other pellets, and reading the ones just given, anything more wonderful than other tricks?

however, on the next repetition, we came to L, M, N, Mr. Foster was obviously baffled. He directed us to 'try back' two or three times, and at last confessed that he could not certainly tell whether the month was *June* or *July*." Now in what way shall we explain this failure? Had A. B.'s "spirit" forgotten the date of his own death, which we suppose must be the hypothesis of Spiritism? Or shall we not agree with the Reviewer—"The secret of this was, that *we did not ourselves recollect*"? Foster's information stops with his *questioner's*, not with that of a third mind. "Wishing to clear up the matter farther," continues the same writer, "we called on Mr. Foster, revealed ourselves to him *in propria persona*, and asked him if he would object to meeting a few scientific investigators who should be allowed to subject his powers to fair tests. As he professed his readiness to do so, we brought together such a meeting at our own house; and previously to Mr. Foster's arrival, we explained to our friends the arrangements we proposed. One of these was, that one of the party should sit outside the 'circle,' and should devote himself to observing and recording all that passed, without taking any part whatever in the performance. Another was, that instead of writing down names on slips of paper, whilst sitting at the table within Mr. Foster's view, we should write them at a side table with our backs turned to him. On explaining these arrangements to Mr. Foster, he immediately said that the first could not be permitted, for that every person present *must* form part of the circle." ("Spirits" are very exacting on this point, it seems. Fully as much so as if they expected to be caught by an observant eye, which had no other occupation but watching them.) "To the second he made no objection. After handing him our slips carefully folded up, we took our seats at the table and waited for the announcement of 'spiritual visitors. The only one however that presented himself during an hour's *seance*, was the spirit of our own old master, whose name Mr. Foster might very readily have learned previously, but about whom he could give no particulars whatever. *Not one of the names written on the papers was revealed.* The patience of our friends being exhausted, they took their leave; but as Mr.



Foster's carriage had been ordered for a later hour, we requested him to sit down again with the members of our own family. 'Now,' we said, 'that these incredulous philosophers are gone, perhaps the spirits will favor us with a visit. We purposely followed *his* lead, as on our first interview, and everything went on successfully as on that occasion; until, whilst the name of a relative we had recently lost was being spelled out on our alphabet-card, the raps suddenly ceased on the interposition of a large music-box, which was set up at a preconcerted signal, so as to hide the *top* as well as the bottom of our pointer from Mr. Foster's eyes. Nothing could more conclusively prove that Mr. Foster's knowledge was derived from observation of the movements of the pointer, although he could only see the portion of it not hidden by the card, which was so held as to conceal the lower part of it; and nothing could be a better illustration of the unconscious 'ideor—motor action,' than the fact, that whilst we were most carefully abstaining from any pause or look from which he might derive guidance, we had enabled him to divine the answer we expected. The trick by which the red letters were produced, was discovered by the inquiries of our medical friends.' It is not every inquirer of Mr. Foster, who uses such precautions against betraying the answer by his manner of touching the letters, as we may learn from the following specimen taken from Gen. Alexander's description of his visit to Mr. F. at his rooms in New York city. "The gentleman," he says, alluding to one whose interview he witnessed, "then asked what was his father's middle name, and the alphabet-card was called for. Now, the name had not been called at the table, but had been written out by the gentleman, *Robert M. Simpson*, and it had lain exposed on the table, so that I had seen it, and Mr. Foster might have seen it if he wished. The alphabet-card was handed Mr. S., and he touched the letters in succession rapidly until he came to M., which he touched with a sort of emphasis, which would have indicated that as the first letter very clearly to me, even if I had not already seen it written. The table rapped lightly at M. Mr. S. said 'that is right;' and began again, touching A., and pausing a second, when, of course, the

table rapped again, but not so promptly. Beginning again, he touched the letters down to L, at which he paused sensibly, but the stupid table not taking the hint, he touched M, N, O, and then went back and touched L again with remarked emphasis, and this time it rapped. And so on he went through the name, Mallory. I told him, on leaving the room, that I could have done the same thing in half the time; but he would not be convinced that there was anything in his manner from which Foster could have guessed the letters.”\* This is not an extreme case by any means, as one may see by reading of the simple faith with which Rev. Mr. Watson, or Mr. R. Dale Owen, admit the *spiritual* origin of every fact, and of every interpretation of a fact, proposed by Mr. Foster, or by the more famous medium, Daniel Douglas Home. We cannot resist the temptation to copy an illustration from the *Debatable Land*, page 391, in which Mr. Owen records remarkable manifestations to the sense of *touch*, which occurred during a *seance* at Naples with Mr. Home of “world-wide reputation.” “During the second session we were all touched in succession; and this was preceded by a singular manifestation. At various points all round the table, the table-cover was pushed outward, and occasionally upward at the edge of the table-top, as by a hand underneath. Mrs. Owen touched it and felt, through the cover, what seemed a human hand doubled up.” (But *was*, no doubt, a human *foot*, *e. g.*, Miss Fox above mentioned). “By the raps, it was alleged that

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\*We append a hint given in a private letter to us from Gen. A., which seems to be of value to any wishing to experiment with mediums. It completely eliminates the risk of unintentional signs which shape the expected answer. “Suggest to any one, who wishes to bring the ‘spirits’ to a test, not to ask questions of family history, etc., etc., but to try something like this. Write down a lot of numbers and ask what is the continued product or sum of certain ones selected at random, out of a page of them. Or ask what is the tenth word on the tenth line of the tenth page of any book in the room. Questions like these—the easiest possible to be answered correctly and certainly by any *intelligence* (disembodied spirit) are the very hardest for *guess-work*, and always put spirits to flight more effectively than ‘holy water.’”

it was our eldest daughter, Florence, whom we had lost when an infant. Then Mrs. Owen's dress was pulled, on the side farthest from Mr. Home, as often as eight or ten times, and so strongly that Mrs. Owen says, had she been asleep it would certainly have awaked her; and, as it was, it instantly arrested her attention. She *saw* her dress move each time it was pulled. Then she asked that it might touch me three times, which it did instantly and quite distinctly. Then I put on my knee my hand *covered with a handkerchief;*" (italics ours) "and, at my request, it immediately touched my hand through the handkerchief. Then Mrs. Owen invited it to touch her hand which she placed, uncovered, under the table; upon which it went under one of the flounces of her dress and touched her hand *through the silk;*" (italic ours) "*but did not touch the bare hand.*" Oh, for a sudden movement of somebody's foot just then, to discover what Mr. Home's pedal extremities were about! But we will say for him that, if our conjecture be correct, he showed some delicacy of feeling, perhaps just a shade of prudence also, in refusing to touch a lady's hand with his uncovered foot.\*

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\*We append an extract from the *New York World*, which speaks for itself:

COMPARATIVE JUGGLERY.

The performances of the East India jugglers exceed, even in the matter of levitation, anything Home can do as a medium. There is an account of one of them sitting composedly in the air, six feet from the ground, with no apparent support. They plant a seed, make it sprout, grow into a plant or tree, blossom, bear fruit, wither, and die, all within an hour. Such at least are the appearances.

The following amusing parody is from the *London Punch*:

HOME, GREAT HOME.

(Respectfully dedicated to all admirers of the mighty medium.)

Through humbugs and fallacies, though we may roam,

Be they never so artful, there's no case like Home.

With a lift from the spirits he'll rise in the air,

(Though, as lights are put out first, we can't see him there.)

Home, Home, great Home!

There's no case like Home!

So much for the "manifestations" (and foot exhibitions too) of the *professional* mediums. We can only say, that if, after reading such exposures as we have given above from eye-witnesses, any one is gullible enough to "seek unto . . . the wizards, that peep and that mutter," he is born to illustrate the economical maxim: "A fool and his money are easily parted." To one who has read of the almost superhuman acuteness to which the senses of the Indian scout are brought by long habits of concentration upon a few points, or the amazing sharpness of an experienced pick-pocket, there is nothing peculiar in the art of the professional medium. By means of a few indistinct prints upon the hard ground, rendered more obscure by the stiff grass which has been regaining its upright position, and they carrying much of the indentation with it, the practised eye of the Indian will tell you how many horses have passed over that spot, how fast they were moving, how much weight they carried, and how long since the "trail" was made. We have read what seemed a credible account of an expert pick-pocket amusing a city missionary, by telling with almost infallible accuracy, from signs

Of itself his accordeon to play will begin,  
 (If you won't look too hard at the works hid within);  
 Spirit hands at his bidding will come, touch, and go,  
 (But you musn't look under the table, you know.)

Home, Home, great Home,  
 There's no case like Home!

Spring blinds will fly up or run down at his word.  
 (If a wire has been previously fixed to the cord).  
 He can make tables dance and bid chairs stand on end.  
 (But, of course, it must be in the house of a friend).

Home, Home, great Home!  
 There's no case like Home!

The spirits to him (howe'er others may hap),  
 Have proved themselves worth something more than a rap;  
 And a new age of miracles people may mark,  
 (If they'll only consent to be kept in the dark).

Home, Home, great Home!  
 There's no case like Home!

known to his craft, upon what part of his person each of the various strangers whom they met carried his money. The anecdote represented him as "reformed," but it may be he knew the missionary's pockets not to be worth picking.\*

Dr. Vander Weide, in the *Scientific American*, and the *London Quarterly Review*, agree in scorning the pretensions of Spiritism, or "the Psychic Force," to be anything more than the art of a conjuror, or the tricks of a legerdemain. It was the caustic criticisms of the Reviewer that brought out Mr. Sarjeant Cox in the pamphlet entitled "The Answer of Science to Spiritualism." Mr. Cox is, we suspect from what the Reviewer says, an eminent lawyer in London, and his treatise impresses us favorably. He contends strenuously for the existence of certain phenomena which demonstrate the reality of a peculiar force connected with the human system, belonging to all men, but in its more marked developments only to a few, denominated "Psychics" by Science, and "Mediums" by the believers in Spiritism. We heartily commend the reading of this pamphlet to any one interested in the curious facts of human belief connected with Spiritism. The experiments detailed and commented upon by Mr. Cox, were not conducted by the agency of a "*professional*

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\*We notice that several of our authorities recommend, as a preparation for determining the tricks of professional mediums, reading the accounts published of conjurors. "The Genial Showman" has been named as a suitable and entertaining book. The *London Quarterly* mentions the autobiography of "Robert Houdin, Ambassador, Author, and Conjuror," (Paris, 1858). Our Reviewer signalises what Houdin terms "Second Sight," which was performed by a wonderful system of secret telegraphy between Houdin and his son, so that one could convey unobserved to the other a description of any thing which he happened to be looking at. The labor of familiarising themselves perfectly with objects most likely to be used in their exhibitions was prodigious—enough to have secured them an honorable position in a more praiseworthy calling. "Among the objects with which they acquainted themselves, were the coins of all nations, half-effaced medals, minerals, precious stones, books printed in various languages (both living and dead)—including Russian, Turkish, Greek, Hebrew, and even Chinese—coats of arms, surgical and philosophical instruments, and miscellaneous curiosities, ancient and modern." His manual dexterity was almost beyond belief.

*expert*" at all. They were made by a committee of gentlemen, all of them of high position in their vocations and in society, says Mr. Cox, appointed by the "London Dialectical Society," to test the reality of the alleged phenomena of Spiritism and bring in a report to the society. A full account is given of the method pursued by this committee, including their report, which claims that there is evidence of a "Psychic Force." "When the London Dialectical Society resolved to appoint a committee to examine and report upon the pretensions of Spiritualism," says Mr. Cox, "I entered upon its duties, in common with five-sixths of the members of that committee, having the most firm conviction that we should detect a fraud or dissipate a delusion. I hoped that long experience in the work of sifting and weighing evidence, and resolving what does or does not constitute proof of asserted facts, would enable me to do good service in detecting imposture and its contrivances. And such were the aims and expectations of the great majority of my colleagues, comprising men of various pursuits and capacities, ingenious lawyers, practised scientists, skilful doctors, authors, artists, and shrewd men of business—all of them persons with keen senses, proved powers of observation, suspecting and looking for imposition, and, therefore, more than commonly vigilant, with eye and ear, and rigid in the application of tests. Before we commenced to examine, it was our confident belief that the alleged phenomena were: 1. Self-delusion by the spectator; or, 2. Imposture by the Psychic; or, 3. Involuntary and unconscious muscular action. With our minds thus prejudiced against the reality of the phenomena, we proceeded to their investigation."

Excluding professional mediums and keeping careful notes of their proceedings during forty meetings, they tried carefully each of the above suppositions, and finally reached the unanimous conclusion, that there were phenomena which appear to indicate a force hitherto unrecognised, proceeding from the human organisation. The supposition of fraud was in a great measure eliminated by the known character of the parties, but great care was taken to examine all the furniture used. The first "Psychic" found was in the person of a lady, who had

never witnessed performances of the kind. The next hypothesis (that advocated by Faraday, and evidently true of the phenomena submitted to him,) of Unconscious Muscular Action, was carefully tested and finally rejected. The crucial test applied we will give—"Lastly, we devised a test which conclusively settled the question as to the possible agency of muscular action, conscious or unconscious. It was contrived thus: All present turned the backs of their chairs to the table," (a heavy dining-table), "and kneeling upon the chairs, placed their arms upon the backs of the chairs, their hands being extended above the table, but without the possibility of contact with it. The chairs were first placed six inches from the table, with which, as the reader will readily understand, neither foot nor hand nor any part of the person, of any of those present, could possibly come into contact unseen. In this position the table moved eight inches over the carpet and tilted several times. The chairs were then withdrawn farther from the table, on each trial to an increased distance, and with the same results. At the distance of two feet from it the motions were continued, with but slightly diminished power. I must repeat that this was tried in the dining-rooms of members, some of them in my own house, with none present but the committee and the 'Psychic.' The experiments of motion without control were repeated many times at different meetings in different houses, and with the same results. Thus was our third and last explanatory conjecture, which we had eagerly accepted on the authority of Faraday, completely demolished by the facts, and we were compelled reluctantly to the conclusion, that there is a force apparently proceeding from the human organisation, by which motion is produced in heavy substances without the employment of any muscular force, and without contact or material connection of any kind between such substances and the body of any person present." The last point we do not consider established. There was physical connection through the atmosphere and possibly through other subtle media—such, for example, as those "imponderables" which become the media of the powerable undulations, known as heat, light, electricity, etc.

The Committee reported in accordance with these facts. In another part of the pamphlet, Mr. Sarjeant Cox proceeds to detail subsequent experiments of the same nature, and then discusses the relative strength of the rival theories of "Psychism," a purely natural force with its accompanying phenomena of mind and of matter, and "Spiritism," which brings in the agency of disembodied human spirits. This discussion he presents in twenty-three propositions clear enough, it seems to us, to carry the conviction to any reasoning mind, that the only intelligence manifested is the embodied mind of man. A few of these we shall give, but their combined force is best seen by reading them connectedly. "Prop. XI. The condition of the Psychic is found largely to affect the exhibition of the force. Its presence and power are dependent upon the state of mind and of body in the Psychic, and vary from time to time with that state. Often a headache will destroy it; a cup of tea that revives the nerve-energy, revives also the Psychic Force. The state of the atmosphere visibly influences it, etc. XIII. The communications made by the intelligence, that undoubtedly often directs the force, are characteristic of the Psychic; as he is, so they are. The language, and even spelling, are such as he uses; the ideas are such as he would be likely to possess—neither better nor worse. If he were to communicate avowedly with his own bodily organs, it would be done in precisely the same manner. Thus the communications in the presence of an English Psychic, are in English phrase; of a Scotch Psychic, in Scotticisms; of a provincial, in his own provincialisms; of a Frenchman, in French. The ideas conveyed are those of the Psychic. If he is intellectual, so are the communications. If vulgar or uneducated, so are they. Their religious tone varies with the faith of the Psychic. In the presence of a Methodist Psychic, the communications are Methodistical; of a Roman Catholic, decidedly Papistical; with a Unitarian, free-thinking views prevail. If the Psychic cannot spell, the communications are faulty in the spelling; if the Psychic is ignorant of grammar, the defect is seen in the sentences spelled by the Force. If the Psychic is ill-informed on matters of fact, as in science and such like, the alleged spirit

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messages exhibit the same errors, and if the communication has relation to a future state, the descriptions given of that sphere of existence, are in strict accordance with the notions which such a person as the Psychic might be expected to entertain of it."

These views fall in with what we have heard from trustworthy sources, more especially from experiments made with the instrument called "Planchette." We cannot by them explain the messages of professional mediums, which for reasons above given seem rather to belong to jugglery and sign-reading. But such mental manifestations as come out in private "circles," readily group themselves under the head of a peculiar state of the medium's mind. The obvious difficulty that the Medium or Psychic is not conscious of thinking out the replies made, is only apparent. It is a case of what Dr. Carpenter terms "unconscious cerebration." The term is not entirely free from objection, and we prefer "An abnormal condition of the mind." Physiologists say that a partial congestion of the brain produces or accompanies such mental states. Certain constitutions are specially prone to these abnormal conditions, just as some possess marvellous facility for dislocating at will certain joints of the body. This places Psychism on a level with Somnambulism or Clairvoyance, and Mesmerism, which is a state of sleep-walking artificially produced for the purpose of Mesmeric exhibition. The startling details of these somnambolic states may be found in Sir W. Hamilton's Lectures on Metaphysics (Lect. XVIII.), and in Professor Porter's able work, "The Human Intellect," page 333 et seq., more fully. These standard authors being accessible to all, precludes the necessity for giving extracts. Suffice it to say, that none of the established phenomena of Spiritism, which are not the result of professional dexterity, exceed the case of the German servant girl recorded by Hamilton. And, in particular, these cases help us to understand what is the explanation of those instances in which the medium is astonished at the revelations made by "Planchette," or the table-tipping. The mind in its abnormal state is excited to unwonted exertion, and being concentrated upon a single point its workings surpass its normal power. The same feature is common to

insanity, to somnambulism, both natural and artificial, and to ordinary dreaming, but in a less degree. And this leads us in the last place to remark that, taking Mr. Cox's experiments as stated by him, they would locate, so to speak, the phenomena of Psychism in the Debatable Region, along with those of sleep-walking, somewhere between ordinary dreaming and insanity. The great authorities above cited point out the fact that normal consciousness is, as it were, separated from the clairvoyant or Mesmeric state by an opaque and impassible wall—the life of the man is bisected, to borrow the mathematical term, and between the two parts so divided there is no communication. He thinks one set of thoughts in one state, and another set in the other state, and is almost like two persons. This is most perfectly realised in the insane, but it also appears in sleep-walking, and more feebly in dreams. The *London Quarterly Review*, page 171, furnishes just such a case. At a private "circle," the spirit of Edward Young, the devout poet, had been called up—"Are you Edward Young, the poet?" "Yes." "If you are, repeat a line of your poems." He repeated, "Man was not made to question, but adore." "Is that in your 'Night-Thoughts?'" "No." "Where is it then?" The reply was, "JOB." None present knew the meaning, not being familiar with his poems. A gentleman purchased Young's Poems, (he was the medium, it would seem), and sure enough, found a paraphrase of Job, the last line of which was the quotation above given. How did it come to pass? The question was soon solved. He found out that he had Young's Poems in the house, and had read them so long ago, that he had forgotten it at the time. But examination convinced him that the line was a *latent* memory revived by the exercise of table-tipping, through the concentration of thought, and by a curiously obscure process.\*

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\*Friends have told us of the strange symptoms accompanying the use of "Planchette," even when there was no belief in the presence of spirits. One, a lady of fine intelligence was disordered in mind and body for two or three days. Another, one of the strongest men, mentally and physically, of our acquaintance, felt uneasy sensations about the head as if the brain were affected. This is easily comprehended upon the physiological doctrine of

Suffer us to repeat, that, as the friend of Christianity, and a firm believer in the Bible, we do not care a button which one of these explanations, if any, prevails. If with Faraday and the Reviewer, it be proven that all the alleged phenomena (except professional dexterity) be explained as "Unconscious Muscular Action"—very well. If with Messrs. Crookes & Cox the "Psychic Force" theory prevail—very well. Or if with the Spiritists we should be driven by stubborn facts from natural law to unembodied spirits—if, farther, the prior supposition of demon-spirits be proven untenable—in both of which the Spiritists have hitherto failed utterly, we think,—very well. What are these to Christianity, so long as reason teaches us that between the alleged phenomena of Spiritism, and the miraculous credentials of Christianity, there is no sort of parallel? Is any champion of the ghost-religion found, who seriously proposes to bring the case for arbitration before the bar of impartial reason? He is most heartily welcome to do so. "Truth's like a torch—the more it's shook, it shines." That man must have a slender acquaintance with the history of Christianity, its conflicts and triumphs, who dreads the issue. Will the champion of Spiritism desire to compare its physical phenomena—the tapping of walls and ceilings, the tipping of tables, obscure sounds and sensations, with the miracles by which Jehovah humbled the pride of Egypt, clave a highway through the sea, and led more than two millions of men, women and children, with cattle and baggage, through the pathless desert to Canaan? Let them have a care, lest, like their predecessors the Egyptian magicians, they come to a stop in the "matter of the lice." Do the advocates of Spiritism crave to measure their puny claims, of the "gift of healing," with the miracles of Jesus Christ and his apostles? with his healing paralysis and leprosy by a word or a touch, congenital

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a "partial congestion of the brain." And the general resemblances of this state to somnambulism, hallucination, and insanity, serve to suggest, in part at least, why dipping into Spiritism is so productive of mental disorder. The exhaustion of the "Psychic," as reported by Mr. Cox, points in the same direction. It is evidently imprudent for highly sensitive, nervous temperaments to be subjected to the trial.

blindness and insanity, caused by evil spirits, on the instant; and, greater than all, towering above even New Testament miracles, as Mont Blanc, "the Monarch of the Alps," above his snow-crowned brothers, the miracles of raising the dead, culminating in the resurrection of Christ and his ascension to heaven?—let them beware, lest like the seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, at Ephesus, they flee away naked to their shame. Would they ambitiously make comparison of the wisdom displayed in the teachings of Spiritism, with that revealed in the Bible? We dare them to do it. God shall frustrate the tokens of the liars, and make the diviners mad, turning their wisdom into foolishness. We point to that unparalleled record, standing out as a tall Pharos, amid a dark and tempestuous sea—revealing the God of Moses as compared with the Pantheistic idolatry, grovelling and bestial, of his native country, Egypt—the pure and holy worship maintained, despite frequent apostacies in Israel, while their kinsmen, the Edomites, the Syrians, and the Arabians were gross idolators. We point to the calm wisdom of Jesus and his apostles, pure, elevating, fathomless, and then call for the wisdom of Spiritism. What is it? The overwhelmingly important announcement of the date of one's birth and death already known to all whom it concerns: or milk and water speculations, full of mediæval superstitions and metaphysical nonsense about the "spiritual body," the spirit world and its inhabitants; or else, the ravings of insane Free-loveism, Fourierism, and Communism. And these offences against common-sense and decency perpetrated by journals, such as the *Banner of Light*, the acknowledged organs of Spiritism.\* By all means let this new champion of Spiritism make his débüt. Let this new "Knight of La Mancha" ride forth armed, cap-à-pie, in the defence of Spiritism, and then we shall wish for another personage, a second Cervantes to sing in fitting strains the more than Quixotic adventures of this gallant chevalier. Only let him get up something new in the shape of a book, for we are weary, *ad nauseam*,

\*We cannot lay our hands just now upon some choice specimens of this sort from blaspheming men, and from women devoid of shame, quoted from the *Banner of Light* in "Credo," with editorial endorsements.

of the rehashes given by strolling preachers of the new doctrine, of the stale crumbs which fall from the more opulent tables of the old-fashioned infidels—Hume, Voltaire, and Tom Paine—for which they forget to give credit. Let him produce one book or one chapter of a book which thinking men shall not despise, and we promise a fair field and fighting to his heart's content.

To our brethren in the ministry we add a humble suggestion. Wherever this baleful superstition appears, like scribes well instructed in the kingdom, let us bring forth from the treasury some of the safe old doctrines provided by divine mercy especially to meet the cravings of man's soul. We may not change one syllable of what God has spoken upon peril of our salvation. For the love of men, as well as for the fear of God, we will preach this Gospel as we have received it from faithful witnesses. Not a jot nor tittle will we abate of it at the demand of infidel Scientists, or of infidel religionists. But we may take hints from the leadings of Providence as to what particular doctrines are needed at this or that time—not to be distorted from their proper connections and proportions, but presented soberly as the Scripture supplies them, free from new-fangled metaphysics, or scientific crotchets of our own. Science may do a negative work of great value in lopping off the excrescences of foreign superstitions; but science, with her formulæ, her balances, her microscope, telescope, and spectroscope, cannot do the positive work of relieving man's conscience of its burden of sin, or revealing to him the better land, where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Let us tell these longing hearts of the great **HERE-AFTER** revealed in Scripture—of the spirit-world, with its good angels, its demons, its disembodied souls, the resurrection of the body, the last judgment, and the life everlasting. "Comfort ye one another with these words."