

A SELECTION OF  
SPIRITUAL TRACTS  
ON  
SPIRITUALISM

By HON. JOHN WORTH EDMONDS.

[1816 - 1874]

Judge Edmonds was one of the most influential early American Spiritualists. After a great public career, as a member of both branches of the New York State Legislature and, for some time, President of the Senate and Judge of the Supreme Court of New York, he resigned the latter position on account of the outcry raised against his Spiritualistic beliefs and, especially, his support of the Fox sisters. The judge's daughter, Laura, had mediumistic ability. He was considered by Hon. Robert Dale Owen, author of "The Debatable Land" as one of the most knowledgable men of his time on spirit phenomena. He is also the the author of a much longer work with George T. Dexter, M.D. called "Spiritualism," New York, 1853.

*New York:*

1858 — 1860

The text has not been professionally proofed and experience shows that works of this vintage are likely to have more than a few errors compared to recent works.

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SPIRITUAL TRACTS, No. 1.

APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC

ON

SPIRITUALISM

By JUDGE EDMONDS.

*New York:*

1858.

## JUDGE EDMONDS ON SPIRITUALISM.

TO THE PUBLIC:

On my recent return from an excursion into the country, I found that during my absence a decision lately pronounced by me, had been seized upon as an occasion for an attack, in several quarters, on my religious belief. I was fully aware that that judgment, running counter as it would to popular sentiment, would subject my action to severe criticism, but I confess I did not anticipate that thence would flow an assault on my religious opinions. Were I a private citizen, I should content myself with merely claiming the right which belongs to every one in this country, of entertaining such faith on this—the most important of all topics—as my conscience might dictate. And as it is, I might perhaps rest satisfied with challenging those who as. Bail me to point out a single article in my creed that aims at aught else than exalted private worth and public virtue. But as the position which I occupy renders the soundness as well as the integrity of my judgment a matter of public interest, I am bound to acknowledge the right of others to question my faith, and my own obligation to defend it.

I acknowledge a still further obligation. And inasmuch as I accepted my present position under the implied understanding, at least, that I believed in the Christian religion, and would administer our civil law according to the principles of the Divine law as it had been revealed to us, on which all our institutions were based, so I am bound to certify to those who have intrusted me with the Divine attribute of administering justice among men, that my reverence for that revelation has not been shaken, nor my obedience to that moral law impaired.

I have not, however, waited for these assaults, to be impressed with these obligations, but have already so far felt them, that I have prepared to publish a volume on the subject, which, but for my other avocations, would ere this have been in the printer's hands. To that I must refer for much in elucidation and proof of my belief, which the limits of this article will not now allow me to dwell upon, and content myself on this occasion with such general statements as may tend to give a correct idea of what it is that I believe or have done. Even this would not have been necessary, if those who assailed me had but done me the justice themselves to have published anything I have said or written on the subject. But hitherto I have been able to reach the public only through publications of very limited circulation; and the wildest and most erroneous notions have therefore been imbibed as to my belief, and the mischief has been increased by the recklessness with which erroneous statements have been fabricated by those who could not know them to be true, but who could easily have ascertained them to be false.

Thus one writer,\* with a want of feeling not perhaps surprising, speaks of my consulting my dead wife in making up my decisions. Another says, that it is "rumored" that I have consulted Spirit Manifestations in regard to my decisions. Another, that my belief is "at irreconcilable variance with all divine revelation, and is fit for no other system than devil-worship;" and still another, that "it constitutes an abandonment of all self-control, and a surrender of the supremacy of reason, as informed and enlightened by the senses, to the most nonsensical jugglery."

All these statements are as wide as they can be of truth, and I might with some justice complain at being subjected to such grievous imputations, merely because I had made a decision which was unacceptable to a portion of the community. But it is not for the purpose of complaining that I sit down to write. I am aware that it is not so much me as it is the faith which I profess, which is the object of attack. It is "the mighty theme, and not the inconsiderable advocate," which offends. I am also aware why it is that so much error exists in the public mind on

\* *Daily Chronicle*, of New London.

that subject, and my whole purpose is, so far as I am concerned, to correct that error—to state truly, as far as I can in this connection, what it is that I do believe, and generally the grounds on which my belief is founded—that all who take interest enough in the matter to read what I may say, may have the means of judging for themselves as to what I really do believe, rather than what others erroneously impute to me as a belief.

I am sincerely grateful to my assailants for not imputing to me any unworthy or selfish motives, for conceding that as a private citizen I "stand exempt from public criticism," and that I am "not a fool," and for confining themselves to the mere imputation that I am laboring under a delusion. It is, therefore, to that point I shall confine myself in what I have now to say.

It was in January, 1851, that my attention was first called to the subject of "Spiritual Intercourse." I was bit the time withdrawn from general society; I was laboring under great depression of spirits. I was occupying all my leisure in reading on the subject of death, and man's existence afterward. I had in the course of my life read and heard from the pulpit so many contradictory and conflicting doctrines on the subject, that I hardly knew what to believe. I could not, if I would, believe what I did not understand, and was anxiously seeking to know, if after death we should again meet with those whom we had loved here, and under what circumstances I was invited by a friend to witness the "Rochester Knockings." I complied, more to oblige her and to while away a tedious hour. I thought a good deal on what I witnessed, and I determined to investigate the matter and find out what it was. If it was a deception, or a delusion, I thought I could detect it. For about four months, I devoted at least two evenings in a week, and sometimes more, to witnessing the phenomenon in all its phases. I kept careful records of all I witnessed, and from time to time compared them with each other, to detect inconsistencies and contradictions. I read all I could lay my hands on, on the subject, and especially all the professed "exposures of the humbug." I went from place to place, seeing different mediums, meeting with different parties of persons, often with persons

whom I had never seen before, and sometimes where I was myself entirely unknown—sometimes in the dark and sometimes in the light—often with inveterate unbelievers, and more frequently with zealous believers. In fine, I availed myself of every opportunity that was afforded, thoroughly to sift the matter to the bottom. I was all this time an unbeliever, and tried the patience of believers sorely by my skepticism, my captiousness, and my obdurate refusal to yield my belief. I saw around me some who yielded a ready faith on one or two sittings only; others again, under the same circumstances, avowing a determined unbelief; and some who refused to witness it at all, and yet were confirmed unbelievers. I could not imitate either of these parties, and refused to yield unless upon most irrefragable testimony. At length the evidence came, and in such force that no sane man could withhold his faith.

Thus far the question I was investigating was, whether what I saw was produced by mere mortal means, or by some invisible, unknown agency; in other words, whether it was a deception, an imposition, or what it professed to be, the product of some unknown, unseen cause. To detail what I witnessed would far exceed the limits of this communication, for my records of it for those four months alone, fill at least one hundred and thirty closely-written pages. I will, however, mention a few things, which will give a general idea of that which characterized interviews, now numbering several hundred. Most of them have occurred in the presence of others besides myself. I have preserved their names in my records, but do not give them to the world, because I do not desire to subject them to the obloquy which seems, most strangely, to be visited upon all who look into the matter with any other feeling than a resolute and obstinate incredulity, whatever the evidence. But these considerations grow out of this fact: 1st, That I have thus very many witnesses whom I can invoke to establish the truth of my statements; and, 2d, That if I have been deluded, and have not seen and heard what I think I have, my delusion has been shared by many as shrewd, as intelligent, as honest, and as enlightened people as are to be found anywhere among us.



My attention was first drawn to the intercourse by the rappings, then the most common, but now the most inconsiderable, mode of communing. Of course I was on the look out for deception, and at first relied upon my senses and the conclusions which my reason might draw from their evidence. But I was at a loss to tell how the mediums could cause what I witnessed under these circumstances: the mediums walking the length of a suite of parlors, forty or fifty feet, and the rappings being distinctly heard five or six feet behind them, the whole distance, backward and forward several times; being heard near the top of a mahogany door, above where the medium could reach, and as if struck hard with a fist; being heard on the bottom of a car when traveling, on a railroad, and on the floor and the table, when seated at lunch, at an eating-house by the side of the road; being heard at different parts of the room, sometimes several feet distant from the medium, and where she could not reach—sometimes on the table and immediately after on the floor, and then at different parts of the table, in rapid succession, enabling us to feel the vibration as well as hear the sounds; sometimes when the hands and feet of the medium were both firmly and carefully held by some one of the party, and sometimes on a table when no one touched it.

After depending upon my senses, as to these various phases of the phenomenon, I invoked the aid of science, and with the assistance of an accomplished electrician and his machinery, and of eight or ten intelligent, educated, shrewd persons, examined the matter. We pursued our inquiries many days, and established to our satisfaction two things: first, that the sounds were not produced by the agency of any person present or near us; and, second, that they were not forthcoming at our will and pleasure.

In the mean time, another feature attracted my attention, and that was "physical manifestations," as they are termed. Thus, I have known a pine table with four legs, lifted bodily up from the floor, in the center of a circle of six or eight persons, turned upside down and laid upon its top at our feet, then lifted up over our heads, and put leaning against the back of the sofa on which we sat. I have known that same table to be tilted up on

two legs, its top at an angle with the floor of forty-five degrees, when it neither fell over of itself, nor could any person present out it back on its four legs. I have seen a mahogany table, having only a center leg, and with a lamp burning upon it, lifted from the floor at least a foot, in spite of the efforts of those present, and shaken backward and forward as one would shake a goblet in his hand, and the lamp retain its place, though its glass pendants rang again. I have seen the same table tipped up with the lamp upon it, so far that the lamp must have fallen off unless retained there by something else than its own gravity, yet it fell not, moved not. I have known a dinner-bell taken from a high shelf in a closet, rung over the heads of four or five persons in that closet, then rung around the room over the heads of twelve or fifteen persons in the back parlor, and then borne through the folding doors to the farther end of the front parlor, and there dropped on the floor. I have frequently known persons pulled about with a force which it was impossible for them to resist, and once, when all my own strength was added in vain to that of the one thus affected. I have known a mahogany chair thrown on its side and moved swiftly back and forth on the floor, no one touching it, through a room where there were at least a dozen people sitting, yet no one was touched, and it was repeatedly stopped within a few inches of me, when it was coming with a violence which, if not arrested, must have broken my legs.

This is not a tithe—nay I not a hundredth part of what I have witnessed of the same character, but it is enough to show the general nature of what was before me.

At the same time, I have heard from others, whose testimony would be credited in any human transaction, and which I could not permit myself to disregard, accounts of still more extraordinary transactions, for I have been by no means as much favored in this respect as some.

While these things were going on, there appeared in the newspapers various explanations and "exposures of the humbug," as they were termed. I read them with care, in the expectation of being assisted in my researches, and I could not but smile at

once at the rashness and the futility of the explanations. For instance, while certain learned professors in Buffalo were congratulating themselves on having detected it in the toe and knee joints, the manifestations in this city, changed to ringing a bell placed under the table. They were like the solution lately given by a learned professor in England, who attributes the tipping of tables to a force in the hands which are laid upon it, overlooking the material fact that tables quite as frequently move when there is no hand upon them.

What I have thus mentioned has happened in the presence of others as well as myself. I have not alluded to any of the things that have occurred to me when I have been alone, for as that would depend upon my testimony only, I have preferred not to subject my veracity to the rash and reckless contradictions of those who venture to denounce as an "atrocious imposture" that of which they are profoundly ignorant, and which has been examined and is believed in by thousands and tens of thousands of their fellow-citizens, who are, to say the least, every whit as honest and as intelligent as they are. Nor am I very anxious to submit my faith to the judgment of those who would have persecuted Galileo nigh unto death for discovering our planetary system, and have united in the cry of "folly" at Fulton's steamboat, "humbug" at Morsels telegraph, and "insanity" at Gray's iron road.

Having thus, by a long series of patient inquiries, satisfied myself on this point, my next inquiry was, Whence comes the intelligence there is behind it all? For that intelligence was a remarkable feature of the phenomenon.

Thus I have frequently known mental questions answered that is, questions merely framed in the mind of the interrogator, and not revealed by him or known to others. Preparatory to meeting a circle, I have sat down alone in my room and carefully prepared a series of questions to be propounded, and I have been surprised to find my questions answered, and in the precise order in which I wrote them, without my even taking me memorandum out of my pocket, and when I knew that not a person present even knew that I had prepared questions, much less

what they were, My most secret thoughts, those which I have never uttered to mortal man or woman, have been freely spoken to, as if I had uttered them. Purposes which I have privily entertained have been publicly revealed; and I have once and again been admonished that my every thought was known to, and could be disclosed by, the intelligence which was thus manifesting itself.

I have heard the mediums use Greek, Latin, Spanish, and French words, when I knew they had no knowledge of any language but their own; and it is a fact that can be attested by many, that often there has been speaking and writing in foreign languages and unknown tongues by those who were unacquainted with either.

Still the question occurred, May not all this have been, by some mysterious operation, the mere reflex of the mind of some one present? The answer was, that facts were communicated which were unknown then, but afterward found to be true; like this, for instance: When I was absent last winter in Central America, my friends in town heard of my whereabouts and of the state of my health, seven times; and on my return, by comparing their information with the entries in my journal, it was found to be invariably correct. So in my recent visit to the West, my whereabouts and my condition were told to a medium in this city while I was traveling on the railroad between Cleveland and Toledo. So thoughts have been uttered on subjects not then in my mind, and utterly at variance with my own notions. This has often happened to me and to others, so as fully to establish the fact that it was not our minds that gave forth or affected the communication.

Kindred to this are two well authenticated cases of persons who can read the thoughts of others in their minds. One is an artist of this city of high reputation, and the other the editor of a newspaper in a neighboring city. The latter wrote me, that in company with three friends he had tried the experiment, and for over forty successive attempts found he could read the secret thoughts of his companions as soon as they were formed, and without their being uttered. So, too, there is the instance of

two persons, one of them also resident in this city, who ran give a faithful delineation of the character, and even the prevailing mood of mind, of any person, however unknown to them, upon whom they fix their attention.

These are not apocryphal cases. The parties are at hand, and in our very midst, and any person that pleases may make the investigation, as I have, and satisfy himself.

But all this, and much, very much more of a cognate nature, went to show me that there was a high order of intelligence involved in this new phenomenon—an intelligence outside of, and beyond, mere mortal agency; for there was no other hypothesis which I could devise or hear of that could at all explain that, whose reality is established by the testimony of tens of thousands, and can easily be ascertained by any one who will take the trouble to inquire.

If these two points were established—and there are now in these United States hundreds of thousands of sentient beings who have investigated and believe they are—then came this important question, *Cui bono?* To what end is it all? For what purpose? With what object?

To that inquiry I have directed my earnest attention, devoting to the task for over two years all the leisure I could command, and increasing that leisure as far as I could by withdrawing myself from all my former recreations. I have gone from circle to circle, from medium to medium, seeking knowledge on the subject wherever I could attain it, either from books or from observation, and bringing to bear upon it whatever of intelligence I have been gifted with by nature, sharpened and improved by over thirty years' practice at the bar, in the legislature, and on the bench.

I found there were very many ways in which this unseen intelligence communed with us, besides the rappings and table tippings, and that through those other modes there came very many communications distinguished for their eloquence, their high order of intellect, and their pure and lofty moral tone; at the same time I discovered many inconsistencies and contradictions that were calculated to mislead. I saw many puerile and some very

absurd statements, and many that were admirably calculated to make man better and happier; and I set to work to see if I could not, out of this chaos, gather something that might be valuable.

I was satisfied that something more was intended than the gratification of an idle curiosity; something more than pandering to a diseased appetite for the marvelous something more than the promulgation of oracular platitudes something more than upsetting material objects to the admiration of the wonder lover; something more than telling the age of the living or the dead, etc.

For that something I have industriously searched I thought that was wiser than to condemn without investigation, and denounce without knowledge. What I have discovered in that regard I have intended to give to the world, that all may judge for themselves whether there is anything in it worthy the attention of intelligent beings. It would have been done ere this if my leisure would have allowed me time to prepare my manuscript for the press. Now I expect that my book will be published by the first of September, and to that I refer, as I have already said, for particulars.

In the mean time, it is due to myself and to others to say, that our faith, as growing out of these researches, is not "at irreconcilable variance with revelation." How little do they, who make such charges, know of this matter! Misled by the crudities which alone are seen in the newspapers of the day, because the graver matters can not find admission there, the idea is, I am aware, entertained by some, that this new philosophy is at variance with the revelation through Christ, the Redeemer, This is indeed a sad mistake, and one that believers would be too happy to correct, if only the opportunity could be afforded them.

So, too, is it a grievous error to suppose that it "constitutes an abandonment of all self-control, and a surrender of the supremacy of reason, as informed and enlightened by the senses." There was never yet, I venture to say, a religious creed promulgated among men, which so entirely eschewed blind faith and

so fully and always demanded the exercise of judgment and the supremacy of the reason.

Hence it is that we are taught that none of these extraordinary things which are witnessed by so many, are miraculous, or flow from any suspension of nature's laws, but are, on the other hand, in conformity with, and in execution of, those laws; that like the steam-engine and the magnetic telegraph, they are marvelous only to those who do not understand them, or are not familiar with them; that those laws, and the means by which they produce such results, are as capable of being found out by human research; that the knowledge is not confined to a few, but is open to all, rich or poor, high or low, wise or ignorant, who will wisely and patiently search for it, and that when it is attained, it can not but work in the heart "a closer walk with God," and an intercourse with our fellow-men of a more elevated character, void of selfishness, and devoted to their absolute advancement in all knowledge and goodness, both in this world and in the world to come.

This is a part of the something which I have found in my researches. But there is more yet. There is that which comforts the mourner and binds up the broken-hearted; that which smoothes the passage to the grave, and robs death of its terrors; that which enlightens the Atheist, and can not but reform the vicious; that which cheers and encourages the virtuous amid all the trials and vicissitudes of life, and that which demonstrates to man his duty and his destiny, leaving it no longer vague and uncertain. What this is, I can not in the limits of this letter explain, but in due time it will be forthcoming, and each one can judge for himself.

But now may I not ask if I overrate the importance of the subject of my inquiries? Scarcely more than four years have elapsed since the "Rochester Knockings" were first known among us. Then mediums could be counted by units, but now by thousands—then believers could be numbered by hundreds, now by tens of thousands. It is believed by the best informed, that the whole number in the United States must be several hundred thousands, and that in this city and its vicinity there

must be from twenty-five to thirty thousand. There are ten or twelve newspapers and periodicals devoted to the cause, and the Spiritual Library embraces more than one hundred different publications, some of which have already attained a circulation of more than ten thousand copies. Besides the undistinguished multitude, there are many men of high standing and talent ranked among them—doctors, lawyers and clergymen in great numbers, a Protestant bishop, the learned and reverend president of a college, judges of our higher courts, members of Congress, foreign ambassadors, and ex-members of the National Senate.

That which has thus spread with such marvelous celerity in spite of the ridicule which has deterred so many from an open avowal, that which has attracted the attention of so many of the best minds among us, can not be unworthy of my investigation, or that of persons far wiser and more reliable than I am.

It is now more than a year that my peculiar faith has been the subject of public comment. During it all I have been silent as to those attacks, content steadily to pursue my investigations until I could arrive at satisfactory results. Perhaps I have been silent too long, for, in the mean time, very erroneous notions, as to that faith, have been allowed to spring up. But I was unwilling to speak until I was as sure as I could be that I was right, lest I might utter some crudity which, by-and-by, I might regret—or commit some error which I might find it difficult to correct, or, in fine, unhappily mislead in my ignorance, rather than wisely guide by my knowledge.

I went into the investigation, originally thinking it a deception, and intending to make public my exposure of it. Having from my researches, come to a different conclusion, I feel that the obligation to make known the result is just as strong. Therefore it is, mainly, that I give the result to the world. I say mainly, because there is another consideration which influences me, and that is the desire to extend to others a knowledge which I am conscious can not but make them happier and better.

If those who doubt this could but spend a few days with me in my library, and witness the calls I have from strangers from all parts of the country; if they would but look, over my portfolio,



and read the letters which pour in upon me from all sections and from persons whom I have never seen and never may see, they would be able, from the evidence thus furnished of the good that has been done, to form some idea of what may yet be accomplished, and they would not wonder that I find a compensation for the obloquy that is so freely heaped upon me by the ignorant, in the grateful outpourings of hearts which have, by my means, been relieved. One of them says (and it is a fair specimen of the whole) "You have acted the part of the good Samaritan, and poured oil into the wound of one like to die, and you will have rendered a death-bed, sooner or later, calm and hopeful, which might have been disturbed by doubts."

This, then, is the offense for which I have been arraigned at the bar of the public with so unsparing a condemnation, declared unworthy of my high office, falsely accused of consulting aught else than the law of the land, and my own reason, in the judgments which I officially pronounce, and have had invoked against me "the fires of Smithfield and the hangings of Salem." From such a condemnation it is that I appeal to the calm, unbiased judgment of my countrymen, with a firm reliance upon its justice.

New York, August 1, 1853.

J. W. EDMONDS

SPIRITUAL TRACTS, No. 2

BISHOP HOPKINS

ON SPIRITUALISM.

REPLY OF JUDGE EDMONDS.

New York:

1858.

## BISHOP HOPKINS ON SPIRITUALISM.

A REPLY BY JUDGE EDMONDS.

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The Right Reverend Mr. Hopkins, the Episcopal Bishop of Vermont, has lately been delivering a course of lectures before the "Young Men's Christian Association," of St. Louis, two of which he devoted to the subject of Modern Spiritualism, and to myself as connected with it.

He admitted the facts of the manifestations, conceding that they were not a delusion or a deception, but he avowed his own belief that the whole thing resulted from the direct agency of the Devil himself. He confessed he had never witnessed any of the manifestations, yet he claimed that he could fairly discuss the subject, etc.

This is the purport of his lectures, as I gather it from the report of them in the *St. Louis Republican* of the 12th and 15th of November, 1856.

As he has thus held me up to the world, denounced by a high dignitary of the Church as acting under the instigation of the Devil, I trust I may be pardoned for saying a few words in defense of myself, especially as I will do so by confining myself to a brief attempt to show what Spiritualism is, and what it teaches.

1. It enables us to know the thoughts and Purposes, the secret intentions and character of those who are living around us. Over and over again has this been demonstrated, yet I will venture to say the Bishop never heard of it; for if he had, he surely would be as ready as any one to see that, in this feature of Spiritualism, there is a better protection against, and prevention of, hypocrisy and false pretenses than all the preaching ill the world has afforded.

2. It enables us to feel and to know that our most secret thoughts are known to the intelligence of the Spirit world, whatever the character of that intelligence, whether for good or evil. It has been for years and centuries preached to us, that the Supreme Intelligence knows our every thought. Yet how few have actually realized it—how few have acted as if they believed it, let the Sins and perversions of mankind say. But now it comes so demonstrated that no man can doubt it. It is a fact as certain as that the sun shines at noon-day. And I would ask, what greater prevention to vice can there be, than the thorough conviction that the deepest secrets of our hearts are all known to the Intelligence which is ever around and near us, and can be disclosed to the world?

3. It demonstrates the immortality of the soul by direct appeals to the senses. Hitherto the appeal has been to abstract reasoning to prove that; and what ill success has attended that effort, no man knows better than the Right Reverend gentleman himself. He has been a lawyer in his day, and he is aware, from his knowledge of the world, thus and otherwise acquired, that the greater portion of the educated classes among us have not yielded to the reasoning, and have been, to say the least, skeptical as to an existence after this life. But now the proof comes with a force like that which establishes the facts that the grass grows and the water runs, and leaves no room for cavil in the sane mind. In the book from which the Bishop quoted so freely\*—though I am not advised that he quoted from that part—some twenty instances were given of conversions from an unbelief as to the future. Those were a few only of the cases which are within my own knowledge. They are numbered by hundreds and thousands within the knowledge of Spiritualists all over the land, and they show how powerful—how all-controlling is the argument in favor of man's immortality, which spiritual intercourse

\* From my published volumes on "Spiritualism."

furnishes—how much more convincing than all the preaching to which the subjects of such conversions have listened for years and years.

4. It demonstrates that the Spirits of our departed friends can and do commune with us who are left behind. The substance of the Bishop's position on this topic is a denial of the fact, for he speaks of the "folly and unreasonableness of supposing that the Spirits of our departed friends are suffered to remain on earth, and to mingle in the affairs of men," and of the "unhappiness it would be to them to remain among strifes and sorrows which they could not alleviate."

The same course was once taken by this same Prelate in regard to the manifestations themselves, and it was "folly and unreasonableness" to suppose they were anything but delusion or deception. But he, and many others of his calling have been compelled to yield to the force of overwhelming testimony, and admit their reality. So it would be with him on this point, if instead of persisting in the ignorance of the Subject (of which he boasts, for conscience-sake,) he would investigate for himself, or take the testimony of those who have investigated. He would then learn that the identity of our departed friends is too clearly made out to be doubted by a rational mind. He would see, too, how enduring is the love they bear to us still—that the cold grave does not quench its ardor, and that their care and sympathy for us is not removed at such an immeasurable distance from us, as he would teach, but that it is ever around and near us, leading us on toward that goal which in his creed' is too far off for us to comprehend, but is now brought so dear that can understand what it is, and learn how to attain it. He would learn that it would be no more a source of happiness to our departed friends thus to labor for redemption from sin, than it is now for him in his ministerial functions to lead a sinner to repentance; and descending from his lofty position on the Episcopal bench, to enter the brothel or the prison-house, and lift an erring

brother to the light of the Gospel. He would learn to bear to the mourner's heart such comfort as he has never yet borne, and to speak to it, in most effective tones, of righteousness and the judgment to come. He would learn then, if he has not yet learned, that it could be no such great unhappiness for the Christian mind to remain amid strifes and sorrows, where it could sympathize even if it could not alleviate, and he would see, practically, that there is no sorrow for suffering humanity, which Heaven, through its messengers, can not heal.\*

5. It demonstrates also, that through this Spirit influence—be it what it may—the sick are healed, the blind are made to see, the lame walk, and ".devils cast out" of those who are possessed.

These are some of the marvels which are now being worked in this land by the influence which is stigmatized by his reverend Prelate as of the Devil. There are hundreds and thousands of witnesses of their existence around us everywhere, *and every man who pleases can behold them for himself*. I could enumerate many, very many instances, but the limits of this paper forbid, and I have yet a few words to say on other topics.

The Bishop says that "none of the so-called discoveries were even new to mankind as proclaimed or received truths." In this he is in a great measure correct. The great law which underlies the whole spiritual philosophy is that proclaimed by Jesus of Nazareth—"Love God with all your might, and your neighbor as yourself." Such is the law, which for eighteen hundred years the Christian world has professed to believe—such the law which over thirty thousand priests are weekly preaching from as many pulpits in this nation. Yet with what effect? Let facts answer. Out of a population of nearly twenty-five millions, not five millions are professing,

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\*Might not also obtain the idea that as God himself descends into the spheres of vice and misery, to reclaim the erring and comfort the suffering, it could be no degradation for the Spirit thus to imitate God!

Christians, and the sect to which this reverend Prelate belongs can not number one hundred thousand.

Is it not proper to ask why is this? It is because there is not inducement enough held out to man to overcome the selfishness of his material nature, and to obey this law of his spiritual existence. Eighteen centuries have demonstrated this, and it is high time that something should come to hold out such inducement. To perform that task is now the great mission of Spirit intercourse; and it is, day by day, as fast as we are capable of receiving it, performing it, by so revealing to us the condition into which we are to be ushered after death, that we cannot help realizing how necessary it is for us to obey the law in life. As the burnt child dreads the fire because it realizes the danger, so will man, when he shall fully realize what is the nature of the existence which is to follow this life, be ever on his guard against the temptations with which his animal nature constantly surrounds him.

This neglected function of the priesthood, Spiritualism is now performing in our midst.

And why not? The Bible is full of it. An angel appeared to Hagar, *Gen. 16*; three, in the shape of men, appeared to Abraham, *Gen. 18*; and two to Lot, *Gen. 19*. One called to Hagar, *Gen. 21*; and to Abraham, *Gen. 22*; one spake to Jacob in a dream, *Gen. 31*; one appeared to Moses, *Exodus 3*; one went before the camp of Israel, *Exodus 14*; one met Balaam by the way, *Numbers 22*; one spake to all the children of Israel, *Judges 2*; one spake to Gideon, *Judges 6*; and to the wife of Manoah, *Judges 13*; one appeared to Elijah, *1 Kings 19*; one stood by the threshing-floor of Ornan, *1 Chron. 21*; one talked with Zachariah, *Zach. 1*; one appeared to the two Mary's at the sepulcher, *Matt. 28*; one foretold the birth of John the Baptist, *Luke 1*; one appeared to the Virgin Mary, *Ibid*; to the shepherds, *Luke 2*; one opened the door of Peter's prison, *Acts 5*; two were seen by Jesus, Peter, and James and John, *Luke 9*; and one spake to John the Evangelist, *Rev. 22*.

It will not do to say these were angels—a distinct order of beings from man, for those seen by the apostles were Moses and Elias, and that seen by John, though called by him an angel, avowed himself to be his fellow-servant, and "one of his brethren the prophets."\*

And now may we not ask, if man in the olden time could see and talk with angels—if, in former ages, the Spirits of departed mortals could appear to and commune with those yet living—may we not, I say, ask wherein has man's nature so changed that the same thing may not happen to him now?

Why! how often in the ceremonies of the Bishop's own church does he call upon his people to say, "believe in the communion of saints!" which the articles of his religion say, "may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture;" and yet that communion which is holy when only spoken of, he would fain have us believe is evil when actually practiced!

Briefly, then, to sum up the argument: Spiritualism prevents hypocrisy; it deters from crime; it reclaims the infidel; it proves the immortality of the soul; it recognizes one God and man's responsibility to him; it enforces the great law of the Creator, by inducements hitherto unknown to man; it heals the sick; it gives sight to the blind; it cures the lame; it comforts the mourner, it enjoins upon all the utmost purity of life; it teaches that charity which rather mourns over than rejoices at the failings of our fellow mortals; and it reveals to us our own nature, and what is the existence into which we are to pass when this life shall have ended.

And this we are taught by a reverend Divine, holding a high rank in what he calls "The Church of God," is of the Devil! Alas! if it be, by what sign shall we know the work of God?

\*Nor will it do to speak of the undignified character of the manifestations of to-day, for surely the reclaiming of erring man from the "deep damnation of infidelity" is of as much importance as relieving Peter from temporary imprisonment, or telling Hagar where to find water.



But the chief basis of the Bishop's position, that spiritual intercourse is satanic, seems to be found in the revelations as to the Spirit's surroundings, after it has passed from this life. These he denounces as gross, material and of the earth earthy, and as conflicting with the sublime teachings of the Gospel, and therefore "Devilish!"

I do not learn that he paused to detail to his bearers what is the condition of the future, according to the Gospel, as he understands it. I have known this attempted many times by Divines, but I never knew any two of them to agree in their description. Whereas, in these revelations, there is no discrepancy on this point

I do not learn that in reading extracts from my book he departed from the practice of his calling—namely, that of drawing particular passages from their context, and thus giving them a very different meaning from the true one—a practice which I do not hold very high either in law or gospel, and which I have often seen excite the smiles of contempt among the intelligent minds in church. Nor do I learn that he called the attention of his hearers to the reasons given in my book (See. 62 of Vol. 2) for our faith on this subject, whereby they might have been enabled to judge for themselves, instead of being governed by his authority or mine.

But he seems to have contented himself with just so many and such extracts as would tend to prove his position, and let the rest go.

But let that pass. And let us inquire what is the great difference between us on this point, which makes my teachings "devilish," "unchristian," and "positively hurtful," and makes his to be holy, and sublime, and Gospel-like?

He teaches that man, on dying, becomes suddenly and marvelously changed—that he passes far away from the earth, out of the reach of its cares, anxieties and affections—that he passes into a state of existence whose condition is entirely unknown, except that it is either unutterably miserable or inexpressibly happy—that the state either of bliss or wo, into which he is first ushered, never changes and is never-ending—and that his condition of

happiness or sorrow is not of his own creation, and can not be affected by aught he can do in this life, but is dependent—particularly in its happiness—upon a vicarious atonement.\*

On the other hand, I believe that man is the creature of progression—that it is his destiny from his birth to progress on to eternity, toward the Godhead—that no man is exempt from this destiny—that while man can not prevent, he can retard or accelerate its consummation, and he can make the interval of progress for long ages happy or woful, as he obeys or disregards the law of his spiritual nature, which is love for God and man—that death is but a continuation of this life, and this life but a preparation for the next—that we pass into the next state of existence with all our faculties, memories and affections, as we have cultivated or perverted them here—and that we are for a while, until our minds grow to become elevated above them, surrounded by all those objects which would be calculated to give us the weal or wo we have earned for ourselves.†

Such is, in brief, the difference between us. I will not pause here to ask which is most acceptable to the rational mind I which is best supported by Scripture!

That would take too much room. But I will ask what is there in my belief that is "devilish," "unchristian," "hurtful?" And I will answer the question, not in my own language, but in that of one of the Bishops of the Episcopal Church of this country—one who sits in the same House of Bishops with him of Vermont.

I extract from a sermon preached in Connecticut in 1852, and published.

"I have now closed my argument, and would be glad if time allowed to pass to the survey of another most interesting question. What are thee conditions of our future existence? But as it is I can only allude to one or two

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\*Or, in other words, that its unhappiness can be caused by us, but Its happiness cannot.

† As in manhood, we outgrow our attachment to The objects which pleased our childhood, so in Spirit life we will in time outgrow our love for the objects which pleased our earth-life.

general points, and then leave the subject to your individual reflection.

"1. In the first place, provision will undoubtedly be made hereafter for the culture and the exercise of all the intellectual and moral faculties of our nature. Heaven will not be a monotony. All which belongs to our nature, that is not sensual and sinful, will there find free scope for its development. Nothing then, which we learn here is lost. No elevated taste, is cultivated in vain. No healthy affection withers under the touch of death. There, are strains of melody, and sights of beauty and holy friendships in the spiritual world. Everything which God has made on earth, and which man has left untouched by sin, is only a symbol of something greater and more resplendent in reserve for the holy hereafter. What music will be heard in heaven I what prospects will charm the eye! what thoughts will be uttered there I what emotions will be kindled there I what variety of enjoyments and yet nothing servile, nothing selfish! How is it then that we shrink from the future? Why does eternity come before us a cold blank void—a sea without a shore, moaning and groaning under a starless sky, where the soul floats, like a helmless wreck, solitary and despairing! Because there' is a stain of corruption on the soul which needs to be washed out—because the sense of sin makes us afraid.

"2. In the second place we observe, that to the righteous the future will be a state of constant and unending progress. The law of this progress may be essentially the same as it is now, only it will operate under greatly improved conditions. We shall never reach a point where we shall stop, and make no further advance, for then there would lie before us an eternity without occupation.

"All mortal creatures are capable only of A limited improvement, because theirs is a limited existence. Man must advance forever, because lie lives forever. The time will undoubtedly come when we shall look back on all that we have acquired and done in this world, as we now regard the experiences of our earliest

infancy, and we shall wonder that we then thought ourselves so wise.

"3. And finally our future destiny, will be in precise accordance to our deserts and character. We shall reap what we have sown. We shall begin our life hereafter as we close it here. There is no such thing as separating the man from his character, and there is no such thing as separating the character from the destiny."

Such are my sentiments, too! Such are the principles which Spiritualism teaches! And now, if they are "devilish," "unchristian," and "hurtful" in me, pray! what must they be in the Right Rev. Bishop of Rhode Island, whose language it is that I have quoted?

A few words on one topic more and I have done. I can hardly believe the Bishop is correctly reported when he is made to say that the law of the Scripture forbids our communing with the Spirits of our departed friends, as well as dealing with witches and those having a familiar Spirit. For I have never been able to find any such injunctions in Holy Writ,\* nor can I conceive how that can be, and Peter, and James and John escape condemnation for beholding Moses and Elias, or John, in the Revelations, for communing with the Spirit of "one of his brethren, the Prophets," or Saul obeying the Spirit when struck with blindness on the wayside, or Peter when listening to the injunctions to call not the Gentile unclean.

But it is true that in the law of Moses there are injunctions against dealing with witches, or those having familiar Spirits. But does the Reverend Prelate mean that his Christian hearers shall understand that that law is still binding upon us? He certainly must mean so or he would not quote it as evidence of our "unchristian" deportment. See, then, where it would bring him. One part of that law must be as binding as another, and

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\* I once asked for the passage, of one who insisted that the Bible did contain such prohibition, and I received for answer the quotation of "the bourne whence no traveler returns!" I confess I was malicious enough to reply that I had found that in Shakspeare, but was not aware of its being in the Bible.

yet right by the side of that to which he appeals, are commands like these:

Ye shall eat no manner of fat." *Lev. 7: 23*

Ye shall not eat of the camel, the hare, or the swine." *Lev. 11: 8.*

When ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest." *Lev. 19: 8.*

"Thou shalt not sow the field with mingled seed, neither shall a garment, mingled of linen and woollen, come upon thee." *Lev. 19: 9.*

"Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard." *Lev. 19: 27.*

"Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards." *Lev. 19: 31.*

"The man who committeth adultery with another man's wife, the adulterer and adulteress shall surely be put to death." *Lev. 20: 10.*

"A man, also a woman, that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death. They shall stone them with stones." *Lev. 20: 27.*

"In the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of rest unto the land. Thou shalt neither sow thy field nor prune thy vineyard." *Lev. 24: 4.*

"Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof." *Lev. 25: 10.*

"When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence." *Deut. 22: 8.*

"Thou shalt make thee fringes on the four quarters of thy vesture." *Deut. 22: 12.*

"A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord." *Deut. 23: 2.*

"Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which has escaped from his master unto thee." *Deut. 23 15.*

And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give He for life, eve for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot

for foot, burning for burning wound for wound, stripe for stripe."  
Exod. 21. 23-25.

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." *Exod. 22: 18.*

"Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause." *Exod. 23: 3.*

"In six days shall *thy* work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a sabbath of rest to the Lord. *Whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death...—Ye shall kindle no fire throughout you? habitations upon the Sabbath day.*"  
*Exod. 35: 2, 3.*

But enough—enough in all conscience! to show to the candid mind the basis on which this "Right Reverend Father in God" rests his denunciations. No word of comment is necessary, unless it may be to inquire if we are entirely to lose sight of the later teaching of Jesus "Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, but I say unto you that ye resist not evil," and of the consoling announcement, that on the command to love God and one another hang all the law and the prophets, under the Christian dispensation?

J. W. EDMONDS.

*New York, November 28, 1855.*

SPIRITUAL TRACTS, No. 4.

UNCERTAINTY

OF

SPIRITUAL INTERCOURSE

By JUDGE EDMONDS.

*New York*

1858.

UNCERTAINTY OF  
SPIRITUAL INTERCOURSE.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN JUDGE EDMONDS AND A  
DISTINGUISHED LEGAL GENTLEMAN.

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*September 22, 1856*

TO JUDGE EDMONDS:

Sir—You will, I doubt not, pardon the liberty of this letter from a stranger. I have your book on Spiritualism, which has impressed me very strongly. I am, however, no Spiritualist, but a candid investigator of these marvelous developments. Without being convinced that they are the manifestations of Spirits, I am persuaded that there is something wonderful and true in all these exhibitions, and that whatever it be, it is well worthy of—nay, it demands—the calm and profound attention and examination of the philosopher, and of all those who are, or profess to be, the votaries of science and knowledge. I can not resist the conviction that some grand result and discoveries will grow out of these mysterious, wonderful and much condemned manifestations.

I have said that I am not a Spiritualist; I repeat it, but at the same time if I had your personal experience on the subject, I could not resist your conclusions, unless I, at the same time, doubted the sanity of my mental faculties.

But these things are so strange and so contrary to all my preconceptions, that nothing short of the evidence of my own senses could possibly carry conviction home to my understanding. Whilst, therefore, the experience of others may be sufficient to put me upon the inquiry, I must see and observe for myself before I surrender my convictions to such extraordinary, and to appearance, preternatural occurrences.

I have been, all my life, in the habit of sifting evidence and weighing it in search of the truth, and I have always found the truth hard to get at. In this world the naked truth is scarcely ever known: and the most unsatisfactory revealing of spiritual



intercourse is that *the truth*, the real truth, is uncertain and unknown in the spheres. But I did not mean to pursue this idea, but to say that in my forensic researches after truth, nothing has been found more embarrassing or more calculated to produce unbelief than discrepancies among the witnesses. In all the statements that I have seen as coming from the Spirits, this objection stands out in bold relief. Though there be a general concurrence in some things, in many others, and those of great moment, there is irreconcilable discord. And some of the latter are not abstruse and metaphysical, like those questions that embarrass the doctrine of fallen angels, providence, fore-knowledge, fixed fate, free will, etc.; but of which any intelligent mind in the flesh or disembodied, would be competent to testify even if not understood; for instance, whether the Scriptures are a revelation from God? On this subject there seems to be as many shades of opinion in the spheres (to use one of the phrases) as on earth. Then, again, upon mere questions of physical science, as for example, the location of Heaven or the spheres. While your informants give the locality at inconceivable distances, Dr. Hare's place the spheres on sublunar concentric globes. How are these discrepancies to be reconciled? Both can not be true, and seemingly we have the same authority for each side of the question. I can not expect a reply, as your time is so much occupied. If you find leisure, a brief notice of this will be acceptable. If you should do so, you will direct to ——. Or if you could find leisure to write an article for the SPIRITUAL TELEGRAPH (of which I am a reader), it will reach my eye and that of many others, probably, who have the same difficulties.

Yours, very respectfully,

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## UNCERTAINTY OF SPIRITUAL INTERCOURSE.

### REPLY OF JUDGE EDMONDS.

NEW YORK, *September 27, 1856.*

*Dear Sir*—I have but one thing to complain of in your letter—that of your speaking of our being strangers to each other. I have not forgotten our former correspondence, and am quite familiar with your handwriting, as I am with your character and the condition of your mind on the subject of spiritual intercourse.

It is quite a coincidence that in my lectures in Philadelphia last Sunday, and in this city on the previous Sunday, I should have dwelt on the very topic to which your refer. I did so dwell, because it was after long investigation that I had arrived at the solution of a difficulty which often embarrassed me also.

Led by the education and religious teaching which we have, both in youth and manhood—from the pulpit as well as in school—we are apt to attach to the idea of Spirit existence, that of great if not omniscient knowledge; and if we imbibe the belief that Spirits speak to us, we naturally expect from them the display of knowledge far superior to ours. This is a great error; for we pass into the Spirit world just as we are here, in respect to knowledge, and have no more there than we had here until we learn it. When, therefore, a Spirit speaks to us, it is not with omniscience, but with such knowledge only as he has been able to acquire. There is, therefore, infinite variety in this respect among Spirits, depending upon education while on earth, opportunities for learning in the Spirit-world, intellectual capacity, and many other things, which there, as well as here, affect the training of the mind.

So far as Spirits speak of their existence or mode of life there, each must naturally speak only of what he has observed, unless perchance he has been taught more by others who have beheld what he has not. At all events most of the incongruous teachings referred to, are in reference to what the Spirits have beheld. Now, there as here, no two behold precisely the same thing. Each views the scene around each, and there must, therefore, of

necessity be the same discrepancies which we behold here, when we are taking human testimony respecting human events, or even inanimate scenery. Each beholds from a different stand-point from the other, and there must therefore be different accounts.

So, too, there is a great difference in the power of observation and of the faculty of expression. We behold around us here men who can see nothing clearly—others, again, who see clearly, but have a bungling and obscure mode of expressing themselves. These peculiarities accompany the Spirit into his Spirit-life, and must mark his intercourse with us until he shall have so far advanced as to have eradicated those defects. But until he shall so advance, it will be in vain to expect from him communications marked by a clearness of perception and expression which we are so fain to suppose ought to characterize all spiritual intercourse.

The very fact of its absence tends to show us the great truth, what is the change which death works in us, namely, that though we leave our physical nature behind, intellectually and morally we are the same, and the Spirit-life is but a continuation of mortal life; that the real or inner man is the same, with all his improvements and perversions, just as they were when he laid aside his outer garment, but with the advantage of greater means of obtaining knowledge, and less obstacles to its acquisition.

Then there is another difficulty for which the Spirit-world is not responsible, and that is, that the mind of the medium does, and must more or less, affect the communications.

Suppose you here on earth desire to avail yourself of the mediumship of any person to convey your thoughts to a third person, e. g., sending a clerk or a servant with a message: unless your agent writes down the message from your lips, or commits your words to memory, it is inevitable that the message which he delivers shall bear marks of his mental characteristics. He will convey the idea as he understands it, and not otherwise; and he will stamp on it also his peculiarities of language. If he is an Irishman, he will give birth in the brogue to a message conceived in pure English, or if a foreigner he will give it in broken or perchance translate it into his own

language, and subject it to all the hazards of an art which requires much practice to perform well—I mean the art of translating from one language to another.

Occasionally there are instances where it would seem as if the medium were giving the precise words of the Spirit. But this is rare, because it involves a state of things in the medium, both physically and mentally, that is very difficult to attain, namely, an exclusion of the medium's self hood—a suspension of his own will, and Spirit control, that is very unnatural, very difficult and very dangerous, and therefore necessarily very rare.

The most favored instances of this character which I have witnessed, are those where the medium speaks a language unknown to him, and be all the time, though conscious he is speaking, is unconscious what idea he is conveying. It is to the medium, as if he were uttering an unmeaning gibberish. Yet even there, it is his organs of language which are used; and as those organs cannot be used without a mental effort, it is difficult for me to conceive how even in such case the communication can be exempt from the taint of the medium, though I confess it is difficult, if not impossible, to discover its presence.

But the generality of communications—far the greatest amount of them, and those which are most valuable—are given in such a mode that they are liable to be affected by the mind of the medium, because they are given through the use, in some measure, of the medium's mental powers. Even the physical manifestations of rapping and table tipping, are not exempt from this remark.

To you who have been engaged for years on the Chancery bench, in seeking the truth through the mazes of human testimony, I need not dilate on the difficulties and dangers arising from this cause. A positive intention to fabricate testimony has caused you less embarrassment often, than the perversion of the truth which arises from the misconceptions of a strictly honest witness, or his incapacity to embrace the truth when presented to his view. I have often felt that embarrassment in my judicial labors, and sometimes the additional one arising from a conjunction of moral and mental incapacity, in the same witness.

And what are mediums but witnesses bearing their testimony to the Gospel of Truth, or interpreters to such witnesses, and to be tried and tested by all the rules which wisdom and long experience have declared necessary to the proper reception of human testimony? Their mediumship is the result chiefly of physical organization, and does not, *ex mero motu*,— work any mental and moral change to exempt them from those rules.

There are other considerations affecting the Spirit that is communing with us, which must not be overlooked. By what light does the Spirit see? In what manner and by what organs does he hear? And how does he convey his thoughts to or through the medium?

He does not see by the physical light which we use, neither by the light of our sun, nor our lamps or our fires. (This is true as a general thing, though I am not prepared to say that there may not be exceptions in the case of those who yet retain much material grossness.) Each, as I understand it, engenders his own light, which is greater or less according to his condition morally and intellectually, and they are frequently aided by each other's light. But how much this enables them to behold of the mortal or spirit-life which surrounds them, it is difficult to say. This, however, I have discovered, that there are things immediately around and before them, in both states of existence, which they do not behold, and of whose presence they are entirely unconscious. For instance: Bacon, who has been nearly three hundred years in the Spirit-world, with all his intellectual powers and culture, has been, while communing with me, ignorant that another Spirit was at the same instant doing so, and ignorant even that that other Spirit was present. One of my brother Judges, shortly after his death, came to me, and in his communion with me was ignorant of the presence of another Spirit who stood by his side, and who was as visible to me as he was. And without entering too much into detail, I remark that I have had very many evidences of this.

Then, as to hearing; they evidently do not bear as we do. I have known them frequently to be ignorant of sounds audible to us, and occurring in their presence. Thus, I have known a Spirit

who was communing to be unconscious of a severe clap of thunder until he discovered the effect in our minds, and I have often observed that they "hear" my thought as well when I do not utter it aloud as when I do.

Then, again, how do they convey their thought to us—I mean how convey it to the medium through whom we get it. It is not by the sound of a voice audible to the medium; it is not by a picture visible to his sight; but it is in a manner which it is difficult to understand, and still more difficult to describe. The Quakers have an expression which is pretty accurate as to some instances." It is borne in on the mind." Yet it is not always so; for I have often myself beheld a Spirit and held conversation with him without the utterance of a sound, yet have "perceived" with facility and accuracy the idea he meant to convey.

I have command of no language which will enable me to describe this any more accurately. I have said enough, perhaps, to show you how liable the intercourse must be to error, and how much the accuracy of it must depend on the intellectual training and habit of the mortal vehicle through whose instrumentality the Spirit-thought is frequently conveyed.

Now, putting all these things together, do you wonder that there are inaccuracies in spiritual intercourse? So long as the instruments used both in the Spirit existence and in the mortal life are imperfect, the intercourse must be imperfect. What would we do with a perfect revelation? We would either crucify it like the Jew, or reject it like the Greek, as foolishness.

Revelation from on high must come to us through man. It comes to us from those who have not yet attained perfection, through mediums who are not yet perfect even as such, and comes to men who are far short of perfection. It must then be commensurate with the minds through which it comes, and adapted to the capacity of those to whom it is addressed. Can you force the Falls of Niagara through a goose-quill? And of what avail would it be to reason with the savage on the Rocky Mountains, of a problem in conic sections, or the forty-seventh proposition of Euclid?

To me there is evidence of marvelous wisdom in the adaptation of the revelations of to-day to the present mental capacity of mankind.

Alan has advanced much in capacity and knowledge in two thousand years, and the revelations now coming to us are far beyond those of that day, in magnitude and interest. Yet many of those already given the world do not receive, and many have been given of which as yet the world is ignorant, and which they would at once reject like him who persisted in denying the revolution of the earth, because, as he said, "We would all fall off."

In the mean time, it comes in such a manner as not to destroy or impair our own individuality, and not to interfere with the cardinal rule, that each must work out his own salvation.

We must therefore take the evidence as it is given to us, and out of its incongruities we must for ourselves sift the truth as you and I have been doing, when exercising the divine attribute of administering justice among men. We must for ourselves follow the truth through all its devious windings to its most concealed recesses, remembering that it is our condition which throws obstacles in the way of its straight and onward path.

So, too, we must judge for ourselves. It is our reason which is the image of the Divinity within us, and we must exercise it. A perfect revelation would come to us "with authority," and we should be required to render obedience and not judgment.

That is the evil which has so long haunted humanity that is the error against which the revelations of to-day are anxiously seeking to guard us. How could this task be so well performed as by the very incongruities to which you allude? We are compelled from sheer necessity to reason for ourselves, and are driven to resist the temptation of letting others think for us.

You are as well aware as I am, that our trouble begins when we begin to think for ourselves, and that the temptation is almost irresistible to fly for refuge from our anxiety, to something which shall speak "by authority."

It is only to a people as blinded and as enslaved as were the

Israelites in Egypt, that a revelation Comes as a command—"Thus saith the Lord." To the educated mind, whose reason has been Cultivated to an approach to the great Mind of all, it comes tendering its freest exercise, and involving man in the responsibility, not of Obedience only, but of so exerting his powers as to be consonant to his immortal and progressive destiny. It comes offering to man that freedom which is his birthright—the freedom of examining and understanding all the laws of the great Creator—the freedom of conforming to them, and the freedom of taking upon himself the consequences of his disregard of them.

Here is a task worthy man's greatest and noblest powers, which fits him for his high destiny of eternal progression, and prepares him for that never-ending enlargement of his intellect, which shall yet bring him nigh unto the Mind which spoke a universe into existence.

I have thus endeavored to answer your inquiries as far as lies in my power. I have done it imperfectly, because necessarily confined to generalities, and compelled to be brief and to content myself with merely touching each topic. I am, however, in hopes that I have, at least, opened to you a train of thought which you can yourself follow out to a conclusion.

One thing I have found it necessary to guard myself against, and that was jumping too hastily to a conclusion.

As for instance, your remark that the revelations as to the locality of the spheres, as made to Professor Hare and to myself, can not be both true. What authority have you for saying that? My own idea is that both are true, and that while some Spirits are, from their comparatively undeveloped condition, confined near the earth and within the distances named to the Professor, others are more refined and sublimated, and can pass to immeasurable distances, and behold, of the great creation, many things unknown to us. And this, as I understand it, is part of the Spirit progression. Must it not be so? And if the doctrine of progression be true, must there not be in Spirit-condition even greater variety than that involved in the revelations to him and to me?



Man's condition in the Spirit-world, as I am taught, depends on his progress in Purity, in Love, and in Knowledge. It is his progress in Purity which fixes the plane on which he exists there, while it is his progress in Knowledge and Love which controls his associations on that plane.

Behold, then, how infinite must be his variety of condition, and as a consequence, how various must be his teachings in respect to it I

And now, drawing my long epistle to a close, I beg to assure you that I shall, at all times, be most happy to render you any assistance in my power in your researches, for I hail with great joy every accession of intelligent, educated minds to the great band of inquirers into truths, which you have justly characterized as worthy the investigation of every votary of science and knowledge.      I am very respectfully yours, etc.,

T:—

J. W. EDMONDS

SPIRITUAL TRACTS, No. 5.

CERTAINTY

OF

SPIRITUAL INTERCOURSE

By JUDGE EDMONDS.

*New York*

1858.

## CERTAINTY OF SPIRITUAL INTERCOURSE.

CONTINUANCE OF THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN JUDGE  
EDMONDS AND A DISTINGUISHED LEGAL GENTLEMAN.

——. October 10, 1856

DEAR SIR:

I write to thank you for the kindness and courtesy with which you responded to my communication of the 22d ultimo; also for the purpose of replying to your request for my consent to the publication of my letter with my name, as a kind of preface or introduction to your exposition of the questions or difficulties suggested in my said letter. I consent most cheerfully to the publication of the letter, if deemed advisable by you, but without the name. I think that this would be premature on my part. It is not from cowardice or fear of ridicule. I believe I am now regarded as more than half a Spiritualist by most of my friends and acquaintances. I am, however, but an humble investigator, with no settled convictions on this subject, but with a mind certainly unsettled on all subjects of a kindred nature. I wish only truth. Of this I am not afraid, let it lead where it may. I feel that no truth can be hurtful, however it may clash with dogmas and preconceived opinions; and of another thing I am convinced, no truth (physical, moral, or religious) can be discordant with any other truth; and this is a consolation and an encouragement to those who investigate with honesty and intelligence. If I sincerely and honestly direct the faculties which my heavenly Father has bestowed upon me in search of truth, but should unhappily arrive at an erroneous conclusion, it can scarcely be imputed to me as a crime.

I do not, however, think that creeds should be lightly changed as one would change a garment; and one should be cautious how he *seems to do so* before he has formed a definite judgment, lest sliding back to his former opinions, or taking others still

more novel he should incur the character of volatility or instability

If I were to be convinced of the truth of Spiritualism, I should not hesitate to avow it, or at least, I hope I should—and I scarcely know whether I should be pleased or otherwise, to find its claims based on reality; but I feel that I would be more than willing to embrace the truth.

O truth! truth! "What is truth?" So difficult to find on earth, is it equally difficult to know what is truth in heaven? While men are darkling after it in this sublunary sphere, is the search for it also vain for the pure and disembodied Spirits in the higher spheres? This, to my mind, is one sad and discouraging feature in your philosophy. For I had hoped and thought (and if it is an illusion, I had hugged it to my soul), that truth vainly sought on earth, was to be found among the bright immortals. But the revelations to you and others would lead to different conclusions.

I think, my dear Sir, that your explanation of the difficulties I suggested (the discrepancies of the Spirit revelations on subjects where there should be no discrepancies) though very ingenious, to a person who stands in my point of view, is not satisfactory, and if you will pardon the phrase (not intended to be in the slightest degree disrespectful) not logical. I mean that, after conceding to you all your facts on which your explanation and argument are grounded, you explain the admitted discrepancies by the supposed different states of advancement of the Spirits who communicate (and here I would say by way of parenthesis, that independently of this new revelation I am prepared to admit and believe, that the disembodied Spirits of the righteous are at any given period differently advanced, according to circumstances, in knowledge and other attributes.) But on this earth, amid our imperfect and undeveloped race, all, however limited in faculties of mind or opportunities of observation, equally know and understand certain simple facts. Upon these all agree; there is no discord. If the discrepancies in the Spirit teachings had appeared on subjects that were abstruse and metaphysical, the incongruity would not have been so startling.

"Providence, foreknowledge, fate and will; fixed fate, free-will, fore-knowledge absolute," these and kindred themes we may suppose that seraphic intellects might discuss and endeavor to explore, "and find no end in wandering mazes lost." But upon a question of geography, a mere matter of locality, we find the discordances in the Spirit teachings most glaring. Where is the difference in this sphere, among *savans*, as to the geographical position of Pekin, or any other known place? Yet this is precisely the contradiction pointed out in my last letter. The question is as to the locality of heaven, or the place where good and happy Spirits dwell. The conclave of high and holy and advanced Spirits, questioned by Prof. Hare, locate it between this earth and the orbit of the moon, that is, the seven spheres are there located; and let it be borne in mind, that the advanced Spirits (Bacon and Swedenborg, I believe,) who being interrogated by you or some one of your circle in the same manner, replied that twice the distance of the remotest fixed star, multiplied a thousand times, would not approximate the measure of the distance of the locality of Heaven. I am writing now from memory, and may not have this teaching accurately in the very words; but I think that I have expressed the idea substantially. I said that both of these statements could not be true. You ask me what authority I have for saying that; that you believe both statements to be true, meaning, I suppose, that there are two localities. You ascribe the apparent contradiction to the different advancement of the two classes of Spirits who teach. If I understand the force of this argument, it amounts to this: the Spirits teach according to their own experience and knowledge, and only in that way. The intimation directly is, that the more distant locality is spoken of by the more advanced Spirits. That is a higher and a happier place. But I have not learned from anything I have seen, that Bacon and Swedenborg claim to be more advanced than some of the conclave who communicate to Dr. Hare. And if they were, and had a knowledge of ulterior spheres beyond the *seven* of Hare, it is reasonable to suppose that the advanced Spirits of Dr. Hare's conclave had some report of these higher and more exulted states of being. There

is a teaching (somewhere to be found in your book, perhaps,) that the seventh sphere, wherever it is, is the ultimate; and that beyond that nothing is known by the highest intelligences. But leaving that out of view, Bacon and Swedenborg, who taught the more distant locality, must in their upward ascent have passed through the lower spheres, and have had a knowledge of them from personal observation, to say nothing of a different way of obtaining that knowledge, being such high and advanced Spirits as they were. I can not see but that they should know all below them, when interrogated as to the locality of heaven; for them (ignoring the seven sublunary spheres of Dr. Hare's conclave,) to locate it beyond the fixed stars, is to my mind, (I can make it nothing else but) a contradiction of the sublunary location. It does this by the most obvious implication. If a learner of geography were to ask where were situated the territorial possessions of the Czar of Russia? and had an answer which included all his European dominions, but omitted his Asiatic dominions, would that be a correct answer? Would it not, by the most manifest implication, exclude the Asiatic territory? Would it not be contradictory to one which included the latter? Would not there be different teachings to that scholar? *Expressio unius, exclusio alterius*, [express mention of one thing implies exclusion of the other] is not simply a law maxim. It enters into the very philosophy of language, and is equally applicable to all subjects. I doubt not it holds good in the language of the angels in heaven. Suppose it were asked to name the states in the American Union, and the person questioned should enumerate the sixteen Northern, and omit the fifteen Southern States, would not this answer be false? Upon every principle of correct construction, applicable at all times and upon all occasions, would not this convey the erroneous information that the sixteen Northern States, and they alone, composed the American Confederacy of States? It would be vain to vindicate the correctness of the statement, by saying that it was true as far as it went, and that the States enumerated were actually in the Union. The implication is that there were no other; and to make it true it every, sense it must be put upon the ground that the person who answered had a mental reservation which the other interlocutor

was not aware of. It is not even answering in a double sense. Pardon me for saying that the defect of your reasoning in the explanation appears to me to be of a similar character. Dr. Hare's conclave tells him that the spheres are between the earth and the orbit of the moon. Bacon and Swedenborg (one or both) say that the spheres are far beyond the sidereal heavens, and all are professing to teach the *where* of the dwelling-place of beautiful Spirits. Conceding all your *postulata*, this, to my mind, is a contradiction.

But admitting the contradictions, how are the facts to be disposed of? There is the rub. The teachings may be contradictory; they may be all false; but the question forces itself upon us, Who makes them? whence come the revelations, true or false? They are intelligible, if not true, and seem to emanate from intelligent sources. They can not come (it seems so) from mere matter, however subtle its forces. I am lost in wonder and amazement! I am free to say that these phenomena, viewed in any light, or however we may dispose of them, are the most extraordinary in the history of the human mind. Great results must follow, whether they emanate from disembodied Spirits or not. No candid or well-regulated mind can question the integrity of all the witnesses. If you only, or a few others, were alone the witnesses, we might without impugning your honesty, veracity, or general intellectual capacity, get over the difficulty, by ascribing the phenomena to monomania, as Swedenborg's teachings were for a long time, and with some still are disposed of. But the concurrent testimony from many and widely separated sources has assumed a magnitude and force which is not to be evaded by a philosophic sneer. Such a mode of treating the subject may and does satisfy the unreflecting and vulgar herd. But the subject merits attention, and will force itself upon the notice of the world.

Thus far I had written last night, under very unfavorable circumstances. I was here forced to stop by the lateness of the hour and the access of a morbid affection to which I am subject. On looking over the foregoing, this evening, I am forcibly struck with the imperfect manner in which I have expressed my ideas,

and the almost illegible character of the writing. And I have been strongly disposed not to trouble you with the labor of decyphering my hieroglyphics, difficult to read at all times, but more so when the writing has been executed under the circumstances that existed when the foregoing was written. I have, however, concluded to forward it to you, as you appear to take an interest in my feelings and opinions on this subject.

There is one observation I must make before I close. The teachings in your publications, as emanating from the Spirits, inculcate a morality the most pure and elevated, and a state of the affections toward God in the highest degree holy and spiritual. In these respects there are, in my opinion, no writings extant more unexceptionable. There is (as it appears to me) in the Spirit teachings much declamation and rhapsody, and they abound in generalities, which, though very good as such, convey no information.

There is very little said in this State on the subject of Spirit manifestations, and what is said is entirely in the spirit of scoffing and ridicule. I know of no confirmed Spiritualist, and but very few who have given the subject the slightest attention. There is a gentleman of some eminence in the western part of the State who is said to be a convert. The person who in my knowledge comes the nearest to that character, is an intelligent, educated and high-toned gentleman in —, who had some remarkable experiences on this subject. He is a physician. Some of the demonstrations at his house I have witnessed. He ha

communication with what purported to be Spirits. Their names were always given. They communicated freely, but revealed nothing of importance. They made some most admirable tests as to matters unknown; but often made mistakes or false statements. The last time I saw this gentleman, he had given up the investigation, and was entirely afloat as to whether the demonstrations made in his presence were the work of Spirits. The Spirits, though they continued to manifest whenever invited, and breathed nothing but kindness, good will and affection, yet spoke so many falsehoods that he was disgusted with the exhibitions. He had no confidence in any thing they communicated;



and on being asked for explanations as to their false statements, they could give no explanation.

But I must cease to trouble you with my crude thoughts and imaginings on a subject which has engaged so much of your attention, and upon which you are so well informed that what I have to say must appear trivial. If leisure serves you, I should be pleased to hear from you at any time upon this interesting theme. I am, Sir, with great respect, yours, etc.,

HON. J. W. EDMONDS,

NEW YORK.

REPLY OF JUDGE EDMONDS.

NEW YORK, *December 14, 1856.*

DEAR SIR:

I know you will excuse the long delay in answering your favor of the 10th of October, and I will therefore waste no words in apologizing, but content myself with assuring you that it has not arisen from any want of inclination on my part.

Plunging then *in medias res*, [into the midst of things] may I not ask if you are not too impatient in your search for the great desideratum—the Truth? There is no short-cut to knowledge. It has to be toiled for, from our A B C's to the great question, What is God? It is by slow steps that we attain the truth. Think how many centuries elapsed before the truth of our planetary system came to us and finally it came through much persecution, and as the result of the observations and speculations of thousands of years. And so it has been with all the great truths of Science which we now receive. But have we yet received all the truths, even in relation to the material world, which Science can yet attain to? We are not authorized to say so. Why, even Newton's attraction of gravitation, which was proclaimed by him as a cause, it is now insisted, is but an effect, and therefore there is a truth yet to be discovered behind and beyond it. How many new planets belonging to our system have been discovered within the past fifty years, which were before unknown to us! And how many ages passed before we learned the fallacy of the long received maxim, "that nature abhorred a vacuum!"

These things were truths as much a thousand years ago as they are to-day, and it was our incapacity which retarded our knowledge of them. It was our fault, and not theirs, that they were not truths to us at an earlier period.

It is the same with moral as with physical truths. It is only as our capacity to receive them advances, that they come to us.

Cast your eyes back upon the world when Fetichism was the religion of man. He then worshiped stocks and stones, because he was incapable of appreciating a divinity, divested of material attributes. He could not comprehend an invisible, omniscient Deity. The idea was simply an absurdity to him, and he rejected it of course.

The fire-worshiper who succeeded him, began to worship the cause rather than the effect.

The ancient mythology began to comprehend the idea of an invisible existence, but it received not the thought of a Great First Cause.

At length man was prepared to receive the revelation of one God over all. Yet mark how difficult it was for him to comprehend it! It came with many marvels; yet we do not learn that even darkness over the whole land, or the destruction of all the first-born of Egypt, worked conviction in a single mind. Even the Israelites had to pause in the wilderness until an entire generation had died out, before they would receive a truth which now our youngest children acknowledge.

And so, when man had so advanced that he might receive the truth of his own immortality, behold I how difficult it was for him to receive it. Socrates in Greece, and Jesus in Jerusalem, fell sacrifices to the promulgation of this mighty truth.

And now that two thousand years have rolled on, behold how few among the nine hundred millions of men on earth are prepared to receive the great truths which you and I acknowledge namely, the existence of one great Jehovah, and man's immortal destiny.

Why is it that you and I, even in childhood, received as truth that which the wise and the learned of antiquity rejected

as fables? Because time had made its impress upon the race as well as upon the individual.

But everywhere with man, in all ages and in all conditions, time and progress are essential elements in the dissemination of truth, and its reception by him.

Do you ask why I thus gravely dwell on these truisms, with you? It is because being truisms, we may learn the application of them; and by applying them to the revelation of spiritual truths, we may see why it is that the dissemination of such truths, even now, and when descending from so high and holy a source, should be so slow in progress—so difficult, so full of anxiety to us, and yet so certainly attainable in the end.

Let us not, then, marvel that Truth is so hard to get at; and let us so learn to discriminate that we may be able to determine whether the obscurity which disturbs us is owing to a spot on the sun or a cloud around the beholder.

If, then, these things are true, they may be as much so in the present as in the past—in regard to individual man as to the race. Let us see if they will not explain the difficulty to which you refer, as to the locality of Spirit residence.

I do not understand that the Spirits who teach Dr. Hare, as to the sublunar locality, do say that there is no other home; and most certainly those who have taught me as to the far distant locality, have not said so.

It is not, therefore, what they do teach, but what they do not teach, that is the cause of the difficulty; and because they who are teaching Dr. H. in regard to the earthly spheres do not stop in the midst of their teaching, to exclude a conclusion by telling him that there are other localities beside, where Spirits dwell.

Pardon me for saying I do not think this is sound reasoning; and marvel not that I say to you, that even on the bench I could not see the philosophy of the maxim *expressio unius, etc.*

It may sometimes be true that the expression of one idea excludes another; it may indeed often be a just inference to draw, but its universal application can not be sound. A child is asking you what are the countries on the face of the earth? You begin by describing to him the Western Continent; and

then, deeming that he has got as much as he can then grasp, you pause for a while and wait for his mind to be prepared further teaching. Would it not be lamentable for that child to infer then that there was no other continent?

Thus Dr. Hare has all his life long been an honest, sincere, but inveterate disbeliever in the Christian religion. Late in life Spiritualism comes to him, and in a short time works in his mind the conviction of the existence of a God and his own immortality. So far his Spirit teachers have already gone with him. But he still denies Revelation. He is as sturdy and sincere now in that denial as he ever was. Will it be just to conclude, because his Spirit teachers have not yet brought him up to that point, that therefore there is not and never has been a Revelation?

If there was no other teaching of spiritual truths but Dr. Hare's, or even if his professed to teach the whole truth of Spirit existence, there would be more room for the argument. But even then the position would be precisely that which the theologians of to-day so pertinaciously assume, namely, that the revelations through Christ are plenary—a position which has been immensely mischievous in retarding man's spiritual progress. But there are other teachings beside the Doctor's, and his do not profess to cover the whole ground.

The other teachings disclose to us who they are, who—for a while at least—are confined within sublunary distances, and why they are so. They also disclose to us other states of Spirit existence, far more elevated and refined than can be consistent with any earthly or sublunar habitation, whose radiance and beatitude are far beyond even the comprehension of those who are yet so earthly as to be bound down within its influence.

The locality of such a state of existence, in the boundless realms of space, I for one, do not pretend to understand. How can they to whom space is nothing, and whose rapidity of motion lags not "behind the celerity of thought," convey to me an adequate idea of distance in their sphere of life? And how could I understand them, when I can not grasp with a proper comprehension even the distance of Saturn or Herschell? I can

approximate to a comprehension, by imagining how long it would take a cannon-ball or a railroad car to traverse the distance but even then I am lost in the immensity of the idea.

Why then attempt to teach me what I can not comprehend? They are not so superfluous. Already have I learned so much that is far, far beyond what I formerly dreamed was possible, that I pause and say, How boundless is thy realm, O, truth and how eternal must be the search for it, with the immortal intellect!

Already have I been taught so many things beyond the power of language to describe, or even of my mind to comprehend, that I pause on the threshold of knowledge, in breathless awe, and await the time when the spark of divinity that is within me shall be so developed and enlarged that I may begin to grasp the mighty truths which are ever rolling round me in His illimitable kingdom.

Let me suggest to you one idea which will tend to show you that the teachings of Dr. Hare did not intend to exclude other localities.

We are taught by science that the countless worlds which roll in space, must be inhabited by sentient beings. We are now taught by Revelation that it is so, and that those beings, differing as they may from us and each other in their development, are, like us, destined for immortality. Now what is their condition after death? Are they, too, confined within the sublunary distances of this, one of the least considerable of those worlds? Yet *expressio, unius, exclusio alterius*, carried out, would have it so. Surely the argument drawn from that maxim can not be sound, which conducts us to such consequences.

I have thus in a measure amplified the idea which I but suggested in my former letter. Whether I have done so satisfactorily, I leave to your better judgment, confident of the result in a mind so candid and intelligent.

Thus far I have dwelt upon the difficulties and uncertainties of Spirit communion, and have endeavored to convey the idea that it is only by the use of our own reason that we can arrive at results; in other words, that we must deal with this revelation

in the same manner that we have dealt with those through Moses and the Prophets who succeeded him, and through Jesus and his Apostles, and that we can take nothing "by authority" without a sinful surrender of our own independence of thought and the responsibility that belongs to it.

Now let me pause a moment, to mention to you some of the important truths which we can and do obtain through this communion, in spite of all its contradictions, and amid all the incongruities which, although they disturb us, must, it seems to me, be inevitable.

I have now been six years engaged in these investigations. I have been blessed with most favorable opportunities for investigation; I have been witness to very many things, not one ten thousandth part of which has yet been published. I am almost daily enjoying the communion, and daily learning some new truth, or receiving confirmation or explanation of some already given. I am thus taught that there is no end to the knowledge which can thus be communicated to us, and that with all my advantages I am but on the threshold of this new knowledge.

My conclusions must therefore be drawn from many facts not as yet within your reach, or which have not yet come to your knowledge; but they are facts, to the knowledge of which all can attain; for it can not be supposed that I have any peculiar privilege that can not be enjoyed by all mankind. All may know what I know; all may witness what I have witnessed. And now, what I mean to say is, that to all such, when they do thus know and do thus witness, these truths are demonstrated.

Most fully do I accord with you in the opinion that they are most important to man, and do "inculcate a morality the most pure and elevated, and a state of the affections toward God in the highest degree holy and spiritual."

These are the truths I mean

1. That man, during his earthly existence can have communion and direct intercourse with the Spirits of those who have, like us, lived the earthly life, and that not only with those who, when on earth, were near and dear to us, and who can return to assuage our grief by their presence, out with those who have

passed away ages ago, and who can return to us and impart to us the "new knowledge" they have acquired during those ages of their Spirit existence.

2. That that knowledge is not confined to matters connected with this earth, as a material world, or to its bidden or forgotten things, but may extend to the constitution and organization of the countless worlds that people space, and to the laws which govern them, from their first formation to their highest state of perfection.

3. That in this manner, man's ultimate destiny can be revealed to him, and the condition of his existence after this earth life.

Hitherto it has been revealed to him simply that he is destined to live forever; but what that existence was, has been concealed. Now it can be revealed to him, with all its conditions, and what are to be his occupations and employments there.

4. That the character of man's future, whether for good or ill, whether happy or otherwise, is in a great measure dependent upon himself—at least dependent upon himself and his surroundings; that he must work out his own salvation, and he can not devolve that task upon others, nor can he cast upon others the responsibility that belongs to him of performing his duty of obedience to the laws of his great Creator.

5. That the great law of man's existence is progression. As his body is the result of progression from inert matter to the living moving animal, so his soul, which is the emanation of the divinity within him, must progress from the cradle to eternity, and that progression must be in the elements which will liken him to the divinity whence he has sprung.

6. That all mankind are members of one great body, as the leaves and the limbs are parts of the tree. They are bound to, and connected with, each other by indissoluble ties, and progression must be of the race as well as of individual man.

7. That man is endowed with all the attributes which are necessary to enable him thus to progress. Some of them are yet dormant, yet are capable of being drawn out by proper

cultivation, as we are able to read by cultivating the powers within us.

8. That among those attributes which are capable of cultivation and action even in this life, are: the power of Spirit communion; of seeing and hearing spiritual things without using the material organs; of knowing the thoughts of our fellow-man even in his earthly tabernacle; and of prophesying as to the future.

9. That progression must begin in this our primary existence, and if omitted or neglected here, it is far more difficult to begin it hereafter.

10. That man passes into the Spirit-world morally and intellectually, as he is here; that if he is perverted here, he is so there until his great destiny of progression shall begin. While thus perverted, he can commune with us on earth, and we are ever surrounded by such, and susceptible to their influences.

From this source come the inner and often mysterious promptings to evil, which all of us at times experience, urging us to do, even against our own will, what we know to be wrong. And now that the source of this evil is revealed to us, so it is being revealed to us how we can resist and overcome it, and how we can effectually guard against its effect upon us.

These are the mighty truths which spiritual intercourse teaches us. They are demonstrated to us, in a manner and with a force and clearness that no sane mind can resist; and they come to the enlightened intellect with irresistible conviction.

But they come to us, by means of evidence flowing through human channels; and like all human testimony, they are attended with difficulties and dangers which are sufficiently annoying, but are not insurmountable.

Patient, calm and intelligent inquiry cannot fail to produce such results. Anything short of that can not be satisfactory, and may often be dangerous.

Fanaticism is always mischievous. Undue excitement is always hurtful, and they are none the less so in Spiritualism than they are in any other religion; but with us they are easily overcome, for we are ever taught that it is our reason that is addressed, and that its calm exercise alone can enable us to perform our whole duty wisely and well.

I am, very respectfully, yours,

J. W. EDMONDS.

To: ——— ———



SPIRITUAL TRACTS, No. 6.

SPEAKING

IN

MANY TONGUES,

By JUDGE EDMONDS

New York:

1858.

## SPEAKING IN MANY TONGUES,

——— INSTITUTE, ——— October 22, 1857.

HON. J. W. EDMONDS,

NEW YORK:

Dear Sir—It is the custom of this Institution to have most of the leading religious periodicals and journals in its reading-room, for the use of its students.

A committee was appointed a short time since for the purpose of writing for such as were deemed proper. My request that some spiritual works should be written for, was unfavorably received. The curator, however, gave his consent to have such journals in the reading-room as I might select. I wrote for the Spiritual Telegraph, and Mr. Partridge has kindly consented to send it to me. The custom is to send it to the Institution free of charge. I do not know how well this may suit your financial views, but permit me to request you to send me the Sacred Circle for this purpose. I feel a delicacy in asking this, but the assurance that you feel an interest in promoting the important truths you so ably and fearlessly advocate, leads me to hope you will send me a regular copy for the above-mentioned purpose.

This is an —— Institution, and quite liberal in sentiment. The professors, however, object to the name of Spiritualism, although they teach the communion of the Great Spirit; and I think if they fully understood the truths of the new philosophy, they would unhesitatingly indorse it.

It has been but a few mornings since that a question arose in discussing the passage of Scripture, 1 Cor. 12 ch., where Paul speaks of the diversity of spiritual gifts. I explained it according

to spiritual phenomena, and mentioned some cases of persons speaking in foreign tongues in our day. The Professor objected, explaining my examples by the mediums having (as he supposed) previously heard those languages read or spoken; but promised me that he would indorse the doctrine when I would bring him a case well authenticated (by three or more reliable witnesses) of any person or medium speaking in a language of which they were entirely ignorant, never having read, heard read, or heard spoken such language, during their previous life.

I feel assured there are such cases, although I have none at command; and I hope you will not feel that I am taking too great liberty by requesting you to send me such a case. If you have such a one (or a similar one equally strong) in any convenient form for sending, as I feel an interest not only as a matter of pride, but as a matter of principle, in convincing him; and if you will be instrumental in assisting me, you may rest assured that you will receive the warmest thanks of

Respectfully,                      A. D. BYLES.

NEW YORK, *October 27, 1857.*

Dear Sir:—It is one of the strange things of the day, that persons of education and standing, whose lives are devoted to the pursuit of science, and who are engaged in the education of our youth, should be so profoundly ignorant of what is taking place all around them.

There are, perhaps, good reasons why it is so, as regards Spiritualism. Both the secular and religious newspapers of the day have refused to publish anything on the subject, except it be an attack upon it, and, therefore, the opportunities of the world at large to learn anything about it, are necessarily contracted; and then, again, when this general practice is so far departed from as to publish anything, there is a class of people who, for conscience' sake, refuse to read.

In which of these positions your Professor is, of course I can not say; but he must be in one or the other, because the fact

which he doubts has been published to the world, in such manner that if it were false, that could easily have been shown.

My second volume on "Spiritualism" was published in 1856, and several thousand copies have been sold. In the introduction to that volume, written by myself, and having to it my own signature, and of course my voucher for its truth, and on page 45, is a statement of my daughter's having spoken several different languages, and particularly of her conversation with a Greek gentleman.

As you may not have the volume, I annex a copy of the passage.

But it contains my evidence alone, for I have not appended the certificates of its verity from those who were present, nor do I mean to do so; for it is to me a matter of entire indifference whether any one believes it or not. I discharge my duty by publishing the truth, as I know it to be, and leave the matter to its fate.

I published it, however, here, where I am known—where my character for veracity is well known—where I am surrounded by the very persons in whose presence the thing occurred, and where, if my statement is untrue, its falsity can easily be established.

Your Professor is wrong, however, in one respect. He says he would indorse the doctrine, if the fact should be authenticated by three or more reliable witnesses. He would not do so, you may rely upon it. He can have it authenticated by fifty reliable witnesses, if he will. But he would not indorse the doctrine, if such authentication even was before him.

He surely does not mean to say he would "indorse" unless he believed, and he surely knows that belief is not a matter of volition. He can not believe at pleasure. He may profess to, but actual belief does not flow from his volition. Let him try to persuade himself that the sun does not shine at mid-day, and see what a piece of work he will make of it.

I do not mean to impute to him any intentional misstatement in the matter, but I understand his remark as a mere expression of his opinion, as to what he now honestly thinks would be the

effect of the evidence on his mind. But in that respect he is deceived, or, at least, I hope he is; for I would not give a copper for that belief in our beautiful faith, that is founded only on a knowledge of its marvels. It would be a house built on the sand, and could not stand the storms that would assail it. And then, such is not the office of those marvels. They do not come for such purpose. Their legitimate province is simply to awaken attention to the subject, and to induce the intelligent mind to investigate it. Blot from memory or from existence all these external manifestations, and then come the philosophy and the religion of spiritual intercourse, which will work conviction for themselves, in any candid mind that will give itself a fair chance. That is the important aspect in which we are to view the matter, and the manifestations are to be regarded of moment only as they call attention to the subject.

I should pity any mind that should believe on the manifestations alone, for it would be eternally in a sea of doubt; but resting on the rock of reason and philosophy, it would attain, firm faith, and with it, calm repose.

Beside, I have heard this assertion made so often, and seen its results, that I feel authorized to anticipate what would be the result in your Professor's case. I said the same thing myself several times in the early stages of my inquiries, and when the fact came on which I had promised or hoped to found a belief, I was surprised to find myself still a doubter.

I had an illustration of it in the case of Governor —— (now of ——). He was told at my house of the manifestation there of the loss of the steamer *Artic*. That was strange, he acknowledged; but there might be some explanation of it in that single instance. If, however, it had come through three or four different persons unconnected with each other, then he would believe. I told him he would not, but he insisted he would. It was not long before he had the evidence that it had come just as he had suggested, and through four different channels, unconnected with, and unknown to each other. Did he believe then

Not a whit I and for the reason, as I suppose, that belief is not a matter of volition, nor is it the province of a marvel to produce a conviction.

Pray, how many converts to Christianity were made by the marvels of the days of Jesus? Of the thousands whom he fed, do we read that any were made believers thereby? And what, on the feast of the Pentecost, added three thousand souls to the believers? Was it the apostles speaking in many tongues, or the beautiful doctrine which Peter unfolded?

No, my friend; we deceive ourselves when we say or think that we should indorse the doctrine of Spiritualism as soon as we become convinced of the reality of the manifestations. Something more is demanded to work conviction in the rational mind; and we who believe will be likely to mislead our hearers when we make of those manifestations an end, and not a means. Confine them to their legitimate purpose of awakening investigation, and they become useful ministers to the truth. Let them be all in all, and they become its masters without the power of due government, but with the power of working much mischief.

Let me not, however, lose sight of your request, in my fear that too much consequence may be attached to its subject. I will annex hereto, not merely an extract from the book I referred to, but also some extracts from my records of other instances, with explanations, etc.

I give you these extracts as my own personal experience alone. But there are other instances which have been published, as known to others, of which I will not venture to speak.

Of what happened under my observation, I can freely speak for I know whether I speak the truth or not. Yours truly,

MR. A. D. BYLES.

J. W. EDMONDS.

EXTRACT FROM VOL. 2, SPIRITUALISM, p. 45.

"She was next developed to speak different languages. She knows no language but her own, and a little smattering of boarding-school French; yet she has spoken in nine or ten different tongues, sometimes for an hour at a time, with the ease and fluency of a native. It is not unfrequent that foreigners converse with their Spirit-friends through her, in their own language. A recent instance occurred, where a Greek gentleman had several interviews, and for several hours at a time carried on the conversation on his part in Greek, and received his answers sometimes in that language, and sometimes in English. Yet until then she had never heard a word of modern Greek spoken."

The foregoing is my account, in very general terms, of my

daughter's mediumship. Let me here specify some of the instances more particularly:

One evening there came to my house a young girl from one of the Eastern States. She had come to New York to seek her fortune. Her education was that which can be obtained at a common country school. She was a medium, and was accompanied by the Spirit of a Frenchman, who was very troublesome to her. He could speak through her, but only in French. For more than an hour a conversation went on between my daughter and the Spirit, speaking through Miss Dowd. They both conducted the conversation entirely in French, and both spoke with the rapidity and fluency of native Frenchmen. Miss Dowd's French was a *wretched patois* of some of the Southern provinces of France, while Laura's was pure Parisian.

This occurred in my library, where some five or six persons were present; and Miss Dowd is still living in this city.

On another occasion, some Polish gentlemen, entire strangers to her, sought an interview with Laura, and during it, she several times spoke in their language words and sentences which she did not understand, but they did, and a good deal of the conversation on their part was in Polish, and they received answers, sometimes in English, and sometimes in Polish. The English she understood, but the other she did not, though they seemed to understand it perfectly.

This can be verified only by Laura's statement, for no one was present but her and the two gentlemen, and they did not give their names.

The incident with the Greek gentleman was this: One evening, when some twelve or fifteen persons were in my parlor, Mr. E. D. Green, an artist of this city, was shown in, accompanied by a gentleman whom he introduced as Mr. Evangelides, of Greece. He spoke broken English, but Greek fluently. Ere long, a Spirit spoke to him through Laura, in English, and said 190 many things to him, that he identified him as a friend who had died at his house a few years before, but of whom none of us had ever heard.

Occasionally, through Laura, the Spirit would speak a word

or a sentence in Greek, until Mr. E. inquired if he could be understood if he spoke in Greek? The residue of the conversation for more than an hour, was, on his part, entirely in Greek, and in hers, sometimes in Greek, and sometimes in English. At times, Laura would not understand what was the idea conveyed either by her or him. At other times she would understand him, though he spoke in Greek, and herself when uttering Greek words.

He was sometimes very much affected, so much so as to attract the attention of the company, some of whom begged to know what it was that caused so much emotion. He declined to tell, but after the conversation ended, he told us that he had never before witnessed any Spirit-manifestations, and that he had, during the conversation, tried experiments to test that which was so novel to him. Those experiments were in speaking of subjects which he knew Laura must be ignorant of, and in frequently and suddenly changing the topic from domestic to political affairs, from philosophy to theology, and so on. In answer to our inquiries—for none of us knew Greek—he assured us that his Greek must have been understood, and her Greek was correct.

He afterward had many other interviews, in which Greek conversations occurred.

At this interview, which I have described, there were present Mr. Green, Mr. Evangelides, Mr. Allen, President of a Boston bank, and two gentlemen whose names I forget, but can easily ascertain, who were large railroad contractors in one of the Western States, my daughter Laura, my niece Jennie Keyes, myself, and several others whom I do not remember.

My niece, of whom I have spoken, has often sung Italian, improvising both words and tune, yet she is entirely unacquainted with the language. Of this, I suppose, there are a hundred instances.

One day, my daughter and niece came into my library and began a conversation with me in Spanish, one speaking a part of a sentence and the other the residue. They were influenced, as I found, by the Spirit of a person whom I had known when



in Central America, and reference was made to many things which had occurred to me there, of which I knew they were as ignorant as they were of Spanish.

To this only we three can testify.

Laura has spoken to me in Indian, in the Chippewa and Monomonie tongues. I knew the language, because I had been two years in the Indian country.

I have thus enumerated Indian, Spanish, French, Greek and English, that she has spoken. I have also heard her in Italian, Portuguese, Latin and Hungarian, and in some that I did not know.

The instances are too numerous for me to recall the names of the persons present.

I will now mention instances through others than her.

A man by the name of Finney, a carpenter, of very limited education, living near Cleveland, Ohio, was once giving me a communication, for he was a speaking medium. The subject was Self-knowledge, and while I was writing it down, I spoke (*sotto voce*.) *Gnothi seaulon*. He paused, repeated the Greek, and added, "Yes, know thyself."

Mrs. Helen Leeds, of 45 Carver Street, Boston, a medium of some note in those parts, has very often spoken Chinese. She is of very limited education, and never heard a word of that language spoken.

This occurred so often with her in a former stage of her mediumship, that I suppose I may say that there are thousands who have witnessed it. I have myself witnessed it at least a hundred times.

In the early stages of my investigations I kept very full minutes of all that occurred. From my records I make this extract:

#### "ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-EIGHTH INTERVIEW.

"Nov. 3, 1852.

"There was a special meeting of the Circle of Hope last evening, to meet some of our friends from Albany. Beside the members of the circle [the circle consisted of Mr. Sweet and wife, Mr. Wood and wife, Mr. Ira Hutchinson, Mr. Comes and myself] there were present Mrs. Shepherd and Mrs. Haight of Albany; Mr. and Mrs. J. K. Mettler, of Hartford, Conn.; Mrs. J. B. Mettler, of New York, and Mrs. Heath, sister of Mrs. Ambler.

"Mr. Ambler was soon thrown into the magnetic state, etc.

"After he came out of the trance-state, Mrs. Shepherd was affected, and spoke in several languages. She occasionally spoke English.

And she continued for an hour or two thus to speak in some foreign languages. It seemed to us to be Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese.

"Mrs. Mettler was then thrown into a trance-state, and she was developed for the first time in her life to speak in diverse tongues. She spoke in German, and what seemed to be Indian.

"And they, two, i. e. Mrs. Shepherd and Mrs. Mettler, then for some time conversed together in these foreign languages.

"Occasionally they spoke in English, and sometimes in broken English."

I have looked in my records, but do not find it, though I very well remember the fact, that Mrs. Sweet, of this city, another of our mediums, of very little education, has often spoken French.

[Since writing the above, I learn that she has also spoken Italian and Hebrew.]

I have, a number of times, witnessed a cognate manifestation, when the communication was through the Tappings, and was given in a foreign language, though the medium knew only the English.

And I have heard Gov. Tallmadge's daughter, at my house, speak in German, several persons being present.

I have thus gathered together my own experience on this topic. I have never done so before, and confess myself somewhat surprised to behold how large the sum total is. And yet my experience embraces a very small part of that which has been given, and less, if I remember right, than what has been actually published to the world.

I had hoped that in our country, where general information is so wide-spread, where this subject of spiritual intercourse has been a matter of investigation for at least ten years, and where the witnesses to its existence are numbered by hundreds of thousands, the time had gone by when it was necessary to pause in our progress to prove that existence. I had hoped that the time had arrived when the intelligent minds of our country were prepared to use the instrumentalities, whose existence can not be ignored by any well-informed mind, for the purpose of inquiring whether there is not something in its philosophy and its revelations worthy of the attention of the loftiest intellect.

It seems, however, that I am mistaken, and that we must yet awhile trudge along in our infant School. So be it. The time will come, however, when better things will be, and the Truth make its own way, even to the educated mind.

P. S. I now add to the foregoing:

*November 1.*

To-day, at our Conference, I mentioned this subject, and asked if any of those present could give me any further information?

The attendance was unusually small, there not being over a hundred present, but I received the following reply to my inquiry:

Dr. John F. Gray mentioned having had communications through the rappings and table tippings in the Malay, Hebrew, and Spanish languages. The communications were spelled out, letter by letter, and written down. He obtained translations of all these from persons versed in the different languages. He has records of it all, specifying where it occurred, and who were present. He will probably give me an extract from them. If he does, I will send it to you.

He mentioned one instance, where Professor Bush, who is a Hebrew scholar, was present, and he called the Hebrew alpha, bet, and wrote the communication down at the time, and afterward translated it, no one present but himself being acquainted with that alphabet.

Dr. Abraham D. Wilson, another physician of high standing stated that the late Mr. Henry Inman, the artist, told him that when his daughter was developed as a medium, she repeatedly spoke Spanish, of which she had no knowledge.

Mr. David Bryson stated that at a recent circle, where Mrs. Tucker was the medium, and Mr. and Mrs. Daniel G. Taylor and others were present, the medium spoke fluently an unknown tongue, and conversed with a Dane, who was present, in the Danish language.

Mr. Taylor was at the Conference, and confirmed Mr. Bryson's account.

Mrs. Richardson relates a recent incident of a woman named Greenleaf, who spoke French. And Mrs. French, the medium, well known here, and at Pittsburgh, stated that through her the Spirits had spoken nine different languages.

She relates a recent instance, where Mr. Henry C. Vail being present, she was addressed by an Italian female and led by tier to a part of the town where some fourteen Italians were huddled together in one room, in a great state of destitution and sickness, and where Italian was spoken through her to them with entire ease. And she mentioned an occasion at Washington, where in the presence of Governor Tallmadge and Mr. Giddings, M. C., from Ohio, she spoke French fluently.

All these are cases where the parties speaking knew only one language—the English.

This is the gathering of one afternoon only. I can form no idea of the extent of the evidence that might be gathered by a more extended inquiry.

But is it not enough for all, except those who would not believe, though one arose from the dead?

SPIRITUAL TRACTS, No. 10.

LETTERS

TO THE

"NEW YORK TRIBUNE,"

ON

SPIRITUALISM.

BY

JUDGE EDMONDS.

NEW YORK:

1860.

## INTRODUCTION.

THE following articles were written for the New York *Tribune*, and were published in that paper at irregular intervals, from March to October, 1859. They have been in such demand, that they are republished in this form. They were necessarily very general in their character; for, in availing myself of the privilege of using the columns of that print, I was, of course, obliged to conform to the conditions imposed, which limited the number of the articles, restricted each in dimensions, and selected the phenomena, rather than the doctrines, of Spiritualism, as the subject to be discussed. I must not be understood as complaining of these restrictions. They were manifestly demanded by the other duties of that paper, and I have ever been grateful for even this opportunity of reaching the world at large.

J. W. E.—*December, 1859.*

No. I.

## INTRODUCTORY

*To the Editor of the New York Tribune:*

SIR: I am permitted to address a series of articles to the readers of the *Tribune* on the subject of Spiritualism, and I embrace the opportunity.

In doing so, I do not mean to address myself to believers, though they are a pretty formidable band, being numbered now by millions in this country alone; nor to the five or six millions of professing Christians in our nation, for I am bound to accord to them the privilege I claim for myself, of enjoying their own opinion without molestation; but I shall address myself to the fifteen or twenty millions of our people who belong to no church, who scarcely possess any religion, but who seem willing or compelled to trust to luck, and let the future take care of itself.

To them I will proffer a faith which can relieve their painful doubts as to the future; which can dispel the anxiety that, in spite of every effort, will at times intrude upon every mind; will open to their comprehension a view of the future, beyond measure attractive to an immortal nature; and, while it may conflict with many of the doctrines taught as the religion of the day, will enjoin upon all who receive it an unvarying life of public worth and private virtue.

In doing that, I shall aim at two things. One will be to demonstrate the fact that they who once lived on earth, and have died, can and do commune with those yet living; and the other, what it is that they can and do reveal to us through such communion.

To fill this task would require vastly more room than will be accorded to me in these papers, and I shall therefore be compelled to be very very brief in my statements; contenting myself, of necessity, with affording my readers mainly a guide to assist them in their researches, rather than a full disclosure of all that is known on the topic.

Of course, I shall have to repeat many things I have said at other times, and which may not be new to some at of my readers. Tedious as that may be to them and to me, I cannot well help it, for my object is not to pander to a craving for the novel or the marvellous, but to bring together in one view the vast mass of evidence on the subject, now lying in scattered fragments all around us.

I am to bear my own testimony, as well as that of others, and therefore I ought, first of all, to show that I am competent to do so.

Am I trustworthy? This paper will be dated on the day I attain the age of sixty years, nearly forty of which have been spent, not obscurely, but professionally, politically, and judicially before the public, where all could judge of my character for veracity.

Am I easily deluded? Let my private and public career answer.

Am I credulous, particularly on this subject? Let this statement answer for me:

It was in January, 1851, that I first began my investigations, and it was not until April, 1853, that I became a firm and unquestioning believer in the reality of spiritual intercourse. During twenty-three months of those twenty-seven, I witnessed several hundred manifestations in various forms. I kept very minute and careful records of many of them. My practice was, whenever I attended a circle, to keep in pencil a memorandum

of all that took place, so far as I could, and, as soon as I returned home, to write out a full account of what I had witnessed. I did all this with as much minuteness and particularity as I had ever kept any record of a trial before me in Court. In this way, during that period, I preserved the record of nearly two hundred interviews, running through some 1,600 pages of manuscript.

I had these interviews with many different mediums, and under an infinite variety of circumstances. No two interviews were alike. There was always Something new, or something different from what had previously occurred; and it very seldom happened that only the same persons were present.

The manifestations were of almost every known form, physical or mental; sometimes only one, and sometimes both combined.

I resorted to every expedient I could devise, to detect imposture, and to guard against delusion.

I felt in myself, and saw in others, how exciting was the idea that we were actually communing with the dead; and I labored, as I thought, successfully, to prevent any undue bias of my judgment. I was at times critical and captious to an unreasonable extreme, and when my belief was challenged, as it was, over and over again, I refused to yield, except to evidence that would leave no possible room for cavil.

I was severely exacting in my demands, and this would frequently occur: I would go to a circle with some doubt on my mind as to the manifestations at the previous circle, and something would happen, aimed directly at that doubt, and completely overthrowing it, as it then seemed, so that I had no longer any reason to doubt. But I would go home, and write out carefully my minutes of the evening, cogitate over them for



several days, compare them with previous records, and finally find some loophole—some possibility that it might have been something else than spiritual influence, and I would go to the next circle with a new doubt, and a new set of queries.

I was in the habit, on such occasions, when alone by myself, and in preparation for the next circle, of putting on paper every possible question that I could imagine to test the matter.

I saw that the circumstances of the interview often prevented my framing, on the spur of the moment, questions sufficiently searching, and, therefore, I took my leisure, when alone in my library, with nothing to interrupt the current of thought, to perform that task, and I used often to attend the circle with a series of questions thus deliberately framed, which I carefully concealed from every human being, so that I knew, beyond peradventure, that no mortal could know what questions I meant to ask, and no mortal could be prepared beforehand to answer them.

I look back sometimes now, with a smile, at the ingenuity I wasted in devising ways and means to avoid the possibility of deception.

Still, there was the danger of self-deception or mental delusion on my part, and I tried to be equally astute on that point, not merely when at the circle, but alone, in the calm of my hours of study.

It was a remarkable feature of my investigations, that every conceivable objection I could raise was, first or last, met and answered.

Let me take the rappings as a specimen

When I first heard them, it was in the presence of three females, whose characters were enough of themselves to assure me against any attempt at imposition. As I entered the room, where they were seated together

at one side of a table, the tappings came with a hurried, cheerful sound, on the floor near where they sat. I took my seat at the opposite side of the table, and listened, with the idea in my mind, "One of them is doing it—perhaps with her feet or hands, her toe or knee-joints." Directly, the sounds came on the table, and not on the floor, and where their hands and feet could not reach. "It was ventriloquism," I said to myself. I put my hands on the table, directly over the sounds, and distinctly felt the vibration, as if a hammer had struck it. "It was machinery," I imagined, and then the sounds moved about the table in different parts, they and the vibration following my hands wherever I put them. At other times, though not on this first occasion, I have turned the table upside down, and examined it so carefully as to know there was no machinery.

Thus I went on, at this time and at other times, testing the rappings in various ways, by these questions. And in answer, they would sometimes come on the back of my chair, when there was no one behind me; sometimes on my person, when there was no one near enough to touch me; sometimes in a railroad car, when in rapid motion; sometimes high up on a wall, beyond the reach of any one; sometimes on a door standing open, when I could see on both sides of it, and no one was near enough to touch it; sometimes four or five feet distant from any person; sometimes following the person, when walking to and fro; sometimes when the medium was immersed in water; sometimes when the feet were held fast sometimes when they were placed on a feather pillow sometimes when isolated from the floor, on glass; sometimes when held up from the floor; and sometimes I found, beyond doubt, that the sounds were the sheer fabrication of the medium.

Still, it might be ventriloquism; and so we tested it by jars of quicksilver, so placed, that the least vibration of the material on which the sound was made, would be apparent. And, finally, after weeks of such trials, as if to dispel all idea in my mind as to its being done by others, or by machinery, the rappings came to me alone, when I was in bed, when no mortal but myself was in the room. I first heard them then, on the floor, as I lay reading. I said, "It's a mouse." They instantly changed their location from one part of the room to another, with a rapidity that no mouse could equal. "Still, it might be more than one mouse?" And then they came upon my person, distinct, clear, unequivocal. I explained it to myself, by calling it a twitching of the nerves, which at times I had experienced, and so I tried to see if it was so. It was on my thigh that they came. I sat up in bed, threw off all clothing from the limb, leaving it entirely bare, I held my lighted lamp in one hand, near my leg, and sat and looked at it. I tried various experiments. I laid my left hand flat on the spot—the raps would be then on my hand, and cease on the leg. I laid my hand edgewise on the limb, and the force, whatever it was, would pass across my hand, and reach the leg, making itself as perceptible on each finger as on the leg. I held my hand two or three inches from my thigh, and found they instantly stopped, and resumed their work as soon as I withdrew my hand.

But, I said to myself, this is some local affection, which the magnetism of my hand can reach. Immediately, they ran riot all over my limbs, touching me with a distinctness and rapidity that was marvellous; running up and down both limbs, from the thighs to the end of the toes, and, two or three times, with force enough to hurt some, as if a child had struck me with a blunted nail.

Thus they proceeded, for some half hour or more, as I thus watched, until I gave it up that there was any but one hypothesis on which they could be explained, for they were intelligent, and, by their changing, met my mental objections, for I uttered no word aloud. I put down my lamp, and lay down to sleep. They immediately left my limbs, and went to other parts of my body, and I fell asleep with them gently tapping, my left side.

Still, there was another question: may not this be some Unknown power, belonging to a peculiar mortal organization, and subject to its control? The answer to that was—though not the only answer—that it would often come when the medium did not want it, and as often refuse to come when it was most earnestly wanted. And it was the same with the desires of the circle. It would come when it pleased, and as it pleased, whatever it was, and not as we wished.

I have gone into this detail here, of events which were spread over several months, merely for the purpose of showing the precautions which I took, and how I investigated. And I will add that, with all the other manifestations, of which I shall hereafter speak—and there are very many others beside the rappings—I dealt in the same way, for a period of about two years, before I yielded my belief as to their spiritual origin.

At the end of these two years, I left the country on account of my health, and spent about three months in Central America. I took with me four volumes of my manuscripts, and having little else to do during that time, I carefully reviewed the subject. I compared the proceedings of one meeting with those of another; I hunted for discrepancies and contradictions; I was away from the excitement of the circles, and I was able to examine the subject, and I did examine it as carefully

and as critically, as I ever tried or decided a case in court in my life.

I discovered a grand scheme displayed in the work—an intelligent design, persisted in amid all discouragements and difficulties—returning ever to its purpose, however diverted by obstructions at the moment, and I became a believer in the spiritual theory. I ought not to say I *yielded* my belief. Belief came in spite of me, as it does that the sun shines at noonday, and nothing short of the blindness of insanity could make me doubtful as to the light that was shining around me.

Since then I have been a firm and unwavering believer in the idea that the spirits of the dead can, and do, hold communion with us. I have been sorely tried, temporally and mentally. I have been excluded from the associations which once made life pleasant to me. I have felt, in the society which I once hoped to adorn, that I was an object marked for avoidance, if not for abhorrence. Courted once, and honored among men, I have been doomed to see the nearest and dearest to me, turn from me with pity, if not disgust. Tolerated rather than welcomed among my fellows, at an advanced age, and with infirm health, compelled to begin the world again; and, A I amid what discouragements! With the subject so dear to me, tainted with man's folly and fraud; destined to see fools run mad with it, and rogues perverting it to nefarious purposes; meeting in its daily walks (owing to the sad imperfection of the instrumentalities used) much that was calculated to discourage and dishearten; and beholding how the world, for whom this glorious truth comes, turns from it and reviles it, I have never, for one moment, faltered from that hour in my belief. It is not my fault that I have not. It is no merit in me that I have persisted.

Belief was not, as it never is with many matter of volition. But the evidence was so conclusive that it compelled conviction, and I could not help it. Mountains may fall and crush me, but they cannot make me believe there is no earth under my feet and no stars over my head.

There is in my profession a saying, that he who tries his own cause, has a fool for a client. Perhaps I shall realize that in the tribunal in which I now appear; but how difficult it is for one to stop when talking of one's self. I had no idea I should carry my egotism so far. I know how ungrateful the strain must be to my readers. But what can I do? I have ascended the witness's stand, and am getting ready to bear my testimony before my fellow-men. I desire that my jury may know in what mood of mind I bear witness, that they may the better judge what credence to yield. Having performed that task, I leave that topic. I forget the inconsiderable advocate, and dwell, henceforth, more on the mighty theme, and in my next number, I will begin the work of describing the various kinds of manifestations, front which I claim that the sane mind cannot escape the conviction that it is a voice from beyond the grave that is now speaking to man. It is not

"Hark! from the tombs a doleful sound."

But listen! it is a voice from beyond, bringing glad tidings of great joy!

J. W. EDMONDS.

*New York*, March 13, 1859.

No. II.

## MEDIUMSHIP.

To the Editor of the New York Tribune

SIR: I shall devote this and the next paper, to mediumship and the Circles—the chief instrumentalities of spiritual intercourse. And I remark:

*First*—That the manifestations of the spirit power, seem to be generally connected with the living human form. I say generally, because there seem to be some cases where the phenomena do not require, or are not connected solely with the person. Haunted houses are of that kind. So are cases of inanimate objects, moving in the absence of any person. And the brute creation are sometimes affected. The devils 'entering' the herd of swine, and Balaam's ass seeing the angel before his rider did, are instances of this. So I am informed of a case, where a fierce watch-dog saw a spirit at the same moment his master did, and fled affrighted. And, in the "Seeress of Prevorst," it is said: "A black terrier that was in the house, was always aware of the spirit, and crept howling to his master; neither would he lie alone at night."

*Second*—The existence of the mediumistic power is the result of physical, rather than of mental or moral organization.

What that peculiarity of organism is, I confess I do not know. I at one time thought the power was connected with a nervous, excitable temperament; but I have seen it just as strong in a stupid, stolid person. It does not depend upon age, nor upon sex, nor upon color; nor upon climate or locality, nor upon condition;

for rich and poor, high and low, educated and ignorant, married and single, male and female, young and old, white and black, are alike developed as mediums.

And my marvel is, that men of science, instead of acting as they do, like seared children, do not look into it like men of sense, and find out what it is that is thus strangely affecting all classes. Surely it may as well be discovered as many other things connected with man, which were once as profound mysteries as this is. Its existence in our midst cannot be ignored any longer, nor will thinking people be much longer satisfied with general denunciation of its delusive or demoniacal nature. And science owes it to mankind, to meet the question, not with self-complacent sneers

The Atheist's laugh's a poor exchange  
For a Deity offended"—

but with careful, judicious investigation. In France, it meets with such sensible treatment. But among the savans of America, with the exceptions of Prof. Hare and Prof. Mapes, it is received as the appearance of a comet was in the days of my childhood among frightened boys, with anything but philosophic calmness.

*Third*—Mediumship is capable of being improved by culture.

I have known physical mediumship to begin with faint and almost inaudible rappings, and end with loud, clear, and distinct sounds; to begin with a slight motion of a table, and, after a while, find itself amid a riotous movement of inanimate objects. I have known the mental kind to begin with writing mere "pot-hooks and hangers," and unmeaning characters, and, ere long, to write with ease and distinctness; to begin with seeing a faint, shadowy form, and end with so distinct a vision of the spirit, as to be able to identify the



person; to begin with a confused perception of something to be communicated, and progress to the point of receiving thought, clearly and distinctly, from this unseen intelligence.

It seems to be like others of our attributes—like our power to read, write, or cipher—to paint, or make music—belonging to us as a part of our nature, and capable of being made available by culture.

I found it so in my own case. The first signs of mediumship in me, came when I was alone in my library, and in the form of an impression on my mind. It might be called imagination, for it was very like the process of building castles in the air, and yet it was different. It was presenting to my consciousness an acting, continuing scene, with a lesson told by the totality of the incidents. The process was novel to me, and I watched it with a good deal of interest. I discovered that I had nothing to do With it but to be a passive recipient of a train of thought, imparted to me from a source outside of or beyond myself—that is, the thoughts did not originate in my intelligence.

My next step was to behold a scene, presented to my vision like a moving panorama, and not merely a mental impression. I seemed to see, though I knew I did not see with my usual organs of sight. And it was remarkable that the intelligence that was dealing with me, presented the picture more or less rapidly, as it discovered I had taken in its details; and after going through with it once thus deliberately, it presented it to me a second time, more rapidly, evidently for the purpose of so impressing it on my memory, that I could narrate it.

My next step was to see an individual spirit, that of an old friend, who had been dead six or eight years. I was in my room at work, not thinking of him, and suddenly

I saw him sitting by my side, near enough for me to touch him. I perceived that I could exchange thoughts with him, for, in answer to my question, he told me why he had come.

Next, I beheld spirit scenes, which, I was told, were the actual, living realities of the spirit world, scenes in which individuals and numbers were moving, acting, thinking, as we do in this life, and conveying to me a vivid idea of life in the next stage of existence.

During all these steps of progress, I could converse with the spirits whom I saw, as easily as I could talk with any living mortal, and I held discussions and arguments with them as I have with mortals.

My daughter, who had long resisted the belief, one day requested to witness a manifestation, and I sought an interview with her mother, in order to bring it about advantageously. The spirit came to me, and I communed with her for half an hour. We reasoned together as in life, discussed various suggestions, and concerted a plan.

It will hardly do to say this was imagination in me for the plan thus concerted was, after a lapse of a few weeks, carried out without my intervention. A female, a stranger to both mother and daughter, was brought to my house from a distant city, and, through her, while entranced and unconscious, was finished to my daughter a parting injunction of her mother, which death had interrupted two years before.

Nor will it do to say, this was a mere reflex of the mind of the living, for my daughter alone knew of the injunction which had been given, and knew not the conclusion until she thus heard it.

Thus has my mediumship progressed, from a shadowy impression of an allegory, to seeing spirits, conversing with them, and receiving thoughts from them

with case and distinctness. Why may not this be equally true of every one?

*Fourth*—Mediumship has an infinite variety of phase—the same that is witnessed in human character and human action, and absolutely precluding the idea of collusion.

*Fifth*—It comes at its pleasure, and not at ours. By observing the proper conditions, we may aid its coming. So, we may surround ourselves by circumstances which will retard or prevent its coming; but we can not make it come at our pleasure. There is no greater anomaly connected with the subject, than the extent and manner of our control over it, and no part of it where improvement by culture can be greater. This control seems to belong to man as part of his nature, and can be so acquired by him, as entirely to forestall any power to do harm.

*Sixth*—Wherever it appears, in whatever part of the world, it has the same general characteristics. Thus, among the slaves at the South, I learn that it comes in the same form as among the free at the North. I have been told by a missionary in San Domingo, that such was its appearance among the ignorant negroes there. A French gentleman, who had been in Algeria, described to me the same thing among the Arabs. Two Spaniards, who had never heard of the phenomenon, found it obscurely in Cadiz, with the same features. An English gentleman came to my house, out of curiosity, and, hearing it described, exclaimed that it was the same thing which had occurred at his father's country mansion, years ago, but they did not know what it was.

This accordance in features everywhere, is a pretty formidable argument against the theory of collusion and delusion.

*Seventh*—Though I have said that it depends mainly

on physical organization, I must not be understood as implying that mental or moral causes do not affect it. I know of no kind of mediumship that is entirely exempt from the effect of the human mind, and I know many cases where, the power being abused, it has been interrupted. The most frequent cause of interruption, is the perversion of it to selfish purposes. One medium I knew, who became grasping, avaricious, in spite of warnings. His power was suspended until he reformed. A young girl, taken from the streets as a rag-picker, with great powers, was used by an old woman to make money out of. Not only was the child taken from her, but the power taken from the child. When it is necessary for my daughter to rest from her labors, the power is temporarily suspended.

But it is not always that it will be stopped at our pleasure. When the desire to stop it is purely selfish, they will often pay no attention to it. I know a case, where a female, afraid that her business might be hurt, refused to be used. She was followed by the manifestations until she yielded, and then all was well. My daughter and niece long resisted the belief, and for a whole year my house was haunted with noises and other performances, until they yielded, and then it stopped. If they omitted their evening devotions on going to bed, they would be disturbed until they said their prayers, and then all would be quiet.

I could enumerate many kindred instances, but I must be content with saying, as the result of my experience, that where the power is yielded to, and with good sense, and from pure motives, it seldom hurts, but is generally productive of good; but when perverted to selfish purposes, it will, first or last, be interrupted or bring punishment in its train, and sometimes both.

*Eighth*—Mediumship frequently changes in the same

person, in its form of manifestation, and this not at the option of the instrument. I know one who, at first, was a medium for rapping, table-tippings, and the like then she wrote mechanically, thoughts not her own then she spoke in many tongues; then she sang and played words and music unknown to her; then she personated the departed; then she saw spirits; then spoke by impression; then was a clairvoyant, seeing earthly, distant objects; then she prophesied, and then communed freely with the dead, and conveyed their messages of affection and instruction to their surviving friends.

*Ninth*—I have observed that, though ill health will not always prevent, yet a sound state of health is most favorable to the manifestation, and the health will never be injured when the power is discreetly used. Overindulgence in it, as in other things, will be injurious.

And, *Finally*, for space compels me to Stop, I have observed that, in every form which mediumship has assumed, there has been ever manifest one great object in view—steadily aimed at throughout—and that was, to open a communication between mortals and the invisible world; and to that end, intelligence displaying itself, and forcing ever upon the rational mind, this most important inquiry, **WHENCE COMES THIS INTELLIGENCE?**

J. W. EDMONDS.

*New York*, April 2, 1859.

No. III.

## THE CIRCLES.

*To the Editor of the New York Tribune:*

SIR: I devote this paper to the Circles, and the conditions best adapted to the due manifestation of the spirit power.

But as it happens that some are already induced by these papers, to investigate the matter, I ought to utter a word or two of caution.

In the *first* place, then, I remark, that the evidence is generally so personal in its character, that it is quite impracticable for any one to convey it to another as vividly and forcibly, as it is realized by him who receives it directly. Thus, when my person is touched, I can know it certainly, but no language that I can use, can convey to others the same realizing sense that I have of the fact. And so when my secret thought is revealed, or something is said that is known only to me and one who is dead, it is quite out of the question that I can make any one know the fact as unmistakably as I know it. And we are thus warned to be patient with those who are obliged to receive our testimony, instead of obtaining it for themselves; and are admonished not to be too ready to receive that of others, especially when the direct evidence is so attainable by all.

In the *second* place, I remark, so great is the variety of forms in which the manifestations come, that we cannot safely reach a conclusion, until after long and patient investigation. I was over two years investigating, before I became a believer, and, even now, after

more than eight years' experience, I find I am all the time learning something new. Six, or twice or thrice six times beholding it, ought not to suffice. Let me illustrate: I once had a Reverend Bishop at my house, who witnessed the manifestations for several hours, and apparently to his satisfaction, till I asked him how he knew that all he had heard, had not come from the mind of the medium? So, the Medical Professors at Buffalo, after a few sittings, attributed it to the toe or knee-joints of the medium, while a little patience would have shown them the power displaying itself by ringing a bell. The Harvard professors, after five or six interviews, pronounced it injurious to virtue, when they had not beheld enough to determine that it existed, much less to know what it taught. How much even of my eight volumes of manuscript—the record of only three years' research—could have been rapped out, letter by letter, in half a dozen sittings? And Professor Faraday would not have ascribed the movement of the table to the magnetism of the hand resting on it, if he had only waited long enough to see it move without a hand's touching it. Such hasty conclusions are always painful to me, and are never, in my opinion, safe.

But to come to the Circles.

In the earlier stages of investigation, the assemblage of a few persons—from four to twelve—is very advantageous, and often necessary. It is now as it was of old—where two or three are gathered together, that the spirit power can most readily descend in their midst. It was when four were together, that Moses and Elias appeared again on earth, and it is now of common occurrence, that a "Circle" of a few persons greatly aids the manifestations.

It is, generally, best to have an equal number of both

sexes; and the advent of the power is often hastened by taking hold of hands, or laying them on a table.

It often occurs, that the display of the power is interrupted by the withdrawal or the addition of some One after the manifestations begin.

So too, it is not a little advantageous, that all the Circle should have a calm, gentle, and devout feeling; and hence it is, that music and prayer are always beneficial, and sometimes indispensable.

Now, why is this? Who can tell, so long as we are as ignorant as we are, of what is the power that is at work?

We know a little—a very little—about it, and, until science shall aid us with its researches, it is almost idle to speculate about it. But what we do know may as well be stated.

Electricity is one element used. This we know from various experiments, and the use of an electrical machine has at times been serviceable.

Magnetism, both animal and mineral, is another. Sometimes the use of a large magnet has hastened the display, as has the presence of those who possess much animal magnetism.

But there is something more than these elements, and among other things, is that which the German writer, Reichenbach, calls Od or Odic force. This is an extremely subtle fluid, invisible to most persons—which is emitted by the magnet, by crystals, and by the human body, being the product, in the latter, of the chemical action of respiration, digestion, and decomposition. I have myself beheld it issuing from both ends of a magnet, and forcing itself out like a pale, shadowy smoke, from under its armature. I have seen it issue from the human head and fingers. On one occasion I saw it so plainly that, in a dark room, I saw my own hand in that



which issued from the head of the person who stood by my side.

It is that which artists have so long been painting around the heads of their saints and glorified ones.

It is ever, as I understand it, generating in the human form, and its natural flow can be disturbed or interrupted by strong emotion.

As we can see electricity and magnetism only by their effects, so we often know of the existence of this element only by the distress which its interruption causes.

I have tried very hard to learn more about this, but the answer to my inquiries has been, that science must discover it, and that until it does, it will be in vain to attempt to describe it to me. Something has, however, been done to enlighten me a little. On one occasion, through a very reliable medium, was displayed the manner in which ponderable objects were moved. I published the account of it in the appendix to my first volume on "Spiritualism." On another occasion, I saw the process of preparing a Circle for manifestations. From each member of it, I saw a stream of this fluid issue and slowly ascend to the ceiling. At the same time, from the surrounding spirits, I saw similar streams issue, but in greater quantities, and with more force. The streams united and gradually filled the room, from the ceiling down, as smoke would. I could trace it in its gradual descent, by the pictures on my wall, and the books on my shelves, and I observed that, as soon as it descended so far as to envelop the heads and breasts of the Circle, the medium was influenced, and the manifestations began.

This is as far as my knowledge extends, and how earnestly I would I that they who, from their scientific attainments, are far better fitted than I am for the investigation,

would pursue the subject to a better understanding of this mighty and mysterious power.

But, from what we do know, it is easy to see how important the topic of "conditions" is, and how easily they can be disturbed, when even emotion can affect them.

The investigator, to be successful, must not only himself be in a proper condition, but he must conform to those which experience has shown to be necessary. This is a stumbling-block with many, but surely it ought not to be. How can we see without being in a condition to have light, or hear without a condition fit for the transmission of sounds?

And as to his own condition, of one thing the investigator may be assured, and that is that he will be most successful when he approaches the subject with a feeling of devout and solemn reverence. And why not? He is talking face to face with immortality. He is, while yet in the mortal frame, communing with the spirit—holy and divine. And now, as of old, it cannot do many mighty works because of unbelief. And to the question, "Why could we not cast him out?" the answer is as of old, "Because of your unbelief; for verily I say unto you, if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible unto you. How be it, this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."

J. W. EDMONDS.

*New York, April 18, 1859.*

PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS.

To the Editor of the *New York Tribune*:

Sir: By this term, which has acquired a sort of technical meaning among Spiritualists, I mean those things in connection with spiritual intercourse, which are addressed to our senses, irrespective of what is addressed to our mental or moral consciousness.

I have known all the senses to be thus addressed, and I will relate in detail, in this and the ensuing paper, incidents calculated to show that.

1. *Smelling*.—Once, after midnight, when I was in bed, sick, I perceived an odor of a peculiar kind, such as I had never smelled before, pungent, but not ungrateful. It was not diffused through the room, but was presented to my nostrils at intervals, as if from a smelling-bottle. Lying on my side, I fancied it might come from the bed-clothes. I accordingly changed my position to lying on the other side, and on my back, and sat up in bed, throwing off the clothes. But in every situation, it continued to come with the same smell and with similar intermissions. In a short time, it operated both as a cathartic and emetic, and I was speedily relieved of my illness.

Once afterward, when I was again sick, I had the same odor presented to me, but less pungently, and without the like effect.

I never, at any other time, smelled that peculiar scent.

I was once present, when a vial containing water, which had been purified by distillation, was passed

from hand to hand, at one of our circles, until The water became medicated and emitted a very perceptible odor.

I had read of a vial of water being prepared, and used as a magic mirror, and I was inclined to try the experiment. Distilled water, in a vial, was allowed to stand for some time on the table, around which the circle were assembled, and it was then put away in a closet. After remaining there a few days, it was found to be medicated, and also emitted a very perceptible odor.

In both instances, we were told that the medication was for curative purposes, and I know that the contents of one of the vials was used with that object, and apparently with effect. I cannot speak certainly of the effect, because I know only the means used and the result. What produced that result, I cannot, of course, know. I can only judge.

2. *Tasting*.—In the earlier stages of my investigations, I was in bad health, which had been increasing on me for some years, and I am fain to believe that I have been materially aided from this unseen source in my recovery. Of that I shall have occasion to speak more hereafter; now I have only to remark, that several times when at circles, and when the presence of the influence was very palpable—and experience enables one to know that quite unmistakably—I have felt a peculiar taste, as of medicine, not as food or drink, but as gas or vapor.

I have heard of similar instances from others; but neither in their cases nor my own, can I do otherwise than speak hesitatingly, for I cannot be sure that spirit influence had anything to do with it.

The medicated water, of which I have spoken, had a peculiar taste as well as odor, and several instances of the same kind have been related to me.

*Feeling.*—Touching the person has been much more common than either of the other two.

The first time I experienced this, was at a dark circle. Ten or a dozen persons were present, sitting around a table. Two of the company were directed to pass behind the rest of us. As they did so slowly, each one seemed to be touched. Sometimes I could only judge from their exclamations, but sometimes I could hear the slap of a hand very distinctly. The manifestation was rather rude, and was offensive to me; and as I was approached, I was apprehensive of a similar display with me; but on the contrary, all I felt was a hand gently laid on my head, and moved around a few times, and then two or three soft touches on my side. The room being dark, I could not, of course, know that it was not done by one of the two persons who were behind me. But it was not a little remarkable that it should have been made to conform to a thought which I had not uttered, and so unlike all the others, both before and afterwards, during the evening, and that it should be a touch with which I was familiar; for it was the gesture with which my wife was wont to pass my chair, as she would enter my library of an afternoon, and find me at work at my law cases. No one then present, I think, could have known that, and it was too peculiar to be deemed accidental.

My doubts, however, were soon removed, for not long afterward, at a circle my arm was seized above the elbow, as by an iron hand. I felt distinctly the palm of the hand, the ball of the thumb, and each finger, and I was held fast, with a force far superior to any that a mortal hand could exert. I was powerless in its grasp. I tried to shake it off, but could not. I tried to move my arm, but in vain. There was none of the softness or elasticity of human flesh in the touch, but it

was bard and inflexible, like metal, and my arm was pressed to the verge of pain. Yet it did not hurt, but simply held me fast. It could be no human hand, and, beside, I knew it was not, for I put my other hand on the affected part, and all around it so as to be certain. I became uneasy, and importuned it to leave me, but it continued long enough to show me it was independent of my will, and then it left.

Beside these instances, my person has been frequently touched, and sometimes under circumstances that precluded the idea of its being done by mortal hand. It would extend this paper too much, to enter into a detail of the circumstances, out of which this preclusion springs, but at that time I was alike astute and skeptical, and labored, like some others of later periods, under the fear that my credulity might be imposed upon, and I made ridiculous by some whom I considered my inferiors in standing, if not intellect. I was, therefore, on a constant lookout for trickery. Sometimes the events would occur in such manner that they might be done by mortal means, though the fair conclusion was that they were not, but it was sometimes that all doubt was cut off. Thus I have been touched, when no person was near enough to do it; sometimes in the light, when my eyesight told me that none of those present did it; sometimes in the dark, when no one knew where I was, or even that I was present; sometimes my foot has been patted as with a hand; sometimes my clothes pulled as by a child; sometimes a push in my side, as by a dull and non-elastic force, and twice I have felt a human hand on my skin. On one of these occasions the touch was cold, but not clammy, and on the other, it was soft, warm, and flesh-like.

I have been present on numerous occasions when others have said they were touched, and have acted as

if they were, and when it was evidently no fabrication of theirs, for they were too really frightened themselves. Once I recollect my niece, who was standing by my side, had her feet so pulled from under her, that she came near falling; and once a young man who stood near me was seized and pulled from me. I caught hold of him, but our joint resistance was overpowered, and he was fairly lifted from the floor, and taken from me.

These things occurred in the earlier period of my inquiries. Their work having been done with me, I have witnessed little or nothing of them of late. But I was then in a peculiar state of mind. At one moment it would seem from the nature of the incidents that it was not possible there could be any deception, but subsequent reflection would suggest that there might be, and I was therefore not yet a full believer. While in this mood of mind, this intelligence urged me to publish to the world what I have witnessed. I refused, and demanded more evidence. They answered they would give it to me, and they did in good earnest.

It would take more than a column of your paper to relate the events of that memorable evening. It must now suffice for me to say, that five mediums were brought together, without my intervention, and that for three hours and a half I was in the hands of this unseen intelligence, and was operated upon by it in a great variety of ways.

I had no fear during the operation, but for several evenings afterward I confess that when I retired to bed I was frightened at what had been done to me, and to this day the incidents live very vividly in my memory.

The object seemed to be to convince me, by a resort to my senses, that there was a power at work, not of mere mortal origin, and that object was attained.

Perhaps I may, in my next paper, detail the events

of that meeting; but now I have filled my column, without yet even alluding to the more numerous manifestations that are addressed to the senses of sight and hearing. I must defer that topic to another occasion, and close this paper by remarking:

*First:* That which struck me most, amid all the wonders I beheld, was the intelligence that was displayed in it all. They were not only guided by intelligence, but they had an intelligent object, and held an intelligent conversation with me.

*Second:* Others may ask, as a very clever correspondent did in a recent letter, Why use such "low and vulgar modes" of communication? I answer, They are not more inconsiderable than opening the door of a prison, or telling a woman where to find water. But, characterize them as we may, they have this object in view—and they are attaining it with marvellous celerity—to convince man of his immortality by appeals to his senses. The effort to convince him by appealing to nature, to reason, and to revelation, has been vain with the great mass of mankind. The argument now comes in this form—the block letters in an infant school—and it comes with such force that he who will place himself in its way, cannot escape conviction.

J. W. EDMONDS.

*New York, May 7, 1859.*



No. V.

## PHYSICAL MANIFESTATIONS.

*To the Editor of the New York Tribune:*

SIR: I NOW proceed to consider the manifestations of this character which are addressed to the senses of hearing and seeing, and I must of necessity be brief and general.

1. *Hearing*.—It was to this sense that the first manifestations which I witnessed were addressed. I was then so situated that the thought uppermost in my mind was in regard to the dead, "Shall we ever meet again?" I am bound to confess that all I had heard of religious teachings, for some fifty years, had engendered in me doubts if there was a future beyond the grave. It was not my fault that this was so. I did not want to be an infidel, but they who were my theological teachers were so full of absurdities and contradictions that in spite of myself, I could not believe. The future they taught was revolting alike to Divine judgment and my instincts, and, unable to conceive of any other, I was led to doubt whether there was any; yet the idea of an eternal separation from the departed was exquisitely painful to me.

It was in this mood of mind, and while I was searching for the truth on this topic, that one evening, when alone in my library, a voice spoke to me in tones which I feared had been silenced forever, and answered the question, Shall we meet again?

The voice was soft and gentle, but distinctly audible, and, oh, how familiar to my ear I

I was startled, and of course the first thought was,

What an hallucination! I could not conceive it to be anything else. Yet, as I knew whether I could hear or not, I could not get rid of the idea that it was a reality. I never dreamed then of such a thing as the spirit of the dead's being able thus to speak, and for several weeks I debated the matter in my mind, trying to convince myself of the falsity of what I was obliged to know was a fact.

Then it was I heard the "Rochester knockings," at a seance or interview, lasting only ten or fifteen minutes, but crowded full of interest. In that interval, it appeared that the sounds were not made by mortals, but by some unknown power that was intelligent enough to spell and to write, to hold conversation, to read thoughts and answer questions not uttered, to know what minute I was making of the occurrence, to display the characteristics of the person professing to be present, and to show emotions of joy and affection.

Here was enough to awaken my curiosity, and I entered upon a course of investigation. For several months I heard the sounds in a great variety of forms.

I heard them on a railroad car while travelling; on the floor in an eating-house by the wayside; on the ground, when standing outside the car; on a door high above our reach; on a floor, following two or three feet behind the medium when walking; alone in my bedroom, in different places; on a door standing open, so that both sides of it could be seen; on a window and a looking-glass; on my person and that of others; on the chords of a piano; on the strings of a violin besides the oft-repeated displays on the floor and the table. I have known the sounds made with the hand, a hair-brush, a fiddle-bow and a chair; and I have heard them imitate the whistling of the wind, the creaking of a ship laboring in a heavy sea, sawing and planing

boards, the falling of sods on a coffin, the sound of an aoeolian harp, of soft and distant music, and once a scream, as of persons in agony.

And in all these forms conveying intelligence, not merely that of the peculiar sounds made, but spelling out words and sentences, letter by letter.

This spelling out words was done by some one calling over the alphabet, and the sounds being made at the proper letter, with certain sounds to designate an idea. To facilitate the work, this unseen intelligence devised a set of signals, by the aid of which my earlier conversations with them were had.

I annex hereto their scheme, premising that each dot in it stands for a sound, and made more or less heavy, or more or less near to each other, as indicated by the size or position of the dots.

●—No	●—●—●●—We
●●—End of a word.	●●—●—●—You.
●●—Colon.	●●—●—●●—And.
●●—End of sentence.	5—Alphabet.
●●—semi-colon.	6—Qualification.
●●●—Yes.	7—Disapprobation.
●!—●!—●!—Emphasis.	8—Sit close.
●●—Comma.	Succession of raps—Go back
●●●—Done.	

It has been supposed by many that the sounds were such as mortals could not make. So far as my experience goes, this is a mistake; for I have never heard one that I could not imitate, and I have known that mediums, failing to get the sounds, would make them. But the fact was clearly demonstrated, that most frequently they were not made by mortals, nor merely fortuitous, but by an intelligence which had will and purpose, and could express them, and which, when asked, "Who and

what are you who do this?" could answer to the satisfaction of any rational mind, and establish identity.

2. *Seeing*.—It was not long after the mode of communicating by raps had been discovered, that table tippings came into vogue. I do not know where or how they originated. They seem to have grown up from circumstances. Half a dozen persons sitting round a table with their hands upon it, was the method most commonly used to obtain the rappings or any other physical manifestations. Moving the table was often one of these, and it was soon found to be even easier to do that than to make the sounds, and signals were concerted in like manner, whereby different motions of the table were used to convey ideas. Thus, as with the rappings, words were spelled out. Some one would call the alphabet, and the table would give the concerted signal at the proper letter.

In Spain a different mode of using the table was devised. The alphabet was reduced to 24 letters, and each letter was numbered. The corners of the table were numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, and the corners would move to indicate the letter. Thus, if corners No. 1 and 4 were moved, it was their fifth letter, and so on.

In this simple manner, though awkward and tedious, did the intercourse begin with hundreds and thousands of people, who thus learned the great truths which it teaches. It was our primary school, and we began with our alphabet.

There were embarrassments about it. Sometimes, when the spirit had not learned to read, it could not spell out words. Sometimes, when its education had been poor, it would spell wrong; and sometimes, when unacquainted with our language, it could not frame a sentence in English.

Still, this mode of communication was used, and became the most common of all.

The sense of seeing was appealed to mostly in the moving of ponderable matter, and it was not always for the purpose of spelling out words. Occasionally it was chiefly with the view of showing the presence of the power.

I have seen a chair run across a room, backward and forward, with no mortal hand touching it. I have seen tables rise from the floor and suspended in the air. I have seen them move when not touched. I have known a small bell fly around the room over our beads. I have known a table, at which I was sitting, turned upside down, then carried over my head, and put against the back of the sofa, and then replaced. I have seen a table lifted from the floor, when four able-bodied men were exerting their strength to hold it down. I have heard, well-vouched for, of a young man carried through the air several feet from the floor, through a suite of parlors. I have seen small articles in the room fly through the air, and fall at the place designed for them, and sometimes so rapidly, that the motion was invisible, and all we could see was, that the object had changed its location.

This is a very meager account of what only I have witnessed, aside from the countless incidents witnessed by others in different parts of the world. But here is enough to show that these manifestations were not made by mortals, but by a power which had all the attributes of the human mind and heart. To repeat a remark I have more than once made, here was an intelligence that could read and write and cipher, divine our secret thoughts, and speak in many languages. Whence came it? Not from electricity or magnetism, as said by many, for intelligence is no attribute of theirs. Not from mortal action, for here was inanimate matter moving without mortal contact, and sounds made

without human intervention. Whence, then, but from that source which appeared to Hagar in the wilderness, which opened the prison-door to Peter, and which caught up Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more?

But, be it what it may—a delusion, deception, or satanic—from this much-condemned source, the physical manifestations, came the proof of intercourse with the spirits—the answer to the question, "Shall we meet a again?" and the demonstration of man's immortality.

Yet, this is but the beginning. There are higher and holier truths than even these, that are revealed to us, and other means that are used, far more important and effective, and to them I shall next address myself.

J. W. EDMONDS.

*New York, May 23, 1859.*

No. VI.

## TEST MEDIUMSHIP.

*To the Editor of the New York Tribune:*

SIR: Lord Bacon, in speaking of Jesus of Nazareth, says: "All his miracles were consummate about man's body, as his doctrine respected the soul of man." "No miracle of his is to be found to have been of judgment or revenge, but all of goodness and mercy, and respect in man's body."

These remarks are equally true of the manifestations of to-day. No harm is done, though the power to do it is present; for it is restrained by an overruling intelligence and directed for our welfare; and that welfare the elevation of our moral nature.

One portion, however, of Bacon's remarks is not strictly true of what is before us. The marvels of the present day are not "consummate about man's body." Aiming still at his moral elevation, they go farther than a mere appeal to his senses. They address his emotions and his reason as means of his regeneration, and this may properly be termed mental proof of Spiritual Intercourse.

Foremost in this class is Test-Mediumship, showing at once the presence of the power, and the identity of the communing intelligence.

It must not, however, be understood that this testing process is confined to the mental manifestations, for it is apparent in all kinds of mediumship. And there has sprung up among us a class known as Test-Mediums—a class *sui generis* [in a class by itself]—and I have frequently heard it said,

"We cannot answer that question through this instrument; you must go to a test medium."

I do not understand and cannot explain why this is so. I only know the fact that, through some mediums, tests are easily given, while through some they are given only incidentally.

It is through this testing process that the objections to the reality of intercourse between us and the spirits of the departed have been met and overcome. And it has come to us in such a variety of forms, that it will be difficult to give anything like an enumeration. The utmost of my effort must be to give a general idea.

First—Even in the sounds and the table-tippings, irrespective of the words spelled out, there will often be observed the characteristics of the individual. Thus, a strong man will be loud and vehement; a child, soft and light—a calm man will be slow and deliberate; an impatient one, quick and hurried. Sometimes the manifestations will be bold and dashing, and sometimes sorrowful or joyous, in accordance with the emotions of the moment.

The feeling against this subject is so strong in many minds, that I cannot give names without inflicting pain. If it were otherwise, I could mention several persons, well known in this vicinity, whose manifestations would be recognized at once as characteristic. Two I can mention without danger of wounding any one, and that will illustrate my meaning. My wife comes gentle and joyous Isaac T. Hopper, prompt, clear, and decided.

Second—Names, ages, dates, and places, are given; sometimes by writing several words on slips of paper, and so folding them as to hide the writing, and the right one be picked out; sometimes by pointing in succession to several names, and receiving the manifestation



at the right word; sometimes by speaking or writing the word; and sometimes symbolically.

Occasionally, however, mistakes are made, and it may be a mere reflex of the mind, or the product of clairvoyance. But it is most frequently correct, and often the word given is unknown to the medium, and not recognized by the inquirer. One instance of this is where the inquirer, at the moment, insists the word is wrong, but afterward finds it to be right. Another is when the word given is unknown to any one present.

*Third*—Letters, carefully sealed and enclosed in envelopes, are returned unopened and correctly answered. A medium in Boston, by the name of Mansfield, has answered hundreds of such letters, thus showing that there is a power at work which can read what is inside the sealed envelope, and, by the character of the answer, that it must be the spirit it professes to be. Sometimes this is tested by the answers also containing a copy of the letter thus concealed.

*Fourth*—Another phase is exemplified in *The Banner of Light*, a newspaper of Boston. For many months there have appeared in its columns communications from spirits, whose existence and names were alike unknown to the medium, but who have been recognized, not merely by the names, but also by incidents told, and traits of character displayed.

*Fifth*—*Seeing mediums* have described the spirits present, so that they have been recognized. This has been common at my house for several years, and hundreds have witnessed it. I have myself occasionally that power, and I mention, as an illustration, that a young man, unknown to me, was once at my house, and I saw the spirits present, and from my description he recognized one whom I had never seen or heard of before.

*Sixth*—Through speaking and writing mediums, the characteristics of the spirit are at times unmistakably displayed. Sometimes this will be in the language used, being in a brogue or broken English, or some peculiar idiom; sometimes by peculiarity of thought, and sometimes by the tone of feeling.

*Seventh*—Incidents are related or alluded to, which are known only to the inquirer and some one who has died. For instance, not long since I received a letter from Maine, purporting to be a communication from Professor Hare. It referred to interviews between us, only known to us.

*Eighth*—Another instance, which is a test rather of the presence of the power than of individuality, is where thoughts concealed from every one are openly revealed. Often have I beheld this, and observed how the inquirer has been startled at thus realizing the truth—often proclaimed, but seldom believed—that every thought is indeed known to the intelligence which is ever around us, and carried—where?

I have not space to enter into the details of these things. They would fill many pages of your paper. I must content myself with appealing to the experience of the many who have availed themselves, as I have, of the opportunities afforded them, and with adding, that all may witness them if they wish. They have but to seek and they will find.

If they so seek, one thing will strike them as it has me, and that is, that while all history, sacred and profane, is full of the evidence of spiritual intercourse in all ages and conditions of mankind, it has not been till now that it has come in the definite form of identifying the spirit.

There is surpassing wisdom in this, come from what source it may.

If the spirit that comes is one whom I have never known, how can I be certain that it is him? But if he comes as one whom I have known intimately when on earth, whose form and features appear to me as of old, or are accurately described to me, who speaks of incidents known only to us, who displays his peculiarities of character, who gives correctly names, dates, ages, and places connected with his earth-life, who evinces the emotions natural to him, and all this unknown to the instrument through whom it comes, how can the sane mind resist the conclusion that it is a departed friend who is thus communing with me? and the still weightier conclusion that, if he thus lives beyond the grave, I must too?

Already have many inveterate disbelievers in a future life been convinced by this argument. And yet we are told it is all devilish!

Will it be thought strange that this feature should now be first known? Such are not uncommon occurrences in the history of man. We are in the habit of speaking of the art of printing as being discovered within the last few centuries. Yet we read that among the ancient Greeks and Romans they knew the art of stamping letters on their medals and vases, and at other periods the ancients practised the art. But they were not sufficiently advanced to appreciate the value of their discovery, and it slumbered for ages. So the leading principle of the Copernican system of the planetary world was announced two thousand years before it was finally demonstrated by Galileo and Tycho Brahe, and received by mankind.

And now, with this feature of spiritual intercourse it is but the legitimate result of human progress. Instead of worshipping the spirits, as did the Pagans of old and calling them our Gods; instead of saying,

as did the Pharisees, it is of Beelzebub; instead of being frightened at it, as the world was in the days of witchcraft, we in this day have had the good sense to inquire what it is; and we have learned that, like everything connected with humanity, it is capable of improvement by cultivation, and of contributing to our advancement.

And thus, out of apparently incongruous elements, has grown up a system of Test-Mediumship, by which the long-mooted question of our immortality is settled, and is demonstrated to the simplest, as well as the brightest mind, by irresistible appeals to the senses, to the emotions, and to the reason. Yet with many it is true now, as it was of old—they will not believe, though one rise from the dead.

J. W. EDMONDS.

New York, June 13, 1859.

No. VII.

## HEALING MEDIUMS.

*To the Editor of the New York Tribune:*

SIR "Now, when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto Him, Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do bear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear."

But not alone by Him were these things done. He ordained twelve and "gave them power against unclean spirits to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness." He chose seventy, and sent them forth, saying, "Heal the sick and say unto them, The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."

And when it was reported to Him that others, not his followers, were casting out devils in His name, he said,

Forbid them not, for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me."

Now mark the parallel:

I. *Casting out Devils*.—I take this phrase as I find it in Scripture, as indicating that the subject is possessed by an influence which produces violent throes, or, as is said in Scripture, "Straightway the spirits tare him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming."

I have witnessed many instances of this, when the subject was relieved simply by laying on of hands, and Sometimes by a mere command to the spirit to depart.

I was once at a circle in Troy, some twenty persons present, when a strong man became unconscious and violently convulsed, He beat the table with great force with both his fists. I put my hand on his head, against vehement struggles on his part to prevent it, and in a few moments he was restored to quiet and consciousness. I once had a man similarly affected in my own room, who beat his head violently on a marble-top table, and fell on the floor in convulsions. He was recovered by the same means, though more slowly. A man from Chicago waited on me, afflicted with continuous convulsions of his arms and legs. He was restored by the mere exercise of the will. Last year, at my house, I found a man lying on the floor, distorted and convulsed. I lifted him up, compelled him to sit up in a chair, and then with a few words, addressed, not to him but to the spirit that was influencing him, he was at Once restored to composure.

These instances are enough for illustrations. They may be startling to one not acquainted with the subject, but it is ignorance alone that makes them so. It is not difficult to understand it, and easy to learn how to control it. Good sense, firmness, and unselfishness afford always, first or last, an adequate remedy, for what often, from the ignorance of friends, consigns the subject to a lunatic asylum, or condemns him a course of injurious medical treatment.

II. *Insanity*.—This is a frequent charge against spiritualism; and it is not long since that a newspaper in this city, in support of the charge, cited from the reports of several asylums, proof that one out of fifty cases was produced by this cause. But it had not the candor to say that three or four times as many were produced by religious excitement, and a greater proportion by disappointed love and pecuniary difficulties; and while it

was earnest in insisting that therefore Spiritualism should be put down, it failed to draw the still stronger inference against falling in love, pursuing wealth, or seeking religion.

It is true that Spiritualism, like every other exciting cause, has sometimes unsettled a weak mind; but it is also true that it can often discover the cause of insanity, and thus indicate the remedy. I will mention an instance:

We once received a letter, telling us of a female who was occasionally seized with attacks of mania. Physicians had tried her cure in vain, and her friends were about sending her to an asylum. We replied that she was at those times influenced by the spirit of a relative who had died insane, and we pointed out a course to be pursued. The parties were all strangers to us, and we afterward learned that her father, in a fit of insanity, had committed suicide, and that the course we advised being pursued, she was cured.

What did Scripture mean when it said, "There came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him and saying, Lord have mercy on my son, for he is lunatic and sore vexed, for oftentimes he falleth into the fire and oft into the water." "And Jesus rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him, and the child was cured from that very hour?"

I know the symptoms of the disease of insanity. My professional and judicial life has compelled me to study it, and I have communed with several who died insane; and I am convinced that there are no means known among men that can do so much to cure and eradicate the disease as spiritual intercourse, well understood and wisely guided. How long it will be before those whose specialty the disease is, will have the good sense to look into it, instead of condemning it without inquiry and without knowledge, time must determine.

III. *Healing the sick.*—This is a chapter full of interest, yet I must of necessity be so brief that I know I can give nothing like an adequate idea of the vast amount of good to mankind that has flowed and is flowing from this source.

There are two modes in which this work is done. One is by discovering what the disease is, and prescribing the remedy. My own case is an illustration of this. For over thirty years I was an invalid, varying the scene only by occasional attacks of long and severe illness. During this time I was treated for various diseases. My last severe illness was in 1854, when I was sick for about four months. A part of the time I was so ill that death was hourly expected. Then it was that the spirits came to my aid. They discovered that my disease was what no physician had suspected but, through the mediums then around me, they could not prescribe the remedy. I sent over two hundred miles for one through whom they could, and whom they named to me. I followed their prescriptions from that day, and I am now in the possession of better health than I have had for forty years, or than I ever expected to enjoy.

There are very many mediums in this country through whom disease is discovered and cured in this manner. But there is a more remarkable, though less frequent mode, and that is by simply laying on of hands.

The following is a brief summary of some instances of this:

J. Loewendahl, of No. 201 Atlantic street, Brooklyn, has cured in a few minutes "A violent pain in the side," "general debility, accompanied by a most trying and nearly constant headache," and in a few sittings has cured neuralgia of four and five months' duration, and bronchitis, and affection of the kidneys.



William O. Page, No. 47 West Twenty-seventh street, New York, cured in a few minutes, a female who had had dyspepsia and chronic diarrhea for years, and was at the time given up by her physician, as she had also inflammation of the womb and bowels. He has cured rheumatism by once laying on his hand; and a long-seated dyspepsia and neuralgia, and a child severely afflicted with rheumatic fever.

Dr. C. D. Griswold, of Buffalo, thus cured a case of shaking palsy, from which the patient had been suffering some seven weeks.

Rufus B. Newton, of Saratoga Springs, has cured "consumption and spinal disease of eight years' standing;" "heart disease and paralysis of the left side "dyspepsia, female weakness, and spinal disease "abscess on the right jaw, hip-disease, and fever-sore;" "heart-disease, pressure on the brain, and nervous derangement an acute lung difficulty," "cancer," "blindness of one eye and partial blindness of the other," "bronchitis and catarrh."

C. C. York, of Boston, has cured rheumatism of four years' standing, when one of the legs was drawn up, and the hands drawn out of shape; deafness, headache, and vomiting; a person who for two years had lost her speech; an external tumor, which had been growing two years; rheumatic fever; toothache; a scrofulous tumor and cancer.

John Scott, of No. 36 Bond street, New York, was originally a pilot on a Mississippi steamer, but for now over five years has been used as a healing medium in St. Louis, Louisville, Cincinnati, Columbus, and Cleveland, and in this city Since February, 1858. He is now receiving at his house from 40 to 100 patients a day, and is working many strange cures, principally by imposition of hands.

In this way he has cured an arm of a physician, poisoned in a dissecting-room; rheumatism, inflammatory and chronic, even where the limbs were drawn up and distorted; total blindness; a club-foot from birth; fevers, particularly scarlet and yellow fever; smallpox, even after breaking out; cholera, of which he has cured hundreds and never failed; paralysis, where, owing to age, the cure was slow and bard; neuralgia; displaced and broken bones; insanity; children dumb from birth; epileptic fits; issue of blood from nose, mouth, and womb; ruptures; falling of the womb; piles; dyspepsia; scrofula; cancers, sometimes by absorption, sometimes by removing them from the body, and restored withered limbs.

And all this, I repeat, by simply laying on his hands.

These are a few of the many cases of healing by laying on of hands, which are known among us. To detail more, or to spread out the evidence which I have in my possession, would exceed my limits. But this is enough to show the existence of the phenomenon now as of old.

Now, what is the inference to be drawn from these things?

I prefer answering the question in the language of the earlier, as well as of the later fathers of the Christian Church:

Tertullian appeals to the power of the Christians over those possessed of devils, as a matter of fact and a proof of the truth of Christianity.

Origen claims that the signs, wonders, and various miraculous powers which followed Christ, were all "confirmations of His dignity," and he says: "None can doubt that the Apostles performed miracles, and that God gave testimony to their discourses by signs,

wonders, and various powers. Our blessed Saviour abundantly discovered that His power was nothing less than of God, by the frequent and incontestable miracles which He wrought, even in the presence of the Jews, but which they tried to evade on the plea that they were done by the aid of the devil." He says: "Christianity is not indebted, either for its origin or progress, to human influence, but to God, who has manifested Himself by means of various miracles, founding His religion thereon."

Arnobius\* asks, "Was He a mortal, and one of us, at whose voice sickness and disease fled away? whose presence the race of demons, hid in the bodies of men, could not endure? who caused the lame to run? whose light touch stayed the issue of blood, restored the withered hand, and gave eyes even to those born blind?"

"Who healed hundreds vexed with divers diseases?"

Eusebius says, "Observe his knowledge, his wisdom, his miraculous works! Surely the matter is divine, and such as exceeds all human endeavors."

Chrysostom says, "The Apostles did not introduce or spread the gospel by force of arms or wealth, but their words, simple in themselves, were sustained by miracles. In proclaiming a crucified Redeemer, they produced miraculous works, and so subjugated all the earth."

Augustine adduces the miracles of Jesus, as being more than unusual events, and he enumerates among them, the sick were healed, strength restored to the lame, sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, etc.

Paley, in his Evidences of Christianity, appeals to the miracles for proof; and Bolton, in his work on the same subject, says, "All parties agree in allowing that a miracle, if it can be proved authentic, is one of the strongest evidences any cause can possess."

Now, when we reflect that healing the sick is one of the miracles referred to by all these champions of Christianity, may we not ask what there is to change the character of the evidence when applied to Spiritualism?

J. W. EDMONDS.

*New York, June 27, 1859.*

No. VIII.

## SPEAKING IN MANY TONGUES.

*To the Editor of the New York Tribune:*

SIR: Some time since I published a tract, in which I mentioned several instances of speaking in many tongues, some of them within my own knowledge. And when I accepted the invitation to write these papers, I inserted a request in *The Banner of Light*, for similar cases, elsewhere, and in answer I received a large number of letters. From these two sources I compile the ensuing very general statement. I can do no more now, but will at some future day give them to the world in detail. It is enough now to say that those letters give names, dates, and places, so that the statements can be verified, and some of them are attested by several signatures; and in some instances they record the speaking in what seemed to be a well-organized language, but it was unknown to the hearers, and might be merely unmeaning gibberish, which some has been that I have heard. I exclude from this statement all cases where the language was unknown, and I give only instances in which the mediums have spoken languages with which they were previously unacquainted. I mention names wherever I am permitted to, and I hold the evidence subject to the inspection of any who may desire it.

My daughter who knows only English and French, has spoken in French, Greek, Latin, Italian, Portuguese, Polish, Hungarian, and several dialects of the Indian, and sometimes not understanding what she

said, though it was understood by the auditor to whom it was addressed.

My niece has sung in Italian and spoken in Spanish.

Mr. Finney, of Cleveland, Ohio, has spoken in Greek, and interpreted it.

Mrs. H. Leeds, of Boston, has spoken in Chinese.

Mrs. Shephard, of Albany, N. Y., has spoken in Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Mrs. Dr. Metler, of Hartford, Conn., German and Indian.

Mrs. Gilbert Sweet, of New York, French, Italian, and Hebrew.

Gov. Tallmadge's daughter, in German.

Dr. John F. Gray, of New York, has witnessed it through the rappings and table-tippings, in Malay, Hebrew, and Spanish.

Miss Inman, of New York, has spoken in Spanish.

Mrs. Tucker, of New York, in Danish.

And Mrs. French, of New York, in nine different languages.

Thus far the extent of my tract. The following is a compilation from my letters

B. S. Hoxie, of Cooksville, Rock Co, Wisconsin, relates several instances of two young men speaking Chinese.

Wm. R. Prince, of Flushing, N. Y., relates instances, one of Miss Susan Hoyt, and one a Mr. Smith, near Newtown, who spoke Italian.

Seth Whitmore, of Lockport, N. Y., states that his son, about 17 years old, spoke Indian, and at one of his circles, several of those present spoke in that language and in Italian, the mediums being Dr. G. C. Eton, Mrs. Heath, and Mrs. Scott, the mother of Cora L. V. Hatch.

Mrs. Mary H. Underhill, of South Malden, Mass., relates the instance of a medium's speaking Chinese.

Through A. D. Ruggles, of New York, French has been written, and that in answer to a sealed letter in French, where the French and the translation were both given in the reply; has written also in German, Armenian, Greek, and Latin.

Robert Wilson, of Keene, N. H., relates the instance of a medium's speaking in Italian.

From Braintree, Vermont, I am informed of a medium who has conversed in French, and of a medium in Barnard, Vermont, by the name of Frederick Davis, who speaks almost (and I do not know but) all languages that are spoken in this age of the world."

John Ally, of Lynn, Mass., certifies that Mrs. John Hardy has spoken in the Indian and French.

Through J. B. Mansfield, of Boston, communications have been given in the Chinese, Greek, Latin, Italian, German, Gaelic, Hebrew, French, and Spanish languages.

Benjamin Dean, of Lee, Mass., states that his daughter, aged 11, has spoken and sung in Italian.

E. Warner, of Milan, Ohio, states that Mrs. Warner has spoken German and Indian.

Dr. James Cooper, of Belfontaine, Ohio, relates that his step—daughter, aged 14, has spoken or sung in the Seminole, Gaelic, German, Welch, Greek, Hebrew, Nanotah, and others, amounting to nine in all.

Mr. J. G. Stearns writes me from Battle Creek, Mich., that he has spoken in Indian, Japanese, and French.

John B. Young, of Chicago, relates that his wife has spoken Italian. She and two others, one of them a boy, spoke fluently in Spanish to each other, and she and a young lady spoke and sang in German.

Mrs. Sarah M. Thompson, of Toledo, Ohio, has spoken in the Pawnee tongue.

Here, then, are scores of instances, occurring in the presence of hundreds of witnesses, testified to under circumstances which preclude all idea of collusion, and establishing the fact as conclusively as human testimony can do so. What are we to do with it?

It is recorded in Scripture that when the Apostles were assembled on the day of Pentecost, they "began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance;" that there were then in Jerusalem "men out of every nation under heaven," and "every man heard them speak in his own language," and "they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying, one to another, What meaneth this? Others, mocking, said, These men are full of new wine."

Paul, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, recognized among the spiritual gifts whereof he would not have them ignorant, "divers kinds of tongues" and "the interpretation of tongues." And the parallel between the past and the present will be complete when I add a fact mentioned, in some of these letters, that it has not been unfrequent that the unknown language, spoken by one medium has been interpreted by another, or by the same medium, the intelligence that is working this wonder realizing the difficulty experienced by Paul, "Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret, for if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful."

I repeat, What shall we do with this? We cannot deny the fact, for human testimony cannot thus be disregarded, and the question will be asked, Wherein has man's nature so changed since the days of old, that what he was once capable of he cannot do again? To regard it as a deception would demand a degree of credulity far surpassing that which we demand for the



testimony. To repeat that these people were "full of new wine," would be mocked at now, as it has been by all of Christendom for 1800 years.

It was regarded then, and has been ever since, that this manifestation of the "spiritual gifts" was evidence of the divine nature of the mission with which the Apostles were charged. And why, I would ask, is not the argument as good now as it was then, and why not as applicable to the new facts as to the old?

For my part, when I behold performed at this day, in our very midst, nearly all the wonders recorded in the New Testament, on which the Christian religion has justly reposed its claim to a divine origin; when I see even "mightier things" done now, as was then promised should be; and when I contemplate the sublime and beautiful truths which these wonders are the instruments of bringing to the attention of man,—I pause in breathless awe, and reverently acknowledge that

"The hand that made them is Divine."

Of those truths, I shall yet have occasion to speak in these papers. Now I will close this article by noticing manifestation in some degree cognate with its subject, of which I have frequently heard, though I have never personally witnessed it.

Mr. A. O. Millington, of Springfield, Illinois, writes that "The Circle of Hope having taken their places at the table, there being visitors present, according to custom, the medium requested all to examine her arms, and all said they were free from any kind of marks. Then, in a few moments, her arm became as cold as if it were dead, and my first wife's name came out in raised letters of about an eighth of an inch broad and high (all saw this plainly, a fluid lamp of two burners being on the table), and then went away or

disappeared. And, by request, the initials A. M. came back on her arm, and they also disappeared in a few moments. The name wrote was A. Millington, making eleven letters; A. for Almirah, the Millington being my own name. Now for the testimony, nine adults being present: A. H. Worthen, Illinois State Geologist; Sarah B. Worthen, wife of above, address, Springfield, Ill.; George Bond, provision dealer, Quincy, Ill. (is not a spiritualist, and permits me to use his name); B. A. Richards, book and job printer, Springfield, Ill., and Matilda Richards, his wife; Thomas Worthen; Molly Booth, the medium; Harriet Millington; A. O. Millington."

J. W. EDMONDS.\*

*Lake George, July 1, 1859.*

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\* When I obtained permission to insert these articles in the *New York Tribune*, I was restricted to some ten numbers, of about a column each, and to the phenomena, rather than to the doctrines or philosophy, of Spiritualism. It was therefore quite out of the question to give in them a detail of the evidence in my possession, for I filled all my allotted space merely with results.

Republishing the articles in this form, I can now give that detail; and I do so in an appendix hereto, in which I insert the letters I received on the subject of this paper. And I do this the more readily, because I know of no other form in which there has been such a concentration of the evidence as is here displayed.

It will be perceived that some of the letters are not confined solely to the topic of "Speaking in Many Tongues." They were, however, so interesting in other respects, that I did not deem it worth my while to limit myself merely to extracts.

No. IX.

## SPEAKING AND WRITING MEDIUMS.

*To the Editor of the New York Tribune:*

SIR: All the kinds of mediumship, except speaking and writing, are necessarily slow in the process of communicating thought, for the reason that they convey it either by symbols, or by spelling out words and sentences, letter by letter. Hence it was, that as soon as the fact of spiritual intercourse was established, speaking and writing mediums began to be developed, that thought might be more rapidly conveyed.

This kind of mediumship, like all the others, is marked with a great variety of feature, and like the others, is capable of improvement by proper cultivation. In this connection I can speak only of the general characteristics, and chiefly of the mediumship after it has gone somewhat through the process of cultivation.

Those general characteristics are, that words and sentences are written or spoken, and thoughts uttered, which are not the product of either the mind or the will of the medium.

It is not always easy to ascertain that this is so. A medium is in your presence writing with ease, or speaking with fluency, and the natural inference is that it is of his own mind that he is doing so, and the evidence must, of necessity, be strong to establish that it is otherwise. That evidence will, however, be furnished to any one who will patiently investigate to the end. I have endeavored to do so, and I will mention some of the prominent evidences, to show that it is some other mind than the medium's that is at work.

1. One is that of the medium's speaking in a language unknown to him, in which, however, he conveys distinct thought and utters proper sentences, which are understood by those who are acquainted with the language.

2. Another is, that sometimes the medium knows, and sometimes he does not know, the thought he is thus uttering in a strange language, and that not at all at his option or under his control.

3. The medium frequently refers to events, and relates incidents unknown to him, but recognized by others present at the time as the truth.

4. He not unfrequently speaks of events and incidents unknown alike to him and to those present, but which are afterward ascertained to be facts.

5. He prophesies events which are to happen, and which do happen, and that sometimes in regard to matters with which he has no connection, and of which he has no knowledge.

6. He often describes persons, gives Names, and delineates characteristics, which are recognized by others as correct, but of which he is previously ignorant.

7. He utters thoughts in conflict with his own sentiments, which he does not receive, and which he repudiates.

8. He writes and utters things of which he is ignorant at the time of their utterance. Such is the case with all the trance mediums. They do not know what they write or say; and I once had the services of a writing medium who was not entranced, but who frequently wrote of matters of which I *know* he is, even to this day, ignorant.

9. He displays knowledge of science and arts, which it is well known he does not himself possess, and uses

words and technical terms, the meaning of which he does not know.

10. He delivers discourses, marked by close argument and profound thought, far beyond his capacity. I have, for instance, witnessed a little girl, some ten years old, a foundling, with scarcely a knowledge of her alphabet, discourse with gentlemen of advanced age and of accomplished education, on topics, and in a manner that confounded them, realizing the account of Jesus at twelve years old, "in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both bearing them and asking them questions; and all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."

11. And to add to it all, the medium is unable to do this at his pleasure, but only when under the influence of this unseen intelligence. I have often seen mediums try in vain to recall the power under circumstances when they had every inducement to success; and I have known the exhibition arrested midway, when the medium was mortified at the failure.

These and sundry other evidences which I have not now the space to enumerate, but which the candid investigator can readily observe for himself, will enable him to be certain that there are times and occasions when the medium is writing and speaking thoughts not his own, but flowing from a mind and a will outside of and beyond himself.

This is no impossibility, though it may seem so to some. The power is recognized by the learned, independent of Spiritualism. Wilkinson, in his treatise, "The Human Body, and its Connection with Man," speaks thus of it: "And so, too, if the soul or spirit, or any other spirit or influence, can make the imaginations or the thought-movements in the cerebral substance, these will seem as much our own thoughts as though no such influence

had been exerted. But in both cases, be it remembered, there is an object out of the faculty excited; though, in the one case, the object is out of the organism externally; in the other case, out of it internally."

There are, however, some considerations affecting each of these kinds of mediumship.

I. *As to Writing Mediumship:* Sometimes the writing is merely mechanical, the arm of the medium being moved by some other power than his sometimes he is unconscious even that he is writing sometimes he is aware that he is writing, but is unconscious of what letters or words he is forming; and sometimes he is conscious of all he is doing, but is aware of the extraneous impulse; sometimes he writes by impression, the thoughts being given to him, but the language used being his own; sometimes he is aware of each word as he writes it, but is unconscious of what is the sentence that he forms; sometimes he is conscious of the sentence, but is not aware of its connection with what has gone before, or of what is to follow; sometimes he writes in his native language, sometimes in a foreign one, unknown to him; sometimes he writes in characters apparently unmeaning, and seemingly mere "pothooks and hangers," like a child learning to write, and sometimes in well-formed hieroglyphics, which are interpreted and understood; sometimes the distinctive hand-writing of the medium is preserved throughout; at other times, through the same medium, a different hand-writing is carefully preserved for each spirit communing; and sometimes the hand-writing of the communing spirit, which distinguished him in life, is closely imitated.

II. *As to Speaking Mediumship:* Here, too, there is great variety in the manifestation, and it is only of general features that I can speak—the principal difference

in the kinds being when the medium is entranced or in a normal condition. Between these two extremes there is every conceivable shade of condition.

I have known the mediums, when speaking, to have all consciousness suspended, so as not to see any object, or to hear any sound, or to feel any wound of the flesh. So I have seen them when only one of the senses would be suspended, as, for instance, to be unable to see, though hearing and feeling were acute. I have seen them when fully conscious of all that was going on, and yet without the power of exercising any control over their own organs, and I have seen when the medium was in the full possession of consciousness and volition, and yet was uttering the thoughts of an intelligence not his own.

I deem the latter the most perfected species of mediumship—for the supremacy of one's own individuality is left unimpaired. The trance and semi-trance state is resorted to only because the medium is so undisciplined that unless his consciousness and volition are suspended, his own thoughts and will color, interfere with, and sometimes interrupt the manifestation. And I have observed that mediums, originally used only in a state of trance, have gradually, as they have permitted themselves to be improved, been more and more in their normal condition when used.

This, however, is comparatively rare, and requires an uncommon degree of mental culture and self-discipline. I do not know that I have ever seen a medium improved to the condition of which it seems to me they are yet capable.

Under this state of things, there is one serious difficulty, too often overlooked: namely, that the mind of the medium will affect the communication.

Such has been the case with revelation in all ages of

the world. It is not, and cannot be, perfect, until man himself—the channel through which it is necessarily made—is perfect.

In the meantime, however, amid all these discouragements, at times it does come pure and undefiled, and there come to us, as of old, revelations of the greatest moment to man.

What they are, I shall have occasion briefly to relate in the next and last paper of the series.

J. W. EDMONDS.

*Lake George, Aug. 15, 1859*



No. X.

## THE END AND AIM OF SPIRITUAL INTERCOURSE.

*To the Editor of the New York Tribune:*

SIR: There is no topic connected with this subject less thoroughly understood than this, even by firm believers in the Intercourse, and even my conceptions of it, imperfect as they must necessarily be, can hardly be detailed within the limits of this, the last of my papers. I can attempt only to refer briefly to a few of the more important considerations.

1. No man or woman has probably ever lived who has not at some time felt a yearning yet once again to hold communion with some loved one whom death has removed from sight, and this prayer, so instinctive and so universal with the whole family of man, is now, in the beneficence of a Divine Providence, answered more specifically and more generally than ever before known. And the first thing demonstrated to us is, that we can commune with the spirits of the departed; that such communion is through the instrumentality of persons yet living; that the fact of mediumship is the result of physical organization; that the kind of communion is affected by moral causes; and that the power, like all our other faculties, is possessed in different degrees, and is capable of improvement by cultivation.

2. It is also demonstrated that that which has been believed in all ages of the world, and in all religions, namely: intercourse between man in the mortal life and an intelligence in the unseen world beyond the grave—after having passed through the phases of revelation,

inspiration, oracles, magic, incantation, witchcraft, clairvoyance, and animal magnetism, has, in this awe, culminated in a manifestation which can be proved and understood; and, like every other gift bestowed upon man, is capable of being wielded by him for good or perverted to evil.

3. That which has thus dealt with man in all time is not, as some have supposed, the direct voice of the Creator, nor of the devil, as a being having an independent existence and a sovereignty in the universe of God, nor of angels, as a class of beings having a distinct creation from the human family, but of the spirits of those who have, like us, lived upon earth in the mortal form.

4. These things being established, by means which show a settled purpose and intelligent design, they demonstrate man's immortality, and that in the simplest way, by appeals alike to his reason, to his affections, and to his senses. They thus show that they whom we once knew as living on earth, do yet live after having passed the gates of death, and leaving in our minds the irresistible conclusion that, if they thus live, we shall. This task Spiritualism has already performed on its thousands and its tens of thousands more, indeed, in the last ten years, than by all the pulpits in the land—and still the work goes bravely on. God speed it! for it is doing what man's unaided reason has for ages tried in vain to do, and what, in this age of infidelity, seemed impossible to accomplish.

5. Thus, too, is confirmed to us the Christian religion, which so many have questioned or denied. Not, indeed, that which sectarianism gives us, nor that which descends to us from the dark ages, corrupted by selfishness or distorted by ignorance, but that which was proclaimed through the Spiritualism of Jesus of

Nazareth, in the simple injunction: "Thou shalt love

the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it: Thou Shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

6. As by the inspiration through a foundling of the Nile, there was revealed to man the existence of one God over all, instead of the many deities he was then worshipping; and as, by the inspiration of Him who was born in a manger, there was next revealed man's immortal existence beyond the grave, of which even the most enlightened had then but a faint idea, so now, through the lowly of the earth, comes a further revelation, confirmatory of those, and adding the mighty truth what is the existence in which that immortality is to be spent.

Throughout all the manifestations—in every form and in every language—whatever the discrepancies, uncertainties, and contradictions on other topics, on this of the nature of man's future existence, all coincide and harmonize. It comes in broken fragments of scattered revelations, here a little and there a little, part through one and part through another, but forming, when gathered together, a sublime whole, from which we can surely learn the nature and condition of the life on which we shall enter after this shall have ended.

This, as I understand it, is the great end and object of the movement, all else being merely incidental to it. But it has only begun, and its progress is slow; not from want of power to communicate, but from want of capacity to comprehend. Much that has already been revealed, has not from this cause been received, even by the most advanced Spiritualists, and, of course, not given to the world. But the work is going on. More is added day by day. And it will not be long before

enough will be received by all to open to their conception a knowledge of our future existence, whose value no man can calculate—whose effects no man can imagine.

7. Enough, however, has already been given to show that man's destiny is PROGRESS, onward, upward, from his birth to eternity. Circumstances may retard, but cannot interrupt this destiny, and man's freedom is that he may accelerate or retard, but he cannot prevent. He may hasten, as did one whose life on earth had been devoted to doing good to his fellows, and who said to me that he had passed away in the full consciousness of the change, had found himself surrounded and welcomed by those whom he had aided while on earth, and had paused not one moment in the sphere of Remorse or he may by a life of sin and selfishness, retard it for a period long enough to satisfy the vengeance even of an angry Deity—if such a thing can be.

8. Our progress is to be alike in knowledge, in love, and in purity. Alike in all it must be. And any circumstance which causes us in any one of these elements to lag behind the advance in the others, is sure to bring unfortunate consequences in its train, though not always unhappiness. So clear, so universal is this injunction to progress in all three of these elements, that the heresies which spring up among us from our imperfect knowledge of them, need give us no alarm.

Even the doctrine of Free Love, revolting as it is, but which some misguided ones have attempted to foist upon our beautiful faith, need cause no anxiety; for profligacy in love is incompatible with progress in purity. And while the command is, "Love ye One another," so ever attendant upon it is that other, "Be ye pure, even as your Father in heaven is pure."

Incidental to these more important points are many

minor considerations, on which I cannot now dwell. By a careful attention, they will all be found consistent with these weightier matters. Distorted sometimes by the imperfection of the mediums through which the intercourse comes, and sometimes perverted by the passions of those who receive it, yet, carefully considered and patiently studied until understood, I can safely assert, after nearly nine years' earnest attention to the subject, that there is nothing in it that does not directly tend to the most exalted private worth and public virtue.

True, to some it is a mere matter of curiosity, and to others a philosophy, but to many it is now, and to all in the end will be, a religion; because all religion is the science of the future life, and because it never fails to awaken in the heart that devotion which is at once a badge and an attribute of our immortality.

J. W. EDMONDS.