

Mesmerism tried by the touchstone of truth : being a reply to Dr. Ashburner's remarks on phrenology, mesmerism, and clairvoyance / by George Corfe.

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MESMERISM

TRIED BY THE TOUCHSTONE OF TRUTH:

BEING

A Reply

TO

DR. ASHBURNER'S

REMARKS ON PHRENOLOGY, MESMERISM, AND
CLAIRVOYANCE.

BY

GEORGE CORFE,

OF MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL,

AUTHOR OF "A POPULAR TREATISE ON THE KIDNEY,"

"THE PHYSIOGNOMY OF DISEASES," &c. &c.

"Try the spirits."—1 JOHN iv. 1.

LONDON:

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1848.

MESMERISM

THE HISTORY OF THE DISCOVERY OF THE

2. 1818

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GEORGE CORN

R35753

INTRODUCTION.

THE main difficulty which a Christian finds in taking up the weapons of God's armour to oppose this satanic doctrine of Mesmerism, is the instability with which its followers advance their principles, and the fickleness which is exhibited by all who hold false tenets ; so that in proportion as they are untenable, their advocates, when attacked, try to guard them by denying this or the other inference which is plainly deduced from their general tenor. For instance, in the popish religion the votaries fall down publicly and privately before the image or picture of the Virgin Mary ; they say prayers to it, they kiss it, they make vows to it and before it, they worship it, and they rely upon it in weal and woe : but let the Protestant grapple with the Papist and charge home these idolatries to his practice and his creed, and he will turn immediately upon him and deny it stoutly, and not only contradict the whole of your accusation, but will laugh at you for your credulity. So with regard to the Socialist, one of his vile doctrines is, that he allows and enforces a plurality of wives ; but let a man take a fancy to the young bride of some disciple of Owen, and then let us see how agreeable the development of this principle will be to the man. I myself was combating this vile doctrine with a tradesman some time ago, and I made this remark to him, " Suppose your wife" (a very pretty young woman) " chose to walk Regent-street every night, of course you would have no objection ?" He blushed, looked confused, and answered, " No, no ; that's going too far," &c.

So the doctrine of Mesmerism is put forth, in reality only as a natural power ; but to give it weight and authority amongst

the most enlightened body of a Christian community, many portions of Scripture are adduced, so as to convey the idea to them, that these reported wonders done in Mesmerism are miracles; but the word miracle, be it noted, is studiously avoided, lest the work should be tried by the only standard for trying the true and false miracle,—namely, the Word of God. Therefore the terms “philosophy,” “communicated power,” “God’s blessing of Mesmerism,” “philosophic humility,” “God’s choicest gift of reason,” “a holy power,” “the Almighty’s will,” &c. &c., are used for a cowardly shelter of the term which is intended for the mind’s eye, which, as I have said, is that of miracle. If miracle is not intended or inferred, wherefore is it that God is so often appealed to, both by Dr. Ashburner and by other writers on Mesmerism? This holy and fearful Name, His adorable Christ our Lord, His truth, His people, His will, and His great enemy, the devil, are referred to no less than thirty-six times in a small pamphlet containing thirty-two pages. We do not find that the amazing and instantaneous transmutation of metallic and vegetable substances into totally different bodies are accompanied, by those ingenious men who describe them, with a variety of solemn Scriptures. If Mesmerism is but a philosophical power and working, why are so many appeals made to God and to His truth, in order to support its claims? What a wonder is that poisonous fluid, prussic acid, when in a moment its deadly sting is withdrawn by the addition of three atoms of water in hydrochloric acid! And lo! a new and innocuous compound is the result,—formiate of ammonia. Let the philosopher put an atom of potassium into a volume of chlorine gas, what a brilliant and wonderful change follows!—an instantaneous burst of fire. And when placed upon water, it swims along its surface burning with a beautiful redness of colour, leaving an entirely new product. The chemist, in exhibiting these powers of nature, does not deem it requisite to call on the Lord in a variety of texts to prove that they are not contrary to religion, and that they are a “holy power communicated to man.” No; it is a power of nature shown up by a philosopher: and such a one does not charge those who differ from him in the causes and results of such phenomena, with titles like these,—“idol worshippers,” “the fool’s weapon of ridicule against the votaries of Mesmerism,” “fraudulent persons,” “assuming the cloak of righteousness in order to blind weak people dishonestly, and to take advantage of ignorant prejudices for the unworthy

purpose of some selfish advantage, or to divert attention from their own cunning arts¹;" "brutal and barbarous ignorance;" "sham piety;" "typified by an almost monster or maniac;" and again, "pig-headed physicians," "dunderheaded impostors, pretending to practical knowledge;" "wiseacres," "fools;" "folks who belong to a class that, in public institutions, abet falsehood and dishonourable conduct;" "who are banded together, they best know why, against Mesmerism." And these latter, it is stated, have to defend the so-called "science against the prejudices, the ignorance, the arrogance, the blackguard slander and calumny, the low cunning of such opponents²."

Consequently, by his own showing, if it be but a power of nature shown up by a philosopher, in a philosophical way, why not confine himself to philosophical arguments, whether his opponents bring forth Scripture, or any other matter, to prove that his theory is false? It appears to me, that philosophy should be tried by philosophy; that religious pretensions should be tried by revelation; and that mechanical powers should be tried by its own laws. But here is the true secret of this matter; and the answer to all such queries, this power of Mesmerism is called "natural," in order to blind the understanding, and beguile the Christian physician into the adoption of its satanic arts, whereas its true name is to be found in the book of Revelation; namely, "the working of false miracles," which God declared, in the latter day, should be performed by devils on earth; and this is the grand primary reason that such a burst of clamour and abuse are levelled at any child of God when he ventures to lift up this revolting mask. It will be asked how devils can work, since we do not behold them with our naked eye? I would, in my turn, ask how that evil spirit did his work, which we are told in the Bible he did, when he went forth, commissioned by the Lord to deceive four hundred men at once? "I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his (Ahab's) prophets," said the fiend; to which the Majesty of Heaven answered, "Thou shalt persuade and prevail also, go forth, and do so." Whether one devil acted upon the four hundred men, or that the one devil was accompanied by three hundred and ninety-nine wicked spirits, as efficient as himself, let them answer who raise the question; but this we Christians know for certain, that the evil spirit did go forth, and did prevail, notwithstanding the

¹ Page 17.

² Page 32.

manifold lies which the false prophets uttered to the contrary before the king, to his own destruction.

It may be argued by Dr. Ashburner and his admirers, that the Christian opponents to his system, at once take up Christian weapons to fight it; and that, therefore, he does but try to wrench the sword out of his adversary's hand, and to cleave him with that sword. But what does this way of Christian fighting prove? Why, it proves that the warfare is not natural, or philosophical, or chemical, but that it is a "wrestling with powers, principalities, spiritual wickedness in high places," and such a Christian mind must immediately discern it to be, as the subject opens and enlarges before him. Where a false miracle has been worked, he sees the agency of Satan; and where a lie is put forth, and a cure has been said to be effected, when there was no cure, then the Christian still sees the cloven foot, and recognizes the father of lies, who can only be rebutted, and awed, and restrained, and put to shame, by the sword of the Lord, when wielded in mortal hands by the power of the Spirit.

In all ages, we find that truth has had its counterfeit. True religion, the grandest and most important reality, has had its imitation from the fall of our first parents to this moment. The serpent, the evil one, in an animal of that description, came up to innocent Eve with his lie, in the specious garb of truth, appealing to God, after his plausible question, "Yea,"—what? "Hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" &c. Oh, no; on the contrary, God knows, "that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." The woman was seduced; and Adam, with open eyes, sooner than part from his idol, entered into her temptation, and shared her lot, preferring the creature to the Creator; and had not the Ransom been prepared before time, death, by sin, and hell, also, would have not only stared the guilty pair in the face, but the lake of fire would have been their portion to all eternity.

As grace in the bestowal of true religion was the precious boon to Adam and Eve, so we find their son Abel also blest with this gift. Cain mimicked what was not so given to himself. Abel's sacrifice of blood, in type of the blood, was accepted of God. Cain's earthy sacrifice of vegetables, the work of his hands, in imitation of the true offering, was also presented in counterfeit worship to the Lord, the offering was not accepted; and Abel was slain through envy. The one true religion has

shone ; and the ten thousand false religions have arisen since, and up to this period, and will do, whilst the world lasts.

When a thing of value is counterfeited, we are most provoked with the deception which comes the closest to the reality. Of all the religious inventions of men wrapped up in the wrested letter of God's word, none come so close at first sight as the Papists ; and for this one cause is it, as I apprehend, that it is called "The Mother," "The Mistress," of all other spiritual harlots, and of abominable false worships : "The whore of Babylon." Other heresies or counterfeits of true religion are close counterfeits, but they must yield the palm of pre-eminence to that ; and even the miracles of Mesmerism, and of Irvingism, fade before some of the miracles of the devotees of Romanism.

Let us take two instances from the Romish Church. In the lives of the five saints who were canonized May 26, 1839, we find the following stories related of St. Francis di Givolamo.

"Once an abandoned woman, before whose house the servant of God was preaching, endeavoured to interrupt him by raising all manner of discordant sounds, which our saint never so much as noticed, but proceeded to the end of his discourse. Some time afterwards passing by the same house, and seeing it shut up, 'Ah,' said he to one of the by-standers, 'what is become of Catherine?' 'She died suddenly yesterday,' was the reply. 'Dead ! let us go and see her ;' and entering the house, he went up stairs and found the corpse laid out. Then, while a breathless silence reigned amongst a numerous concourse of spectators, 'Catherine,' said he, 'tell me, where are you ?' and twice repeated the self-same words. When now a third time he had spoken in an authoritative tone, the eyes of the corpse opened, and the lips moved, as was seen by all, and in a weak hollow voice replied, 'In hell ! in hell !' Whereupon all present, seized with terror, fled out of the house, and the holy man himself departing, repeated several times, 'In hell ! in hell ! Omnipotent God ! tremendous God ! in hell !'

"Sister Mary Angela Rispoli was seized with epileptic fits, and at last suffered a stroke of apoplexy that deprived her of sense and motion. . . . The whole left side of her body was paralysed, and she lay bed-ridden and disabled. Procuring a relic of the saint, she got the infirmarian to apply it to her side, and in the night, during sleep, was cheered up by a vision of the holy man, who touched the part affected and disappeared.

Next morning she awoke perfectly well, arose, dressed herself, and went down into the church!"

Thus much for Romanism, which pretends to cure epilepsy by less trouble and labour than Mesmerism can lay claim to, a relic is all that is required here.

Now we look to a would-be miracle of the Irvingite school: "They (the Irvingites) generally told the sick and dying, they could heal them if they had faith; but the parties took care always to blame the dying for want of faith, and *acquit themselves*, giving out by that offer, that they had the power of God at command, but did not exercise it, because the people had not faith. During their visits, they reproved the sick and dying for employing doctors and ministers; and this was in character, for they habitually speak of medical men and ministers in language that cannot be transcribed." I will give the reader a short dialogue between a dying woman and one of the Irvingites, as related by the Rev. — Crabbe, of Southampton. "You are very ill." "Yes, sir."—"Have you faith that you can be raised up again? If you have, *we* can raise you up." "I do not wish to be raised up; I would rather die, and go to Jesus."—(She was a Christian.)—"But don't you know that all affliction comes from sin and the devil?" "No; for I read, 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.'" She added, "Why if persons had the faith you speak of, such would never die."—"Oh, no;" was the sorry reply of this deluded man².

"Gifts of healing were claimed as accompanying these manifestations, as well as some extraordinary discernment of thoughts, which were said to be the gift of discerning of spirits."

"The work is not the mere effect of enthusiasm, produced by natural causes, and excited to its highest pitch, but it is a manifest power of the spirit of delusion. Having been myself participator in the fullest measure, and been conversant with the proceedings in private and in public of those who possess the utterance, I am enabled to speak upon the most ample testimony."

"It better becomes us to bear with their infirmity, and seriously refute what they seriously advance, than to throw

² Crabbe's Address to the Irvingites, 1836.

difficulties in their way by ridicule or contempt, which, however it may offend, will never convince. At the same time, I may be pardoned in reminding all serious readers, that any assumption of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, however unfounded, is too deep an offence against God to be met by the taunts of ridicule or contempt. Silly and contemptible as the grounds of the claim appear to them, the offence is a very awful one, and those who commit it should not be tempted to think lightly of it by the levity of those who have escaped it."

"This delusion, connected with the lying wonders, and power and signs of Satan, is a manifest spiritual power, and without entering into the prophetic aspect of the passage, the plain doctrinal instruction it gives us is, that God in judgment does suffer such a power of delusion and lying conviction to be assumed by Satan; and that if any man takes pleasure in that which is not the truth, he incurs this judgment of being given over to believe a lie. I can testify, that neither before the visitation of the power, nor since, after resistance, it ceased, have I known any thing analogous to it in the workings of my own mind."

"It is, however, of very secondary importance what judgment is formed upon the present manifestations, as to the degree of the evil power exercised upon its followers. If our eyes are only opened to watch against the assaults of the enemy, and we are prepared to reject him, even should he come to us individually *with power, and signs, and lying wonders*, our object is attained. Those who deny to the manifestations all supernatural interference, are not likely to be entangled in them; but those who systematically deny to Satan all such power, are liable to be themselves seduced. Should such a power be put forth against them, their system of belief will lead them at once to ascribe it to God⁴," as is the case with Dr. Ashburner, in treating of Mesmerism.

But more of the miraculous doctrines of devils amongst the Irvingites hereafter. We will now look at some of the year 1847 amongst the disciples of Mesmer.

"My friends, Captain James and Mr. Topham, being at Cheltenham, had the opportunity of seeing a young gentleman, who, at the request of Mr. Topham, read a word placed under his foot with the writing towards the carpet. The eyes had

⁴ Rise and Progress of Irvingism, by R. Baxter, 1836.

been bandaged carefully. Strict precautions were taken that there could be no possibility of seeing by the ordinary organs of vision. The word was Wolf, it was written by Mr. Topham, and the somnambule described with the aid of his finger the peculiarities in the form of the W. This same clairvoyant had repeatedly read words carefully concealed from him, and placed under a thick cushioned footstool upon which his feet rested."

"Up to this date the mottos in 1512 shells (the words amount to 22,195) have been read. In many cases, (some of which you have witnessed,) the shells have not only been brought by strangers, but held in their hands, and never touched by me, nor by the clairvoyants. I have mesmerised 319 persons, of whom 115 have been clairvoyant: out of this number 13 have read words placed on the head, back, under the foot⁵, &c. &c., and 96 in boxes: 42 persons have thus read while awake. This includes three ladies, and one young gentleman, who were *never put into the mesmeric sleep*, and two ladies who first read in the waking state, and were subsequently mesmerised. Even to you, who have admitted the efficacy of my passes in removing pain, I fear to state how many I have thus relieved. You are practically aware, in your own person, of the truth of the existence of this power in me, and know full well that different persons possess this faculty in very various degrees."

"The case alluded to by the worthy Major⁶ is one of a poor woman in Cheltenham, who was afflicted with severe epileptic fits. Her name is Elizabeth Hookham; she had been subject to fits for three years. These at first occurred about twice, and latterly they came on every other day. In August, 1845, she became so ill that her life was considered in danger. On the 29th of that month, Major Buckley first visited her, and made passes down her back, which strengthened her greatly; he saw her again in a week, and found her much improved. On Wednesday, the 10th of September, and four following days, he mesmerised her. On Sunday she drank a glass of water which had been mesmerised on the preceding day," and the story goes on to relate that she perfectly recovered⁷.

⁵ It appears, throughout the recital of these nut-shell experiments, that no one but Major Buckley was permitted to be the operator on these sensitive dressmakers; and that even the Major's permission was first obtained before any other gentleman could hold a nut in his hand. Which fact presents a strong ground for the suspicion, that some intricate stratagem was fostered upon the Major's credulity.

⁶ Buckley.

⁷ Page 20.

What state of mind that individual must be in, who could pen such sentences as the following, I leave to the judgment of the reader.

"It would seem as if the fluid emitted by the brains of persons who are severely,—and to clairvoyants, disagreeably sceptical, was sufficient to suffocate and to destroy the developing events." "Major Buckley having made the passes down his own face, the girls said they saw a blue light on his forehead and cheeks." "If the greatest delicacy be not observed in these experiments, they fail. The human brain is not to be examined harshly; and he who wishes to arrive at the truth, must not here torture nature. She will yield to positive persuasion, but negative violence has no charms for her. Address may gain her affections; but a doubt that she possesses the virtues of her sex, affronts her sense of propriety. In the examination of clairvoyance, the tenderest management, most extreme delicacy of investigation, is absolutely necessary." "We say that in the operations of the mind a fluid emanates from the brain, because the phenomena of thought and mutual interchange of ideas between individuals are accompanied by rays of colours, visible to persons who, asleep or awake, happen to be in an exalted condition of clairvoyance."

"The nut-shell experiments illustrate a curious and most remarkable condition of brain, that which gives the power of shedding light into dark recesses protected by apparently opaque media.—Do they not by analogy give us some idea of the flash with which the poet's genius illuminates a hidden truth? May they not at some future period, teach how the distribution of nervous fluid can, in an exquisite organization, implying a highly sensible condition of nervous arrangements, account for the chasms of delicacy of sentiment and of naturally refined taste?"

"I think I have adduced facts enough to lead to the conclusion that this fluid is either attractive or repulsive, according to phrenological conditions; and that it can be accumulated in water, or on other bodies," &c. "If we could so dispose the crystals of morphia as to be able to present to the face only the extremities that produce the hypnotic effect, we should, in all probability, have a delicious refreshing sleep; but in administering this drug, we put into the stomach the poisonous as well as the benignant pole, and thus we defeat the object we have in view. It is the recoupe,—the countre coup, the blow with the

bit, that is the inevitable consequence of a simultaneous exhibition of both poles. Ether and chloroform in excess exemplify the pernicious agency of the repulsive pole ; that of clone^s."

In a word, it is my firm conviction that any individual who ardently pursues such a track of delusion, who bends down the energies of his mind to receive and take up the power of this mystery of iniquity, will find the wages of death in the warping of that understanding, in the unbridling of his passions, in the aberration of his intellects, in the loss of his reason, and in the downfall of that healthy counterpoise which constitutes a rational creature ; so that having lost all self-control, as the man in the Gospel, he is possessed of devils, cutting himself with stones, and as another Scripture expresses it, like him, who "wandering out of the way of understanding shall remain amongst the congregation of the dead." For my own part, I can aver that the consideration of this hateful subject which is requisite to refute it has filled my mind with disgust, horror, and dread; and if Mr. Baxter could pronounce of Irvingism, which in its effects most resembles Mesmerism of any thing I am acquainted with, that "the work is not the mere effect of enthusiasm, produced by natural causes, and excited to its highest pitch, but that it is a manifest power of the spirit of delusion;" I can also affirm, though I was never a believer in the system, as Mr. Baxter once was in Irvingism, yet "that the strong blasts from the terrible one" which have swept over my soul, as I have read, seen, and heard related the varied deceptions which have been set forth by the disciples of Mesmerism, have fully convinced me that it is an infernal system, "whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness" in them that receive it, entertain, believe, and practise it.

Middlesex Hospital,

May 2nd, 1848.

^s Pages 24—27.

MESMERISM

TRIED BY THE TOUCHSTONE OF TRUTH.

A LETTER, &c. TO DR. ASHBURNER.

DEAR SIR,

I BEG leave to acknowledge the receipt of your little pamphlet on Mesmerism forwarded to me yesterday. I have perused its thirty-two pages with care and attention; and as I read sentence after sentence, a secret desire sprang up in my mind to address a few lines to you upon the subject. I wish, however, to premise, that having on several occasions entered into conversation with you upon the irreligious tendency of the doctrines of Mesmerism, you will not be unprepared to find me now stating, as I have before stated to you personally, that your pamphlet, and the doctrines which influence the disciples of Mesmer, I solemnly and firmly believe are unholy, antichristian, satanic, and unscriptural.

In the introductory remarks to this letter, I have partly mentioned my general opinion of this system; I now intend to make quotations from your work, as well as from any other of your writers whose pages may fall in my way, and to reply to them seriatim; and, on the other hand, to make use of any argument from a writer, who, on the subject of delusions, is of the same opinion with myself, that the matter may be fairly placed before the mind of the general as well as of the professional reader, since it is very possible that many weak intellects may be unhappily warped by the specious arguments which are brought forward by the advocates of your doctrine. This is a minor plea to that higher one of standing forth for the honour of the Lord

of Truth, for my thus taking up the pen against the system, and consequently exposing myself to the ridicule, the abuse, and the scorn of a large body of persons so deluded.

I cannot say that I deny the facts which you adduce, for I know no more of them than what I read ; but this I firmly assert, that throughout the whole period of nine years during which Mesmerism was more or less practised by yourself and Dr. Wilson, whilst holding the office of physicians to this charity, I never once saw or heard of an instance of cure effected through its agency ; but, on the contrary, I have witnessed many serious evils resulting from its employment.

In the first place, then, you observe at page 22 :

“The wide ramifications of this science into the depths of the most occult phenomena, the power of knowing events passing in another hemisphere of this planet, second sight, the prevision of disease, the faculty of introvision, and of seeing into the earth for minerals and springs of water, the will, the interchange of thought between man and man, the relations between wakefulness and sleep, the power of suspending ordinary sensibility to alleviate and to cure the most agonizing pain, the cure of diseases, even those involving alteration of structure,” &c., are so many “portions” of this “important subject.”

Now, let us contrast these assertions with similar ones made by the biographer of the canonized popish saint, Francis di Givolamo, referred to in my introductory remarks.

“That wonderful gift, also, which authentic testimony proves several saints to have possessed, namely, the power of being present in more than one place at times,—between which no physical interval is perceptible,—was not denied to our saint.”

“I too have testified,” you remark, “that I have been present where persons in sleep have declared to events passing in other places, which have been found, on investigation, to have been most accurately recounted.”

You then proceed to inform us, that “some patients, in their ordinary state, could see blue light or grey emanating from the ends of my fingers when I was engaged in the act of Mesmerism, and some of them from my eyes and forehead ; and I, in return,” you remark, “have seen her covered with a violet-coloured halo.”

So also did they affirm of St. Francis di Givolamo. “He enjoyed frequent ecstasies, which happened more than once in the presence of many witnesses. His face shone at times with a radiance so bright, that it dazzled the eyes of the beholders.”

Let me now pass on to the notice of similar powers which the Irvingites claim to possess.

Mr. Baxter remarks, that "gifts of healing were claimed as accompanying these manifestations, as well as some extraordinary discernment of thoughts, which were said to be the gift of discerning of spirits;" or, according to the disciples of Mesmer, and in the words of your pamphlet, "events passing in other places have been declared by these somnambules; and they have been able to see through opaque media into an adjoining room; possessing the power of shedding light into dark recesses," &c.

Now, if these are facts, then no one can doubt but that there is a power in operation which is not in the possession of every mortal, and that power is supernatural, and beyond finite control. Such I deem to be the fact, unless the whole relation of Mesmerism is to be resolved into a tissue of lies and of fraud, which I cannot agree to; therefore it is most evident to my mind, that if any one or more individuals can be so acted upon as to see into the belly of the earth for minerals and springs of water, and know the interchange of thought between man and man, that it is a most terrific delusion, seeing it could only be by the agency of the devil. God the Holy Ghost, the Third Person in the adorable Trinity, alone possesses this power; and I would earnestly press upon your attention, that any assumption of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, however unfounded, is too solemn and too awful an offence against God to be met with sarcasm or vituperation; and I perfectly agree with Mr. Baxter, that "God in judgment does suffer such a power of delusion and lying conviction to be assumed by Satan; and that if any man take pleasure in that, which is not the truth, he incurs this judgment of being given over to believe a lie."

But I must now request you, Doctor, to allow me to draw your attention to the authority of one of the most accomplished, shrewd, and judicious physicians of the present day, I allude to Dr. Watson, whose knowledge, based as it is upon twenty-five years' hospital practice, pervades like a rich stream the whole of his valuable Lectures:—

"In what is called ecstasy, the patient is lost to all external impressions; but wrapped and absorbed in some object of the imagination. The muscles are sometimes relaxed, sometimes rigid, as in slight tetanus: but the loss of voluntary power over them is not complete or universal, for these patients often speak in a very earnest manner, or sing: they are, as the term *ἑκστασις* imports, out of the body at the time, wholly engrossed

in some high contemplation. This state is not uncommon as forming a part of religious insanity ; and sometimes it runs into ordinary hysteria. Nervous and susceptible persons are apt to be thrown into these trances under the influence of animal magnetism ; and grave authors assure us, that the intelligence which then deserts the brain concentrates itself in the epigastrium, or at the tips of the fingers ; that people in that state read letters which are placed upon their stomach, or applied to the soles of their feet ; answer, oracularly, enigmatical questions ; describe exactly their own internal organic diseases ; and even foretel future events. 'Credat Judæus Apella, non ego.' I take for granted that they who were in the habit of speaking, a few years since, in some of our places of worship, in what they called *unknown tongues*, were either gross impostors, who deserved to be publicly whipped, or persons labouring under this disease, and wanting physic. Dr. Copeland mentions a curious fact in connexion with this subject. He says, that many of the Italian Improvisatori are in possession of their peculiar faculty only while they are in a state of ecstatic trance ; and that few of them enjoy good health, or consider their gift as otherwise than something morbid¹."

This is precisely the spot in the field of battle that I must bring all your experiments to. I maintain with the above gentleman, that physic and not Mesmerism is required in five cases out of ten ; and that the remaining five either deserve the horsewhip, the cold douche, or solitary confinement.

I was asked by a friend why these clairvoyants, who are said to be so highly gifted, did not lay out their gifts, and appropriate so many hours daily or nightly (daylight being of no importance to them) for the gratification of their countrymen, and issue bulletins daily or hourly to let us know what is being done in the court of Spain, the south of Africa, and in our possessions in the antipodes ; nay, they might look through the icebergs without spectacles, and inform us in what position Captain Franklin is at this moment, for such information would obtain the reward offered by his lady. Nay, they might do more than this for the farmers, and be well rewarded for their trouble, by looking into the ground at all seasons, and ascertaining the hunger, thirst, position, chemical composition, state or health of land, or of a field of corn, of a crop of turnip

¹ Vol. i. p. 686.

seed, or the springing roots of a thousand newly-planted acorns, for which plantation a reward is always given by Government.

Nay, they could do more than this too; for they could dart their long eyes through heaps of rubbish, gravel, and rock, and discover, peradventure, a bed of coals under the Seven Dials, a Baden spring under the Fleet ditch, a vein of gold fifty miles under Newgate's bottom, and a stratum of mammoth fossils fifty feet under Snowdon's top. These things would be of incalculable benefit to some person or other, and would far outweigh the value of the electric telegraph, which cannot tell you whether the locomotives run over a hidden volcano, or an antediluvian burying-ground.

I cannot conceive why these wonderful powers should be confined to a sick room, to dressmakers, and to a few mental philosophers. I should like to ask one of these clairvoyants to slant his eye in the proper direction, and just acquaint me what the great Mogul is doing at this moment, or how many humming-birds are settled upon the rails of the palace of the English consul at Buenos Ayres.

According to your own words, things, similar to the above modest requirements, can be done, and it will be the means of proving to the world more of the efficiency of a mesmeric professor, than volumes of vituperative defence. Now let me offer a remark or two on the subject of these female readers through the opaque walls of a nut-shell. It appears that all their eyes darted at were love verses, mottos, and such libidinous trash. I would ask, why some philosophical page was not opened, so suited to the exercise of this so-called philosophical power, such as Dalton's Atomic Theory, Newton's Principia, or Mahomet's Koran (surely language is nothing to them); some one might hold the book open in the next room, and ask these sybils to read off a few pages in the adjoining chamber; this would have been a smart criterion of their cleverness, not so harmonizing with their passions, but more edifying to the uninitiated bystanders.

But to be serious, the real truth is this, that these exhibitions are wholly to be attributed to collusion with the devil, notwithstanding your repeated assertions to the contrary. But let me quote your own words:

"Clairvoyance is said by weak, or by cunning and canting persons to be the work of Satan. Brutal and barbarous ignorance could be the only excuse for thus treating mental philosophy."

And again, at p. 21 :

"It is not magic. It is not collusion with the devil. Let him who diabolically asserts this falsehood, for the devil is the *father of lies*, ask himself if the alarming gentleman in black ever sanctioned the patience and the perseverance of 238 and 327 sittings of one hour each, devoted to the successful treatment of two patients, afflicted with epilepsy ? Did Satan ever spend so much time in endeavours to do good ? The Spirit of evil may have often prompted patients and their relatives to halt in their course of Mesmerism. Tired of reiterated sittings, they judge, without experience, of what is called a fair trial."

Most certainly this fiend never wears out, tires out, or gives in, when his own darling projects are to be carried forward. We have had the idolatrous worship of popery in falling down to stocks and stones going on for upwards of six thousand years through the untiring exertions of this father of lies, this incarnate false prophet, so that "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was, and still remains, only evil continually ;" and I am sure that they are in no wise improved by the introduction of such unhallowed workings as Mesmerism and Phrenology exhibit in our day. Even the patriarch Jacob's father-in-law must rush in breathless anxiety and fiery zeal in the devil's cause, to regain his beloved gods. "Thou hast stolen my gods, as well as my daughters," was the devilish cry in this wretched heathen ; and you have heard enough, I presume, of the Lady of Loretto being carried through the air, and St. Denys walking without his head, and of such like popish wonders, as are swallowed down by thousands, as holy verities, to acknowledge that in this cause, at least, the father of lies is not weary in propagating lies, and preaching the doctrines of devils up to this hour. But what will you say to this angel of darkness being a lying spirit in the mouths of four hundred men at once ? Yet you would think, perhaps, that there was no philosophy in all this ; certainly there was not, but doubtless there was abundant collusion with the devil. This daring, impious angel came forth and stood before the Lord and said, "I will persuade Ahab (my own child) that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead ;" and the Lord said unto him, Wherewith ? and he said, "I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets." And He (the Lord) gave him leave. True to his character, and acting according to his nature, just as it is in the nature of a fish to swim, and in an eagle to fly, so went he forth, and it was not made manifest to the righteous Jehoshaphat who stood by, until a true prophet solemnly warned the assembly thus : "Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put

a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets (O wretched Ahab), and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee.²”

Thus you see that the father of lies not only propagates lies, but he does it in such a wholesale, compact manner amongst four hundred prophets, that the righteous king of Judah was almost carried away by the delusion, and could hardly see through the cheat until the holy Micaiah was sent to undeceive him. William Skinner and many more may have been relieved or “cured,” as you term it, “by the patient and persevering use of this power;” but from what I have witnessed during the whole period that these delusions of the devil have been exercised, I never saw nor heard of any thing of the sort go forth but what was indecent, disgraceful, and injurious. All the patients have unequivocally expressed themselves worse where real disease existed, and where nervous disorders only were present, the mind has been worked upon, the lascivious passions have been excited, and the will, unable to control the animal desires, has lost its balance, and the patient has then been momentarily stupified, by the 300 or 400 passes to and fro before the eyes, but only to awake in a more libidinous state than before; and this has sent them, sooner or later, to wander the streets to gratify their lust, and thus have they become open prostitutes. I write that which I know. I *could* relate a vast deal more of the after-workings of this magic art of the devils. But one thing I must not let pass; you know that the Papists make much ado about sprinkling holy water, after the Mosaic ceremony, and the Mesmerists must go beyond them here too, and therefore they make folks gulp down mesmerised water. If the Moslems believe that the false prophet’s coffin is suspended between earth and heaven, the Mesmerists believe that a human body placed in a coffin, and floated upon water, is highly susceptible of mesmeric influence; and we have had some of these juggleries carried on upon a poor paralytic, until the operator became the laughing-stock of all who witnessed it, and the patient remains a helpless creature to this day.

You have already heard, it would seem, that this licentious tendency is the result of mesmerising weak and silly women, for you say,

“Another mode of operating on the fears of women is to assert that Mesmerism excites to ungovernable sexual passion. An ignorance of phrenology encourages

² 1 Kings xxii.

this gross misstatement ; so disgustingly libellous and offensively insulting to the moral capabilities of self-control among the females of our country. A *few* are found with undue developments of the organ of Amativeness, and the opposers of Mesmerism would insinuate that our proverbially delicate-minded women are *all* too large in the lower back part of the head, and that they necessarily forget the functions of those other organs of their brains whose duties are to encourage the purest thoughts, and to check improper amatory feelings. If their averment were true, no woman should take a glass of wine or of any exciting drink, for they induce a state of brain that encourages passion, and an abandonment to such ideas as are most apt to prevail with the presence of large posterior cerebral organs. Far more immoral mischief may be done, and has been done, with intoxicating liquors—chloroform and other drugs—than with Mesmerism.”

In answer to this assertion I would only observe, that the Lord declares that “out of the heart (not out of the cerebellum) proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies ; these are the things which defile a man³ ;” and we read “that every imagination, purpose, and desire of the thoughts of man’s heart is only evil continually⁴.”

You remark,

“If Dr. Hodgkin be capable of large views, and have the faculty of philosophical reflection, he may learn by the aid of Mesmerism to do that which has already been done by this holy power, to *cure* hallucinations, instead of talking nonsense about them.”

And at page 24, you sum up the workings of Mesmerism thus :—

“I have said that I had myself, after having continuously exercised my will upon an obstinate subject, seen ‘her covered with a violet-coloured halo.’ Since that time, I have frequently observed modifications of the same thing. In mesmerising with the exertion of intense will, I have seen portions of the face of the patient covered with a violet, and sometimes with a blue cloudy atmosphere, which has vanished upon my having recourse to dispersing passes.”

And again,

“It would seem as if the fluid emitted by the brains of persons, who are severely, and to clairvoyants disagreeably, sceptical, was sufficient to suffocate and to destroy the developing events.”

These extracts must impart the conviction to every unbiassed mind, that the opinions of those eminent physicians, as under-mentioned, of Guy’s and St. George’s Hospitals⁵, upon Mesmerism, delivered before the Westminster Court, and the Committee of the House of Commons, were based in reason, common sense, and truth⁶.

³ Matt. xv.

⁴ Gen. vi.

⁵ Drs. Hodgkin and Seymour.

⁶ “Drs. Winslow, Browning, Hodgkin, and other medical gentlemen, were then examined as to the present state of mind of the alleged lunatics, and agreed that

Allow me, therefore, to proceed in drawing your attention to those scriptural grounds into which God the Holy Ghost has led my mind, and has demonstrated to me that the followers of Mesmer are as much under satanic delusion, as that "the devil is the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air, and the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience⁷." The Christian is commanded "to try the spirits," by the touchstone of God's truth, which is spiritual; and I must again refer you to that passage, which I have often quoted to you in our conversation upon this subject, from Holy Writ;—"and I saw three unclean spirits, like frogs, come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles⁸." Here, then, we read a prophecy that miracles shall be worked by devils, and that these devilish spirits shall be incarnate. The dragon is the devil; the beast refers to the Papacy, and the false prophet to man. In Scripture, a false prophet designates a man, or set of men, who are guided, taught, and influenced by the devil, or by the beast, to deceive the souls of men; they are, in an especial manner, the agents of the dragon, or of the beast, or of both, and they are called by Paul, "angels of darkness," though they look like "angels of light." "For Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light, therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be

they were insane, and incapable of managing their affairs. On being cross-examined by Mr. Miller, several admitted that there was no unsoundness of mind except as to the above-mentioned delusions. Dr. Hodgkin said, '*A person who believed that any one under the influence of Mesmerism could read a book in the next room, would be labouring under a delusion, although he might be able to take care of himself and property.*'"
—*Extract from a Newspaper.*

"Mr. Macaulay. You mentioned as a remarkable instance that a person of great rank in the state was a patron of the mesmeric hospital.—Dr. Seymour. Yes, I have seen a proposal going round with his name at the end of it.

"Mr. M. Do you conceive that in patronizing the mesmeric hospital, he showed a disregard to the College of Physicians?—Dr. S. I think he showed a great disregard to our acquirements, to common sense, and to every thing else!

"Mr. M. Is not the principal of the mesmeric hospital a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians?—Dr. S. That I cannot help. He became a Fellow before he took up his apostolic mission.

"Mr. M. Has he been allowed by the college to make a public appearance upon an occasion of great interest? [Dr. Elliotson's delivery of the Harveian Oration.]—Dr. S. He was not passed over: that was all. I think it was a bad measure, but I cannot help it." (*Report from the Select Committee on Medical Registration; together with the Minutes of Evidence*, pp. 1300—1303.)

⁷ Ephes. ii.

⁸ Rev. xvi.

transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works⁹”

Let us now take your definition of true religion:—

“Religion is a holy subject. It has its own place; it governs the highest aspirations of mortal men. From persons of well-constituted minds, its sacred impressions receive the profoundest attention; and it ought not to be lightly, unreasoningly, irreverently introduced into questions of ordinary science. It can stand its own ground by its own strength. The organ of veneration is placed on the highest part of the human head; benevolence, hope, firmness, conscientiousness belong to the federal compact over which it presides, and the organs of the reasoning faculties direct the laws by which the truly religious, the really humble character, holds sacred the principles of humility, justice, and universal charity. True religion reposes on an intellectual basis, and nothing which is abhorrent to reason can belong to it.”

What does Dr. Ashburner think of the “reasonableness of the religion” of Abraham, who is styled in Scripture “the father of the faithful,” when he contemplated for many hours, with such alacrity, the slaughter of his only and beloved son Isaac, and made the youth bear the wood up the mountain, whilst he carried the knife and the fire wherewith he was first to slay, and then to burn him? or what does Dr. A. think of the “reasonableness” of Joseph’s religion, who is called a just man, when he still revered the unsullied purity of his betrothed’s virtue, although he was plainly told, and that by an angel, that she was with child? where “did intellect repose,” and “reason” assent? A child to be forthcoming without an earthly father! The truth is, that real religion is wholly a supernatural gift, communicated in all its power and working to man by Jehovah the Trinity; and the father of the faithful, who acted by faith, and the honoured virgin, who was chosen to bring forth *the Incarnate Word*, acted in the same power, as hundreds of other saints have done according to the measure of faith given unto them, which faith is the gift of God, and is altogether opposed to “reason,” since Paul says, “We walk by faith, and not by sight.” Instead of its being a subject that reason can handle, it is a mystery, “Great is the mystery of godliness,” &c. “We speak in a mystery.”

In the above extracts you appear as a disciple of Mesmer and of Gall, and an apologist for the devil, who is the author and abettor of both clairvoyance and of phrenology. If there was no jugglery in all the experiments which you witnessed and describe; if, I say,—for I am not convinced that there was

⁹ 2 Cor. xi.

not some chicanery,—yet, I repeat, if these are facts, as you assert, I, for one, hope never to exhibit the hardihood in asserting that that which is, to say the best of it, a delusion of the mind, is the putting forth of “that great power,” “that holy power,” “the will of God,” “the blessing of God,” as you construe it.

I do not assert that you charge these delusive workings as the direct influence of God the Holy Ghost; but you clearly evince such a bias, since you say it is “God’s blessing,” “God’s holy power,” and “*not* collusion with the devil.” If this power is thus irreverently designated, I maintain that you are treading upon the very borders of blasphemy, and “running upon the thick bosses of Jehovah’s buckler;” affirmatively answering that solemn question, “Will ye speak wickedness for God, and talk deceitfully for Him¹?”

You then strive to elude this just charge brought against all the disciples of Mesmer and of Gall,—for the spirits of Phrenology and of Mesmerism are twin devils, copartners, fraternal spirits of uncleanness,—by asserting, that “if we studied the philosophy of the mind, the meaning of the word *irreligious* would be applicable strictly to few in the civilized portions of a Christian land. The bonds of civil society would soon be rent asunder, if many refused a faith in things sacred.”

But all these inferences are at once negatived by the remarks at page 22, where we read, that—

“The real and perhaps instinctive fear of the bad spirits of this world is, that Mesmerism of a necessity leads on to a philosophy of the mind which must ensure the establishment of *true* instead of *false* Christianity,—a consummation hated by a far larger proportion of mankind than, in their greedy selfishness, would choose to confess it.”

What! Mesmerism necessarily establishes Christianity? The doctrines of devils elucidate God’s truth? Just as much as Mother Shipton’s prophecies, dear sir, explain the mystery of Adam’s creation out of a handful of dust, and that of our Mother Eve out of one of his bones.

Where was your philosophy, Doctor, when you penned such sentences as these. Do you not know that more than one-half of the population of this great metropolis never think about things sacred, never enter a place of worship from the first of January to the thirty-first of December; that they lay them-

¹ Job xiii.

selves out to spend the Lord's day either at the cursed Socialist meeting, to eat, drink, and be merry, like the Epicureans of old, to commit fornication, adultery, thieving, lying, and swearing, whilst others saunter into the fields and adjacent towns; and some more penurious artisans and young men and women, lay out a shilling or two to procure the infamous Sunday newspapers, and inflame their "philosophical" minds with reading its treasonable and blasphemous articles, whilst their constitutions are unstrung and excited by copious pots of strong drink, spirits, with fumes from pipes and tobacco, &c. &c.? The greater number of all these Sabbath-breakers finish the day as they began it, by prowling about "or creeping into houses, and leading captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, who are ever learning your vain philosophy, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus." I believe that our laws are more lenient than are those of all other nations called Christian; and yet what a fearful catalogue do we witness year after year of the crimes and misdemeanors committed by these "few," as you term the irreligious people! Are you cognisant of the appalling fact, that at this moment there are tens of thousands in this land, falsely called Christendom, who know no more of the Bible, of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Saviour of His Church, or of the simple truths of the Gospel of salvation, than a Hindoo, Chinaman, or Hottentot; but who are storing their minds with licentious publications, treasonable pamphlets, and exciting romances, tales, &c. &c., sent forth weekly from the press on a Saturday, on purpose to decoy such characters to buy and peruse them on the Lord's day?

I repeat, that to charge the delusions of Mesmerism as the fruit of "God's holy power," is closely allied to that terrific and unpardonable sin,—blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. For as the wicked and scoffing Jews, who hesitated not to say that the Lord's miracles were wrought by the devil, were warned by Him that they were, in so doing, guilty of this awful sin; so in like manner, if we charge the satanic tricks of men or of devils upon God, as the work of His Spirit, we may be justly chargeable with the same tremendous crime and its punishment. "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: because" (mark that expression) "they said he hath an unclean spirit²."

² Mark iii.

Do you not know, Doctor, that there are familiar spirits in the doctrines of devils? and that a man may commune, or hold intercourse with the devil, and at length, like Ahab and Saul, "sell himself to the devil to work wickedness;" if you do not believe all this, you must reject much of the Bible, for God's word abounds with such solemn truths³.

I have often watched the wild hallucinations and loquacious harangues of patients with the drunkard's disease,—delirium tremens,—and I am certain that they as truly see the objects before them, with the eye of the mind, whether they describe them as men, devils, bears, or dogs, &c., as I see with my corporeal eye the paper I now write upon. If they did not so, whence arises their horror, their breathless anxiety to escape the grasp of fiends and monsters which dance in devilish mimicry around their bed, hooting, groaning, hissing, and blaspheming, at such an awful rate, that the poor wretch is bathed in perspiration, agonised with fear and terror, and passes hours of restless torture in the company of these spirits of darkness? I am not writing visions of my own brain, Doctor, but that which I have both seen and heard from the lips of these distressed objects of pity, who thus suffer a hell on earth, in a gnawing, agonizing conscience. Their minds are free to talk upon any subject you propose to them in the midst of this terror; and although I need not quote all the cases I have on record of such diabolical workings, yet I cannot pass over the instance of a man named Smith, who once was with us. He has written his own account of his sufferings, tortures, visions, &c., whilst under this terrific disease; and he declares that he first heard an awful rushing wind, which he never knew how to describe until he tremblingly took up his Bible, during his convalescence, and read the account in the second chapter of the Acts, of the glorious descent of the fiery tongues; and he solemnly writes that this infernal rushing which he heard, was a faint description to his mind of that gracious effusion of God

³ Surely Dr. Ashburner has heard, in this our day, of many persons who, like Ahab, have sold themselves to the devil; who make no secret of it, but publicly own it when their consciences are seared enough so to do; and at other times, when flashes of tremendous guilt dart upon them, pace up and down their chambers in horror and dismay, sometimes muttering to their familiar spirits in undistinguishable language, and at other times holding communion with their familiar spirit. If Dr. A. does not know this, I could refer him, if I thought proper, to several instances, and one in particular, who is an officer in a first-rate emporium not a mile from the Green Park.

the Holy Ghost, upon the blessed Apostles in the day of Pentecost. The one was infernal, the latter was from the Lord of life and glory. He goes on to relate, that having dared to look into the Bible during the day, when the night came on, these familiar spirits of darkness surrounded his bed, cursing and blaspheming, and jeering him for having touched the word of God. He deliberately put his hand out of bed to drive them away, when to his utter astonishment his arm cut them in twain, he passed through their bodies as it were, and then his mind perceived that they were spirits, yet they multiplied about him, hovered over his head, pulled his legs, dragged off the bedclothes, and were plotting together how they should carry him off through the window. Just at this moment (11 p. m.) I entered the ward, and deliberately walked up to his bed; he relates, that I addressed him with a few comforting words of Scripture, as is my usual custom, when the Lord enables me; and the host of devils fled, he fell off into a calm sleep, and awoke quite well. They returned on several succeeding nights, but he was enabled to answer them with some gracious truths from the word of God, and they harassed him no longer. This man, observe, was not a lunatic, he was not delirious, neither under any delusion nor hallucination; he conversed as rationally to me (for he was a well-educated clerk in a mercantile house) as ever did any sane person in London. He left us quite well, and furnished me with the account of his sufferings, which he wrote in the ward, and was kindly received by a religious gentleman, who again obtained him employment.

But you will say, What does all this go to prove? Why, simply this, that a man may have intercourse with devils, and yet he may be called delirious, though he is not so; a man may be possessed of devils, and be called insane, and probably he is so; and lastly, a man may have the power of devils to do the devil's work, as the Egyptian magicians, the witch of Endor, and the Samaritan sorcerers in Paul's days, who were bewitched, in order that this foul spirit may enable man to arrogate to himself *a power* which he really has not, for it belongs only to his Creator, Satan's deadly foe.

To requote your quotation, "there are more things in heaven and earth, Doctor, than are dreamt of in your philosophy" of Mesmerism, which you would do well to seek for from another source, than rashly call upon God, and quote His Sacred Scrip-

tures, which only gives the infidel a feast to glut over, when quoted in the support of a system of delusion.

You observe, that

“Interested knaves are found to invent and give circulation, by the most cunning arts, to most atrocious calumnies. A cunning dodge of the medical men who try to oppose the progress of that which an honest sense of duty should impel them to study, is, that they *decline the responsibility* of having mesmeric practice administered to their patients ; and so they work on the timidity of the public !

“These are the folks who belong to a class, that, in public institutions, abet falsehood and dishonourable conduct. These are they, who spread slanders of their competitors, and fear the publicity of their own proceedings. Being themselves below par in knowledge, talent, ingenuity, judgment, they would exert their influence among governors to keep up a system of favouritism and of nepotism, to the detriment of science, and to the most unjust exclusion of the best medical advice for the poor ⁴.”

In reply to these paragraphs, I have to inquire what interest I, for instance, can have in denying a fact, were it well grounded, of one single cure being effected during the period of nine years, that I have watched the practice of Mesmerism ? and I would, moreover, inquire, where I have spread slanders of its advocates, or have shunned the publicity of my own opinions upon this awful delusion ?

I would also ask what benefit could possibly accrue to so distinguished an ornament of the Established Church, as Dr. McNeile, of Liverpool, who, though I have not read his discourse, has wielded his valuable pen to expose the baneful tendency of these doctrines ?

You speak of “the practice of a piety which eschews cant and all hypocrisy,” that is just the piety that I desire to practise ; and I find that such piety was exhibited in the Evangelist Philip and the Apostle Peter, “for unclean spirits, and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed by them.” But this marvellous and supernatural gift which rested with the Apostles only roused the envy of Simon the sorcerer, and therefore he believes, and is baptized, and he makes this ceremony a crafty loophole to associate himself with these holy men ; but Peter’s piety eschewed such cant and hypocrisy, and with holy indignation, he addresses himself thus to this incarnate witch and deceiver, “I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity ⁵.” Paul also had to withstand another of these agents of the devil in the person of

⁴ Page 32.

⁵ Acts viii.

Elymas the sorcerer; and his fervent zeal for the honour of his Lord and Master, did not allow him to forget the exhibition of this piety in "eschewing cant and hypocrisy," and he boldly calls him by name, thus, "O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" This faithful dealing was the means of bringing one heathen to bow down at the feet of Christ, whilst it left the wretched sorcerer in a mist of darkness, spiritually and corporeally blind⁶.

"I have met with several persons who could, in their ordinary state, see flames, not visible to most, in broad daylight."

"I have known many more who could see these coloured emanations when they have been in a mesmeric sleep."

"Some have seen the room in which they happened to be, enlightened as if by the rays of the sun; others, as if by all the colours of the rainbow. Others have been able to see through media, commonly known as opaque, into an adjoining room, or even to a great distance."

And thus a series of "blue lights," (sulphureous flames, perhaps, for they are to be the devil's own element ere long,) is ascribed to God; and it is asserted that this "holy power to cure hallucinations, diseases," &c., "proceeds from the tips of the fingers of the operator, and illuminates the nutshells," in which were concealed some of the most licentious and profane mottos that could be strung together. Be assured, dear sir, that if this subject came from heaven, it would never lead men to trifle, much more to publish conundrums upon the sacred oracles of God, and place a righteous Abel in juxta-position with an infamous Sunday newspaper, in order to excite the laughter of the fool, the jeers of the infidel, and the merriment of wanton dressmakers. Alas! alas! Dr. Ashburner, whither are you going? What unforbidden paths are you treading in; what ribaldry and jesting is there here of the most holy things. Remember Christ comments upon the death of this holy martyr by a cursed and envious Cain; and if ever you write again, which God forbid you ever should, I implore of you to withhold such irreverent language from the gaze of the already too infidel age in which we live.

But I again repeat, that the tendency of your pamphlet is to palm the devil's work upon God; and if this is not blasphemy, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians, I know not what language

⁶ Acts xiii.

means, or ideas convey. One of the main causes of Ireland's distress and misery, in my humble judgment, rests in this, that they are ever swearing, "By the power of God." The power of God is none other than God the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of the Triune Jehovah; and this fearful sin is closely bordering upon that tremendous sin which is unto death, and which the Apostle commands us not to pray for delivery from⁷. O that you saw the terrific precipice on which you stand, as I see it in the light of this much abused, soul-refreshing light of God the Holy Ghost; when I feel convinced that your countenance would change, your thoughts would trouble you, the joints of your loins would be loosed, and your knees would smite one against another, and like the haughty Belshazzar, you would soon find that neither the magicians, astrologers, soothsayers, mesmerists, or phrenologists, would afford you one grain of consolation, but they would all prove physicians of no value, until you were led to seek that gracious and Divine Physician, whose sacred truth and holy name you have thus so grievously misrepresented.

Every Christian mind must be pained at the frequent assertions which you make in this pamphlet, that Mesmerism is a "power from God, granted unto men by Him." I hesitate not to affirm that it is from the devil, and "ye do greatly err in that you know not the Scriptures;" for, had you read them, you would find that such miracles had been worked by the devil ever since man fell into transgression and rebellion against his Creator, and had joined affinity with Satan, the adversary of God. If you will turn to the Bible and attentively read the seventh of Exodus and succeeding chapter, you will find that it is recorded, that when God's set time to deliver his chosen people out of Egyptian bondage was at hand, that He commanded Moses to work certain miracles before the haughty monarch, saying to him, "See, I have made thee a god unto Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet." This heathen king, like the unbelieving Jews to the Lord Jesus, were for having signs and miracles wrought before them. "Show us a sign; we would see a sign from thee," said the latter to Christ; and so the Egyptian prince exclaimed, "Show a miracle." God therefore gratified his credulous heart, for rods were turned into serpents, water into blood, so that wells were dug to furnish them with drink, and frogs were brought up upon all the land; but when God works effectually, the devil must come forward

⁷ 1 John v.

and mimic the work. If God has a Church, the devil must keep a chapel, they say. Therefore the king sends for the sorcerers, the magicians, the real agents of the devil, the false prophets, to show Moses and the Israelites that his wise men were endowed with power like unto the Hebrew prophet. God permits the devil to mimic all these miracles, so that serpents, blood, and frogs, are alike produced by these sorcerers; but, "hitherto," said God, "shalt thou go, but no further," for He ordered lice to be brought by the hand of Moses throughout the land; but here the devil's mimicry ceased, and even his beloved children, the magicians, were constrained to cry out, "This is the finger of God." We read of no farther attempts by them to chicanery, they were awe-struck, and the Lord God sent them to their wretched beds of misery, with guilty consciences, a frowning God, a hell within, and sore boils without; and thus ended their miserable career on earth.

Saul, the wicked king of Israel, was envious at the prosperity of the stripling David, and watched him day after day that he might rid himself of his rival. But though the devil fought for Saul, a greater than Saul, David, or devil, was with the sweet Psalmist. "An evil spirit" took possession of Saul's heart, and when he was sore troubled and tormented, he must be tickled with a little music, therefore nothing will serve his turn but David the minstrel must be brought before him to play upon his harp, and the spirit of Saul was quieted. However, we soon find his devilish spirit at work again, and he pursues the in-offensive David through the thousands of Judah, to find him, and to slay him. But foiled on every side, and tired out with his diabolical stratagems and plans, he lays him down to sleep, when David finds him thus disarmed, and might have taken his vengeance upon his pursuer, but the fear of God prevented him: this event seems to have touched the steel-hearted Saul. Now, however, David leaves the country altogether, and God leaves Saul to work out his own destruction. The Philistines assault his kingdom, holy Samuel is dead, David has fled, and Saul has put away those that had familiar spirits and wizards out of the land. Yet now in his extremity, he shrieks, "Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said unto him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor." These faithful allies of the devil then get together, and Saul tells her who he wants, even Samuel; "And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with

a loud voice," saying to the crafty monarch, "Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid; for what sawest thou? And the woman said, I saw gods ascending out of the earth; an old man cometh up, and he is covered with a mantle: and Saul perceived that it was Samuel⁷." If this was not collusion with the devil, through witchcraft, then I know not what words signify. The magic art of this sorceress did as clearly set a form like unto the departed prophet before the eyes of Saul's mind, as the wretched men see the terrific spirits of others before them, whilst labouring under the drunkard's disease. There is not a whit of distinction, in my apprehension. It is a communion with familiar spirits, that they have been led by, tempted by, and are at length taken captive by, to their utter and eternal destruction, unless God's rich mercy intervene to stop them in their terrific career. These solemn truths may be sneered at by some persons, and ridiculed by others; they are now made the subject for musical display and talent on the stage, and men dance and sing to the devil's pipe in these matters; but be assured that they are nevertheless fearful realities.

It will doubtless be said by some, as it has already been said of me at the Middlesex Hospital, "You write in a bitter spirit; it is such a bad spirit." But I reply, let the spirit of my writing be left to the righteous judgment of the great Searcher of hearts for His final decision, when I appear before His holy tribunal; and let us now look to the truth of God that lies couched under the *spirit* of this letter; and then you may perhaps judge, by His help, whether the spirit is a bad or a good one which thus enables me to write, and whether it is from the devil or from God's holy truth. I would only add, that under the old or Mosaic dispensation, there was a sacrifice allowed for every sin committed against God or man, save one sin, and that was the sin of presumption; the law provided no expiation for this crime at God's altar. This unpardonable sin was punished by death, temporal and eternal, "because the soul had despised the word of the Lord, and had broken his commandment⁸." "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins," cries the holy Psalmist, under a fearful apprehension of its unpardonable nature, and a jealous suspicion of his own heart.

But to return; this child of the devil, Saul, could sup upon

⁷ 1 Samuel xxviii.

⁸ Num. xv.

the witch's calf, but he had no grace to feast upon the fatted calf, set forth in the morning and evening sacrifice of the gospel, as Huntington remarks. Now, will you not agree, Doctor, that this wretched king saw and conversed with a form which the devil's witchcraft conjured up before his mind, and he knew it and believed it to be Samuel? "And Saul perceived that it was Samuel; and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself."

These are some of those strong delusions, the fruits of "the mystery of iniquity, whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders⁹," &c. But the philosophical age in which we live, and the turning aside to vain jangling by men who dote about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, &c., is faithfully rebuked by the apostolic command, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith¹." It would be far more consistent with the sacerdotal character of some few clergymen, who are tainted with these delusive principles, to take heed to this solemn warning from Holy Writ, than for them to practise Mesmerism in their parishes, and by fair speeches deceive the unwary who are committed to their pastoral care; and not so unadvisedly to take up the pen in defence of a system which, to say the least of, they can only judge by the representations of worldly-minded persons, and not by the sober opinion of the truly evangelical portion of the community.

This modern philosophy and vain deceit scoffs and sets at nought the plainest truths of Divine revelation; they are too mean, too contemptible for the studious brains of such high-notioned men, such moral free-thinkers, and virtuous free agents. If a man dares to step boldly forward in the strength of the Lord, with his sword in his hand—the word of God,—and like David the stripling, with his sling and stone, to fight against Goliath of Gath, he is run down with a volley of epithets, such as "a canting, hypocritical fool," or, as you term it, "brutal and barbarous ignorance, proceeding from cunning and canting persons; and he is a stupid pretender to religion who calls this pure and honest philosopher an ally of the devil²." "I completely cured William Skinner by the patient and persevering

⁹ 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10, &c.

¹ 1 Tim. vi.

² Page 17, 18.

use of this power³." God says, "I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal, saith the Lord;" therefore Dr. Ashburner's power could not have done it, even if it were done.

But, dear Sir, in the instance of sister Rispoli, referred to in my introductory remarks, her epileptic fits, and paralysis too, were both cured, it is said, by her obtaining—though deprived of sense and of motion—a relic of the canonized saint, and making it her bed-fellow for one night only; when lo! "next morning she awoke perfectly well, arose, dressed herself, and went down into the church!" You will allow that this was far more expeditious and more marvellous than "the reiterated sittings," and "the never-flagging patience," required with your epileptics, whose recovery you attribute to Mesmerism.

You speak very confidently of having cured these epileptic patients. May I inquire if you have carefully perused the relation of those miraculous cures which the Lord performed on the poor epileptics and insane persons? A man brings his only child thus afflicted to this gracious Redeemer, crying out, "Master, I beseech thee look upon my son, for he is mine only child; and lo! a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out, and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruiseeth him, so that he falls on the ground, gnashing with his teeth, and wallows in his foam, and pines away⁴." The Lord gives the Almighty command, "I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him;" and the fond parent beholds his afflicted son sound and whole.

Now we no where read, that God has delegated this holy power to man since the Pentecostal days, nor is man empowered to exorcise, curse, or excommunicate devils or saints, either by bell, book, and candle, or by the magic art of modern sorcery, called Mesmerism, though 500 sittings are employed for the purpose. But this I do maintain, that as Christ declares, "When an unclean spirit (and such an one the poor epileptic above suffered from) is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, (for devils hate any other element than that of air, therefore the chief is called, the prince of the power of the air, and hence their aversion to entering into the swine, knowing the effect it would produce on these animals, in driving them into the water,) but finding none, (of rest,) he saith, I will return unto my house, his former habitation, the soul of

³ Page 21.

⁴ Mark ix. Luke ix.

the man." From which relation I gather, that this evil spirit is kept in abeyance for a time, but it is Satan divided against himself after all ; for when the stronger than he comes, even the Almighty Power of his Creator, He overcomes him. "He that is not with me," saith the Lord, "is against me⁵." It is very evident that not only do devils know their Lord and Creator, but they know one another when they speak through the mouth of man ; for we read that certain vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus ; but the only return these necromancers receive, is the cry from the evil spirit in the man, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know ; but who are ye ? And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on these exorcists, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded." Pray read the whole history in Acts xix.

Now I maintain, that just as the familiar spirit in the witch of Endor brought up a form which deluded the mind of Saul, and made him believe that it really was Samuel, though the holy soul of the prophet was in glory, and the clay mouldering in its mother dust, so do these exorcists, Mesmerizers, &c., believe that their works and delusions, wrought upon them by the father of lies, are realities and truths.

Your language runs thus :

"It is not magic, it is not collusion with the devil ; let him who diabolically asserts this falsehood, for the devil is the father of lies, ask himself if the alarming gentleman in black ever sanctioned the patience and perseverance of 238 and 327 sittings," &c.

O yes, that he does, and a thousand times more refuges of lies does he sanction. Here is one amongst the thousands I could enumerate, which occurred in our own wards, and under my own care :

A fat healthy-looking woman was sent to us by a highly respectable medical practitioner in the neighbourhood, who had been a cripple in her bed for a reputed disease of the spine, during nine years, without having once dressed herself, or walked down stairs. She was the only daughter of a widow woman, and the two individuals were constantly visited, and their necessities were ministered to, and even accompanied with luxuries, uninterruptedly, during the above period, by

⁵ Luke xi.

several gentlemen and ladies in Portland Place and its neighbourhood, who each subscribed half a crown a week for this purpose. The whole spine of this woman was covered with scars, from the repeated use of tartar emetic ointment, setons, issues, cupping, blistering, and leeching, &c. I need not tell you why I suspected the woman was an impostor, but I was soon enabled to swear it, and I ordered her to be dressed three days after her admission, and in fourteen days more she was walking alone brisk and steady in the hospital garden. The mother finding all this astounding progress, raised a fierce and devilish cry throughout the neighbourhood, "seeing that the hope of her gains was gone⁶," declaiming that "I had brutally treated her daughter, that I had beat her, that the nurse had starved her, and that the doctors were all winking at it," &c. &c. This last resource of the devil's to get the woman back to her lodging was utterly foiled. Distinguished persons sent or came to ascertain the truth of the mother's statement, and could say nothing, but left us in astonishment at the marvellous "cure" of the spinal disease of nine years' duration in little more than nine days. Why all this abuse, if the woman honestly desired her daughter's cure? Why all this torture for nine years, if the patient wished to walk? Why all this collusion of mother and daughter with the father of lies, if money was not the golden wedge that kept her fast in bed? Would she have thus wallowed in bed, fattening upon alms, and cringing with hypocritical villany, during nine hours even, if she had been turned into an open boat upon a boisterous sea in the channel? This Fakir-like case of usurious self-torture is professionally enlarged upon in my work on "The Physiognomy of Diseases," and the treatment I pursued in that, as in other such instances, is thus alluded to by Dr. Watson in the Lectures already quoted,—which I will subjoin for the information of the general reader:—

"Mr. Corfe has no little trouble with patients of this kind; but he generally succeeds in *making* them walk, and in convincing them, as well as himself, that they may do so with impunity. In those long paroxysms, if they may be so called, in which some other disease is simulated by hysteria, the cold effusion is a most valuable resource; especially in those forms of the disorder in which a limb is permanently bent, or incapable

⁶ Acts xvi.

of motion. In several instances, in which such contraction had existed for a long time, it has yielded, in the Middlesex Hospital, to a few minutes' application of the cold douche. Mr. Corfe, as I stated before, takes much pains with these cases; he pours cold water from a tea-kettle, or any other convenient vessel, in a small stream, from a moderate height, upon the contracted limb: it has been bent up for weeks, perhaps; no power that you are able to exert can extend it; and any *very forcible* attempts to straighten it give the patient extreme pain. After the stream of water has been kept up for a short time, the patient complains of it very much; but Mr. Corfe is inflexible—more so than the culprit limb—he goes on; presently the limb begins to tremble, the tight state of the muscles is evidently on the point of yielding, and in no long time they are entirely relaxed and manageable, and the member becomes as lithe and moveable as ever. It often happens that the state of contraction recurs; but a repetition of the douche has always the same good effect, and by degrees the habit is broken and the patient set free. It requires some determination to put this experiment in practice. The patient looks upon you as a monster of cruelty; and, in private, the friends will not always allow such “rough” treatment, as they consider it. Sir Charles Clarke, who necessarily sees a great number of these cases—they are more common in the upper than the lower classes of society—is a great advocate of this ducking system. He recommends a “sudden and lavish” application of water to the face, or the immersion of the whole body. Sir Benjamin Brodie, who, to use a vulgar phrase, is *up* to these cases, says, that, among the higher classes of society, at least four-fifths of the female patients who are commonly supposed to labour under diseases of the joints, labour under hysteria, and nothing else⁷.”

In this case, however, I did not use cold water, as there was no limb contracted, but having at that time the assistance of a very active and energetic woman, as nurse in the ward, we conjointly persevered in forcing this sullen young woman to walk up and down the room; and as from the first moment I examined her spine in the out-patient room, I declared before our medical staff that she had no bodily complaint, so I believe, from my words and manner, that the woman plainly saw that I considered her as an impostor, and then being thus thrown off her guard,

⁷ Vol. i. p. 675. 681.

and not able to practise the deceitful arts which she had so successfully done with very many other professional gentlemen, we forced her to stand upright and to make use of her legs, and to walk whether she would or not, in the short space of time that I have mentioned.

You remark at page 5, that "the objection to such a committee" (to examine into the facts of Mesmerism) "exists in the truths elicited by much experience, concerning the utter failure of the phenomena in the presence of several doubting minds. It would seem as if the fluid emitted by the brains of persons who are severely, and to clairvoyantes disagreeably, sceptical, was sufficient to suffocate and to destroy the developing events." This is poor wretched Irving all over again, with his damnable errors and awful presumption. He, as the angel, summoned his twelve apostles to pray six or eight hours without ceasing over the corpse of his departed child, that its soul should reanimate its mortal tenement; and when the time expired and no success followed their groanings, this angel then declared that it did not revive because there was an unclean spirit amongst these twelve servants, and therefore he bid them all depart from the house. In other words, if there is one whom the devil knows does not readily swallow down his doctrines, and is not charmed with his works of darkness, he then sets up a cry that all efforts are vain, until the sceptic is turned out of doors.

When that beloved child of the devil, Jezebel, the mother of witchcrafts, nursed four hundred and fifty of these philosophical sorcerers, poor holy Elijah, and the Lord's true prophets, had to wander about in the wilderness, sleep in caves, and feed upon bread and water. But when these unclean spirits were brought together to confront holy Elijah, to call down fire upon the altar, then they begin to cry out, "O Baal, hear us!" and by way of exciting their master-spirit to hear them, "they cut themselves with knives and lancets, until the blood gushed out upon them, and they cried aloud." But what says the holy man of God? According to your line of argument he should have said, "Search out the 'disagreeable sceptic,' for he suffocates the fluid emitted by the brains of these excellent men, so that the holy fire will not descend to burn up the sacrifice," or, as you would express it, "the developing events were destroyed." But no; such philosophical harangues and awful blasphemy would have made this righteous prophet shudder; but in a bitter strain of sarcasm he

mocks them, saying, "Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked." And God took vengeance speedily upon these cursed deceivers of His people, and he slew them by the hand of Elijah at Kishon's brook.

You treat Phrenology, too, as a twin sister to Mesmerism. A. B. and E. L., the two dress-makers, are described thus:—

"The one is of a slight figure, above the middle height; of a nervo-lymphatic temperament, with dark hair and grey eyes. The other" (the prettiest of the two, I presume) "is said to be slightly embonpoint, of middle stature, lymphatic temperament, with dark hair, hazel eyes of most interesting expression. She is the intimate friend and companion of the other." (Mark that, reader.) "In her feelings she is more sensitive than her friend. Both have amiable cerebral developments. A. B. has better constructiveness, size, individuality, music, time, and mirth; but as a whole, the head of E. L. (the pretty one) indicates causality, comparison, colour, and other organs of taste and judgment, more than that of her friend. Her head is larger. Both are well formed for affection and the social feelings of our nature. Both have a delicacy of nervous fibre, that produces a highly sensitive condition of mind. Each is susceptible; both are impressionable."

Again, at page 16, you speak more fully the sentiments of an ultra Phrenologist.

"What parent would deliberately wish to educate a child to become an idiot? and yet the course of education which leads to a weakening of the reasoning faculties is the race-course to the goal of idiocy. Thanks to that great Power which has so arranged the human brain as to decree the natural alliance between religion, conscience, benevolence, sympathy for our fellow beings, and the reasoning faculties,—the race for the intoxicating cup has not been won, and the world is awakening from the complicated frauds by which it has been jockeyed." "The organ of veneration is placed on the highest part of the human head; benevolence, hope, firmness, conscientiousness belong to the federal compact over which it presides," &c.

What parent would deliberately wish to educate a child to become a disciple in such antichristian and immoral principles, I would also ask?

You talk of veneration, hope, benevolence, &c., as if they either sprung up like mushrooms in the head, or were brought forth by dint of education. Here you give the plainest contradiction to the holy words of God and the XXXIX Articles of the Church of England. "Man by nature is gone very far from original righteousness," as saith the excellent Articles of the Church; his thoughts are only evil continually: "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" "it is a cage of every unclean bird." He who, as Jehovah, knew what was in man, declares that those things which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart, and they defile the man: "For out

of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, covetousness, pride, foolishness, deceit, lasciviousness," &c. Here I have the vantage ground over you, Doctor, for I was once as great an admirer of your metaphysical system of Phrenology as the most ardent disciple the devil ever had in the cause; but God in his mercy has opened my eyes to see the infernal agent who palms this blasphemous system upon man, and calls it a science.

Man by nature has no more veneration in him than the devils, nay, not so much, for the devils believe and tremble; but man is declared to be both earthly, sensual, and devilish: these fallen spirits know and acknowledge Christ as their Almighty Lord; which is more than many thousands do now who live, saying in their hearts, "There is no God⁸." "What is the Almighty that we should serve Him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto Him⁹?" "It is vain to serve God¹." "We will not have this man to reign over us²." Therefore it happens now as it happened then, that since "they do not like to retain God in their knowledge, God has given them over to a reprobate mind, (a mind void of all judgment in things spiritual and divine,) to do those things which are not convenient." These people are always (whilst their consciences thus remain seared against God and his truth) "changing the truth of God into a lie, and worship and serve the creature more than the Creator³."

You sum up your great admiration of the materialist Gall by extracting the following instance of "wresting the Scriptures" of truth:—

"Read the concluding sentence of Gall's great work, and let any one ask himself if the pursuits of such a philosopher, or of those who are proud to tread in his steps, can be irreligious. 'Finally,' he says, 'Man, that inextricable being, is made known; organology composes and decomposes, piece by piece, his propensities and talents; it has fixed our ideas of his destiny and the sphere of his activity, and it has become a fruitful source of the most important applications to medicine, philosophy, jurisprudence, education, history, &c. Surely these are so many guarantees of the truth of the physiology of the brain,—so many titles of gratitude towards HIM, who has made them known to me.'"

According to this vile theory, let us ask if it is not intended to imply that a man with a murderous bump upon his head, must of necessity become a murderer, unless this propensity be nullified and neutralized by the alkaline admixture of principles

⁸ Psalm liii.

⁹ Job xxi.

¹ Malachi iii.

² Luke xix. 14.

³ Rom. i.

fostered by education of a benevolent nature? If it be so, and if it be thought that the Creator has a design in all He does, and that He has power to carry out that design, then this religion tends to inculcate the doctrine that the Creator can be thwarted by a creature of sin—a rebel—a worm. What terrific doctrine! Whereas the most destructive of mortals that we read of in all God's word, was Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who from the birth devoted every male to death, and in after days had the will to crush the whole Hebrew nation under his foot, if God had allowed him. But God "raised him up" on purpose to show how far the thirst of blood could go in a reprobate man, and at the same time to display the mighty Power of God in the protecting of that people whose destruction was so ardently desired. God cannot be thwarted; what He intends to do, He does; and who art thou, O man, that repliest against thy Maker?

Now let us revert to another instance in Scripture; and there you will find the greatest blasphemer and injurious character speaks for himself. Paul, the Pharisee, thus describes his own natural state, and his natural religion as a natural man:—"I was a "blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious;" "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating my neighbours, without God, and therefore without hope in the world." If we go to the lying system of bumps indicative of natural propensities, what wretched contradictions must be found in this one case only!

What veneration could be squeezed out of such a character as this by the most skilful metaphysician, I wonder! and yet in three short days this very man, who had been persecuting the poor despised flock of Christ, entering into every house, haling men and women to prison, compelling them to blaspheme that Holy Name by which they were called; this man, I say, was knocked to the earth by one Almighty arrow from the Lord's quiver, and he cries out in agony, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Any man who reads from this ninth of the Acts forward to the Epistles of St. John, will learn what Paul did and what Paul thought, taught, and said; and one thing is certain, that he declares that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived;" and this, to my mind,

forms the most terrific part of the subject,—that men are wilfully deluded first, and then they are judicially given over to blindness of heart and hardness of conscience, so that arguments with them are as tow in the fire. Where then was Paul's bump of veneration, hope, and love, and where went his murderous, blaspheming organs to? But such, I trust, will not prove the case with you, dear Sir, but that God will in his infinite mercy disentangle you from the meshes of these metaphysical disquisitions, and unmask them to your mind's eye, that you may see them in their real light and colour; for I solemnly believe that such doctrines are from hell, and not from heaven; that they are the spawn of the devil in the human heart; and not the sweet fruits, heart-consoling, soul-reviving, mind-refreshing springs, which God the Holy Ghost is the Author and the Giver of to fallen man, so that He enables a wretched sinner to look sin, death, hell, and the devil in the face, and exultingly exclaim, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

I have written thus much, though I could greatly enlarge, not using men's words to please men, nor cloaking matters over with this world's false charity, which is a wide distinction from the Christian charity inculcated by the Scriptures, and I would conclude with a word of warning from a faithful servant in the Lord's vineyard now amongst us. "Sooner or later these fair seeming and high-sounding delusions which are connected with them, and the strong enthusiastic excitement which naturally arises from both combined, will lead into depths which it is awful even to think of. High excitement is naturally followed by a corresponding reaction. And how near high wrought, but spurious, spiritual excitement is to the merest sensuality, those (only) who have been really watchful over their own hearts can readily understand. According to God's righteous appointment, too, pride must have a fall, and the devil is always at hand to take advantage of such a frame. Let none, therefore, be surprised at any depth of iniquities into which the subjects of such delusions may fall.

"But, my dear Reader, if you love your own soul, if you have any desire to follow after holiness and godliness, take warning in good time. If you are yet beyond the verge of this fearful vortex, venture not near, but keep at the utmost possible distance from it. If you are in any measure drawn within the range of its dizzy whirl, escape for your life. There is no safety but in instant flight. The mental hallucination, which may steal upon

you in consequence of any hesitation or delay, will soon put you beyond the reach of any friendly warning, however earnestly and loudly spoken. Oh! then, take warning while it is called to-day. I speak advisedly, and as the result of long and calm consideration of the subject⁵." And I can add my own testimony, that I have watched the proceedings of Mesmerists and Phrenologists for thirteen years; and the terrific events which have passed before my eyes compel me to say, beware how you plunge farther into this awful delusion of the devil's chicanery; and that God may mercifully furnish you with grace to recover yourself out of the snare of the devil, before you are taken captive by him at his will, if it be His holy pleasure, is the sincere prayer of

Your faithful friend in the Lord,

GEORGE CORFE.

⁵ Refutations of Irving's Heresy, by Rev. A. S. Thelwall, 1836.



