

# Strong Delusion;

or

## Modern Spiritualism in the Light of Science and Scripture

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We have two correspondents who are troubled to know the nature and origin of the phenomena upon which the modern and rapidly spreading system of spiritualism is based. They cannot believe in their genuineness in the face of the Bible, and yet they cannot satisfactorily explain them. One of them says:

“I have till now been quite content to ascribe the ‘manifestations’ partly to cupidity, partly to deception, and, perhaps, in a measure to a kind of mental aberration under certain circumstances; but if any credence is to be given to persons of well-known character in private life, there is more *fact* than I have been wont to believe, and if what they relate be true, our doctrine of the unconscious state is not true. There are many here, though not caring to talk much on the subject, who have witnessed the rappings and moving of tables and chairs; but one person in particular with whom I have conversed, somewhat reluctantly told me how far he had gone, and what he had met with. He is a consistent professor of the orthodox belief, and a man of good general capacity. His experience just lands him in wonder and surprise, without satisfaction. He has elicited replies of various characters, by which it would seem that the *real* earth character is preserved and manifested. ‘He that is holy, let him be holy still; he that is unjust, let him be unjust still,’ appears to have its verification. This person, while sitting with others when a certain person was present, Cardinal Wolsey was sure to come, his name being announced by raps, when the right letters of the alphabet were pointed to, spelling his name, and after many sittings they came to know who was coming by a peculiar motion of the table; but his communications were not at all dignified or courteous. Once he gave some information which the next post proved to be true; but he also told what was proved to be false, and generally concluded by telling my informant that he was to go to hell, and sometimes that he was to go to Rome. When asked if he could fetch anyone he liked, he said Yes, and often brought those asked for, and spelt out their names. Now these things were done without a ‘medium,’ through whom you may find room for many doubts, but simply take the fact that pieces of heavy furniture behave themselves in a way anything but consistent with their usual gravity, moving to many yards’ distance out of the room, and there for a time being immovable, then sporting about the room. I have been invited to witness some of these things by a family who have often produced these manifestations, but I stand too much in doubt of the propriety of such things to consent, much less adopt, ‘spiritualism’ as a religion, which thousands are doing, especially in America. But if we cannot take the Bible as a basis for our faith and practice, what foundation can there be in the misty jargon of the new faith? They say they have visions of unearthly splendour revealed to and through their ‘medium;’ that the Bible is an allegory, no more inspired than, nor so much, as the utterances of their clairvoyant seers, etc., etc. Again I revert to the main inquiry; clear away all that might be deemed of doubtful character, and all the rubbish, and still there are a few startling facts left. What do they mean, and what use can be made of them?”

Another writes:

May I ask “your opinion on what has already appeared to my mind the miracle of this age— ‘spiritu-

alism.’ My children are powerful mediums, whatever this word may mean. Certainly future events by the ‘Electric Table Telegram’ are known and told; some things are misty; some apparently never did come true; others did. I copy one message, taken letter for letter, and so to words, with young children.

“**Telegram Message**— ‘I am your Christian guide and King of kings—father, mother, husband, sister, brother—I am God of the fatherless and widow, friend of dear children, and of virtuous men, and of women who love my word. —Signed, Jesus.’

“What can it be which moves the table to such a result? In passing your finger over the alphabet, it moves *strongly* at each letter, which letters give the words which constitute the sentence. If you are wrong, the indication is given, and you return to the wrong spelling. The clergy say it is the unclean spirits working miracles to deceive, under the sixth seal, with signs and lying miracles: and this is the devil which your appendix at once beholds. Can you help as many as are running about with their candles half lit, and their lamps scarcely burning. What was sorcery? Some say this is it; but the messages are so beautiful. The fruit is so good, can it come from a corrupt tree? Napoleon is, as they say, a confirmed spiritualist.”

The doubts and enquiries contained in the foregoing communications, will doubtless occur to most minds, at the stage of only partial acquaintance with the subject. A close examination will dispel misgiving, and replace the Bible in the position of glorious pre-eminence from which it is sought by the system in question, to be driven. Spiritualism is a joint product of natural ignorance and religious superstition. This may be a harsh verdict; but it is justified by the evidence which we propose to submit, in the shape of an article republished from the *Herald of the Kingdom and the Age to Come*, (July number, 1852), edited by Dr. Thomas. Immortal soulism is its great parent. If men had not believed in the existence of disembodied human ghosts, they would have asked and found some other explanation of table-rappings, etc., than the one embodied in spiritualism. If there are immortal souls, it is only natural to suppose that after death, they would make some attempt to communicate with surviving relatives. Orthodoxy can make no reasonable objection to spiritualism in this aspect of the question. It is rather strange than not that deceased persons, if still alive, should make no sign after the method invented by spiritualism. Spiritualism is only orthodoxy made consistent: the one leads to the other. There would have been no spiritualism if there had been no immortal soulism; and when immortal soulism, stripped of its pretensions and exhibited in its naked deformity as a speculation of Pagan thinkers, whose wisdom Paul declares to have been foolishness with God— (1 Cor. 3:19), spiritualism takes rank among the degrading superstitions that have marked the history of human ignorance.

Scripturally, the system is at once and for ever annihilated by the divine rule supplied to Israel for the test of all such pretenders in ancient days: “Seek not unto *wizards that peep and mutter*; should not a nation **seek unto their God?** for the living to the dead? *To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word*, it is because there is no light in them.” — (Isaiah 8:20). The modern “spirits,” as our readers have evidence in the first of our correspondent’s letters, not only speak not according to the law and the testimony, but they actually speak against them, declaring them to be a human fiction! It is as well to see the issue. The choice lies between the oracles of God, historically verified in a hundred ways, and the ambiguous nonsense decocted from inanimate furniture by the electrical fluid of the misguided people who assemble in dark chambers, to worship at the shrine of their own hearts. The fact that the majority choose the latter in preference to the former, is easily accounted for. That which appeals to the senses is easier to apprehend, and pleasanter to receive, than that which requires an act of the understanding; and when the views or lessons accompanying those appeals to sense, are in harmony with the natural likings, which the teachings of wisdom run counter to, the dead weight of natural bias is thrown into the scale, and the result is inevitable. This is the case with the question before us. The “manifestations” of spiritualism are to be seen

and heard; while the Bible only sets forth a record of what has been, and what God declares shall be, leaving us to decide, by intellectual process, whether in view of the state of affairs in the world, its historical record is true; whether, in the light of its own composition it is not worthy to be received, and whether, in view of all things, it is reasonable to put faith in the promises of God. Now with the low state of mental organization that prevails, this is a very difficult and unrelishable task for the majority, while the other is easy and exciting. Then, the teaching of the Bible is distasteful to the fleshly mind. It places God first, obedience next, and human welfare in subordination to both. Spiritualism, on the other hand, inculcates doctrine highly agreeable to the fleshly palate. It discards God, enthrones pleasure, clears the universe for the creature, and opens a boundless prospect of progress on the democratic basis. The popularity of spiritualism is no mystery, in view of these facts.

Scientifically, spiritualism, like its mother orthodoxy, begins by begging the question. The table moves: it does not ask the cause of its motion; it affirms it is attributable to the presence of "spirits." Symptoms of intelligence are exhibited; it does not ask, as a scientific question to be pursued scientifically, what is the source of this intelligence—living brains in the "circle?" living brains elsewhere *en rapport* with the circle, through the conducting medium of the atmosphere, or any property in the apparatus? It *affirms* that the intelligence proceeds from disembodied spirits, presumed to enter the room at the bidding of the "medium." Everything is assumed. The whole theory is an assumption from beginning to end. The *facts*, in most cases, are undoubted; but the question is, what is the explanation of the facts? This question was proposed for discussion, some years ago, between two of the most capable of living men (one since dead) to discuss such a question, viz., Mr. Faraday, the great experimental philosopher and electrician, and Mr. Home, a leader among the spiritualists, whose name has recently been prominent in our law courts in connection with a case that has not brought him any increase of reputation. The origin and upshot of the proposal will best be learned from the following cutting from the *Morning Star*, of May 12th, 1868.

"In 1861, it seems Sir Emerson Tennent was anxious that Mr. Faraday should investigate personally, certain of the phenomena reported to have occurred in the presence of Mr. Home. Mr. Faraday had long before, as we all know, expressed his opinion on the general subject, and declared his conviction that the 'phenomena' were due to involuntary muscular action. He felt a profound contempt for the whole thing, for which we are by no means inclined to blame him; and he seems to have been a little annoyed at the attempt to draw him again into what he considered ridiculous and futile investigations. It is likely that if Professor Owen were invited to lecture on and dissect Barnum's Woolly Horse, he might reply somewhat tartly; it is not improbable that Sir John Herschel would chafe at being invited gravely to investigate Parallax's theories about the shape of the earth and its relations to the planetary system. Mr. Faraday did reply, in language which was not encouraging. He prescribed certain conditions which it would have been utterly impossible for Mr. Home, whether that gentleman be the apostle of a new science, or a mere pretender and humbug, to accept. In fact, Mr. Home was invited, as a condition precedent to Faraday's entering on the investigation, to acknowledge that the phenomena, however produced, were ridiculous and contemptible. He was also required to pledge himself to the most entire, open, and complete examination—a condition which, of course, Mr. Faraday knew quite well Mr. Home could never accept. So the gentleman who was apparently acting for Mr. Home—we believe, the late Mr. Robert Bell—declined going any further; and it does not appear that Mr. Home was particularly consulted in the matter at all. At the present moment, Mr. Tyndall offers to investigate the phenomena, but he offers to do so 'in the spirit of Mr. Faraday's letter;' and, of course, Mr. Home replies that 'as such spirit not that of logic, nor according to the true scientific method,' he declines to lend any aid to the enquiry. And there the matter ends, as it always has ended and always must end.

“We confess we think the scientific men look rather foolish when they get into such controversies at all. Does Mr. Tyndall really suppose there is the faintest chance of his being allowed to investigate Mr. Home’s ‘phenomena’ as he would inquire into a new astronomical or chemical discovery? If Mr. Home be not the sincere and supernaturally endowed personage he claims to be, then, of course, the idea would be out of the question. But if he be, it is hardly more reasonable. The manifestations, according to him will not take place, cannot anyhow be got to take place, under the conditions, which are absolutely essential to ordinary scientific inquiry. If somebody claims to have discovered a new planet, how does he go about establishing the genuineness of his claim? He says, ‘Here is my telescope, look through it—here are my calculations, take them and test them in any way you will—here is my note of the perturbations the planet’s presence produces, of the orbit in which it moves. You have, besides the evidence of the glass, a hundred different ways of putting my claim to the proof. I only beg of you to be patient, and try them all.’ So of everything else that science can inquire into.....

“But Mr. Home’s revelation is something quite different. He does not even profess to know anything about it. The manifestations may come or they may not; they generally come in the dark; they rather often don’t come when any sceptical people are present; there is no way of telling beforehand whether they are likely to come or not. Now it is obvious, or ought to be, that such manifestations, whatever they come from, may defy scientific inquiry. Science had much better let them alone. You might as well start a scientific inquiry into the probable purpose of Mr. Home’s dreams the night after tomorrow. As yet, the spiritual manifestations have not added much to the world’s stock of knowledge on any subject relating to the here or the hereafter. If ever they do come to tell us anything worth knowing, we may be sure they will by that time offer themselves in a manner which will bear the most rigid investigation. Till then we would have the scientific men go their own way, mind their own business, and trouble themselves not with spiritualism.”

The following is the letter by Mr. Faraday, referred to in the foregoing remarks; it is republished in the *Morning Advertiser*, of May 12, from the *Pall Mall Gazette*:

“Folkestone, June 14, 1861.

My dear Sir Emerson,—I cannot help feeling that you are indiscreet in your desire to bring me into contact with the occult phenomena which it is said are made manifest in Mr. Home’s presence. I have investigated such in former times, during some years, and as much as I thought consistent with the self-respect that an experimental philosopher owes to himself. It would be a condescension on my part to pay any more attention to them now; and I can only do so under the persuasion that all concerned wish to have the phenomena unraveled and understood, and will do all they can to aid in such a result. To settle whether I can go or not, I wish to put to you the following points: (1) Who wishes me to go? —to whose house? —for what purpose? (2) Does Mr. Home wish me to go? (3) Is he willing to investigate as a philosopher, and as such, to have no concealments, no darkness, to be open in communication, and to aid inquiry all that he can? (4) Does he make himself responsible for the effects, and identify himself more or less with their cause? (5) Would he be glad if their delusive character were established or exposed, and would he gladly help to expose it, or would he be annoyed and personally offended? (6) Does he consider the effects natural or supernatural? If natural, what are the laws which govern them? or does he think they are not subject to laws? If supernatural, does he suppose them to be miracles, or the work of spirits? If the work of spirits, would an insult to the spirits be considered as an insult to himself? (7) If the effects are miracles, or the work of spirits, does he admit the utterly contemptible character, both of them and their results, up to the present

time, in respect either of yielding information or instruction, or supplying any force or action of the least value to mankind? (8) If they be natural effects without natural law, can they be of any use or value to mankind? (9) If they be the glimpses of natural action not yet reduced to law, ought it not to be the duty of every one who has the least influence in such actions personally to develop them, and aid others in their development by the utmost openness and assistance, and by the application of every critical method, either mental or experimental, which the mind of man can devise? I do not wish to give offense to any one, or to meddle with this subject again. I lost much time about it formerly, in hopes of developing some new force or power, but found nothing worthy of attention. I can only look at it now, as a natural philosopher; and, because of the respect due to myself, will not enter upon any further attention or investigation, unless those who profess to have a hold upon the effects, agree to aid to the uttermost. To this purpose they must consent (and desire) to be as critical upon the matter and full of test investigation in regard to the subject as any natural philosopher is in respect of the germs of his discoveries. How could electricity—that universal spirit of matter—ever have been developed in its relations to chemical action, to magnetic action, to its application in the explosion of mines, the weaving of silk, the extension of printing, the electro-telegraph, the illumination of lighthouses, etc., except by rigid investigation, grounded on the strictest critical reasoning, and the most exact and open experiment? and if these so-called occult manifestations are not utterly worthless, they must and will pass through a like ordeal. As I do not want to debate this matter with those who have already made up their minds in a direction contrary to my own, but (if I see sufficient reason) only to work it out with such a desire to find incontrovertible proofs, independent of opinion or assertion, so I wish you would show this letter to Mr. Home, and those who want me to meet him on his own ground; after which you will know whether you should persevere in asking me. You will understand that I decline to meet any whose minds are not at liberty to investigate according to the general principles I have here expressed. Ever, my dear Sir Emerson, your very faithful servant,

**M. Faraday.”**

We now propose to introduce our readers to an article by Dr. Thomas, published, as already stated, sixteen years ago, in the *Herald of the Kingdom and the Age to Come*, in which spiritualism is exposed, with the relentless acumen of a mind well exercised in the discernment of things new and old. Both the scriptural and scientific aspects of the question are exhibited with a clearness and a fullness that leaves nothing to be done, and that, we should imagine, will speedily put to flight any lingering uneasiness that may be felt by those who, notwithstanding their acceptance of the truth, are perplexed with the signs and lying wonders of the great delusion. The following is the article, which from the exigencies of space, we shall have to divide into two parts:--

# Odology;

or

## Theological Mesmerism, Witchcraft Revived Anew

The following correspondence will serve to introduce the subject which we have styled *Odology*, the derivation of which we shall give hereafter, when we come to treat upon the suggestions it contains.

Dear Sir:

I think you have done the “spirits” too much honor in explaining their “rappings” on philosophical principles. I believe they are a set of knaves, and their “rappings” and “tappings” mere tricks of legerdemain. I have seen the “Wizard of the North” perform many more surprising.

E.Q.M.

England, May 1852

Dear Sir:

In the “*Herald*,” for April, is a short notice of the remarkable phenomenon which is now attracting so much notice in the Northern States, under the name of “Spiritual Manifestations.” Your correspondent [see Endnote #1, page 20] selected a very poor specimen as the subject of his communication. There are hundreds of “*mediums*” in this region; and most of them are persons whose character for integrity has hitherto been unimpeachable. Their answers are often surprising to all who hear; and present the strongest argument for the existence of spirit separate from matter, that I have ever seen. For instance, two gentlemen called at one of these *Circles* in a city where they were entire strangers; and where they stayed but a couple of hours. They went into the room where “the circle” was already “getting responses.” One of them asked if he might put questions at once, as he was going out in the next train. Permission was given; and in answer to his questions, he got in a few minutes all his past history, many circumstances of which he thought were only known to himself; and others which had been carefully limited to a small circle of his intimate friends. The other gentleman was almost equally successful; but one or two mistakes were made in their answers to him. The first gentleman had *all* his questions answered correctly and promptly, though some of them were asked mentally, and others by writing on a card, (taking great care to conceal what was written from every person,) and then pointing to a written question, (keeping the card out of sight,) he was at once answered, and always correctly. I might tell you a multitude of such instances, where there could be no collusion, and no dishonesty.

And now, brother, I will give you to understand why I take the liberty of troubling you with this statement. I do not believe that these are the works of “disembodied spirits;” for I believe in no such existences. But what are they? These things *are facts*. How are they to be accounted for? They seem to come into direct collision with views I have for years entertained, as you well know. But I must be able to explain them, *at least to myself*. I have exchanged farms with a man who was a “medium,” and became crazy by it-- “possessed of the Devil,” he says; and he is a very honest man. There are *forty* of these mediums in the village of Battle Creek near here; and there are some in this neighborhood. Do you read any of the papers that are devoted to this subject? I wish you could read the past

volumes of "*The Spirit World*," published in Boston by Le Roy Sunderland. There are startling facts in it. Now, what I want to say is that this new delusion, is the most dangerous one you have ever been called upon to meet. The whole system promulgated in your writings goes down, if the claims put forth by these spirit-mongers are established. And it seems to me more important that you should attack and demolish this new opposition than that you should defend your position against any and all others. If you do not take up this subject and do it justice, you must not be surprised if your subscribers in these vicinities, where these things abound, fall away.

And now I am upon this subject, let me propound a few questions, which have been put to me by believers in separate spirit existences:

1. How do you account for the forms seen by the disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration? It is claimed that the souls or spiritual bodies of Moses and Elijah were seen there.
2. How did the Lord's body, after resurrection, appear suddenly, and as suddenly vanish out of sight? Will it be so with our bodies in the resurrection? And why was he never seen except by the disciples?
3. What did the young man with Elisha see? And what was done to him to enable him to see? What was that sight of the patriarchs and prophets which enabled them to see angels?
4. Where was Paul caught up to, when he says he was taken into the third heaven? Where is the heaven of angels; and could Paul's body be taken to it?
5. What does the Lord mean by his argument against the Sadducees? If Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are *already risen*, the argument seems to me merely a catch, and dishonest.

I send you some numbers of a Swedenborgian paper which is sent to me; and call your attention to some passages by pencil marks. I remain, truly your brother, in the Hope of the Kingdom and Age to Come,

John B. Hoxie.  
Marshall, Calhoun, Michigan,  
May 19th, 1852

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Professor Reichenbach, in his experiments on certain crystals, and persons, through the *medium* of highly sensitive individuals, has ascertained that a fluid of a blue and yellow color, more subtle than electricity, is thrown off from the poles of the crystals, and from the ends of the fingers. It is not visible to persons in a normal state of the nervous system, which is adapted only to the perception of ordinary phenomena; but when the brain is exalted beyond what is usual, though short of actual insanity, things invisible to others are perceived, pertaining to this highly attenuated or rarified exhalation, which is probably the electro-magnetic fluid reduced to an *aura* by the peculiar atomic organization of the bodies from which it is given off. On this fluid Reichenbach has bestowed the name of OD; I suppose for the same reason that Dr. Faraday styles the electrical poles *electrods* (electrodes) from *electron*, amber, (by the friction of which electricity was first artificially discerned) and *odos*, a way--the poles being regarded merely as the doors or ways by which electricity passes. The *od* is the boundary of the decomposing matter in the direction of the electric current. Reichenbach's fluid passes off at the *ods* or poles; and as he regards it as something else than electricity, magnetism, or galvanism, he calls it by another name, even the Greco-chemical term for the extremity from which it exhales.

I have styled this article *Odology* (from *logos* a discourse and *od*) or discourse upon Od. Not that I am going to discuss the subject of Od reichenbachically; but believing that the phenomena referred to in the foregoing communication are Odistic, if any thing, I have chosen to denominate what I have to say upon the subject by *Odology*, rather than by Pneumatology, Psychology, or any other word which concedes the unproved and unprovable affirmation of the existence of supposed dead men's ghosts disembodiedly.

The electro-magnetic od is constantly passing off from the electrodes, or poles, of animal bodies and certain crystals. It is probable that our bodies are enveloped with a halo of it, for every thing has its halo according to the following testimony. "It is well known," says Mrs. Griffiths, "that around and adhering to all surfaces there is a *halo of demi-transparent light*, seen only, however, when the object for experiment is in a certain position with regard to the eye and the light which falls on it. This halo is not dependent on any peculiarity of color or material, for it encompasses every object in nature, whether it belong to the animal, vegetable, or mineral kingdom; whether it be square or round, black or white, opaque or transparent, solid or fluid." (Silliman's Journal, Jan. 1st, 1840.) The halo of our bodies, it is probable, consists of Reichenbach's odic fluid the color of which is visible to those who are highly odic, or in a state in which the *od* is abundantly generated. It is of a delicate blue when given off from the positive electrode, and yellow from the negative pole of crystal. From the fingertips of a male subject it exhales of a blue color about an inch long; but from those of a female the jet is inconsiderable, imparting, as it were, a luminousness to their extremities.

From grave yards this odic exhalation is abundant. It has been seen to cover a necropolis to a depth of four feet, as a lambent blue haze. This is doubtless the fluid generated by the decomposing animal matter beneath the sod. Like phantom-ships at sea, produced by refraction of the light reflected on the firmament from real ships, *phantom appearances* are sometimes seen by sensitive nervous systems, produced by refraction of the odic rays in and upon the mirror formed by the magnetic halo of the earth, which emanate from the *forms* corrupting in the dust thereof. These phantoms (in Greek styled *phantasma* [Matt. 14:26; according to Griesbach, Luke 24: 37, 39, should read *phantasma*, not *pneuma*.] are called "*separate*," or "*disembodied spirits*," by the ignorant and superstitious, under the supposition that they are the real men and women, boys and girls, who used to enact life's follies in the flesh! They are, no doubt, as real as phantom-ships; and as awfully mysterious to the unphilosophical and scripturally-unenlightened, as they are to the untutored barbarians of the fore-castle. But real as the phantom-ship spectres are, who would be so crazy as to maintain that they are the souls or spirits of the ships which gave them motion over the dark blue sea! Or that they are the disembodied ghosts of the vessels caught up to the third heavens! Yet this would be just as rational, as the psychological theosophisms of the schools, pulpits, and "circles," about souls, ghosts, and spirit-worlds.

There are a few discoveries in electrical science worth knowing in connection with this subject. Professor Moser, as the result of his researches in Thermography, remarks that "*all bodies radiate light even in complete darkness*." Again, he says, "the rays of this light act as ordinary light;" and that "two bodies constantly impress their images on each other even in complete darkness." Thermographic experiments prove these principles, and lead him to the conclusion that there is *latent light* in certain vapors as well as latent heat. The ordinary condition of the human brain, and organs supplied by its nerves, is that of adaptation to the common exterior aspect of imponderable matters, such as light, heat, the grosser forms of electricity, sound, etc. But there is a more exalted or refined perception of these things which the animal organization of its own power, however intensified by inherent excitation, cannot attain to. Our perception of the *latent imponderables*, latent light, latent heat, latent electricity or *od*, latent sounds, etc., may be rendered more acute than ordinary; but it can never rise to the highest penetration which is possible, without the superaddition of something which the animal nature possesses only to a very limited degree. This something is "*the spirit of God without measure*" (John 3:34). All living animals have it in some degree; for "in God"



they “live, and move, and have their being;” and if He were to “gather unto himself *His spirit and His breath*, all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust”. (Job 34:14, 15). This minimum possession of God’s spirit, possessed by quadrupeds and man, is just sufficient for the purposes of that peculiar constitution of things we call “*this life*,” but for the physical perception of things visible to beings of a more refined organization than ours, the sight of which will be vouchsafed at a future time, called “the world to come,” the present amount of spirit is not sufficient. This can do for man what is proved, and what may yet be proved; but not what is randomly affirmed. He is not ordinarily in harmony with the latent imponderables; but God is intensely and completely so. Hence “the darkness and the light are both alike to him.” If a man was imprisoned in darkness a thousand feet below the earth’s surface, God would see him as distinctly, as we see each other above ground in the light of noonday. Men *profess* to believe this; but upon what principle is it that God sees thus in darkness? Because His nature, every atom of which is, as it were, condensed lightning, glowing with such an intensity, that its radiation is felt throughout the boundless universe, penetrating through all substances, and developing life and motion in all things, from the minutest animalcule to the globe of the vastest magnitude. Hence He is called “light,” and “a consuming fire.” The rays from His presence, called spirit, diluted with the grosser menstrea of the earth’s products, place Him in inner relation to the imponderables, which are but one and the same principle, variously developed by the media through which it passes into the receptacle whence it came. Thus, for instance, the most subtle principle of the earth’s halo is spirit, which is called by different names, such as, electricity, magnetism, etc. This halo is its reservoir, as it were. It is diluted with atmospheric air. We breathe it. It pervades every atom of our bodies; and having enabled our organization to perform its functions, it exhales from the electrodes of our system as *Od* into the reservoir where we derived it by breathing. Thus a circle or circuit exists of the external atomic form changing fluid, internal transformed matter, and nervous current, closing the circuit by *Od* (latent light radiating in darkness) exhaling into the outer fluid.

Now this outer reservoir of fluid may be regarded as a highly polished and extremely sensitive mirror, in which can be excited latent *odic spectres*, which become visible sometimes to those whose brains are subjected to *odic exaltation*. The spectral impressions may emanate from corrupting bodies, mineral or other substances, and from living brains acting upon other living brains. Reichenbach’s graveyard experiments have demonstrated the first; thermo-electrography the second; and animal magnetism, in all its varieties, the third.

We may adduce here a philosophical experiment, illustrative of what we mean by latent spectral impressions. Take a piece of polished metal, glass, or japanned tin, the temperature of which is low, and having laid upon it a wafer, coin, or any other such object, breathe upon the surface; allow the breathe entirely to disappear; then toss the object off the surface and examine it minutely; *no trace of any thing is visible*, yet a spectral impression exists on that surface, which may be *evoked by breathing upon it*. *A form resembling the object at once appears*, and, what is very remarkable, it may be called forth many times in succession, and *even at the end of months*. Other instances of the kind have been subsequently described by M. Moser. (Draper’s Text Book of Chemistry, p. 97)

M. Karsten placed a coin on a piece of plate glass, which being supported by a plate of metal not insulated, and the sparks from the conductor of an electrifying machine were made to strike on the coin, thereby causing them to pass simultaneously through the coin and the metallic plate. After one hundred turns of the machine, the coin was removed; *the glass plate appeared perfectly unaltered*, (the ghost was invisible,) but *when breathed upon*, a perfect impression of the coin in its most minute details *became visible*.

M. Karsten says, that the impression is not produced *by traces of the electric fluid remaining adherent* to the glass plate; because the impression still remains with great distinctness after all traces of electricity

have disappeared, after the glass has been wiped with a handkerchief. And again, these impressions are neither destroyed nor even weakened by passing a stream of the opposite electricity over them. (Fisher's Photogenic Manipulation, Part 2, p. 39, 42-46.)

From these experiments we see, that *a thing may exist, and yet be invisible*. Furthermore, that *by breathing upon the thing impressed, things hidden may be manifested*; thirdly that this can be effected *at the end of months*; and fourthly, that *unseen, but real impressions of words and figures, can be made on surfaces by electricity*, and afterwards made visible by breathing. These principles are scientific demonstrations. And pray what is science? It is knowledge. Human knowledge or science, when it is really knowledge, consists of the little men have discovered—the few *general facts* they have found obtaining in the universe; and more especially in this terrestrial system, in relation to the earth, its substances, and man upon it. Men know but little of the laws to which God has subjected His earth and the things belonging to it, compared with what remains to be discovered or revealed. The most scientific of men are comparatively very ignorant. Their knowledge of general facts is exceedingly limited; and their reasonings upon them, and their deductions very often, more often than otherwise, remarkably illogical, and singularly absurd. The wisest among them are free to confess this. And if the wise be fools, in science, how grossly ignorant and foolish must the multitude be, which troubles not itself with general facts, right reason, or scientific principles at all! And yet it is the ignorant who undertake to draw conclusions from data the most recondite, and pronounce the Bible a cheat, if it teach not according to what they have predetermined it ought to teach. But after all, the multitude is not so much to blame for this as their guides. Like priests, like people. The theosophist reasons out from insufficient data a crude theory which pleases his fleshly mind, and then goes to the Bible to cull sounding epithets to sanctify it; instead of allowing God's holy word to teach him as a babe, and then to prove all things by its rule. This procedure is emphatically the folly of our age. All classes are guilty of it; and in consequence, rush headlong to the adoption of theories which destroy the truth, and stultify themselves.

General facts are the laws by and through which God sustains all things and operates upon them. By these laws a relationship is established between Him and man, who is subjected to their operation in common with minerals and vegetables. Thus, electricity acts uniformly whatever the nature of the thing acted upon; the products of that action vary according to the medium through which it acts. Like electricities repel, and unlike ones attract, whether minerals, vegetables, clouds, or animal substances, be the subject of their power.

When God speaks to man He speaks electrically, that is, *by His Spirit*; for electricity is the term *science* has bestowed upon what the Bible styles *Spirit*. All physical phenomena are produced by the spirit acting according to laws peculiar to it, a very few of which are found scattered about in works of science. When the Creator wills to speak, He does it by the same spirit that shivers the sturdy oak, or rends the rocks asunder. Sometimes He communicates His mind by making direct spectral impressions on the magnetic mirror of the brain. In this case a man in his sleep *sees* objects and *hears* sounds that have no real existence; but are representative of realities past, present, or future. These are the dreams and visions of the prophets. Sometimes, He speaks mediately, but still electrically, as through Jesus Christ to his apostles, whose method we will look into briefly in connection with the principles brought out in M. Karsten and Dr. Draper's experiments.

Things, ideas, or images may exist upon the brain's tablet, or sensorium, and yet be invisible; that is, not be recollected by the individual who received them; and consequently invisible to all other persons from his inability to utter them. Though thus invisible, the ideas are nevertheless existent, and actually present within. They exist, however, in the state of *latent spectral impressions*, and in order to be evoked, or made visible, they need *to be breathed upon* by the same principle that impressed them upon the sensorium. Now

the sensoria, or magnetic mirrors, or minds, of the apostles had been prepared, (Luke 1:17) or highly polished (to speak artistically) by the process they had undergone by the ministry of John the Baptizer. They were in that state which is represented by the polished metal, or glass, in Dr. Draper's experiment, ready for the coin to be impressed upon it. Jesus came, *the medium* through which the Father operated in word and deed (John 5:30). He spoke the words, laying them, so to speak, like coin upon the polished tablets of their hearts; while the Father, who performed the miracles, passed by their effect the electricity of his spirit, as it were, through the words and their sensoria, stamping impressions there after the illustration of M. Karsten's experiment with the electrifying machine. "I can of mine own self do nothing," said the Lord Jesus; "the Father is in me. The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." This proves what we have said; that Jesus was the Father's medium through whom, by his spirit, He operated on men's minds by words confirmed by miracles, in strict accordance with the laws illustrated by the experiments before us.

The apostles saw and heard many things during their attendance on the instructions of the Great Teacher, which continued to *the end of months*, as hidden spectral impressions upon their sensoria, but which were afterwards evoked in lines of living light. They saw Jesus ride into Jerusalem on an ass's colt as predicted by Zechariah. But one of them referring to it says, "These things understood not his disciples at the first; *but when Jesus was glorified*, then *remembered* they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him." (John 12:16). They knew what was written in the prophet, and they saw what the people did on the occasion referred to, but their knowledge was a latent spectre until made manifest some time after at the glorification of Jesus. But what happened then by which these latent spectral impressions were evoked? *The Spirit was breathed upon them* after the illustration contained in Dr. Draper's experiment. But why were they not evoked before Jesus was glorified? For the reason assigned by John, in speaking of the gift of the spirit—"The Holy Spirit," says he, "was not yet given: because that Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39). Speaking of his teachings, Jesus said to them, "These things have I told you, that *when the time shall come, ye may remember* that I told you of them. When the spirit of the truth is come, it will guide you into all the truth: It shall glorify me" (John 16:4, 13, 14). The glorification in this sense was the receiving things concerning Jesus, and showing them to the apostles—evoking the impressions already existing, and communicating new ones, as evinced in their writings. In this way they were glorified as well as Jesus; for receiving the spirit of the truth, it became in them as a fountain of living streams; thus, "whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Rom. 8:30). The Lord Jesus was glorified in a certain sense, after his resurrection, before he was received up into glory; and therefore before he ascended he gave a measure of the spirit to his apostles—not a full charge as on Pentecost, but a sufficient charge, so to speak, to evoke the hidden spectral impressions, the effect of which electrification is seen in their words and actions, between the ascension and Pentecost, compared with those before the crucifixion. In bringing out these impressions he proceeded as in Karsten and Draper's experiments with the coins; for the apostle says, "*He breathed upon them* and said, *Labete pneuma hagion*, Receive ye holy spirit;" and from that time they had authority to remit sin.

Man was made in the image and likeness of God. Or, as David saith, *watkhasseraihu meat maielohim*, thou hast made him to fall short a little of the Elohim, (Psa. 8:5) or angels. He is, therefore, like to them in form, and capable of similar manifestations; but he falls short of their perfection of beauty, strength, and electrical or spiritual exaltation. The Elohim, gods, or angels, are not spectral impressions, any more than men and women are, though they can make such impressions. They are ponderables, occupying space that can not be occupied by another body at the same time. They are not ghosts, or disembodied winged phantoms, through which you may sweep your arm as through a shadow, and leave them undivided. They are bodies of a nature capable of corporealizing a thunderbolt without deterioration or hazard of destruction.

Hence they can walk in the glowing furnace unaffected, as can they also whom they choose to mantle in a halo of their spirit (Dan. 3:25; Isa. 33:14-15). They can eat and drink, and do eat and drink material substances; (Gen. 18:8) and have feet that can be handled and washed as the feet of men. "Let a little water, I pray you," said Abraham to three of them, "be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. And they said, *So do*, as thou hast said." The popular notions about angels are mere superstition. Disembodied spirits with wings are spectral impressions made by *odic emanations* from innate human folly on the unpolished sensoria of the ignorant. Winged heads of chubby babies, peeping out of clouds on the margin of inner glory, are spectres of minds bewitched, or crazed, by the "philosophy and vain deceit" of theosophical magicians, and prophets of "the Spirit-World"—a world of electro-magnetic spectralia. Such angels as the people's heads are filled with flourish there, and only there; and the darker the intellect the more vividly are they seen in all *their* glory. Hence fanatics, worshippers of dead men's ghosts (called by them "saints") and angels, see more phantoms of the kind than the less intensely foolish; others on their deathbeds, when sometimes their sensoria are more than ordinarily excited, and their latent spectral impressions become vivid, have visions of such angels and even hear, as men hear in dreams, celestial music, and invitations to depart and come to Jesus!! Hence error stamps the sensorium as indelibly as truth can do; and confirms itself with falsehood in the article of death.

The angels of Jehovah [Editor's note: Yahweh] do His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word (Psa.103:20). By His spirit, through them, He shapes the course of human affairs that they may arrive at an appointed end, when Jesus and the resurrected saints--*isangeloi* -- "equal to the angels," no longer falling a little short of them, will assume the government of the world. These noble and glorified men, real, not phantom, spirits, cannot be evoked at the will and pleasure of railway travelers, and *circles* of backwoods sectarians, and consulters of the dead! How prostrate must be the human mind in this truly heathen land to succumb to such a conceit! Honest they may be as honesty goes; but Oh the inexpressible ignorance of the Divine Testimony such pagan practices display! "Should not a people seek unto God? Should they seek to the dead in behalf of the living? To the Law and the Testimony if they speak not according to the word, it is because there is no light in them." This is the unerring rule. The consulters of the dead do not obtain answers according to this word; though they do according to the latent spectral impressions on the minds of their "*mediums*," and those who consult or seek to know through them. There is therefore no divine truth to be extracted from their answers; the truth they have is only an evocation of what exists in the mind of man. The things I advocate are matters of divine testimony and reason. They need not demand confirmation from the spectral impressions, visible or invisible, of "mediums," ignorant of the first principles of the oracles of God. Granting that all they say they see and hear in *their* "Spirit World" is really seen and heard, it militates not one iota against any thing *proved* by the testimony of God. They see and hear nothing but what begins and ends in the carnal mind. Everything they reproduce is the mere magnetic reflection of human action, or human thought, from the sensorium of the medium: or the magnetic mirror, lake, sea, or reservoir, in which we exist like fish in the teeming waters.

A prophet, one of the apostle John's brethren, (perhaps Enoch or Elijah) was sent as an angel to him in Patmos. He was sent to show him future things (Rev. 22:8, 9; 1:19), which then had no existence, and many of them at present also have none, *except in the mind of God*. There the underived archetypes of them exist, and no one could see them there, unless he was placed *en rapport* with the Divine mind. When this should be effected, he could behold them there in all their wonderful symbolization glowing on the Divine Sensorium. No one, however, was allowed to gaze upon this manifestation proximately, but Jesus. Hence, the Apocalypse is styled "the revelation which God gave to Jesus Christ," that He might communicate it to His servants on earth. In doing this, He sent an angel, called "His angel," who was qualified to *signify it* to John, that he might write a description of it to Christ's servants. Now, in signifying it to John, the angel had

to present visible spectral impressions before the apostle—to Daguerreotype his sensorium in the camera obscura of his brain with the objects transferred from the mind of the Father to the Lord Jesus, and then to the angel. This was effected by the spirit shining upon the divine scenery, and being thence reflected upon John's sensorium, "shining into his heart to give him the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ:" and all the angel had to do to accomplish this, was to place John *en rapport* with himself; so that the spirit passing from him to John would transfer the spectral impressions to him, and make him clairvoyant. The circle being completed the spiritual current circulated through the group; and John records the fact, saying, "I was in the spirit, and heard behind me a great trumpet voice"— "he that hath ears to understand let him hear what *the Spirit* saith."

Now man being made in the likeness of the angels, can imitate them, without knowing it, in many things, only in an imperfect manner. The Quaker "light within" can be made to shine with latent or *odic light* upon the sensorium of a prepared "medium." "If the *light within* you be darkness, how great is that darkness!" This is the character of the Quaker "light," which that sect teaches every man brings with him into the world! It is the electro-magnetic halo of the sensorium, stamped in after life with all sorts of spectral impressions, according to the teaching the pupil may happen to receive. Now take two such persons, and make one a "medium," called formerly a wizard or a witch, and the other a consulter of the dead through him, or her. In preparing the medium, you have preternaturally exalted, or rendered unusually sensitive, the sensorium—you have so highly polished the plate as to prepare it to receive impressions—its electromagnetic halo is susceptible of the most delicate touches. Now place the seeker to the dead *en rapport* with the medium and cause to pass from his sensorium a current of whatever you choose to call it—electricity, magnetism, od, or what not. This done, there is a connection established between them which unites the halos of the two; so that even the hidden spectral impressions of the seeker are daguerreotyped on the sensorium of the medium, and the witch sees and hears in dream-sight and dream-sound, things which the seeker may have himself forgotten. But the relationship established is not limited to the seeker and the witch; through her it extends to all she knows, and through them to others, and reacting upon herself; and so through the seeker to all the ramifications of his acquaintanceship, both living and dead. He says, "Bring me up Samuel!" And Samuel vividly depicted on the sensorium of the seeker, appears also evoked as a spectral impression before the magnetic sight and hearing of the witch or medium. Saul saw nothing and heard nothing of himself; but perceived by the woman's description that it was Samuel. "What sawest *thou*?" said he to the woman. She told him; and "he perceived that it was Samuel," and made obeisance. The conversation between the spectral impression and Saul was carried on through the witch as through mediums at this day. She heard as we hear in dreams, and what she heard she reported; and Saul's spectral forebodings became prophetic in the witches mouth.

Spectral impressions may be made in divers ways upon the sensorium. Irritation of the stomach will do it. A gentleman in Edinburgh told me that for six weeks he had the appearance of a pig's head sitting upon his left shoulder, so that whenever he looked to that side he saw it staring him in the face. He was suffering from dyspepsia. It was as much the disembodied spirit of a pig, as the spectres seen by mediums are the disembodied spirits of dead men and women, boys and girls, infants and sucklings. When his stomach was restored to healthy action, the pig's ghost vanished from the sensorium, and was consequently dethroned from my friend's shoulder; so when the excitation of the medium's sensory from another cause ceases, the disembodied spirits, and all the angels, vanish in a trice!

Reasoning from the facts presented in the experiments of the coin, we might argue that the actions of men cause hidden spectral impressions to be made on the external magnetic halo of the earth, which remain after they are dead and long forgotten; so that were the Almighty to breathe upon it with His spirit, a man's history would be evoked like the handwriting on Belshazzar's palace-wall. Even these exterior spectral

impressions may be discerned by mediums of peculiar sensibility; so that they may perceive scenes after the actors have become quiet. Clairvoyants have seen many things upon this principle. Elisha's is a case in point here. The king of Syria warred against Israel, and devised ambuscades for his enemy; but Elisha, who was in Dothan afar off, warned the king of Israel and saved him not once nor twice. The king of Syria suspected treason in his own camp; but he was told by one of his followers, that Elisha, the prophet in Israel, told the king of Israel the words that were spoken in his own bed-chamber (2 Kings 6:8). Here the spectral impressions made upon the universal magnetic mirror by the Syrian's words, were breathed, or shined, upon by God, and evoked upon the sensorium of the prophet by the daguerreo typism of His spirit, which gave wings to the matter. This is the "*bird of the air*" that reveals even the inmost thoughts of men. Therefore, "curse not the king; no, not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bed-chamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings, shall tell the matter" (Ecc. 10:20). Let no man commit crime, and say, "No eye sees me, therefore the offence shall be hid." Sooner or later his sin may find him out. The impressions of his deeds upon the earth's magnetic halo may happen to be reproduced upon the sensorium of some sleeping or waking medium; or stare him in his own face when he shall rise from the dead, and behold his actions written, like Belshazzar's doom on the magnetic page, in words of living light—thus verifying the proverb, trite yet true, that "*murder will out.*"

Unless God think fit to infatuate a people by their own folly and presumption, and so create spectral impressions of things upon the sensoria of their wizards beyond the range of their own sphere, the second-sight of mediums never contemplates ideas, or images, or shadowy forms, which are not purely of human origin. All the things they have seen are but the spectral impressions of human thoughts, words, or actions. *The doctrine they utter is always traceable to some sectarian theosophism*—some double-distilled theological foolery, always at variance with "the law and the testimony." If they stumble upon a truth, it is just that proportion of truth that happens to be blended with human foolishness; and being truth, serves as a decoy to lead them into the mazes of a labyrinth from which there is no possibility of extrication. From what I have read of "*Spirit Worldism*," I have no hesitation in saying that it is mere "lying divination." I have a volume at my side, Cahagnet's "*Celestial Telegraph, or Secrets of the Life to Come revealed through Magnetism*," a book of 240 large 12mo pages, which is full of this sort of thing. It is a French work, and on p. 220 the author inquires, "On earth is there aught that we can hide from the perception of a clairvoyant? It is not, therefore, ridiculous to admit that in the world of spirits none is any longer able to conceal aught; it is the Book of Life which will be open to all." Hence a relationship being established between a clairvoyant and "spirits" in the invisible, messages may pass between living bodies on earth and dead men's ghosts in heaven or hell as by telegraph, and clairvoyants become the *see-ers*, and *prophets* of their familiar spirits or gods! In this way are laid broad and deep again the foundations of *a new system of idolatry*, of which the magnetizing circle-men who entrance the clairvoyants, are *the priests*. Already in the hands of these ignorant people the Bible is what the clergy have made it, by their preaching, a mere "dead letter." They misapply it -- and they can do nothing else—at pleasure, and cull from it texts, without regard to contexts, to suit their purpose—to sanctify their nonsense in the esteem of those in whom some veneration for "the Law and the Testimony of Jehovah [Yahweh]," is supposed to be still unextinct. Now the issue is between the *Magnetic Book of Life*—the Book of Magnetic Spectral Impressions—and *the Book of the Covenant*, usually styled THE BIBLE. Both volumes cannot be divine revelations of the future, or exponents of the same truth; for they foretell opposite events, and teach doctrines subversive of each other. The Magnetic Book of Life is nothing more than the magneto-etherial spectral impressions pertaining to the living generation, whose mind, or sensorial halo, is the mirror from which is darkly reflected its own thoughts: while the Bible is a revelation from Jehovah [Yahweh] of the fate of all existing governments, of His purpose to establish a Theocracy on their ruins, of the destiny of nations for the coming thousand years, of the eternal constitution of the globe from the end of that period, of the condition of the human race when all things terrestrial become new, and of how *we of this*, and others of

past generations since the world began, may constitute a part of his Theocracy, and become dwellers upon the earth for ever. These are great and glorious destinies, upon which the priests and prophetesses of “the Spirit World” can throw out no light. Their divinations upon these topics, where not borrowed from the Bible, are only lying rhapsodies—the dark and malarious thinkings of nervous flesh, rioting in the spectralia of musty theosophisms talked into it by the gospel-nullifiers, and pulpit mar-texts of the “chairs” and “sacred desks” of “christendom.” Like the old Athenian spirit-worldists who withstood Paul, they reject the resurrection of the mortal body in resolving it into the introduction of the spirit of man into the spiritual world on the total cessation of the heart’s action! The Bible says, “Many who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake” (Daniel 12:2). And again, “the earth shall cast out the dead;” “and no more cover her slain;” (Isaiah 36:19, 21) and that we may know by what power the dead shall rise, and who shall participate in the resurrection of the just, it is written, “IF the spirit of God that raised up Jesus from among the dead (*ek nekron*) dwell in you, He that raised up the Christ from among the dead, shall also make alive your *mortal bodies* through his indwelling spirit in you” (Romans 8:11). This is teaching the resurrection of dead bodies from earth’s dust in which they are mingled—a resurrection effected by Jehovah’s [Yahweh’s] spirit through Jesus (2 Cor. 4:14) at the reorganization of the righteous dead, and not at the dissolution of their existence here. But compare with this, and spurn with contempt, the following drivelling foolery of spirit-worldism, taken from Cahagnet. It is the clairvoyant Swede who vapors— “The spirit of man,” says he, “after the separation, remains a short time in the body, but only until the total cessation of the heart; this happens differently; according to the nature of the disease of which the man dies, for the movement of the heart in some lasts a certain time, and in others ceases at once; no sooner does this movement cease than *man is resuscitated*, but this is brought about by the Lord alone. By *resurrection*, we mean the spirit of man leaving the body, and introduced into the spiritual world; correctly speaking, this resurrection should be termed *the awakening!*” The awakening believed in by spiritisms is very different from the awakening taught in the Bible, as must be obvious to the weakest intellect. The clairvoyant awakening differs in the time and subject of it—it is the awakening of a dead man’s ghost at the last pulsation of his heart while his body is still untouched by decomposition; while the Bible awakening is the awakening of a dead man himself, at some time, it may be five thousand years, after he has actually mouldered into dust. Now which are we to believe? Baal’s prophets, or Jehovah [Yahweh]? The spectral illusions of the flesh, or the testimony of the living God? The crazy old mesmerist of Sweden, or the apostles of Jesus Christ?

So much for the strongest argument for the existence of spirits separate from material bodies—an argument which with all its strength is but general debility in the presence of God’s testimony, and Messrs. Karsten and Draper’s experiments of the coins. Separate spirits!—mere spectral impressions on magnetic haloes!—hidden, indeed, from light-stimulated optics; but disclosed to electro-magnetically excited brains! How are the “wise” with the ignorant entrapped in their own foolishness! And the “pious” too—the “great and good divines,” with their adorers—how are they taken in the craftiness of their own pietism! Oh the worth of the immortal soul, who can calculate it!—of that soul evoked from the magnetic halo of a clairvoyant’s sensorium! Such is the phantom-soul, for whose salvation from Pluto’s realm of fire and brimstone, the whole machinery of clerical superstition has been erected in ages past; and is now maintained at the expense of the liberty, intelligence, and wealth of the nations; and is sought to be imposed upon all semi-barbarians and savages as a means of introducing the long-looked for millennium upon earth! A mighty superstition—a great mountain filling the globe—a stupendous fabric of moonshine—a pious cheat for the salvation of a magnetic spectre! Still out of evil God educes good; for if he did not, where on earth would the good come from? Even this vast imposition on human credulity He turns to a good account. The generations of mankind having yielded themselves to their propensities; or, as the scripture expresses it, “instruments of unrighteousness to serve sin”—their intellectual and moral sense has become so darkened and unfeeling, that they cannot comprehend or appreciate the goodness of God, so that order in the absence of the divine

majesty might be maintained among them by its influence over them. There is, therefore, but one of two things remaining—either the earth must be left a prey to anarchy, which would be “*hell*,” or, order must be established by acting upon the fears of the multitude. The existence of “*hell*” here would defeat the divine plans destined to eventuate in blessedness upon all nations. The world became hell before the flood. It was therefore destroyed to become heaven: therefore, order was elaborated; and “the powers that be,” as they appeared from time to time from amid the storm of human passion, were controlled and ordered of God. Without approving their words, He permits them to exist as a terror to evil-doers until the appointed time arrives to punish them for their wickedness, and to set up His own kingdom in the earth which shall rule over all, administering His will in truth and righteousness over all nations. At present the popular superstitions are an important element in “the terror” by which evil-doers are restrained. The clerico-priestly dogmata of immortal disembodied ghosts; heaven in a spirit-world; hell somewhere; and the necessity of faith in these wares as administered by an ordained ministry, or “sacred order,” on pain of the soul’s exclusion from the joys of the one, and eternal fiery torment in the other—are the staff of the spiritual police, which co-operating with the imperial sword, keeps the world in awe, and maintains order until the Lord comes. It is the fear of punishment, not the love of truth and hope of reward, that makes men behave with social decency and order. This is the general rule, to which doubtless there are exceptions; but they are such as to establish the rule.

Our worthy correspondent thinks that the answers obtained by the dead-seekers from the spectres before the medium’s sensorium is “the strongest argument for the existence of spirits separate from matter.” I grant it. It is doubtless the strongest, and but weak at that. It is the argument of a dream to prove a fact. But the argument cannot be received as valid; for the dream-answers *are not always right*, as he testifies in the case of the second gentleman. Answers from God are infallible. His spirit never makes mistakes; nor is it presumable that any intelligencies of a true spiritual nature, in harmony with His spirit, are ever guilty of untruthful utterances. The “spirits,” therefore, whatever they be, are neither of God, nor of “the just made perfect.” But, may they not be the spirits of the wicked or unjust; if they be, then, the disembodied existence of spirits is as much proved as though they were the spirits of the just? Granted. If by *a spirit* is to be understood no more than *a spectral impression on a medium’s sensorium, mesmerically evoked by the thinking of the dead-seeker*, I grant that such spirits do exist separately from the persons they represent, as the spectral impression of the coin exists on the halo of the mirror separately from the coin itself. All the phenomena observed belong to spirits of this class, and prove only their existence under mesmeric excitation. Before their evocation before the medium’s sensorium, they exist only as images before the seeker’s mind when he thinks of them. I can now see before my recollecting faculty a child of three years old, standing with a ruler in his hand with which he had just struck me over the head. This child, a little brother, has been dead over thirty years. I see his image, and if I were placed *en rapport* with a medium I could make him see the child’s appearance; but would it be logical to conclude that he saw the child himself, or the real individual, which a spirit is supposed to be? If the spectral impressions, or spirits, seen, were real persons, and had cognizance of human affairs, they would make no mistakes in their responses; they would speak truth only, unless they were wicked persons. It is admitted that they err, and on theological subjects it is notorious that the mediums utter the most stupid nonsense; hence I conclude, that they are not of God, nor of his saints, whatever they be.

Now, it is not my business to prove that these *lying spectres* are not real persons. I do not undertake to prove negatives. I have shown that they may be philosophically accounted for. It is for the spirit-mongers to prove that *the forms* observed by their clairvoyants are realities, and therefore not appearances only; and that they were formerly embodied in human clay, and lived in the world as men, women, and children, now exist therein. The kind of proof must be different to anything they have produced yet however. The declaration of the spectres through the clairvoyants cannot be received; because in a multitude of instances they



have proved themselves to be liars, and therefore unworthy of credit; besides that unsupported self-testimony is incredible. It may be true, and it may not. If, then, the spectres say they lived in human clay as its animating, thinking principle, let them give us proof from God that their assertion is true. Jesus Christ, the sinless man, did not require his unsupported testimony to be received; shall we then admit the self-testimony of the lying spectres of the wicked dead? Perish the thought! "If," saith the Lord, "I testify concerning myself my testimony is not credible" (John 5:31). We demand, therefore, confirmation of spectral assertions strong as Holy Writ; because assertion is no proof. They tell us, or rather mediums do, that they are the ghosts, or spirits, of dead men, and that they know a great many things, and much more than the living. But upon this point the word of God gives them the lie direct. It testifies, that "the dead know not anything;" (Ecc. 9:5) and that "there is neither knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol," (Ecc. 9:10) whither we go. Now "divines" make this word *Sheol* equivalent to *Hades*, which they say is "*the place of departed spirits.*" Well, let us accept their definition for the present; how then reads the latter text? Even thus: "There is neither knowledge nor wisdom in the place of departed spirits," which theological mesmerists term "the spirit-world"! This is, with me, authority outweighing the testimony of all the spectres in creation, with all the opinions to boot of the 30,000 simpletons in the east, judges, lawyers, doctors, parsons, and less distinguished dupes, who vainly imagine they converse with living spirits from the vasty deep.

Our correspondent thinks, that "the whole system promulgated in our writings goes down, if the claims put forth by these spirit-mongers be established." By *established* he means *proved to be God's truth*; or else, established as true in the estimation of all men. If the latter be his meaning, the system we advocate only goes down in regard to mere human opinion. Its truth is not at all affected by mankind's opinion of it; because men who are ignorant of the true Bible-doctrine, judge according to the thinking of the flesh, which knows not the things of the spirit, because they are spiritually discerned; (1 Cor. 2:9-15) that is, they are discerned by the light shed upon them by the spirit in the prophetic and apostolic testimony, or writings. We advocate the system exhibited in this testimony, which went down in the estimation of their contemporaries, in whose judgment the spirit-mongers of the apostles' day established the notion, that the spectres seen by the clairvoyants in the idol temples were the disembodied immortal souls of the dead. As this notion went up, the apostolic doctrine of the immortality of the body at the resurrection went down, as at this day. It ate out the truth of immortality at resurrection only, as a gangrene; (2 Timothy 2:15-18) and left in its place nothing but a fetid, ill-conditioned ulcer, which has reduced the patient to a gasping state. The gangrene is everything; the apostolic doctrine scarcely to be found beyond the lids of the Bible. On the other hypothesis it is doubtless true, that if the spirit-mongers' claims be proved to be God's truth, the system we advocate will be exploded. No doubt of it. It ought to be; for if their claims be true, the system we exhibit must be false, utterly and entirely false. There is no agreement between spirit-worldism and the Bible; so that if mesmerized theology be God's truth, God is not the author of the Bible; and, as we advocate the things taught in this book, which are all together at variance with the spectre-revelations of clairvoyants, we must go down with the Bible, and share with it the misfortune that peradventure might befall it. But such an hypothesis is monstrous. God can be the author of no doctrine at variance with bible teaching. This He has plainly declared in the text below (Isaiah 8:19, 20). The Bible is not to be tested by the peepings and mutterings of familiar-spirit mediums, and the table-tappings of mesmeric circles; but their utterances on the contrary, by its word, which is the truth. We stand or fall by this; and feel no apprehension of the result, though a thousand millions of spirits, a thousand times told, pronounce the reveries of the possessed, the infallible and eternal truth of God.

## The Questions Answered

In conclusion, I present the following replies in brief to the questions propounded through our correspondent:

1. To question No. 1, I respond, that I have nothing to do but to believe Matthew's testimony in regard to the Transfiguration and its attendant circumstances. I have nothing to do with the claims of spirit-mongers in the case. Matthew says nothing about "forms," or "souls," or "spiritual bodies," being seen there. He says, "there appeared unto Peter, James, and John, Moses and Elijah talking with Jesus." Luke testifies substantially, the same thing, saying, "There talked with him *two men*, who were Moses and Elijah, *who appeared in glory*, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and *when they were awake*, they saw his glory, and *the two men that stood with him*" (Matt. 17:3; Luke 9:30-32). Now I ask any man, not crazed by spirit-worldism or "theology," when he is awake in the midst of a crowd on court days, what does he take those living things to be which he sees around him? Would he not reply, "men to be sure?" Suppose, I were to say to him, "No; they are spirit-forms, or souls, that once inhabited human bodies; they are not men, but the ghosts of men, which became "spiritual bodies" when the hearts of their old bodies ceased to beat"—would he not say I was either a madman or a fool? Or, if neither, that, on the supposition of his being a dupe, I was amusing myself at his expense? If rational, would he not argue that they must be men, because they presented to the eye all the marks by which men are ordinarily known? The apostles were matter-of-fact men, and reasonable withal. They judged of Moses and Elijah as they did of other men, and therefore called them by the right words, styling them "two men." Whatever quibble might be raised about Moses, because he died, cannot at all affect Elijah, who never died; and therefore never experienced a resolution into two parts. But we need add no more. Moses died, and must have been raised from the dead, or he could not have appeared as a man before three witnesses wide awake who called him such. There is no difficulty or mystery in the case, except with those whose minds are spoiled by "philosophy and vain deceit."

2. The sudden appearance and disappearance of the Lord's body, or the Lord rather, for the Lord and his body are one and the same, was the result, not of any change *upon him*, but of an effect produced by him *upon the eyes of his disciples*. "Their eyes were holden that they should not know him," until he thought proper to release their sight from the restraint. Mary saw Jesus but did not know him for the same reason. (Luke 24:16; John 20:14; 21:4) The eyes of the disciples going to Emmaus were holden. The meaning of this is given in the words, "And their eyes were opened, and they knew him." Hence to hold the eyes is to shut the sight, so that though the lids be unclosed, certain objects shall be invisible. I have performed an experiment similar to this upon the eyes of a person now in this city in the presence of many witnesses. I first mesmerized him by looking at him steadily in the eye. By this process the lids were closed so that he could not open them. I allowed him to remain in this state for some time, and then brought him out of it by a wave of the hand upwards and backwards. He could now see, and converse with anyone. I told him to look at my finger which I held before him, and about six inches above the level of his eyes. While he was doing this I carried it obliquely upwards and forwards as far as I could conveniently reach, and then suddenly withdrew it from the line of vision. This left him staring with the eyes wide open upon vacancy, with a countenance as blank and inexpressive as a corpse. He was now in *the state of extasy*. His eyes "were holden" completely; for he could see nothing. In proof of this a lighted candle was passed almost near enough to singe the lashes, but without causing a wink. Everything in the room vanished from his view with the jerk of my finger from the line of vision; and appeared again as suddenly as I waved my hand upwards before his eyes, which "opened them" to the objects by which he was surrounded. The Lord Jesus, who understood man's physique better than all the living, operated upon the disciples more skilfully. He could close their sight upon some objects

at once, while he left them capable of discerning others. In this way he made himself invisible to them, and entered with them unseen into their room, where he continued to hold their eyes until they shut the doors for fear of the Jews, when he opened them and was discovered standing in their midst to their no little amazement, as may be supposed. When he parted with the disciples at Emmaus, he did not vanish as a figure from a magic lantern; but as the margin of the text reads, “he ceased to be seen of them;” that is, he took his departure. Just men, made perfect at the resurrection, will doubtless have the same power over mortals to make themselves visible or invisible as they please, by holding or opening their eyes; for of them, it is testified, “they shall be like him.” He was never seen so as to be recognized by others than his disciples, because it was contrary to God’s plan that he should be seen by any others. He was only to be seen by witnesses, that his resurrection might be a matter of testimony and faith, that believers might walk by faith and not by sight; therefore, the eyes of all men were holden except “the witnesses chosen of God,” (Acts 10:40, 41) and the Roman guard.

3. Elisha’s servant saw on the mountain near Dothan “horses and chariots of fire,” such as Elijah ascended to heaven in. They descended to Elisha, and at his instance, in obedience to Jehovah’s [Yahweh’s] command, their riders smote the Syrian host with blindness. The servant’s eyes were made more open, and the Syrians’ were closed by the same spirit. The patriarchs and prophets saw angels as they saw men, by their natural sight. When men do not see them, it is either because there are no angels present to be seen; or because their natural sight is holden that they may not see.

4. Paul was not removed from earth when he saw Paradise. When he is writing about the Third Heaven and Paradise, he tells us he is treating of “*Visions and Revelations of the Lord;*” that is, of things represented and communicated to him by the Lord, as they were of old time to the prophets, and afterwards to John in Patmos. He was so absorbed in the contemplation of what he saw and heard, that he was altogether unconscious of his present existence. He had a Vision of Paradise, or a Vision of the Third Heaven, in which he heard things not communicated for utterance. He did not see Paradise or the Third Heaven, but a representation of them as they will be when the Kingdom is established by the God of heaven in the land promised to Abraham, and shall be in continuance after the thousand years shall have passed away. The “heaven of angels” is their abode in some of the stars. Hence they are styled “the Morning Stars;” but which of the heavenly bodies is not testified; therefore I cannot tell. Paul’s body could have been taken any where God pleased; but, as I have said, it, that is, he never left the earth. He was wrapt in vision unconscious of where he was.

5. In his argument with the Sadducees, Jesus meant to prove the resurrection of the dead from Moses’ writings; and he did prove it triumphantly. He does not even hint, much less affirm, that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob “are already risen.” He said, “that the dead are raised even Moses has shewn at the bush, *when he called the Lord* the God of Abraham, etc.,” that is to say, “that there is to be a resurrection of the dead, Moses teaches in calling Jehovah [Yahweh] Abraham’s God.” How so? Because Jehovah [Yahweh] is not a God of dead men. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are dead men; therefore, for Jehovah [Yahweh] to become their God they must become living men; for Jehovah [Yahweh] is a God of the living, not of the dead. Hence their resurrection is necessitated, as that is the only way in which the dead can become living. This being so, He is called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while they are actually dead, “because they all live to him” in the sense of *rising from the dead to live*; for “God who makes alive the dead, calls *ta me onta* things not existing *as though they were*” (Romans 4:17). The Lord of glory dealt not in “catches” nor “dishonesty;” these are the weapons of spirit-mongers, and of those who have more respect for the foolishness of men, than the words of the living God.

# Endnotes

Endnote #1 (From page 6):

[The Herald of the Kingdom and the Age to Come, 1852, Vol. 2, page 67]

## Table Tappings Not Spirit-Rappings

An esteemed correspondent from Cambridge, Ohio, says:

“There is a religious deception practiced in this country of which I had never heard till a few weeks ago. It is called ‘*Spiritual Rappings*.’ I suppose you will know more about the delusion than I can tell you. About a week or ten days since a few persons assembled at my employer’s to perform the ceremony, in order to convince me, by ocular demonstration, that ‘the spirits’ do answer by raps and movements of the article on which the necessary group of hands is placed. Accordingly four persons placed their hands on a small table, each one having their right hand above their neighbour’s left; and care is necessary that the upper hand touch not the table. The question was then asked in the usual manner, ‘If there be any spirit present in this room let them signify it by a rap.’ This was replied to by a sort of rap or jerk of the table. I am satisfied, however, that the farce is worked by sleight of the hands on the top, and not by a spirit under the table. Being requested, I asked some questions. I first asked, if the spirit present were material or immaterial? If material, I wished the table to rise in one direction; if immaterial, in another. It accordingly rose in the immaterial direction. I then asked, if it were a something or a nothing? The table was raised, signifying that it was a something. I then asked, if it were a something, how many like it could sit upon the point of a needle? In answer to which the table was raised three times. I then requested it to make its appearance on the top of the table, if it were something? But nothing appeared, although many of the persons present were afraid they would see something. After those who could and did work the farce were done, my employer, myself, and other two, got our hands arranged upon the table according to rule; and as we were unbelievers in such nonsense, we had to hold our hands on for twenty minutes before asking a question. We kept them on about three quarters of an hour, during which time a great many questions were put; but the table would neither rap, rise, nor move for us, our hands being too honest! While those who could were working the farce, I asked, how long my brother Thomas had been dead? The table rose eight times. I then asked, how many years my brother William had been dead? Upon which it rose eleven times. This led me to remark, that it must surely be a lying spirit, for Thomas died in 1841, and William in 1835!”

Thus writes Mr. John Swan, a man of veracity, and a competent witness in a matter of fact. He does not believe in disembodied-soulism; and we suppose these table-tappings were played off as evidence in proof of its verity, and of the erroneousness of the doctrine which teaches immortality of the body to them only who are accounted worthy of the kingdom of God and the Age to Come, by a resurrection from the dead. Disembodied souls and table-legerdemain assort well together. The more ignorant the spectator of the testimony of God, the profounder will be his faith in such creations of the fleshly mind.

But granting, as a fact, that the table rose without any cunning or deceit on the part of the operators—that their hands were perfectly honest, which our friend rather doubts—how are its movements to be accounted for without recourse to superstition? Upon the same principle that a loadstone, or electro-magnet, lifts a piece of steel, or that the compass-needle is drawn to the north magnetic-pole of the earth. The sun, moon, and stars, are magnets. The earth also is a magnet, and every thing upon it, animate and inanimate, magnetic, naturally, or induced. Immensity is filled by spirit, which is all-pervading, and styled by philoso-

phy, electricity, magnetism, and so-forth. Man is pre-eminently electrical; some men, however, more so than others. His electricity is generated mainly by the processes of digestion and respiration, which, from the nature of their substance accumulates intensely upon the brain and spinal column, which thus become magnetic by induction, and capable by the peculiarity of their organization of throwing off, by the system of efferent nerves, the electro-magnetism produced. The hands of four or more persons arranged on a table, form with the table an electro-magnetic chain or circle. They are then *en rapport*. The will and thoughts of the most powerful brain among them directs the mentality of the whole. They have strong faith, not in divine revelation, but confidence in the certain accomplishment of what they propose to do, because they have succeeded in the experiment frequently before. The divine teachings of the prophets are nothing to them, being ignorant of what they are. The spirit-answers to their questions by the bungling contrivance of electrical crackings, knockings, or thunderings, and table-liftings, or through clairvoyant seeings and speakings, are mere reflections of the foolishness indoctrinated into them by preachers, and teachers, and the trashy literature they are educated by. A question is put. The most active and powerful brain immediately conceives an answer. That conception flashes through the other brains in the electrical circle. They all will to knock or rap. The electrical fluid is thrown off intensely towards the table; and in leaving them, and meeting with the negatively excited table—excited by the hands upon it—a rap, or succession of cracks, is the result; as many as the positively excited brains guess will meet the question. Table-lifting is on the same principle as table-tapping, dependant on the will of the united brains. The hands become strongly attractive, and the table is moved any way the theory of the operators requires. It may not be possible to explain all the phenomena reported as proved facts by the laws of electro-magnetism, electricity, etc.; because all the laws, according to which this subtile, universal, and powerful fluid, by whatever name called, operates, are not known. Indeed, very few of them are known; for the science, or knowledge, of this great physical element of the universe is scarcely born.

In the case reported by Mr. Swan, the manipulators were immaterialists, or nothingarians. Had they believed that the nothings they call spirits were material or something, the taps would have been on the other side of the question. Their hands were no doubt honest, but the thinking of the fleshly tables of their hearts, was perverted by a mischievous and foolish theology. One anti-theologist in a circle would be enough to mar the experiment; for the circuit would be in an interrupted, and therefore, unworking condition. Hence the raps and liftings could not be manifested with him in the chain, or circle, willing against them as sheer nonsense, or slight of hand. We have seen many curious experiments in human electro-magnetism, biology, neurology, etc., several of which we have performed ourselves. They were all explicable, however, on electrical principles. The psychology of magnetism, that is *magnetic soulology*, exactly reflects the theology of the pulpits. It cannot rise above it; for the theology is the carnal mind's interpretation of divine and unseen things derived from its own propensities and imaginings. The two *ologies* stand or fall together. Neither of them speak in harmony with Moses and the Prophets. Hence all the spirits they start between them are lying spirits, and not to be believed, though occasionally they should happen to stumble upon the truth. The spirit of God *always* speaks in harmony with the written word, and says neither more nor less than is written there. Hence the absence of all necessity that he should speak any more at all till the Lord comes to utter *his* voice, and to send forth the Law from Zion, and the Word of Jehovah [Yahweh] from Jerusalem. (Isa. 2:3). --

Bro. John Thomas, Editor.