

# THE USE OF SPIRITUALISM?

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“For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears : we would know, therefore, what those things mean.”—THE ACTS.

“He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”—SOLOMON.

“The true mission of Spiritualism, and it is a great and magnificent mission, is to recall to the knowledge, and restore to the consciousness of mankind, the Christian faith, with all its Divine and supernatural power. Its business is to exhibit the reality of its connection with God, and His angels, with the life and spirit of the Divine Word, and to open our earth-dimmed eyes to perceive all the wealth of celestial wisdom in the Christian Revelation.”—WILLIAM HOWITT.

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JH

I PRINTED this letter in 1863; in 1871 I reprinted it, with many additions. In 1876 I print it again; and I again add to it. My motive in referring to previous editions is to show that my belief in Spiritualism has undergone no change. I have as entire conviction of its truth as I had thirteen years ago. But I have far less joy in it now than I had then. It is, at this time, not only enveloped in mystery, not only confused, and conflicting, and contradictory; but many of its public professors subject it to the vilest influences, while some of the spiritual publications uphold the filthiest doctrines: taught to them, as they say—and probably say truly—by SPIRITS who have lived in earth-life.

Spiritualism is none the less a fact—a solemn, impressive, and instructive fact. I attribute the decadence in spirit, while the number of “believers” is largely increasing, to this: Those who might guide it, and ought to guide it, keep aloof from it, and leave the workers for its propagation to their own—often—wicked devices. They are not encountered, or are insufficiently encountered, by the good and able men who are public advocates of the Spiritualism that upholds the cause of God and promotes the welfare and happiness of man. There are comparatively few ministers of the Gospel who “take up” the cause: few who enquire, and the few who do lack the courage to avow belief. Yet Spiritualism progresses, and will progress. There are now millions where, twenty-five years ago, there were scores. To “stop” it is impossible: as easy would it be to stay the inflow of Ocean by a wall of shingles. Our pastors and teachers leave the mighty power for good—or for evil—in the hands of those who will use, to abuse, it—who do use, and do abuse, it. I solemnly warn, therefore, such as are enquirers, neophytes, or acolytes, to avoid, as they would contact with a plague-spot, fellowship and communing with mediums who, under the sway, influence, and dictation of spirits, low or base, or evil, inculcate principles repugnant to natures that are good,—and sometimes teach “Doctrines of Devils.”

The purpose of this letter is first to prove that Spiritualism is reasonably, rationally, and scripturally TRUE; and next, that it is intended to be, and may be, a holy safeguard—a “whole armour”—a source of incalculable happiness, a powerful means of strengthening and disseminating the teachings of the New Testament—that is to say, Christianity.

S. C. HALL.

50 HOLLAND ST., KENSINGTON, 1876.



REVEREND SIR,

I answer the question you have put to me,—What is the “USE” of SPIRITUALISM? and your doubts as to whether it be good or evil in its origin and purpose.

If it be of no “use,” religious thinkers and men of science are bound to enquiry concerning it. It is only of late years we have discovered the “uses” of a hundred things that our fathers considered either useless or obnoxious. The lever that moves the world—steam—was useless until within a comparatively recent period. Is it so long since an eminent Professor derided the idea of a ship, propelled by steam, conveying a cargo across the Atlantic? In 1843, the House of Representatives at Washington scorned Professor Morse and ridiculed his suggestion as “a chimera.” Yet, who now wonders when he receives a message by the electric telegraph, although he knows the sender, three thousand miles away, is waiting for his reply! Dreams are “admitted facts,” yet of what *use* are they? Not one in a thousand can be recalled at all; not one in a million is of any worth. Benjamin Franklin asked what was the *use* of an infant? He must have been strangely startled who first saw the magnet draw towards it a piece of iron. When telescopes and microscopes were invented, they were decried as “atheistical inventions.” Although Mesmerism is not yet an “admitted fact,” it is “believed in” by thousands who a few years ago treated its advocates with hostility and obloquy. These are the comments of Archbishop Whateley on *that* subject. They are as applicable to Spiritualism as they are to Mesmerism.

“I myself was for many years strongly reluctant to believe in Mesmerism; but I was at length overcome by facts. *Any amount of detected mistake or imposture will no more go to disprove a well established fact than the detection of a number of pieces of counterfeit coins will prove a genuine shilling and sovereign not to be genuine silver and gold.*” The learned Prelate adds:—“To suppose that we are all so mad as to believe that things are taking place before our eyes which did not, and all mad in the same way, is utterly incredible. No one, I am convinced, who has seen *what I have seen*, or the half of it, can remain unconvinced that Mesmerism is a real and powerful agent. Those who profess complete disbelief, therefore, must belong, I conceive to one of two classes: first, those *who have made but a slight and scanty enquiry, or none at all*, and shun full investigation, lest they should be convinced—which is what they do not wish; and secondly, those who have enquired more fully, and really *are* convinced, *but are afraid to own it*, for fear of being laughed at, or of being sent ‘to Coventry’ by a kind of Trades’ Union conspiracy.”

How rapidly do scientific discoveries and inventions pass from the marvellous to the familiar! The miracle of yesterday becomes the natural law of to-day, and may be the common fact of to-morrow. Thunder was a prodigy to our far-off ancestors. There are people now to whom the ticking of a watch is the voice of a god. Tell an enlightened native of Siam that you can drive a laden cart over the surface of a lake: will you expect him to believe you? Tell him that the water may be converted into vapour, and that the vapour may be made to move the cart at the rate of fifty miles an hour: will you look for any comment beyond an incredulous laugh? He has never seen ice! He has no conception of the power of steam!

Thus wrote the Christian poet, James Montgomery: “Let Science search



out every secret of the Universe: she has nothing to fear except error: error in the guise of truth, or truth adulterated with error: every pure truth she can discover must be a new revelation of God in His visible universe, and a new confirmation of the authenticity of that Word which reveals the things that are unseen and eternal."

Truths universally admitted, have been ignored by nine-tenths of mankind.

I am fully aware that in its present immature state, Spiritualism is, at times, not only unsatisfactory and inconclusive, but conflicting and contradictory:—

"dark and intricate,  
Puzzled in mazes, and perplexed with error"—

I believe that as it *now* exists, it has mainly but one purpose—TO CONFUTE AND DESTROY MATERIALISM, by supplying sure and certain and *palpable* evidence that to every human being God gives a soul which he ordains shall not perish when the body dies; and that the soul, after removal from the earthly house of this tabernacle—is, in some cases, permitted to revisit earth, discharging such duties as the Almighty Father ordains and directs. That is what I shall endeavour to prove to you. If I succeed, you will believe that Spiritualism is doing the special work of God, for the welfare and happiness of man, temporal and eternal.

I contend, then, that if there be no apparent or probable "*use*" in Spiritualism, enquiry is still a duty: especially if it be shown that believers in Spiritualism are very numerous, including many of the most intellectual men and women of the age: some, whose temperament, education, and pursuits are the very opposites of those that beget error or nourish enthusiasm—persons whose business in life is to deal with *facts*.

The mockers and sneerers at Spiritualism are almost exclusively those who have seen nothing of it, know nothing about it, and *will not* enquire concerning it. As rational and respectful would it be for me to reprove Professor Owen for saying that a certain mark on a stone was the mark of an antediluvian bird's claw—which to me appeared nothing more than an accidental impression—as it would be for one who has seen and known nothing of Spiritualism, to tell those who have seen and studied it much, that they are deluded and deceived—believing they see, hear, and feel, that which they neither feel, hear, nor see.

Yet I for one am bound to receive these objections in a spirit of charity: not only because charity is ever persuasive, but because for a long time I viewed the subject with extreme and suspicious reluctance: and I can repel none who consider it a delusion or a fraud; for I repeatedly refused to accept, even to hear, the testimony of those whose testimony was quite as unexceptionable as mine can be. Conviction came at length, but it certainly was not invited.

It is unnecessary now to defend Spiritualism on the ground I must have taken not long ago, when it was "cried down" as "a mischievous delusion," "a shallow fraud," "consummate and disgusting quackery," "shameless duplicity and fraud," "a puling prostration of intellect," "invented by knaves for the wonder of fools," received "only by persons on the confines of imbecility" (these are extracts from newspapers published ten or twelve years ago). Nay, a Chief



Justice of Victoria spoke in public of the "blasphemous pretensions" of its upholders, describing them as "impostors" and their followers as "credulous dupes."

The *facts* are now generally admitted; such evidence, and so continuous, has been adduced, the witnesses are so thoroughly above suspicion, so entirely removed from all doubt, inferring either delusion or fraud, that its opponents have taken their stand on other ground—attributing it to demoniac agency.

It has been truly said of Spiritualism by one who is not only a learned man, but a Christian clergyman,—“Testimony has been so abundant and consensaneous that either the facts must be such as they are reported, or the possibility of certifying facts by human testimony must be given up.”

“Evidence has accumulated on all sides—so continuous, so multiplied, in every way so overwhelming—that no doubt is any longer entertained on the subject.” That is the view of F. Perrone, an eminent Roman Catholic divine, who decries Spiritualism as devil worship. A writer who quotes him in the *Dublin Review*, a Roman Catholic journal, adds, “Here there is a question of facts and of the testimony of the senses; of facts sensible to the sight, the hearing, the touch; of facts and testimonies repeated over and over again, beyond the possibility of calculation, in the greater part of Europe and America, and recorded year after year down to the present day. *It is quite impossible that about such facts a cloud of such witnesses should be all deceived.* Abandoning that ground, therefore, we proceed to show that it is diabolical agency, solely the devil personating the souls of departed friends and others.”

I am justified, therefore, in treating this subject under the assumption, that of the reality of the phenomena—the facts on which Spiritualism is based—there is now no doubt; that, at least, such is the conviction of all who have inquired concerning it.\* As there are many who cannot and will not accept this assertion, I shall endeavour to explain the grounds on which it is made. Yet it requires much moral courage to defend Spiritualism, either as a mere fact, a useful fact, or a means by which God works out His high and holy purpose. Its advocates are, even now, often hailed with scorn and obloquy—ridicule is the least of their rewards for a bold avowal of their convictions: for a resolute advocacy of truth; they are met, not unfrequently, by a degree of hostility indefensible—nay, sometimes with a shudder of abhorrence. Many who have as full faith as I have—and on the same ground—shrink from its avowal: they dread the peril in which it may place them, the suspicion of mental incapacity that may prejudice them in their social positions—at best, they are frightened by the contempt they have to endure when their opinions are expressed.

No such feelings affect or influence me; they will not affect or influence you if you are convinced that it is a gift of God to humanity.

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It is asked why, if this be a blessing, it has been so long withheld from uni-

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\* The Dialectical Society—a Society instituted to inquire “concerning all subjects with a view to the discovery and elucidation of truth,” but mainly to expose the fallacies of Spiritualism, and concerning which the majority of its members had arrived at a foregone conclusion, answering the matter before they heard it, proclaiming it to be fraud where it was not delusion, and delusion where it was not fraud—unanimously (I believe) abandoned that ground; the evidence submitted to them induced conviction that it was not fraud—that it was not delusion. A majority of its members ignore Spiritualism, although they concede the phenomena to be unquestionable—and inexplicable.



versal knowledge? I believe that Spiritualism is given us now, because it is now more needed than it has been at any period of the earth's history—now, when Revolution and its close ally, Infidelity, are marching over civilisation: when dogmas, repulsive to Scripture and reason, are preached from the pulpit; and books are issued, and treated with indulgence if not respect, that strike at the roots of all beliefs—ignoring all responsibility—dissipating all hope of Hereafter—all trust in a superintending Providence.

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I could give you a long list of persons eminent in literature, science, and art, sound practical lawyers, methodic bankers, merchants, and stock-brokers; clergymen not only of the Established Church, but of "all denominations;" physicians, surgeons, accountants, electricians, naturalists, astronomers, chemists—in a word, I repeat, men whose whole business in life is to deal with facts. I quote but one authority, that of Judge Edmonds, an eminent Judge of New York, who, being put on his defence, thus wrote:—

"It is now over fifteen years since I made a public avowal of my belief in spiritual intercourse. I was then so situated that the soundness of my intellect was a matter of public interest. I had just retired from serving my term in our Court of Appeals—the court of last resort in this State. I was then the presiding Justice of the Supreme Court in this city, with the power of wielding an immense and destructive influence over the lives, liberty, property, and reputation of thousands of people. The soundness as well as the integrity of the administration of public justice was involved, and all had an interest in watching it. The cry of insanity and delusion was raised then as now. I remained on the Bench long enough after such avowal to enable people to judge how well founded the clamour was; and for the fifteen years that have since elapsed I have been somewhat before the world as a lawyer in full practice, as a politician, active in the organisation of the Republican party, in a literary aspect as the author and publisher of several works, professional and otherwise, and as a public speaker, thus affording to all an abundant opportunity of detecting any mental aberration if there was any in me."

If you inquire as to the number who hold this faith you will be told they are to be counted by millions—that in every part of the world they are continually increasing; yet that little more than twenty-five years have passed since a small room held all the men and women who thus believed; encountering howls of derision, sometimes personal assaults, losses of business, ejection from society, separation from friends and often nearer ties, persecution in all the shapes it is possible to assume in the 19th century, which assuredly would have been the gallows and the stake if they had avowed their convictions two centuries earlier.

Happily, we live in an age when persecution will not be tolerated; it was otherwise in old times and in times more recent. "For as concerning this sect we know that everywhere it is spoken against," was applied to those who first preached Christ the Redeemer. All who brought new lights to the world have had to endure the fiery trial of Faith. From the time when Noah built the ark, and was scorned for giving warning of a coming flood, persecution has been the heritage of Truth. Luther, Huss, Fox, and Wesley, all reformers of religion, all heralds of scientific truths, have been thus encountered.

There are few of the leading towns of England in which there is not a "circle" of Spiritualists to be found. More than a hundred volumes record their views in England, and upwards of a thousand in America. Here there are



several periodical publications which represent them ; and there is hardly a city or town in the United States that has not at least one.

The matter, therefore, cannot be passed over as insignificant. Though of rapid it is of mighty growth—either for good or evil. Let us see !

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Spiritualists, then, demand to be heard on the ground that their antecedents are such as to justify confidence—confidence in their integrity and in their capacity for arriving at correct conclusions based on the evidence of their senses, sustained by their intelligence ; because they have subjected Spiritualism to such tests as the Almighty has given them by which to detect error and to discover truth ; because these things are not done in a corner ; because alleged facts are attested by tens—nay, by hundreds—of thousands, who have witnessed them at various times, in several places, now in one company, now in another : testified to, not by “ignorant and unlearned men,” but by men and women of capacious minds, and of great experience in all the affairs of life—sound and practical thinkers ; and they affirm that if their testimony on *this* subject is not to be accepted by just and intelligent judges, it must be considered worthless for any purpose by any public or private tribunal—that they are unfitted for the discharge of any of the duties of citizens, because of either cupidity, deliberate imposture, mental incapacity, or continuous self-delusion.

“We speak what we do *know*, and testify what we have *seen* !”

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Before I proceed to deal with the more important parts of my case, I will make some reference to the minor objections urged against it. Spiritualists are continually met by arguments based on the puerility of the messages they receive and the uselessness of the marvels exhibited. I by no means admit that it is so. I could tell you of wonderful cures effected by those who have “the gift of healing ;” of communications out of which have arisen great temporal good : but I confine myself to my main object—that Spiritualism is a mighty helper to destroy materialism, to strengthen Bible-teaching, and lead to belief in Christ.

Yet, if these miracles were all puerile, inquiry is imperative none the less. The “raps” and “tilts” and “dancings of tables” upon which opponents are perpetually harping are but the lowest rungs of the Spiritual ladder. They are, perhaps, the most convincing to neophytes : they have their purpose, and that purpose is answered by stimulating curiosity, and subsequent thought and study. It may be that their very simplicity contains suggestions of truth. Naaman objected to have his leprosy removed by so simple a process as dipping seven times in the water of Jordan : nay, “he turned and went away in a rage” at receiving counsel so undignified ; but when his servant argued—“If the prophet had bid thee do some *great thing* would’st thou not have done it?” he yielded, and was made clean. The facility of the means by which manifestations are made, supply to some the most “unanswerable” argument against their possibility. Those who imagine that “table turnings” and “rappings” are the only “manifestations” of spiritual power are very greatly in error : there are manifestations, of which these give no better idea than a single brick may do of the completed building—than the alphabet can do of the printed book. Often a little additional light enables us to discover hidden beauty. Newton had seen many wonderful



things in nature before the fall of an apple from a tree became to him a volume of Revelation. When Franklin was flying his kite, he seemed to lookers-on only occupied with the plaything of a child.

The experience of life confirms the line of the poet—

“What great events from little causes spring!”

Forty-five years ago, I saw Professor Wheatstone exhibit a doll which he made dance about a drawing-room table: when he told us it was “done by lightning” he was heard with a smile or a laugh; yet it was the embryo of the electric telegraph. Sir John Herschel said, “The history of all science establishes this—that speculations apparently the most unprofitable have almost invariably been those from which the greatest practical applications have emanated.”

The same spirit of unreasoning objection would condemn the Saviour for His “policy” in selecting His apostles from the lower classes of the Jews—“unlearned and ignorant men”—instead of the Gamaliels of the chosen people. They were not “dignified” miracles that changed a rod into a serpent, made iron float, and wetted a fleece with dew while a hot sun was shining.

Another objection is that mediumship is limited to a few, and these not of the better order of mankind. “Have *all* the gifts of healing? Do *all* speak with tongues? Do *all* interpret?” Why mediums are necessary for these manifestations who can say? I believe their power arises mainly, if not solely, from some physical peculiarities not accorded to many: that mediums are to the spirits who “use” them little more than the tables at which they sit. The greater number of these “mediums” are not remarkable for either moral, social, or intellectual advantages—some, indeed, are, in all ways, of a low type. I could, however, adduce exceptions: men and women, as honest and intelligent and upright as any of those who constitute themselves their judges. I must specially name one—Mr. Daniel D. Home—the most prominent and the most “gifted” of those we have yet had in England. I have known him, intimately, for upwards of fifteen years: I am sure he is as incapable of fraud as any man living—of saying, or even thinking, a thing that is untrue. And I know that opinion would be indorsed by a hundred witnesses who hold high positions in public esteem, and are entitled to have their testimony respected and accepted. He has been the object of much vituperative slander; but so it has been with all who have “told us some new thing.”

But mediums are by no means needed in all cases. There is ample evidence that mediumship is frequently encountered where it is least expected: in private families where none of the marvels of Spiritualism have been seen; sometimes among those who are so alarmed as to shrink with terror from its display; and occasionally among such as have never heard the word Spiritualism at all. Those who imagine there are only *professed* mediums are greatly in error. All persons are mediums, more or less; with different gifts.

I see no reason why “professional mediums” should not be sustained in their work by payment for that work: for the most part, they have no other means of living: we have high authority for pronouncing the labourer to be worthy of his hire. Mr. Home has indeed persistently continued his resolve to receive no



money for the exercise of his "gift," and so it is with several other mediums ; but all are not so circumstanced as to be able to *give* of what they have received.

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It is equally a mistake to suppose that sittings must be in the dark, sometimes they are so, and the most singular of the physical manifestations take place when light is entirely excluded. I dislike dark sittings : Mr. Home very rarely sits in the dark. The sittings of Mrs. Everitt are dark sittings—that is to say, alternating between light and dark. It is obvious that only in darkness we can see the lights that almost invariably appear in many parts of a room. I believe Mrs. Everitt and her husband to be as upright and incapable of wicked and blasphemous deception as any two persons living on earth. To some of the phenomena that occur in their presence I shall have to refer.

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Neither have we any means of knowing why "manifestations" are at one time varied and abundant, and at another time there are none—although apparently the conditions are exactly similar, the same persons being together, aided by the same medium. Some "men of science" have agreed to "inquire," provided they might previously arrange a "programme;" that is to say, lay down certain "rules" that would, of a surety, prevent the possibility of manifestations. Sir Charles Wheatstone told me he could make a piano play a tune when no hand was near it, but he declined to permit me to examine its vicinage and cut away any wire that was near the instrument. One of the most eminent of the men of science can show wonderful effects in a room that must be perfectly dry and free from damp : what would he say if I demanded his sanction to bring a boiling tea-kettle into the chamber?

Sceptical "Philosophers" have been repeatedly tendered the power of suspicious scrutiny—the means of examination by *any* test, before and after. Some have consented and been convinced; others "hold out," and refuse to inquire unless permitted to dictate their own terms. Others, and these form by far the greater number, concede the phenomena, and attribute them to some occult power as yet unknown, but which in no degree interrupts their notions as to a Creator and an hereafter. As one of them is reported to have said, "Spirits are the last things I will give in to."

You could direct my attention to many such incidents and results recorded in Scripture. When the apostles asked our Lord why they could not work a certain miracle, they were answered, "because of your unbelief:" when our Lord came into his own country "he could do there no mighty works." The Pool of Bethesda was effectual only for him who was first dipped in after an angel had troubled the waters. Many widows were in Israel, in the days of Elias, when great famine was throughout all the land : but unto none of them was Elias sent, save "to Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow."

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To me, it is certain that belief in Spiritualism is not only consistent with reason, and sustained by experience, but is sanctioned by Revelation,—upheld by the Book of God : that it is "a glorious truth and a Heaven-born reality."

Belief in supernatural influences seems inseparable from humanity : a part of



our universal nature. It has been received and cherished among all nations, in all ages: not only is it rife among refined and cultivated peoples, it is found alike in "farthest Ind," and in the *ultima thule* of civilisation.\* The Old Testament is full of evidence. While, in the New Testament, I find frequent references to spirits,—to spiritual power and spiritual influence,—I find nothing that infers peril to mind or soul arising from such belief. "Come out from among them and be ye separate," is one of many cautions against intercourse with dangerous associates in this life: surely it applies with equal force to subtle adversaries unseen. We are warned against "seducing spirits, teaching doctrines of devils, and bidden to "try the spirits, whether they are of God;" but while there is much to warrant, nay, to encourage, the belief, there is nothing to prevent such belief from being accepted as another proof of the Will of that God who ever

"Moves in a mysterious way."

I know that "concerning spiritual gifts," the apostle Paul "would not have you ignorant;" and that the prayer of one of the most beautiful of the collects of our Church is, that God will "mercifully grant, that as Thy holy angels always do Thee service in heaven, so, by Thy appointment, they may succour and defend us on earth."

Need I remind you, Rev. Sir, that not only the apostles and their immediate successors, but good men in all ages—and, probably, of all countries—have believed in the direct intercourse and superintendence of angels and spirits—of their "jurisdiction," so to speak, in the affairs of earth and of the influence they exercise over our thoughts, words, and acts. The annals of the Roman Catholic Church are full of them; yet, strange to say, the Roman Catholics are almost universally opposed to Spiritualism; they will acknowledge no miracles but such as are sanctioned by "the Church;" yet who will pronounce all their records to be fictions—"cunningly-devised fables"?

That remembrance and consciousness of deeds done in the flesh is with the soul after it has quitted the body is not only sustained by Scripture and consistent with reason, but without it, indeed, the Hereafter would be a blank, and the soul assume a condition equivalent to extinction.

The highest authorities in the Church of England, and the oracles of the Dissenters from that Church, contend that *such* "miracles" have *not* ceased, but that they continue to be wrought, not only by good angels, but by evil spirits. Thus wrote Bishop Hall—"So sure as we see men, so sure we are that holy men have seen angels." And thus Archbishop Tillotson—"The angels are no more dead or idle than they were in Jacob's time or in our Saviour's, and both good

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\* One of the most eloquent writers of our age, Lord Lytton, affirms that while "the grandest thinkers have sanctioned the hope of the humblest Christian—the man who has no faith in religion, is often the man who has faith in a nightmare," and he quotes the instances of Julius Cæsar, and that type of the elegant sceptic, Lord Herbert of Cherbury: Julius Cæsar, who publicly denounced a belief in hereafter, and rejected the idea of a soul and a Deity, yet muttered a charm when he entered a chariot, and did not cross the Rubicon until he had consulted the omens: Lord Herbert, "writing a book against revelation, asking a sign from heaven to tell him if his book is approved by his Maker; the man who cannot believe in the miracles performed by his Saviour, gravely tells us of a miracle vouchsafed to himself!"



and bad spirits are each in their way busy about *us*." Bishop Beveridge contends that "though we cannot *see* spirits with our bodily eyes, we may do so when they assume, as *they sometimes do*, a bodily shape."

[It has been explained to us by spirits that they assume such bodily shape "for our eyes" that we may recognise them: "when our souls are predisposed by sympathy or tendency to see them."]

Among the Dissenters there are many authorities equally convincing and conclusive. Baxter, in reference to apparitions, says—"I have received undoubted testimony of the truth of such." Who can doubt that John Bunyan was a thorough Spiritualist? Isaac Watts reasons that "the appearance of apparitions is a strong proof of an intermediate state, whence they can return for special divine purposes." "I know," says good Mrs. Fletcher of Madeley, "our friends are not really divided from us; they are only invisible, and are hidden from our sight lest we should put too much trust in them." The story of John Wesley's father is well known; in the supernatural noises, of which he gives a detailed history, John Wesley fully believed; he could not resist belief, on such testimony. His sermons on "Good Angels" and "Evil Angels" contain nearly all on which the modern Spiritualist insists. The former is preached from the text—"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"—the latter from the text—"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." The venerable founder of Methodism contends not only that good and evil spirits worked in the apostolic times, but that they are as busy now as they were then,—to lead and to mislead, to enlist soldiers under the banner of Christ, and to augment the armies of Satan! And he establishes that doctrine by reasoning unanswerable, arguing that "whenever evil spirits assail us in soul or in body, the good are at least equally strong, equally wise, and equally vigilant,"—that "God has in all ages used the ministry not alone of men, but of angels," defeating the rage, the malice, the subtlety, of evil spirits,—and although he does not in that sermon affirm his belief that they appear in visible shape—which he does elsewhere—he contends that evidence of their actual presence is none the less palpable,—concluding his most beautiful and eloquent discourse thus—of Good Angels :—

"They may assist us in our search after truth, remove many doubts and difficulties, throw light on what was before dark and obscure, and confirm us in the truth that is after godliness. They may warn us of evil in disguise, and place what is good in a clear strong light. They may gently move our will to embrace what is good, and fly from that which is evil. They may many times quicken our dull affections, increase our holy hope or filial fear, assist us more ardently to love Him who has first loved us. Yea, they may be sent of God to answer that whole prayer put into our mouths by pious Bishop Ken :—

"O may thy angels, while I sleep,  
Around my bed their vigils keep;  
Their love angelical instil,  
Stop every avenue of ill!  
May they celestial joys rehearse,  
And thought to thought with me converse!"

Dr. Isaac Watts considered that the soul after its removal from earth "reflects upon its own temper and actions in this life; it is conscious of its virtues and its



vices,"—"and," adds Dr. Southey (*vide* "The Doctor"), "it has an endless spring of peace and joy within, or is tormented with the anguish of self-condemnation."

"For, in truth,  
Man's spirit knows not death, but sets aside  
The interlinear boundaries of the flesh,  
And in its thoughts, which are its proper self,  
Holds intercourse with those which are unseen,  
As if they were still with us." \*

Dr. Johnson thus writes:—"That the dead are seen no more, I will not undertake to maintain against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages and of all nations." Addison speaks of such belief as "confirmed by the general testimony of mankind." Isaac Watts, in allusion to the text, "If a spirit or an angel had spoken to this man," &c., affirms that a "spirit here is plainly distinct from an angel;" and asks, "What can it mean but an apparition of a human soul that has left the body?"

("But may ye not, unseen, around us hover,  
With gentle prompting and sweet influence yet?")

And thus wrote Adam Clarke, in his "Commentaries"—"I believe there is a supernatural and spiritual world, in which human spirits, both good and bad, live in a state of consciousness. I believe that any of these spirits may, according to the order of God, in the laws of their place of residence, have intercourse with this world, and become visible to mortals."

"This is certain, angels descend from the choirs of the blessed, and minister to the comfort of the suffering; those angels return from their ministry to the choirs of the happy; and can we suppose they will be silent on what they have seen, and to whom they have ministered below?"

I quote the passage from one of the eloquent discourses of the Rev. Dr. Cumming; he is not only no Spiritualist, but a strong—and somewhat irrational—opponent of Spiritualism. Yet, in the following passage from another of his discourses, he preaches and teaches almost all for which Spiritualists contend:—

"Those who are gone before us recollect this world and those they have left behind them. It seems to me an irrefragable conclusion that those who have gone before us must recollect those they have left behind. The life that now is shapes the life that is to be; the impressions we receive in time we never can forget in the realms of eternity. Separate our growth here from our recollections there, and you *separate the individual from himself*. Were the past blotted out, for instance, from the memory of some one admitted into heaven, he could not believe himself to be the same person. As long as I am placed anywhere, so long the *I* must recollect what it was, what it has gone through, what influences it has felt, what motives have inspired it, and what *progress* it has made. Separate in my memory my past from my present, and you annihilate me,—you create a totally distinct and different being. We cannot conceive memory to be expunged in Heaven, because we cannot conceive the individual to be annihilated there."

Perhaps I am needlessly urging an argument, the weight of which you would readily concede. Others, however, may not do so, and to them I address myself through you.

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If we admit a God—All-mighty—we must admit the *possibility* of miracles,—that He *can* change the conditions which seem to govern, and do generally govern, natural laws; for we only mean by the "supernatural," occurrences

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\* The Rev. John Keble.



that cannot be accounted for by the operation of such natural laws. But we have to contend against those who admit nothing of the kind,—nothing they cannot test by their reason and their senses; they limit the Omnipotent to acts that science calls “the possible;” they affirm that what they have not seen God do, He cannot do; and that He does not depart from the laws of what they term “Nature.” They are far from conceding that *there are no laws before God but His will*. Yet what does science know of any laws? The laws they accept as guides now were not the laws that guided them yesterday; and some of them may be utterly abrogated to-morrow. Yet their perpetual reasoning is, in accordance with the line of the poet—

“What can we argue but from what we know?”

They contend that all nature is comprehended in the visible,—that the same things *must* happen under the same circumstances; “they doubt everything in the Maker’s plan of Creation that cannot be mathematically proved, contending that *our* experience is *all* experience, and will not permit God to depart from the ordinary rules by which He governs Earth;”—“substituting for a benignant Deity a relentless Fate.”

“Can science gauge the influence that draws  
The needle to the magnet? Can it see  
The perfume of the rose? or measure laws  
By which the flower gives honey to the bee?”

Happily all the men of science are not in this state of mind. There is no advocate of Spiritualism more resolute than Mr. Cromwell Varley; but he has somewhat recently obtained a powerful ally in another eminent man of science—Mr. William Crookes. I must content myself with merely naming him; for to go at sufficient length into his statements, derived from often repeated—scrupulous and suspicious—examinations, chiefly in his own house, would be to extend this paper far beyond the limits to which I confine myself.

But what sort of philosophy is that which makes no effort to discover truth, if the attempt infers a departure from old ways and generally conceded facts? It is the philosophy, not of Galileo but of the monks who would have burned him. It is not the philosophy of Jenner, but of the College of Physicians who laboured to prove him an imposter. It is not the philosophy of that unhappy man who first promulgated the notion that steam was a power, but of those who placed him in the Lunatic Asylum of the Bicetre. It is not the philosophy of our Lord, but of the Jews who crucified Him! It is the philosophy of Lot’s wife—to look only behind!

“I believe,” says the latest among these philosophers, “that water will wet, that iron will sink in it, that fire will burn;” and it would be utterly impossible to convince this philosopher by any reasoning that there exists a Being who ever did, or could, prevent fire from burning to death men enveloped in it, cause water to divide and let men pass through it with dry garments, or prevent iron from sinking beneath the surface of a lake.

The miracle of Spiritualism may yet do for Professor Tyndall what the written Word and the Teachings of Holy Men have failed to do. He may credit the miracles of yesterday by witnessing those of to-day.

I need not allude to the theory called “Darwinian,” which traces man to his



origin in the monkey, and the monkey to his source in mud ; but I may refer to one of the authors of "Essays and Reviews"—the Rev. Baden Powell. This is his view of miracles—"All facts may be brought under the dominion of some physical law, and thereby become credible ;" and he necessarily treats as mere inventions all the recorded miracles of Christ—those that preceded and those that succeeded His mission, as well as those that are affirmed by Spiritualists in modern times. Yet the Rev. Baden Powell was an ordained clergyman of the Church of England. For my own part, I believe there are many ordained or appointed ministers of religion who ascend the pulpit weekly—and do not believe in the Gospel they teach. I may quote to you the latest case—that of the author of "A Sling and a Stone"—the Rev. Mr. Voysey. It is patent to the world. He is no longer a clergyman *authorised* to preach and teach ; but he *is* preaching and teaching ; and no doubt finds many to follow in his wake.

This is the reasoning of Ernest Renan, in his book "The Apostles," in reference to miracles :—"The first twelve chapters of the Acts are a tissue of miracles ; such facts have never been proved ; all the pretended miracles, near enough to be examined, are referable to illusion or imposture ; discussion and examination are fatal to miracles." He admits, indeed, that "a miracle before experienced savans at Paris would put an end to all doubt ;" but affirms that, "alas ! such a thing never happens." I have hope that Ernest Renan will see the miracles I have seen in the presence of experienced savans as sound as any that Paris can supply. If he does, of a surety he will repent him of the book he has written, and admit that miracles may have occurred 1800 years ago.

Yes, to those who will accept Truth only on the evidence of their senses—who altogether ignore faith unsustained by tangible proof—is this new light of Spiritualism sent.

Miracles were the credentials of the Jewish prophets ; and they were adopted by our Saviour and His apostles to prove the authenticity of His mission. "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works." "They were wrought," said our Lord on another occasion, "*to the intent ye may believe.*" That His miracles did what they were designed to do, we have the clearest and most conclusive evidence ; not only after the raising of Lazarus, but on many other occasions, thousands,—who having *seen* the works, and exclaimed—"Surely never man did what He doeth,"—believed in Him, *in consequence* of what they saw, who would not have believed if oral testimony had been all their proof. It is clearly stated, indeed, that *when one did rise from the dead many believed in Christ as a direct result of that miracle.* There are other cases—notably that of Tabitha, in which the same effect followed the same cause.

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Yet there are many who contend that miracles have ceased ; who, while they admit that miracles *were* wrought to induce conviction of Christ's mission and as means of conversion to Truth, deny that they are in operation now, when there are on earth hundreds of millions more than there were in the apostolic times, and though they know that Materialism is widely spread and extending throughout the world. But I respectfully say I do not consider them sustained by the teachings of our Church—of any Church. I do not see that the Fathers, at any



period, have impressed such belief. Certainly, the Roman Catholics believe, universally, that miracles have *not* ceased.

If they have ceased—when and why? If they occurred, as you know they did, “to the intent ye may believe,” are they ineffectual now that were effectual eighteen hundred years ago? They remained in operation at the latest period of Scripture record. Was such power withheld from the disciples of the disciples? Was the mandate, “Go ye unto all nations,” and the means to induce belief by miracles, given *only* to the few,—the twelve or the seventy?

“Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe” may be addressed to congregations to-day with as much necessary force as they were when our Lord spoke the words, “Believe me for the very works’ sake.” “We know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do the miracles that thou doest except God be with him”—the passage is as applicable to-day as it was ages ago. The words of our Lord—“He that believeth in Me, the works that I do shall ye do also, and greater works than these shall ye do,” were limited to no period and to no place. Such works were done at Ephesus fifty years after His ascension, and by men who had not only never acknowledged the Lord while on earth, but were of those who persecuted his disciples: such at least had been St. Paul.

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What is there irrational in this faith—the faith that the departed from earth can and do communicate with those who remain on earth? Scripture so abounds with evidence in proof, that he cannot be a Christian who doubts it. That angels have appeared in the outer guise of men is clear: Jacob wrestled with an angel: Lot gave entertainment to angels. Even our Lord was mistaken for the gardener by the holy women at the Tomb.

Was it an evil spirit that Cornelius heard and saw that bade him seek St. Peter at Joppa? Was it an evil spirit that said to Peter, “Go: nothing doubting: I am with thee”? Was it an angel or an evil spirit who, when Peter was in prison, asleep, said to him, “Cast thy garment about thee and follow me,” led him through an iron-gate, that “opened to them of its own accord,” and having set him free “departed from him”? Was the power evil that met St. Paul on the way to Damascus when “they that were with me saw indeed the light, but heard not the voice of him that spake to me.” We are warned—often—not only of false prophets but of false Christs, who “shall show great signs and wonders.” But of what use would the warning be, if the true prophets and true Christ withheld the power to distinguish one from the other. The seed of the parable fell upon good ground as well as upon barren rocks and among thorns.

Is it difficult to believe in an innumerable company of angels: that

“Millions of spiritual beings walk the earth,  
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep”?

That there may be as many gradations from man up to the Creator as there are from man down to the smallest insect—so small that the human eye cannot see it though aided by the telescope that magnifies ten thousand fold?

I address myself only to those—be their creed what it may—who believe in an HEREAFTER—in an immortality distinct from present life—in a spiritual as well as a natural body—and of them I ask what is there irrational in this faith? On



what ground do they question it? The soul when it has left the body is somewhere. As a good man has said, "Heaven cannot be a state of glorified indolence."

There are not only those who affirm that "the age of miracles is past"—that "the days of supernatural enlightenment are over:" but some who describe miracles as periodical impulses of God: believing that they happen now and then: forgetting the emphatic declaration of our Lord, "I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS!" and, "I am the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever!"

Rev. Sir, our combat as Spiritualists, has principally been with those who have faith in *no hereafter*. It has happened to me, more than once in my life, to be told, "I would give all I have in the world to believe fully and entirely, and without a shadow of doubt, in a future state." In the Christian, as in the Jewish, Church, there are Sadducees who do not believe in a Resurrection—"for the Sadducees say there is no resurrection, *neither angel nor spirit*." They were not only rulers but learned men, of whom St. Paul asked, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" Of the Corinthians he enquired, "How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" On one memorable occasion he said, "Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question." Rev. Sir, may there not be in your own congregation some who do not believe in *any* future beyond this life? Nay, may not the pulpit be occasionally occupied by preachers who have no faith in an Hereafter?

Yes, there are many who, rejecting miracles of the present, hold fast to faith in miracles of the past. They irrationally strive, indeed, to uphold the miracles of Scripture by denying the possibility of any not recorded in Holy Writ!

They refuse to believe that Mr. Home and others have been raised without hands or any visible power and floated about a room; but they say they believe that Philip was "taken up" and conveyed from Gaza to Azotus; and they credit Daniel when he says, "He put forth the form of a hand and took me by the back of my head, and the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven." They will not believe that a simple uneducated peasant girl has written Greek sentences, and a man from the plough delivered a Latin oration; but they say they believe that on the day of Pentecost, apostles and disciples "spoke with other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance." They will not credit the healing powers of the Zouave Jacob, Dr. Newton, and others; but they say they believe that at the gate of the Temple called Beautiful a man was made to walk who was impotent from his mother's womb. They will not believe that a heavy table has been raised from the floor to the ceiling without touch of human hand; but they say they believe that the stone was rolled back from the door of the sepulchre. They will not believe that voice-music has been heard continuously when no living lips were moved; but they say they believe that shepherds heard voices praising God in the highest. They will not believe in modern trance-mediumship; but they say they believe Ezekiel when he wrote, "And the spirit entered into me, when he spake unto me, and set me on my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me." They will not believe in the cold breezes and violent shakings of rooms that usually precede communications when Spiritualists are "with one accord in one place;" but they say they believe in "the rushing mighty wind" that shook the house in which the apostles



were assembled. They will not believe in the audible voices heard by Spiritualists, though they say they believe in the voice heard by St. Paul on the way to Damascus, which some of the attendants "heard not;" and in the voice that hailed our Lord, heard by some although "others said it thundered." They will not believe in "direct spirit-writing," although they say they believe that Jehoram received a written communication from Elijah four years after he had been taken from earth. They will not believe that writings and drawings are now produced without thought, design, or will; but they say they believe that David thus received instructions how to build the temple—"All this the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, even all the works of this pattern." They will not believe that, in our day, seen or unseen hands have been known to write what was afterwards read; but they say they believe in the handwriting on the wall at the feast of King Belshazzar, and that Ezekiel spoke truly when he said, "When I looked, behold an hand was sent unto me; and lo! a roll of a book was therein." They will not believe that a coal of fire has been placed on the head of a white-haired man without singeing a hair; but they say they believe that three men were thrown into a fiery furnace, from which they issued unscathed. In short, that angels and spirits do *now* communicate with men and women, earth-living, they will not believe, although they say they believe that angels announced to shepherds good tidings of great joy; that a multitude of the heavenly host heralded them to the manger at Bethlehem; that Moses and Elias talked with our Lord on the Mount; that it was a spirit who reproved John when seeking to worship him, "See that thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets." You can multiply such cases; and I can show that the miracles recorded in Holy Writ are almost identical with those of recent experience. Why they are now more palpable than they have been during centuries past we can no more tell than we can why God in His wisdom has delayed for development in our day many things of which He kept us in ignorance in times past. But I by no means concede that Spiritualism is the birth and growth of recent years; that all the good deeds for which Saints have been canonised, are inventions.

That the "gifts" were given as signs of God's approval is certain. Is it not equally certain that their withdrawal were marks of His displeasure? When He threatened, through the Prophet Amos, to "send a famine on the land," it was "not a famine of bread nor a thirst for water, but a hearing of the words of the Lord." A warning was conveyed through Micah—"Then shall the seers be ashamed and the diviners confounded: yea they shall all cover up their lips; for there is no answer of God." And, surely, if Spiritualism can illustrate the manner in which Saul prophesied when influenced by an evil spirit, they aid to make intelligible that by which "the spirit of God came upon him: and he prophesied." Who will suppose it was alone from the Witch of Endor he sought counsel, or doubt that he applied to her only because the oracles of God were dumb?

And now, Rev. Sir, I approach another branch of my subject, and address myself to those who, fully believing in the outer manifestations of Spiritualism, attribute them to Satanic influence: resisting it upon that unnatural and unchristian ground: contending that while God *does* allow evil spirits to be with us, communicating with us, influencing us, teaching us, He absolutely forbids just and good spirits from counterbalancing the effects that evil spirits are continually

good  
misinterpretation



striving to produce. Surely, so to assert, is to arraign not only the mercy, but the justice, of God!

Those who "wrestle not against flesh and blood," but against "spiritual darkness," may contemplate the struggle with dread, for it cannot be without danger. Ordinary means of opposing enemies are not at their command: they do not see the foe they have to encounter: they are without the power of estimating peril, such as reason, the senses, and it may be instinct, supplies to guard against dangers they can foresee or apprehend. Against "flesh and blood" they may wrestle fearlessly; but against "spiritual darkness" they can prevail only by help from God, and His protecting and ministering angels.

Who will dare to say that God will refuse to send them in answer to fervent and faithful prayer? Surely, it is precisely to such the impressive words are addressed,—“Fear not, for *I* am with thee: be not dismayed, for *I* am thy God.” Who can doubt *their* being also perpetually present with us: reminding us of the penalties of sin and the rewards of righteousness, of the wisdom of virtue and the terrible malady of remorse: impressing the awful truth that while the influence of evil spirits engenders misery on earth, it prepares a future—from which even hope may be excluded and repentance “quite shut out.”

To believe that God does permit the evil to act and forbids the good to aid is to induce not only despondency but despair. Who could tolerate life if he believed himself given over exclusively to the influence of evil: evil which good had no power to counterbalance: nay, that by the decree of the Omnipotent, good was absolutely withheld from any interference with the operations of evil!

These are truisms, you will say: they are so; but they are needed none the less as answers to those who, while they admit the existence of Spiritualism, contend that it is only and exclusively demoniac. “He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in *all* thy ways!” Especially will that charge be imperative when evil is present with us. “If we could see,” exclaimed Luther, “for how many angels one devil makes work, we should despair!” But despair we should not, if we could see also the good angels by whom the devil and his helpers are controlled and fettered.

Yes, well we know that *evil spirits* are perpetually about us: Spiritualism brings only closer and more conclusive evidence that they are ever ready and eager to instil poison into heart and mind, to induce corrupt thoughts, to excite impure desires, to suggest wrongful acts, to palliate sin, and to supply excuses for iniquity. Is peril that is seen more perilous than that which is unseen? Is the whole armour of God more or less efficacious for defence when we *know* it is needed and are warned to be ready for the inevitable encounter?

“Shall we admit,” writes Dr. Cumming, “that fallen angels may reach the heart, irrespective of the volition of its possessor, and that good angels may not do so?” and he adds, “Now I cannot believe that an evil spirit would speak the truth or attest the inspiration of the Bible: for if a kingdom be divided against itself how can it stand?”

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Spiritualists believe in PROGRESS, after the soul has left this life. The subject is too large a one to enter upon here. The “many mansions” are prepared for many souls: and inasmuch as while on earth there is no standing still, and



those who do not advance must retrograde, so it is in the "places" prepared for us. Southey, writing to one of his friends, alludes to a state "where there shall be no separation and no mutability except that which results from '*continual progression*.'" That is a point on which you can better instruct me than I can enlighten you.

Now, Rev. Sir, notwithstanding the much I have already written—and my "letter" has grown into a pamphlet—it is possible you may still ask, "What is the *use* of Spiritualism?" I do not think you will ask it—of me, at all events—when you have read a little farther. I could give you the names of many who have been by this means converted to belief from unbelief—of some to perfect faith from total infidelity; I can, indeed, give you abundant proof that Spiritualism is doing God's work, and *may be an all-powerful assistant to His ministers*. I may, without hesitation, name Dr. Elliotson (a name well known throughout Europe) who, in a letter to an esteemed and venerated clergyman of the Church of England (an earnest advocate of Spiritualism), thus wrote:—"You ask me if I am a believer in Christianity? I believe all that you, as a Christian minister, believe—and perhaps more." The opinions of Dr. Elliotson, as they are recorded in his writings, do not demand comment;\* they approached atheism. He expressed his deep gratitude to Almighty God for the blessed change that had been wrought in his heart and mind—by Spiritualism. As noteworthy a case is that of Professor Hare—a very celebrated chemist and physicist of Philadelphia—an avowed unbeliever, who, according to his own statement to Judge Edmonds, had been "all his life long an enemy to the Christian religion, a denier of the possibility of revelation, and a disbeliever in God and in our immortality." He had, indeed, published extracts from the Bible with a view to negative its testimony. Not long before his removal from earth, he said to the Judge,—to the intense happiness of that most excellent man—"I believe in revelation, and in a revelation through Jesus of Nazareth. I am a Christian." He had been taught by a Christian sister, years previously removed from earth. Spiritualism—and Spiritualism only—had done *that* work.

I may be permitted reference to another remarkable man, although I have no right to infer that he was at any time "a sceptic," in the ordinary sense of the term; but he was not a believer in miracles until he had seen miracles. I allude to Robert Chambers, one of the most estimable, as well as the most enlightened, men I have ever known. He was a thorough Spiritualist, although he lacked the courage to avow his opinions publicly. In a letter from him to me, dated September 1, 1866, he writes, "What a rich thing Spiritualism is, if men of the world could only be induced to take a candid view of it." And he once said to me, "If I did not believe that the spirits of those who have gone from earth can and do communicate with those who remain on earth I could believe nothing." He also told me that after he became convinced by Spiritualism, he destroyed a MS. for which he had been many years collecting materials—a History of Supersti-

\* Dr. Elliotson has left earth since this was written: he had read it, however, and authorised me to print it, in a letter now before me. I am acquainted with a clergyman who, sitting with him, saw him take the Bible in his hand and say, "This is now my comfort, and hence is my hope." The same clergyman, who knew him at two periods of his life, described to me the expression of his countenance as more angelic than human at its later period.



tion. I do not know if he were or were not the author of "Vestiges of Creation:" but if he did write that book, I am very sure he would not have published it after he became a Spiritualist. I may surely include in this list the name of George Sexton, A.M., LL.D., the editor of "The Spiritual Magazine," and "The Christian Spiritualist"—a frequent, able, eloquent, scholastic, and scientific lecturer on Spiritualism. Before the truth was revealed to him he was an open advocate of Scepticism—I will not say infidelity, although his views and his public writings bordered upon the frightful malady of total unbelief in a Supreme Being.

I do not wish strongly to describe my own state of mind—all my life—until I became *convinced* by Spiritualism—convinced, that is to say, that the dead die not: that there is an eternity of which, what we call life is the beginning and the preparation: that earth is but the first of "many mansions," to which man is in progress: that, in a word, God creates in each of us a spirit (which we call "soul,") that He ordains shall never perish.

[Honoured and revered be the memory of the good woman (her life in this sphere was continual preparation for life in another) who, after she left earth, was mercifully permitted to continue her influence, to give me counsel, to bring me "messages," to humble my heart, and lead me to a knowledge of my Saviour—a work she had laboured, while in the flesh, to accomplish, in vain. We had evidence of her presence with us, after her "removal," as clear, certain, and conclusive, as we had when she was sitting "in the body," by our side. It was scarcely less palpable than it was when she was *only* an inhabitant of earth.]

*You* will not, Rev. Sir, ask *me* if Spiritualism has been to me of any *use*? I humbly and fervently thank God it has removed all my doubts! I can, and do believe all the Bible teaches me: in the efficacy and indescribable happiness of Prayer: in the power of Faith to save: in the perpetual superintendence of Providence: in salvation by the sacrifice of the Saviour: in the mediation of the Redeemer—in a word, I am A CHRISTIAN.

It is no doubt right that you and other clergymen should tell us we have the Bible, and that the Book is all-sufficient for salvation: although they thus, in some measure, ignore the fact that ministers are appointed to be its interpreters. "Understandest thou what thou readest?" was the question put by Philip. "How can I except some man should guide me?" was the answer of the Eunuch. I deny, however much I may deplore, that they—not the one, but both in combination—suffice *always* to induce conviction of the mysterious truths in Christianity. They certainly did not suffice in my case; for I did not, and could not, believe in miracles, although, from my youth upwards, I had been taught to study the Scriptures, and had been "guided" by Christian men of the Established Church. It is needless to say, that while I did not believe in miracles I was not a Christian.

Rev. Sir, is it not something like seeking a quarrel with God to question His judgment if He has seen fit to give the guidance of another light in addition to the lights He had given, when they did not suffice? and who will dare to complain if he send it to some and not to all? Jonah was angry with God for saving the Ninevites, whose destruction the prophet had foretold as nigh at hand. Some persons decry Spiritualism on just such grounds, and imply blame to the Almighty for sending a new light to those who had found the lights of Scripture and Teaching insufficient, but who, guided by that new light, have found them sufficient for salvation. There are some who question *my* right to walk in this way, although



it has led to Christ—because it is not *their* way. “Blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed!” yet surely they are blessed also who believe because they have seen.

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I am far from asserting that Spiritualism has been to all Spiritualists what it has been to me. On the contrary, I believe that to many it is a teacher of Evil: utterly un-Christian: but I am sure that none have been led *from* Christianity, though thousands have been brought *to* it, by Spiritualism. On earth, like seeks like: so it is with those who, having passed from earth, seek intercourse with those who remain of earth. But *all* who believe in Spiritualism are nearer to Christianity than they have been—are in a state or preparation for receiving it, because at least ready to hear, and not eager to reject, the truths of the Gospel.

*All* who *saw* the miracles that Jesus did were not believers in him: some mocked him: others called them delusions and frauds: others exclaimed, “He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, the chief of the devils:” others cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him!”

Think you that a man will be less inclined to faith in the “diversities of gifts,” of which holy Paul speaks, after he has himself witnessed them? Will he be doubtful that some apostles had the power to work miracles after he has seen miracles? Will he be more than ever disposed to deny the gift of “discerning of spirits” after spirits have appeared to his visual organs? “To them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up!”

We can but take the advice and caution when we accept the testimony of St. John:—“Try the spirits whether they be of God!” try them by earnest and fervent prayer: try them by the words they utter: try them by the counsel they give: a house divided against itself falleth: and Satan will not cast out Satan!

Rev. Sir,—Faith based on Scripture is to you easy: you have probably never had any doubts. But do you wonder that it has not been so easy to others? Remember the case of one of the associate-apostles of Christ—St. Thomas. There were ten witnesses, all agreeing in evidence: yet Thomas did not believe their words that they had “seen the Lord!” He directly accused the ten of fraud and imposture: for it is not easy to understand how he could have supposed them all deluded, that they did not see what they affirmed they had seen. Yet Thomas had witnessed the miracles that Jesus did, had read the prophecies, and knew that the body of his Lord had disappeared from the tomb in which he had been laid: no doubt they brought reasoning and argument to convince him: yet they failed: he insisted on evidence of *a certain kind*, dictating to the Almighty one specific proof by which alone he would be satisfied—“Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.” And it pleased God to give him that specific proof: he was convinced, and exclaimed in a burst of repentant agony—“My Lord and my God!”

Yet such conclusive means of proof were rarely given by our Lord. There was no response when the mocking unbelievers on Mount Calvary exclaimed—“Save thyself, and come down from the cross!” It is for God and not for man to determine by what evidence He will communicate His will. Testimony depends for its value on the trustworthiness of those who give it. God permits



us no *certainties*: our lives are entirely guided by *probabilities*: if we had the former, who would toil for the harvest he knew he should never reap.

I have alluded to publications that strive to propagate and extend the evil influence of Spiritualism. Happily all Spiritual works are not of that class. There are some—though not many—that are pure, holy, and Christian. It would occupy more space than I can spare even to name them. There is one, however (a recent publication), that I may not pass over without brief description and comment. It is published by Nisbet, the printer of this pamphlet. It professes—at least the major part of it—to be the Revelations of a Persian Prince, who lived on earth during the youthhood of our Lord: when the Gospels describe Him as commencing His mission, at the age of thirty. It is a wonderful book—beautiful in style; but that is comparatively nothing: it is entirely HOLY: fully bearing out the testimony of Scripture: and sustaining the Christian in his belief of the Divine birth of our Lord. I cannot give even an idea of the contents of this Marvellous Book.\* The revelations were transmitted at more than a hundred “sittings,” there being present several reputable and respected citizens of Glasgow, the Medium, David Duguid, being a carpenter—a man of irreproachable life, educated only in so far as a Scottish mechanic is usually educated. I have not witnessed his mediumship. I must take the statements of well-known and trustworthy citizens—whose positions and characters preserve them from the suspicions of fraud, and who are as justly safe from the supposition of delusion. They have seen Duguid paint pictures in the light and in the dark: landscapes—some of them very good; producing in a few minutes a picture that, under ordinary circumstances, it would take any artist a day to paint. Imposition is utterly impossible. There may be—there are, indeed—two opinions as to the authenticity and integrity of the source. There will, no doubt, be some who pronounce Hafed an imposter. I cannot conceive him to be so. No evil influence—and if it be not a true, it must be a very evil influence—could so emphatically uphold the teachings, and exhibit the purity of the example of Christ. Satan will not cast out Satan. It is utterly repugnant to belief that a Devil could have prompted a spirit to the utterance of truths so holy—not once, but a hundred times. For my part, I see no reason to doubt that a spirit *may be* permitted to revisit earth who had lived on earth at the time of our Saviour’s earth life. None can doubt that who have had a tithe of the experience I have had. I am sure that Duguid could not of himself have written the book, any more than I could have written it, than any one of the party assembled day

\* “Hafed” is introduced to us as a Prince of Persia who lived at the commencement of the Christian era. His own life story is deeply interesting. Much professedly authentic information is given regarding the state of the nations of the East as they were in his day; but the grand feature of the Communications is what he has to tell about the middle life of Jesus Christ. Hafed claims to have been one of the wise men who came from the East to Judea guided by the star. Jesus is said to have spent years with him in Persia when growing up a young man, to have studied in Persia, and travelled in India, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. The history embraces most of the time between the Saviour’s boyhood and the period when his public ministry commenced. . . . A considerable part of the book is occupied with an account of the labours and sufferings of Hafed and others in the service of Christ, after he had given commandment to go unto the world and preach the gospel to every creature.—*The Christian News (Glasgow)*.



after day at Mr. Nisbet's could have written it. It is infinitely above their capacity and mine. Indeed, I should find it difficult to name any writer who could have produced it as a result of thought, labour, time, reading, and frequent revision: yet if we are to credit these witnesses—and there are none who question their probity—the words were taken down as they came from the lips of a comparatively illiterate carpenter.

It is necessary that I should detail to you some of the marvels ("miracles") I have witnessed. Most of them—if not all—have occurred in my own house, in presence of persons invited by me: with lights always burning: with "all conditions" as perfect as they could be made, for scrupulous and even suspicious examination. On such occasions the medium has, generally, been Mr Daniel Home: and some of the most remarkable of them are fully described (with at least a hundred others in various places, with different persons, often "sceptics," in so far as Spiritualism is concerned,) in a book, printed for private circulation, by Mr Home's friend, Lord Dunraven, entitled "Experiences of Spiritualism," with introductory remarks by his Lordship's father, and "certified" by above fifty ladies and gentlemen present on such occasions, whose names are given—with their sanction first obtained.

I have held an accordion (my own property) in my hand, when delicious music was played upon it, lasting several minutes. It has been taken from me and carried to the end of a large room, playing there: I saw the stops moving and heard the music—I could only not see the power that produced the sounds. I have seen a man taken from his seat by some power invisible, conveyed about the room; and he has marked on the ceiling, with a pencil, a mark that is still there.

Robert Chambers in my drawing-room, once held my accordion in his hand. His father's spirit came to him: Robert said, "If it is you, play an air that you specially loved." Immediately an old Scottish air was played. "Yes," said Robert, "That is it."

I have seen nearly a hundred flowers—among them two large bunches of apple-blossom—thrown on my table: the medium, a lady, having been previously examined by two ladies on entering my house. I have repeatedly grasped "a spirit hand"—I can compare it only to a glove inflated with air; and have frequently recognised a hand by a peculiar mark on one of the nails: I have seen lights that seemed phosphoric, to the number of it may be twenty at once, floating in all parts of a room: I have seen a heavy table floated to the ceiling, carried round a chandelier, and brought to its place as gently as a leaf falling from a tree. A grand piano has been raised from the floor and moved backwards and forwards, no visible person being within two yards of it: I have seen a hand-bell taken from my table and rung over the head of each person in the circle: I saw, and all the others present saw, a shadowy hand raise it and replace it. (At that sitting the late Lord Lytton was present.)

I might greatly augment this list of marvels; but the wonders I have seen are insignificant, and inconclusive, compared with those that may be related to you by others. With reverence I borrow the words, "Ye cannot bear them yet."

I will describe briefly an evening I passed at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Everitt. He is a respectable and respected tradesman of Pentonville: they are both



teachers at a Sunday school, and estimable in all the relations of life—as parents, friends, and neighbours. They are Christians, members of a non-conformist church; and they never sit without prayer, singing a hymn, and a chapter read from the New Testament—always I believe suggested to them by some unseen spirit present. To suppose fraud under such circumstances would be to infer an amount of wickedness almost incredible: that they *could* blasphemously implore God's aid and blessing, with *the deliberate intention* to perpetrate a cheat! They are in no way paid mediums; and I am sure they believe in the reality of these manifestations, as truly as Mary and Martha believed in the restoration to life from death of Lazarus their brother.

At that "sitting" (it was "a dark sitting") I held a conversation, continuing for more than half-an-hour, with a spirit who called himself "John Watt," who told us much of his earth-life's history, of his present condition and state, and of his hope and faith in progress to a higher and better. The voice was low; at parting he said this prayer:—"May God and our Lord Jesus Christ bless you, comfort you, help you, and give you happiness in this world and in that to which, in due course, you will come. May his light guide you, and his help be with you here and hereafter. Amen."

It would occupy too much space to give you full details.

There was a cottage piano in the room: it was closed and locked. I removed from the table, the books, a large inkstand, and other things, and placed them on the top of the piano. The medium, Mrs. Everitt, was seated, in a trance, at the end of the table farthest from the piano. The room is a small room, with barely space enough for the ten persons assembled. Suddenly we heard a faint sweet melody, not played on the keys, but *on the wires*: it was as if a harp was played—just such as I have heard from a player on a Welsh harp, where all the strings are wires. The melody continued for full five minutes: those present who are musical, describe it as of great beauty and great originality: it was sometimes louder and sometimes softer: dying away into a murmur of sound, and having an echo, so to speak, of surpassing delicacy and sweetness.\*

On another evening a still more marvellous incident occurred at the Everitt's, Mr. Sergeant Cox, Mr. William Crookes, the eminent chemist, and others being present with me. A sheet of blank paper, *marked so as to be recognised*, was laid upon the table with a pencil: the light was extinguished: we heard a scratching on the paper: in seven seconds there were raps to indicate that the candle was to be relit, and we found the paper half covered with writing, to have written which would have taken me seven minutes. It contained the name of a Greek philosopher, and a Latin quotation of four lines. Imposture was out of the question: if the medium had been a Greek and Latin scholar, to have written so much in seven seconds was a sheer impossibility, by any "living" human hand.

This "miracle" occurred in my own drawing-room. I copy the following details from a letter written by Mrs. Hall to the Earl of Dunraven, and printed by him in his book:—" . . . Mr. Home rose from his chair, walked slowly to the fire-place, held his hands over the fire, and then drew out of the fire with his fingers a large lump of red and blazing coal—not from the top but

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\* I published a somewhat lengthened account of this sitting in the *Spiritual Magazine*, Oct., 1869, and previously obtained the signatures—testifying to its accuracy—of all the persons who were present, three of whom were our personal friends taken there by us.



from the middle of the fire; he held it in both hands, advanced to the table at which we were seated, and placed the coal, red and blazing as it was, on Mr Hall's head, ruffling his white hair about it. When it had remained there more than a minute he removed it, and offered it to a lady, the wife of a clergyman who was present. She drew back: Home murmured, 'little faith.' He then tendered it to me (Mrs. Hall), and placed it on my open hand: I felt it to be warm, but not hot: he did the same by one of our guests. Before he took it back to the fire-place, he put it on a sheet of paper on the table: the paper was singed through. There was not a hair of Mr. Hall's head singed; but when he combed it in the morning, he combed out about fifty specks of cinder dust the blazing coal had flung off. Two candles were lighted on the chimney piece, and gas was burning in the next room, separated by folding doors that were open."

I am sure that all the eight who were present would testify to the accuracy of this statement: that fraud was impossible: delusion impossible: and I do not dread that a single person who reads it will hesitate to believe that collusion was impossible. Lord Dunraven was not then present: Lord Lindsay was. Lord Dunraven gives in his book details of three occasions to which he was witness, when facts similar, or nearly similar, occurred—at three different places; and once it took place at my house, when Mr. Sergeant Cox and Mr. Crookes were of my guests. The coal was not then placed on the head of any one, but there were the other phenomena.

I must detail to you one other experience. Early in May, 1869, I had a sitting in my own house, with seven of our friends, including the medium, Mr. Home: nine in all. My venerable and truly Christian sister, who had passed from earth two years previously, was permitted to be visible to me, and those who sat with me. She was not only not a Spiritualist, but strongly and sternly objected to the principle, as anti-Christian or demoniac. She had never been present at any manifestation, never would be. But not long before her departure, I said to her, "I am sure God will permit you to visit me after you leave earth. You will be permitted to do so for my comfort, and as a helper on my way to Christ. I wish you to promise that you will do so, if God gives you the power." She did not absolutely make the promise; but she did say, "My dear brother, if it be for your good, and God permits it—and He may do so—I will be with you after He has called me from earth."

When she appeared to us in my drawing-room, her face was so healthy—so full of the red and white that betoken health—that at the moment I did not recognise her, for she had been two years confined to bed, "died" of cancer, was a great sufferer, and was naturally reduced to a skeleton—so to speak. Suddenly I said, with an exclamation, "It is my sister." Three blows (indicating the affirmative) were struck on the table: the head was distinctly turned round towards me, and a smile moved the features. The eyes were closed—she had been blind during the last ten years of her earth-life—possibly but for that I should not have recognised her; there was so marvellous a contrast between the face, as I saw it on her "death" bed, and the face as I saw it then; so healthful, so beautiful, so happy; but the likeness was exact, for I recognised every feature after my exclamation; the hair, precisely as she wore it, plaited back, and the cap precisely as she wore it also, which the Master of Lindsay (now Lord Lindsay, who was seated next to me), called a "mutch," *i.e.*, the cap of the old Scottish



model. She remained before us, thus palpably, for about two minutes—certainly more than one. Long enough for any photographer to have made a photograph of her; and I am very sure there would have been no difficulty whatsoever in making such photograph, if the apparatus had been ready; that it would have been at once recognised by any person who had known her during her “life” here, and that it would have been as distinct as any photograph of any (so-called) living person.\* This statement would be confirmed by all the persons present—excepting one; that one (a lady and a Spiritualist) could see nothing, although the appearance was repeatedly pointed out to her. One of the ladies present subsequently made a drawing of the “appearance” which she gave to me.

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I could give you many evidences of *identity* within my own knowledge and experience; I confine myself to these: but if you desire further, you may have them in abundance, and greatly more striking and conclusive, by consulting some of the numbers of the *Spiritual Magazine*. I could, indeed, detail to you marvels witnessed by others—persons as fully entitled to credit as I claim to be—compared with which those I have related from my own experience would be, I repeat, insignificant.

Facts by which to identify the spirit with the “person” are so numerous and so conclusive, that I consider it hardly necessary to detail any. Of the many I could give, I will, however, relate one. I passed an evening with the artist, Mr. Hannah; the medium was a Mr. Colchester—since passed from earth. He had never before seen and did not know me. Before I went to the meeting, in my own house I wrote a name in pencil on a small slip of paper, which I enclosed in seven envelopes—crossing and recrossing them. When I entered, I addressed Mr. Colchester and said, “I desire, if it be possible, to receive a communication from the spirit whose earthly names I have written in this paper.” He took it between his hands and threw it into the fire-place. I took it up and burned it, following him into the next room—a room with folding doors. We had not been seated two minutes before Colchester addressed me: “Sir,” he said, “that is a spirit by your side.” “What was the earthly name of that spirit?” “Hamilton Hall.” “Yes,” I said, “that is the name I had written. Now, if you are the spirit of my brother Hamilton, tell me what I mean by this:” placing my hand on my thigh. The answer written by Colchester was this: “I did it with a knife.” When we were young children I was teasing him at the dinner-table; he flung the carving knife at me: and the mark of the wound is still on my thigh. I had not thought of putting any such test until the moment before I asked the question.

A few months ago, a clergyman—a dignitary of the church—formed one of a circle in my house; the spirit of his mother came to him. He said “it

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\* I wrote this statement to Judge Edmonds, *apropos* of the trial of Mumler in New York, charged with fraudulently pretending to make photographs of spirits long departed—a charge which he refuted by evidence, which the presiding magistrate (not a Spiritualist) deemed sufficient to justify his discharge. Since then there have been manifest frauds in photography; so as greatly to weaken, if not to destroy, faith in the process; but if spirits can be seen and recognised there is no reason why they may not be photographed, nay, though we cannot see them, that they may be photographed, although not palpable to our sight.



would go far to convince me of your presence if you would write your maiden name on that paper." Two minutes afterwards, it *was* written.

I am strongly tempted to enlarge on this subject. My father once came to me: I asked him for a test, and he gave me one that no other person present could by any possibility have recognised. So it was with an aged woman who had been our servant more than forty years; and not long ago my life was saved by a very dear friend, the late Master of the Rolls in Ireland, who gave to Mrs. Hall and to me his earth-name at a sitting the day after.

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Who will say how often, what we thoughtlessly call "chance," is in reality the act of some spirit permitted to be our guardian and protector.

"It chanced—Eternal God that chance did guide!"

There can seldom be evidence that it is so, but no proof is required by believers in Spiritualism. The very beggar whose needs we have relieved may have been our preserver in dangers we marvel to have escaped: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these ye did it unto me." The bread we cast upon the waters may be returned to us "after many days."

What a stimulus is this belief to "do good and to distribute"—to "lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven:" to sow plenteously that we may reap plenteously: to "gather a good reward in the day of necessity:" to know, as indeed we do know, that those we help may be our help *there*, although *here* they can give us only prayers and blessings. It is fact, and not fancy, that we sometimes "entertain angels unawares."

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The occurrences I have above related (excepting the last), all took place when "mediums" were present. I have said that manifestations frequently happen when no medium is near. I will detail some of those that we (my wife and myself) receive, when we "sit" with a view to obtain them: they are by comparison limited in length, but that they are sources of intense happiness to us you will not doubt, when you have read some of the "messages" thus conveyed to us.

Our communications are obtained through the planchette, a piece of wood with a pencil attached to one end, which moves and writes when our hands are upon it. When the hands of either are alone there, no movement is made; when the hands of both are there, it rarely fails to write. We are utterly ignorant as to what is written until the sentence is finished (indicated by two raps of the planchette)\* and we have read it.

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\* Communications made by writing are very frequent.

Others draw most beautiful flowers, which are stated to be "from nature" in the other sphere; and I have seen drawings of angel groups by a young girl who, in her normal state, cannot draw at all, so good that Flaxman might have produced them. I know a lady and gentleman who cannot write a verse of poetry, but who have thus written a poem in blank verse of 400 lines, some passages of which are of great power and beauty. I am acquainted with three young ladies, sisters, who in my presence have had their hands guided to answer questions in lofty science, of which they are utterly ignorant. I have seen a French lady write a long extract from an English poem which she had never read—indeed, she could not speak ten words of the



From the messages so received, I extract the following, selecting them from more than a hundred of the like, premising that the spirit who thus communicates with us has never been of earth, and can answer no mundane question. More than once I have had this reply, "That is purely a mundane question, and I cannot answer it." The spirit, however, can and does prescribe for bodily ailment, and has more than once anticipated the prescription of our doctor. These are a few of the messages we receive: they are written in a broad, bold hand, very different from the handwriting of either of us; sometimes a word is illegible, which, at our request, is written again:—

"May God give us what we need, not what we ask."

"It is right, meet, and your bounden duty to encompass yourselves and those you love with an atmosphere of praise and prayer."

"The silent unbeliever is an object of pity; the public unbeliever is a pestilence."

"The Lord's influence will be with you when you pray for it, and even when you do not. He causeth the sun to shine on the just and on the unjust; but its greatest light, its warmest sunshine are for the household of faith. Pray that when the Lord cometh he may find your lamp bright and burning in that household."

"God's lamp is fed by the oil of gladness."

"Never mourn the departure of time, unless you have neglected its improvement."

"Keep away all gloom, for gloom insults God."

"Neglect no means of grace, neither in the closet nor in the church; and though zeal leads you on to instruct, yet remember you have two ears and but one tongue."

"Prayer is to the growth of faith what water is to dry land. May the love and peace and joy of Christ dwell with you, now and for ever. Amen!"

"It is well to study and think over all words, but especially written words; they live after you have left life, and in them your life continues. Weigh and consider your written words."

"The land that asks a day's rain should be grateful even for a shower."

"The wayside gutter cannot have the purity of the mountain stream, though the sun and the stars shine on it, and at times it catches their beauty and light, and is purified."

"You will be harmonized by this evening (*i.e.*, an evening at church), for even if it is not given to the preacher to illumine your mind, the Divine Spirit is in the prayers, and the sacred singing is the voice-incense to heaven, and the atmosphere is more refreshing to the wearied and worn than the perfume of a garden of roses to the fainting senses. Remember how He honoured the Temple made with hands."

We have had but one "living" child. Its earth-life was but for a few days. I *know* she has been often with us—that she is our child still—that she will be restored to us; as surely as that when one of us two—husband and wife—has "gone before," that one will again meet that other. "They sin who tell us love can die!" My belief is, as you are now aware, that though the child has been taken from our sight, she is with us continually;

"She is not dead—the child of our affection.

Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,  
She lives, whom we call dead.

Not as a child shall we again behold her;

But a fair maiden, in her Father's mansion,  
Clothed with celestial grace."

language. These writings are by no means always with the planchette; often the pencil is held in the hand, and the hand is guided. What is called "direct spirit writing" is when the pencil and paper are laid together, and no human hand is near them. Well authenticated cases of this kind are numerous. I have seen several.



Sitting with a clergyman lately, the spirit of a child he had "lost" came to him. The child had been born deaf and dumb. The message given was, "You will hear his little echo soon." The clergyman clasped his hands and exclaimed, that was the only word the child ever spoke; it continually moved about the house saying "e-co!" I received once a message to Robert Chambers from a child he had "lost," and I asked for a test to prove the verity of the communication. This was the answer, "Tell him pa love!" I have before me the letter of Robert Chambers, in which he writes to me, "These were the last words the child said when she was dying in my arms."

"Ah!" said the Quaker, to a lady he saw in grief—that reason and religion had not lessened—for the loss of her child, "Ah! friend, I see thou hast not yet forgiven God Almighty!" She was mourning without hope. What hope might she not have derived from Spiritualism? Believing, and receiving comfort and consolation from the belief—knowing that the child

"Takes the vacant seat beside me,  
Lays her gentle hand in mine."

I have confined myself almost entirely to the marvels of which I have been myself a witness; but, as I have intimated, there are those who will testify to marvels infinitely more wonderful; such as the "bodily" appearance of spirits—having all the outer characters of beings of flesh and blood. I leave this matter in the hands of Mr. W. Crookes, F.R.S., who has deposed to many facts compared with which the facts now related are very small, to say the least.

Albeit, to such facts he has printed the certificates of several ladies and gentlemen, who were on such occasions present; some of them have high social rank; and all of them are far above the suspicion of delusion—to no other charge could any one of them be for a moment subjected.\*

Rev. Sir, I have now a less pleasant duty to discharge. That evil spirits as well as good spirits are actively at work among Spiritualists is abundantly proved. It was always so. The apostle emphatically warns us to "try the spirits whether they are of God." There were active anti-Christian spirits then as there are now: then as now there was mediumship for evil as well as for good. It was so during the earlier periods of the Jewish history: so it was during our Lord's sojourn on earth and the times that followed—so far as we know concerning them from Holy Writ. Can we doubt that so it was with the immediate successors of the Apostles—the primitive Christians—that it has been so, indeed, in all ages? Spiritualists are terribly and fatally broken up into sects: one sect maintains that Christ is a saviour only in the sense that any good man is a saviour—to those who follow him. Another (it largely prevails in France) teaches the loathsome

\* "If, as is claimed, there be a 'preternatural element' involved in the manifestations, what fact more important could be established? The question of a death-defying principle in man, an invisible body, the continent of his individuality, of his entire self, unimpaired by the wreck of matter or by the transition to another stage of being? Were it a question of the discovery of a beetle, distinguishable from all other known varieties by an additional spot, what respectful heed would be given to it by specialists like yourself, and how patient would they be of all details!"—*Epes Sargent addressing Professor Tyndall.*



doctrine of re-incarnation: that the Supreme transmits the soul from one body into another—made to receive it; hence all earthly ties are abrogated: a future is *nil* as associated with a past: reformation is begun, and will be ended, here: memory becomes a dim and utterly clouded retrospect—if there be any retrospect at all. Such a creed is infinitely worse than that of total annihilation—far more repulsive than that which recognises *no* hereafter. Thus William Howitt writes concerning such Spiritualists as those to whom I refer: “By the extravagance of their doctrines and the wild immorality of some of their social innovations, they have struck a deadly blow at their own glorious dispensation. By their licentious free-loverism: by citing the teaching of spirits to violate the sanctity of marriage: to declare the non-existence of evil, though its desolation and ruins lie awfully around us: and by their attacks on all established faiths: by the loathsome dogma of re-incarnation and the advocacy of heathenism: they have caused sober and reflective people to start back and stand aloof.”

I am told—and I do not doubt—that those who hold the frightful belief in reincarnation, derive it from instructions of spirits, some of whom have been, and some of whom have not been, in the flesh. And I know many enlightened and good persons who, most unhappily, profess it. “Horrible, hateful idea,” as William Howitt terms it—impossible to God, and intolerable to man—“destroying,” to quote from another writer, “the principle of personal identity, and the hope of future recognition of mutually attached souls.”

These are perhaps the most objectionable of the theories which Spiritualists profess and teach, and broadly proclaim as tending to the social good, moral progress, and ultimate happiness of man!

Unhappily, as I have said, some of the periodical works that represent Spiritualists as well as published volumes, uphold and strive to extend these doctrines of devils. Still more unhappily, there are lecturers going about from town to town labouring to inculcate such pernicious teachings—in some cases forming what they term “children’s classes,” and holding “seances” of which blasphemy is the foundation and the end. Many follow these “pernicious ways,” “bringing upon themselves swift destruction,” as they did when false prophets were denounced by the Apostle Peter. “He that biddeth him ‘God speed’ is partaker in his evil deeds.” The warnings against spirits of devils “working miracles,” “seducing spirits” and “doctrines of devils,” “spiritual wickedness in high places,” are as applicable to-day as they were when they were uttered. It is as needful now as it was then to believe not every spirit; but to “try the spirits whether they be of God.”

But, Rev. Sir, I have shown you that the working of Spiritualism is not all evil; if it were so, I should yet intreat you to “stand between the dead and the living, that the plague may be stayed.” Hundreds of thousands have been converted by Spiritualism from utter unbelief; and if their creed be now confused, or worse, it is at least better than that which excluded *all faith in Hereafter*. They have not gone from good to bad; they had no belief in any future, any responsibility, any God: and their last state is certainly not worse than their first.

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And now, Rev. Sir, to my main purpose in addressing you, and, through you, other clergymen, ministers, pastors, and teachers, of any Christian Church. You may be sure I have not written this pamphlet without earnest prayer to God for



guidance : that He would send His angels and the spirits of just men made perfect to aid me as I wrote ! My prayer has been answered.

I say again, you *cannot* arrest the progress of Spiritualism ; but you *can* guide it. You can make it a helper to Christianity. It is, as I have shown you, spreading largely over earth—this “new revelation of an old power :” of a surety, it will increase.\*

It is in the hope that you, and men like you, whose solemn and bounded duty it is not only to pray, but to give practical effect to the prayer—“that it may please Thee to bring into the way of truth all such as have erred and are deceived”—that you, and men like you, will stand by the side of Christian Spiritualists in their combat with “spiritual wickedness” in places high and low—to sustain in fighting the good fight of faith those Spiritualists who are emphatically Christians—as hostile as you can be to the propagators of infidelity.

You, and men like you, who have made a solemn contract with God and man to impress and extend and interpret the holy, and comforting, and happy truths of the Gospel, must come to the van and no longer loiter in the rear, or rather by keeping altogether aloof, be indirectly, yet certainly, aiding and abetting those who are our foes as much as yours. Will you see us warring with the powers of darkness and render no help to those who bear the banner of light ?

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And now, Rev. Sir, I draw this Letter to a close. I have told you of my entire faith—without the shadow of a doubt—that not only does God send to earth His holy angels, ministers of His will, but that He permits to visit earth and to hold intercourse with those who are yet of earth, those who have been “in the flesh :” I have told you I have had such clear, ample, continual, and conclusive proof of this, that, if I did not believe it, I could believe nothing for which I have the evidence of my senses sustained by reason, analogy, and reflection : I have presumed to tell you also, that my faith is supported by testimony in all ages—by God himself in the inspired writings of His prophets—by the testimony of our Lord and Saviour, and by the repeated and emphatic declarations of His apostles. I have shown that hundreds of thousands, nay millions, receive and cherish this faith : believing it to be sent of God, and that we are, more or less, the means He adopts for its propagation ; that “the dead die not”—that there is another state of being, and that we step into it at the instant of our leaving what we call life ; that permission for the departed to communicate with the living is a part of God’s merciful dispensation to humanity—that he permits us evidence

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\* “Spiritualism can now take care of itself. For the last quarter of a century those who hate and fear it have been comforted almost daily with the assurance that it was at last dead and buried ; that some great exposure had taken place which explained its tricks and proved it to be all a fraud. Yet here it is, more irrepressible than ever, though its ‘exposers’ multiply, and its calumniators call it bad names. It goes on, not at all affected, it would seem, by all these assaults of anger, malevolence, charlatanry, and pseudo-science. It has survived not only the frauds and misdemeanors of real or spurious mediums—not only the dislike and denunciation of its critical classes, the religious and the cultivated—but what is harder to endure, the help that is harmful, the imprudences of its own friends, and the heresies, credulities, and stupidities that would seek a shelter under its name.”—*Epes Sargent*.



that it is so—that His ways are inscrutable and past finding out, and that in seeking to fathom them we only betray our infirmities :—

“Blind unbelief is sure to err,  
And scan His work in vain ;  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain.”

Rev. Sir, you will not tell me there is no meaning in this passage from the prayer we of the Church of England offer up at the grave-side of one whose earthly tabernacle we bury out of sight: sown a natural body: to be raised a spiritual body: “Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of those that depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity.”

I have shown you that the belief I cherish I share with some of the most enlightened men and women of the age—of intelligence unimpeachable—upright, conscientious, and good—utterly incapable of fraud, and, as far as humanity can be, not liable to self-delusion or exposed to the influence of deception.

We believe—I repeat—that Spiritualism, the foe of Materialism, may lead to inconceivable, immeasurable, good. And we pray God that, having enlightened us, we may be made His instruments for distributing that light to our fellows on earth—that, BEING CONVERTED, WE MAY STRENGTHEN OUR BRETHREN.

I am aware that in the earnestness of my desire to impress your mind I have occasionally “repeated myself.” I risk that charge again by printing, with additions, a short paper I recently contributed to the “Spiritualists’ Calendar,” edited by the Rev. F. R. Monck.

To me it seems marvellous that people who believe in a Creator—GOD—and in the existence of a *soul*, linked with every *body*, that does not perish when the body perishes,—that such persons should refuse to believe, or find any difficulty in believing, that the soul after separation from the body can and does visit and communicate with the souls that yet continue “in the flesh,” awaiting their own removal to that other sphere which they are to inhabit when the bonds that bound them to earth—in the ordinary sense of the term earth-life—are in force no longer.

The soul when gone from the body is *somewhere*. Probably, there are now very few who accept the old theory that the soul remained—not dead but torpid, like a stone—until a final award of happiness or punishment at “the day of judgment.” Those who have that faith are consistent and rational in answering that there can be no communication between the “living” and the “dead:” but, surely, it is far otherwise with those who hold that the soul does not lose consciousness when its earth-life ceases. Such consciousness to be retained makes the Heaven or the Hell of hereafter. “The deeds done in the flesh,” when they become *retrospect*, must be sources of joy or misery, or the soul would be, to all intents and purposes, a new creation, and the promises of Scripture signify nothing: while all inducements to act righteously, to fear and love God, and do His work for “neighbour,” would be utterly *nil*, except



inasmuch as they might influence us for evil or for good in the life, brief or prolonged, the united soul and body is commissioned, or permitted, to pass on earth. I ask you to read again the passage I have quoted from Dr. Cumming at page 12 of this Letter.

If the soul, on its departure from the body, its sometime tabernacle—the house in which it has dwelt—loses all consciousness of a past, what can be its future? If it cease to take any interest in things of earth, if the affections are to die when the body dies, and although parents, children, friends while “living” enjoy the bliss that memory brings, the souls removed are denied all such sources of happiness,—surely, to maintain such a doctrine would go very far to destroy all honour and glory to God, all faith and trust in Him, in His justice and His mercy, and all the hope that sustains more or less every human being born into the world, and what is, so especially, the inexpressible blessing of the Christian.

I am limited to a brief space: yet upon this fertile theme I could fill many pages: and may do so if my life is sufficiently prolonged *here*: if not, my faith is that I shall be directed to do that work hereafter.

I am as sure that the “dead”—wrongly so-called, for there is no death, “what seems so is transition”—can and do communicate with the “living” as I am that my right hand holds the pen with which I write. I could give a hundred proofs in evidence. I have given some in this Letter; but they are to be had by thousands in the hundreds of volumes that Spiritualists have written: and those who desire or require conviction may obtain it from “authorities” at least as unquestionable as I can be.

That souls “departed”—that is to say, removed from positive “contact” with our senses (though I by no means admit that it is so, for, as I have stated, I have seen, heard, and touched “spirits” I knew to be the spirits of those I had known when I and they were living on earth), are continually about us, as “vital” intelligences, comforting, consoling, helping, advising, protecting, teaching, I no more doubt than I do the power of the Creator.

He or she who seeks to deprive me of this source of incalculable happiness is a cruel and needless enemy: but a worse enemy to the soul that is freed from the flesh than to the soul that continues encumbered by flesh.

Such an enemy would take from us all responsibility—all stimulants to good, all faith, all hope in this life: but that is comparatively little of the evil he or she who so teaches us would do.

Picture a soul departed—a mother taken from her child, a husband from his wife, a child from its parent, a friend from a friend—and imagine its condition *if* it is permitted to retain consciousness and has still the power of memory and the gift of reason, shut out from all intercourse with the objects of affection, anxiety, hope, with only the horrors of suspense, despondency, fear—I add one word *despair*! and ask yourself, if there can be Heaven for a soul so circumstanced!

Surely, if the soul, after its departure from earth, retained no remembrance of “deeds done in the flesh,” no consciousness of a past with its light or heavy records of good or evil, it would be, to all intents and purposes, a new creation: in no sense the soul that made happiness or misery to many or few, during its habitation of the body—for minutes or a century, as it may be—in this sphere. It would be, in short, tantamount to extinction, for we know the body is



destroyed, and if the mind be obliterated also there could be no hereafter of rewards or punishments. This life would be all in all: the "be-all and the end all" would be of earth and on earth.

God keep us from a faith so utterly miserable—so entirely opposed to revelation and to reason: a faith that would extinguish hope as a delusion: that would make the Christian of "all men most wretched," render the sensual enjoyments of life the duties of a season, and justify men who say "let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die."

Possibly I am fighting with a shadow; there may be none who believe in God and in the soul's immortality, who hold and cherish so foul a doctrine.

But my purpose is to show that if there be not such an annihilation of all we associate with the soul, there must outlive *this* life, affection, memory, reflection, comparison, intelligence—to use a familiar word, REASON: that these faculties are not lost or lessened, but vastly strengthened in the soul after its removal from the body. They *must* be exercised: there *must* be a continual recurrence to the events of this life: there *must* be meaning in the words "well done good and faithful servant," and in these—"depart from me ye wicked." Only by the unlimited exercise of these powers could there be reward and punishment: without them "Hereafter" would be a sound "signifying nothing!"

"But MEMORY lives—of what thou wert and art—  
In 'many mansions' where the Soul may dwell:  
For to REMEMBER is of Heaven a part,  
As to REMEMBER is a part of Hell."\*

Let imagination then follow a departed soul into the sphere it occupies—in progress—after leaving life in the flesh, and ask whether it is possible for a soul to be happy with memory strong, and love stronger, as regards those who continue yet on earth: fancy the perpetual anxiety to know something of the beloved ones: the yearning desire to help them: the continual conviction that when they go wrong they might, if helped, go right: that danger, physical and moral, *might be* effectually averted—if God would permit the advanced soul to give aid to souls that are in peril. And ask yourself, if Heaven *could* be a place of bliss, if you, believing you *could help*, were debarred from efforts to help—withstanding your deep longings and your earnest prayers!

Is it hard, then, to believe that a God of love and mercy will permit to the spirits for whom He designs happiness hereafter—to whom His promises have been emphatically given—and to whom He has sent THE BOOK that "they might have hope converted into certainty," that "by patience and comfort of His holy word," they may have reliance and faith, that can by no possibility infer disappointment—is it hard to believe that God does permit such souls to revisit earth as the guardian angels of those they have loved when clothed in "humanity," and whom they love still more dearly when dwellers in Celestial spheres?

I have said I *know* that the spirits of those who have gone from earth can and do communicate with those who remain on earth: that such belief is not

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\* "Butler argues expressly that there is no ground for supposing that the exercise of our present powers of reflection is even *suspended* by the act of dying.—See Analogy, ch. i., *ad fin.*" "Unless the act of dying is to effect some magical change—which there is nothing in Reason or Revelation to suggest—such as the sinner was when he passed from Earth, he must wake in the World Unseen. . . ."—*The Rev. H. N. Oxenham in the Contemporary Review.*



only borne out by Scripture, "written for our learning," but sustained by Reason: that, in a word, spirits departed, "gone before," *could not be happy* unless such was the Will of God.

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When our Lord said, "I have finished the work Thou gavest me to do," He did not mean it to be inferred that there would be no more "work" for Him. *After* the crucifixion He preached to the souls in prison, and taught disciples on the way to Emmaus; it was *after* He had "risen from the dead," "when the doors were shut," He appeared to the eleven, breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost!"

There are a hundred passages of Scripture (if they are needed) to show that the Divine Master is still working. So it will ever be while man needs a comforter, a helper, a mediator. Christianity is based on the belief that God permits no idleness to any of the works of His creation.

The most beautiful of the Church Collects prays that "As Thy holy angels always do Thy appointments, they may succour and defend us on earth," inferring that they may work for us and with us; and surely the prayer would apply quite as strongly to the "just made perfect" as to "holy angels." Can we conceive a state of existence where there are thousands of millions of souls with "nothing to do"? Surely some of them will "walk the earth"—

"Both when we wake and when we sleep."

Can we suppose that God has no occupation for them? Can they see the beloved ones, and render them no help? Hear them, and give no response? Are they less capable in their state of beatitude than they were when clogged by human infirmities—

"Puzzled in mazes and perplexed with error?"

Always assuming that consciousness of the past is not obliterated, will they be useless when mortal has put on immortality, and nothing but the earthly tabernacle is dissolved? The WILL is strong—stronger than ever. Is the power weaker—weaker than ever—to guide, to counsel, to comfort, to console, often to protect and preserve from perils seen or unseen? "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living;" surely as much the God of Moses and Elias, when communing with our Lord on the Mount, as when they were doing the earth-work He had given them to do.

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O blessed faith that keeps us ever watchful, knowing ourselves to be perpetually watched: that gives us conclusive and continual evidence how very thin are the partitions that separate this world from "the next"—the next where ingratitude is a crime, and "sins of omission" exact penalties as do "sins of commission:" where those who, having neglected their "talent," are guilty as those who misused it. "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of these ye did it not unto me," implies condemnation for opportunities neglected, as well as abused.

"For what we will, yet lack the power to do,  
Be it for good or ill, God counts as done."

O blessed faith! that brings closer and nearer those whom death has, not



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even for a time, separated from us : that makes certain sure the actual presence of those we love : sharing our daily walks, our hourly talks : watching us with hopeful love : participating in all our anxieties : in all our joys : guiding us, helping us, averting from us evil and the influence of evil : bringing around and about us the holy and the good : giving us a foretaste of that "overpowering of delight" of which the poet speaks as the recompense of death : bringing palpably to our hearts and minds "the substance of things hoped for ; the evidence of things not seen : " and prompting to continual prayer, that when our Lord cometh He may find our lamps bright and burning in the Household of Faith.

O blessed Faith ! that enhances a thousand-fold the joy that is given by the Christian dispensation ; that removes all doubts of Hereafter—teaching us that angels who do the will of our Father which is in heaven, "may by his appointment succour and defend us on earth," and that the perfected spirits of the just are not only permitted, but directed, so to aid us—that we also may inherit the "mansions" prepared for us !

That is the faith of all Christians. But it is not the happy privilege of all to have palpable and convincing evidence of their companionship on earth ; the absolute and positive *knowledge* of their continual presence, hearing all we say, seeing all we do—nay, cognisant of our most secret thoughts : "to us invisible or dimly seen,"—yet sometimes seen and heard and felt by us while we dwell in our habitations of clay. It is not belief,—it is certainty !

Is not death thus deprived of its sting ? are we not thus taught to dread

"The grave as little as our bed !"

Shall we not, therefore, strive so to live that we may be the associates of the good and the happy when we leave earth—when the loving and beloved will meet us—"the souls of the perfected just released and relieved from the burthen of dust"—not with the ailments and weaknesses that clog mortality,—the draperies of Earth that entangle the soul—but freed of them all !

And we, hoping in faith that God will, in our turn, make us His messengers—it may be His missionaries—to those we have left behind, amid troubles, griefs, and temptations, to be *their* consolers, *their* comforters, *their* counsellors, during the remainder of their journey through this life to another life, where—there as well as here—the soul is

"tried and purified,  
To have in heaven its perfect rest."

S. C. HALL