



WHY I AM A SPIRITUALIST.

IN answering this question it is proper that the term Spiritualist should be first defined, or at least that the writer should state the sense in which he is willing to accept it as applicable to himself. It is well known by such as have taken the trouble to inform themselves in the matter, that there are spiritualists *and* spiritualists. There are, doubtless, numbers who assume this designation, or to whom it is popularly applied, with whom the undersigned has very little in common, and has no desire to be classed. In some quarters the term Spiritualist is regarded as almost synonymous with open-mouthed credulity, wild fanaticism, general looseness of morals, scoffing irreligion, and measureless folly. Without attempting to deny that some occasion has been given by persons called or calling themselves Spiritualists, for such an estimate, I shall endeavor to show that the term more properly applies to persons who hold convictions and cherish aspirations of which no rational, pure-minded or devout man need be ashamed, but which are worthy the serious regard of all thoughtful people.

It should be noted that, in being thus subject to diverse conceptions and interpretations, modern spiritualism is by no means peculiar. There is no form of belief, no system of religious faith, or of rationalistic philosophy even, extant among men, but has its lower as well as its higher interpretations—its unworthy as well as its worthy representatives. Christianity is surely no exception to this rule. The crude notions and practices prevalent among the more uncultivated of its professors differ widely from the convictions and observances approved in the most intelligent and refined churches in Christendom. And often members of the same sect or church are found greatly at variance in their conceptions and expositions of Christianity, as well as in their practical exemplifications of the same. Fair-minded inquirers will judge any systems by its best, rather than its worst, expositions.

A Spiritualist, formerly, was one who believed in the doctrine of spiritualism ; that is, in any system of spiritual philosophy, as opposed to Materialism—like those of Berkeley and Fichte, chiefly speculative in character. But more modernly the term has come to signify also, according to Worcester, “ a believer in the doctrine that the spirits of the dead hold communication with men;” or, according to Webster, “one who believes in direct intercourse with departed spirits.” Neither of these latter definitions, however, is strictly accurate, since, if it be true that spirits communicate, it is manifest that they are neither “ dead ” nor “ departed ” from our world. It would be more exact to say, “One who believes, or knows, that communication with excommunicated spirits is possible and actual.” This necessarily includes several postulates, namely, (1) that man is in reality a spirit, or a spiritual being ; (2) that he is capable, as a spirit, of surviving the death of his physical body, and (3) of living on as a conscious entity, (4) in a world or state which, though invisible, is not far removed from our mundane existence.

Thus it will be seen that, as the term is modernly used, Spiritualism involves simply a question of fact, provable by sensible and rational evidence, like the facts of astronomy, of chemistry, or of telegraphy ; and a Spiritualist in this sense is one who has become convinced of this fact, aside from and independent of religious belief, theological dogmas, or moral codes of any description. It is true, however, that the subject is so closely related to both religion and morals that a conviction of this one basic fact, with the new knowledge and fresh influx of thought that are apt to come with it, is likely to result in some modification—at least, expansion—of previous religious conceptions, and perhaps ethical notions also, depending much upon the nature of the views antecedently entertained. And it is somewhat common for undiscriminating minds, even among avowed Spiritualists as well as their opponents, to regard as essential parts of Spiritualism the particular theories or views *they* as individuals have come to entertain, whether religious or anti-religious, theistical or atheistical, rational or irrational, refined and spiritual, or crude and gross. Opponents are specially liable to make this mistake, particularly as regards anything which appears to them objectionable and offensive. But candid inquirers who may read these pages will please note that to be a Spiritualist, in the authorized modern

sense of the term, means no more than merely to be a believer in the reality of communion with the so-called "dead," or more correctly, with excarnated human beings. It does not necessarily imply adhesion to what some one has rightly termed "that compound of atheism, agnosticism, irreligion and blatant individualism" (to which might sometimes be added sensualism) which is frequently, but erroneously, called "spiritualism." Beyond the simple fact of recognized spirit-communion, all theories of religion, all doctrines of theology,—all questions about the existence of God, the Devil, Christ, the Bible, creation, salvation, atonement, reincarnation, the condition and destiny of spirits, etc., and all debatable questions in morals,—are matters of distinct or after inquiry, regarding which Spiritualists are no more fully at one than are other people. Each independent thinker has his own opinions, depending much upon his previous status, his capability for dealing with such subjects, as well as his predilections and the consequent grade or department of the vast environing spirit-world with which he is most closely in rapport.

It should be added, however, on this point that since the word *spiritual*, in its ordinary significance, designates "that which pertains to spirit," "separated from things of sense," refined, "pure, holy, divine," etc. (see lexicographers), it is plainly incongruous and improper to apply it to any notions or practices of a gross, unspiritual, or sensualistic character. Mere believers in spirits, and their doings, who are chiefly engrossed with marvels and eager for startling novelties, or who mainly occupy themselves with the phenomenal and scientific aspects of the matter, irrespective of and indifferent to any morally refining and uplifting tendency it may contribute—of both which classes there may be large numbers—are more properly designated as *Spiritists*, and their belief and practice *Spiritism*. They and it lack the element designated by the particle *ual*.

The term *Spiritualist*, then, properly pertains only to such persons as, in addition to a recognition of spirit-existence, presence, and communion, hold to doctrines of an elevating, refining, spiritualizing tendency, and aspire to exemplify these in thought and life, seeking to make spirit-communion contribute to that high end. Such aspiration establishes a tendency to look beneath the surfaces of things—to inquire into causes, hidden meanings, and realities—to interpret all systems of religion,

philosophy, and morals according to the *spirit* rather than the *letter*, and to view the universe from the standpoint of the spirit instead of that of matter.

In the comprehensive sense thus defined, I avow myself a Spiritualist, and now am prepared to state intelligibly and explicitly why I am one:

1. It is because for more than thirty-five years I have enjoyed the privilege of conversing, more or less freely and frequently, and in the privacy of my own family, with beings (invisible to myself) claiming to be exarnated human spirits—many of them relatives and personal friends well known in their earthly lives—and who have given conclusive evidence of being what they claim to be.

2. Because, through this intercourse and the demonstrations and experiences that have accompanied it, I have been led to entertain conceptions of the universe,—material and spiritual,—of Deity and the Divine Providence,—of the spirit-world and its relations to this,—of man, his duty and destiny,—in fact, of all which is embraced in the domains of Religion, Philosophy and Ethics,—which are to my view not only eminently rational, but expanding, uplifting, spiritualizing and soul-satisfying beyond anything and everything I have been able to gain from any and all other sources.

In order to justify the first branch of this answer, it is necessary to make some statement of the facts or evidences which have proved to me the reality of spirit intercourse; but in the brief space at my disposal no extended recital of what has covered so many years can be attempted. Nor, perhaps, would it be of much use, since it is not possible to convey in cold print, to readers who are inexperienced and skeptical in such matters, any adequate idea of the force of evidence, whether of distinct personality or of personal identity, which attends a free conversation and interchange of thought between friends. No outside person can be a competent judge in such matters. Let it be noted that I am stating why *I* am a Spiritualist—not giving proofs that should make others such. It is desirable that, in so important a matter, all persons should witness and know for themselves, and then their faith will stand on no uncertain ground. I am confident that no sane mind, meeting with similar proofs, or even a tithe of them, could avoid the same conclusions with myself; yet my convictions should not answer for another.

But it may not be out of place to briefly mention some of the steps by which my present convictions were arrived at, with indications of the nature of the evidence on which they rest, and the quality of the "angelic ministrations" enjoyed.

I was born and reared under the influence of New England Puritanism of the most rigid type, as it prevailed three-score years ago, and at an early age accepted the faith of my fathers in a general way, becoming a member of an orthodox Congregationalist Church, and actively devoting myself to the work of the Church. My mind was so constituted, however, that I could accept no dogma or duty until I could see what appeared to me a rational basis for it. The creed of the particular Church with which I united happened to be, as I afterwards found, of an unusually liberal type, having been greatly modified from the old standards under the influence of a pastor more noted for practical good sense than for sectarian zeal, and I was not long in finding that I held many of the doctrines of the sect in a sense peculiar to myself, while others I was either unable to accept at all, or gradually repudiated.

As to belief in a future life, this had been taken for granted, mainly on the force of early education and as a part of the current Christian doctrine; but as I grew older and came in contact with intelligent people who were skeptical regarding existence after death, I often wondered at the paucity of positive evidence on the subject, though I do not remember to have seriously doubted it for myself. But it seemed to me that if all human beings who have lived actually continue to live as conscious beings, there ought to be some available proof of it in addition to the evidence found in the Bible records more than eighteen hundred years old. If spirits and angels could once visit earth, why should they not now? Consequently, all accounts which came in my way of supposed manifestations from the invisible world, or of visions of it or its inhabitants at the approach of death, etc., were read and pondered with eager interest. But few such accounts fell in my way, and none were very satisfactory, especially in view of the prevalent skepticism with which all such matters were regarded in the Church as in "the world." I then knew next to nothing of the mass of evidence bearing on this subject which has accumulated through all history, and in all nations which have a literature, but which has been discredited and

largely suppressed by the materialistic tendencies of modern times.

When, in 1848, the startling announcement went abroad that, at Hydesville and Rochester, N. Y., an invisible intelligence, claiming to be a human spirit, had found means of communicating by signals from the silent world, the statement caused a thrill of hope that it might prove true; but when I learned that the revelations made regarding the nature and conditions of the after-life did not accord with the notions I had been taught, I naturally concluded that the mysterious "rapper," if a spirit at all, must be an "evil and seducing" one.

Some months later the strange "rappings" broke out in Boston, where I then resided. An intelligent gentleman, with whom I was associated in employment, and whom I highly esteemed, informed me that they were occurring in the family of one of his neighbors, the "mediums" being a woman in humble station, but of simple and honest character, with her young daughter. Day after day my friend brought me statements of what he witnessed and messages which he received in interviews with this family; and I soon saw that he was not only becoming thoroughly convinced of the spirit origin of the phenomena and messages, but, to my dismay, was being, as I feared, dangerously misled as to religious opinions. I felt that in some way he must be the victim of a delusion, but saw that the only way to rescue him was to go with him, find out the trick, and expose it to himself. Accordingly I accepted his invitation to accompany him to an interview.

Suffice it to say, that I soon found my friend had strong reasons for his belief in the spirit-origin of these novel phenomena, and, instead of being able to rescue him from a shallow delusion, I was myself face to face with a problem which demanded intelligent and courageous solution. There was evident intelligence behind the mysterious raps, and I had at least one proof that it was not altogether evil disposed.

But opportunities to personally pursue the inquiry under favorable circumstances were then few, and I was in no haste. Reading and pondering everything which came in my way relating to the matter, in the light of my previous education, the theory that "evil and seducing spirits" were seeking through this novel method to mislead humanity, seemed the most probable explanation. But I was not wholly satisfied with this solution.

Might not my ideas of the conditions of supposed "departed" spirits be mistaken? All I had been able to learn on the subject from the Bible and from my religious teachers was confessedly vague and unsatisfactory. Some of the new views presented seemed at least rational and worthy to be true. I could not come to a decision without further knowledge.

At length opportunity offered to visit the well-known Mrs. Hayden, in whose presence the demonstrations were much more pronounced. She was an entire stranger to me, but her personal integrity was strongly vouched for by friends. At her table, taking every precaution against imposition, I was greeted by an intelligence claiming to be my father (then twenty years deceased), who stated several particulars regarding himself, which were known to me, and one, as to the cause of his death, which was unknown (but which I subsequently learned was doubtless correct). Till then I had held a sort of vague notion that any facts communicated in this way might be in some way picked out of one's mind, perhaps by clairvoyance or mind-reading on the medium's part, or by crafty invisible beings, and by some occult process told by the "raps." But this theory would no longer serve.

The sounds then indicated an urgent desire to communicate further to me, and using the alphabet and pencil in the customary way, I was astonished to see a spontaneous message grow letter by letter on the paper before me, not only glowing with parental affection, but breathing an exalted religious tone, and which seemed eminently characteristic and worthy of my father, from whom it claimed to come. It differed from anything I had before seen or heard of from this source, the communications usually being meagre answers to questions, or of a frivolous and sometimes offensively irreligious character.

Why should I not accept this message as from my revered parent? The proof of extra-mundane intelligence, in this as in other cases, seemed incontestible. Yet the possibility and danger of being deceived by crafty and designing beings—or by *a* being "of fathomless intellect and fathomless guile," as a prominent clerical writer had phrased it—had been so strongly impressed on my mind that I hesitated long. It was urged that "Satan himself can be seemingly transformed into an angel of light." But why, I thought, should "evil and seducing spirits" alone be allowed access to humanity, while loving parents, friends, and holy

beings are shut away? It seemed incredible that it should be so. The same Bible which warned against deceivers taught also that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him," and that "ministering spirits" are "sent forth to minister to them which shall be heirs of salvation"; and it enjoined that we "try the spirits whether they be of God," plainly implying that the latter class may approach us, and that it is within our power and province to distinguish between the two classes, to guard against the machinations of the evil, and to avail ourselves of the ministrations of the good. It also enjoined us to be "not forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."

Instead, then, of cowardly shrinking from any contact with these denizens of the invisible world, or from any inquiry regarding them, as I found my fellow-Christians generally disposed to do, it seemed plainly my duty to qualify myself to discriminate between them, and, clad in the panoply of conscious rectitude, guided by supreme love of truth and purity of aspiration, boldly to meet these messengers claiming audience from the invisible realm, test their quality and purposes, and avail myself of any good they might peradventure bring. And it seemed just, also, that the test applied to determine their character should not be merely avowed belief in doctrines popularly esteemed "orthodox"—since it is easy for deceivers to profess any belief—but rather, practical *fruits*, and the obvious tendencies of their influence and teachings.

It was not long after determining on the duty of hospitality to these visitors from the unseen shore, that their presence began to be manifested in my own home, through the instrumentality of a member of my own family, and in hours of quiet seclusion. They made their presence known in various but unmistakable ways. One notable early occurrence was as follows: In consequence of a severe and painful illness, my companion was at one time brought, as it seemed, very near to death's door. One evening, on my leaving her to get a little rest, she bade me adieu, hardly expecting to survive the night. Soon afterwards she felt herself leaving the body and soaring above it, gazing back upon it as it lay upon the couch; then she was seemingly wafted upward, passing through what appeared to be an atmosphere of undulating music, and was ushered through an illuminated portal into a vast

amphitheatre, in which were assembled what seemed "an innumerable company of angels," who broke forth into a chant of greeting. Among these she was soon recognized and greeted by relatives and friends who had "gone before"—her own father, bringing a tiny babe she had lost some years previously, being among the number. One was brought to her and introduced as my father, whom she had never seen in this life, and she was able to give me afterwards a singularly correct description of his person as she saw him. During the interview which followed, and which may have lasted some hours—as the nurse fell asleep, and there was no one to take note of time—she witnessed and was told many things of great interest and instruction, tending to solve problems which had long perplexed her own mind and mine, but which cannot be here recounted. At length she was apprised that she must return to her body, but was very reluctant to do so, as she seemed happily escaped from all the ills and sufferings of earth. She was reminded that there were important duties remaining for her to perform on earth, and when these were accomplished this heavenly home would await her. The thought of her family and her infant babe reconciled her to a return, and she seemed to pass back over the same route by which she had ascended. She found herself again in the body, but, to her surprise and delight, *the pain and disease had wholly disappeared*, and she quickly regained her wonted strength and health. But the power of passing into the spiritual state (that is, the state of quickened or opened spiritual perceptions, in which spirit-beings are seen and heard) has remained ever since, and can be exercised partially at will, provided no untoward influence interferes.

That this experience was no ordinary purposeless dream no argument is needed to show, and that the spirit sight and hearing, or clairvoyance and clairsaudience, which have followed are not an abnormal or diseased action of the faculties, as some may suppose,—although first coming into activity as a result of severe suffering,—is evidenced by the fact that a good degree of health is found requisite for their exercise,—the best health for their best use. Years of experience have tested their reality and taught something of the laws of their exercise.

To complete my narrative: The spirit claiming to be my father afterwards manifested great persistency in efforts to satisfy all my doubts regarding his personality. Gradually he, and apparently

others, acquired power to control (on permission) my companion's hand to write without volition on her part ; also to control her vocal organs, to speak and converse—she retaining complete consciousness the while, and aware that the writing and the speech were not hers but from another person who was ordinarily seen and recognized by her on approach. Such was my skepticism, however, that months elapsed before accumulating evidence compelled me to confess my full satisfaction. When, at length, I conceded my doubts removed, my father, addressing me through the vocal organs of my wife, used substantially the following impressive language :

“ My son, I have been thus persistent in my endeavors to satisfy you of my identity, for an important purpose. It has not been to gratify curiosity, or to astonish you with marvels, but to bring you valuable instruction. When I was in the body, I taught you the lessons of religion and of rectitude, to the best of my knowledge. But after entering the world of spirits I soon became aware that I was mistaken in regard to many things. Clearer light has dawned upon me, and I have been anxious to impart it to you and my other children. I have constantly exercised a guardian care over you, and have found your mind susceptible to my influence to a greater degree than are the others. I have guided you in many things, unconsciously to yourself ; and now that you recognize my presence, I can approach you more nearly and aid you more effectively,” etc.

He then invited me to come to him freely with questions and doubts, as I would if he were in the body, and he would do his best to help to a solution. Naturally, a very free intercourse followed, as opportunities presented, and much that was new, interesting, and seemingly valuable, was obtained. Ere long, however, on my applying to him for light on some difficult problem which had arisen in my mind, he surprised me by saying:

“ Let me advise you, my son, when you want wisdom on any important matter, to apply to the Great Fount of Wisdom and leave Him to send it by whomsoever He will. You have been accustomed to call upon me, and by so doing you establish a mental rapport with me which shuts out others. Now, there are hosts in this sphere who are vastly wiser than I am, in comparison with whom I am but a child in attainments. It is better not to call upon *persons*, but to open your mind in pure aspiration to

the Infinite, and the answer will be sent through the channel best adapted to minister to you."

This advice seemed so eminently wise and proper that it has been substantially acted upon ever since, and the results have been most satisfying. Rarely are individual spirits called upon for any purpose (even though the less advanced often request that it be done), but seldom an opportunity of suitable quiet and seclusion occurs that some one or more of these celestial visitants do not make their presence know and impart some message of interest, affection, or instruction—some gift of spiritual illumination, or some accession of physical vigor and health according to the needs and exigencies of the hour.

The opening of the spiritual senses spoken of (clairvoyance and clairsaudience) has been attended by the development of an acute perception, or power to distinguish the auras or atmospheres of different persons—spirits as well as mortals—thus giving an instant and intimate knowledge of their real qualities and characters (psychometry). This appears to be a sufficient safeguard against the approach or subtle influence of the evil-disposed, or of deceivers professing to be what they are not. The visitors referred to are not always seen, the clairvoyant power not being at all times in activity; but they are always *felt*, and thus their quality is known. Old friends and acquaintances, of course, are readily recognized, and are often among our visitors; sometimes strangers give their names, and occasionally some sketch of their earthly history, if asked, and many an interesting surprise has been enjoyed this way; but more commonly no name is mentioned, or it will be withheld if asked for—the messenger claiming that his duty is strictly impersonal and official—that he comes in obedience to an authority beyond himself, and that his message must bear its own credentials.

The subject matter of these messages and conversations has been infinitely varied, and any adequate presentation of them would require volumes. Our attendants seem to have an intimate knowledge of all our concerns, and of even our thoughts; they manifest a kindly and vigilant interest in our physical health, often suggesting means for its preservation, or remedies for its restoration if impaired, and frequently impart a direct healing force, of conscious, immediate benefit. They have taught us the reality of the "gift of healing" as anciently practiced, explained

its *rationale*, and instructed in its successful exercise in numerous instances. They have warned against impending dangers—on one occasion saving our lives by preventing our taking passage in a steamboat on which a fearful disaster occurred—the occupants of the stateroom we had engaged (but did not occupy) being scalded to death. They sometimes volunteer valuable advice regarding material interests—though for reasons which cannot be fully explained here, we deem it neither wise nor safe to ask or depend upon the advice of spirits in matters not pertaining to their proper sphere, but counsel *volunteered* from an obviously well disposed and intelligent source may be worth heeding. They have not, indeed, saved us from *all* the ills and trials of life, and probably it is not best they should do so, since the discipline of suffering is doubtless an important part of life's purpose. But their ministrations have illumined even the darkest experiences with the light of hope and trust in the eternal goodness, whose unfailing care is convincingly exemplified in and made rationally credible by these angelic ministrations.

But the chief sphere of their service to us has been the moral, religious and spiritual in the best sense of the latter word. They have seemed most earnest to promote personal improvement, roundness of character, the overcoming of all faults and the stimulation of all that is noblest and best, and to urge the application in human society of those higher principles of action—justice and brotherhood—which alone will redeem our world from its abounding evils and bring “the kingdom of heaven” on earth. Especially have they illustrated the nature and value of “inspiration,” as well as other “spiritual gifts” of primitive times. But this interesting branch of the subject cannot be here enlarged upon. It must suffice to say that our celestial teachers have not led us to repudiate (as some so-called spiritualists seem inclined to do) all religion, nor even that form of it known as Christianity; but rather have aided us to attain a far higher sense of what religion is in its essence—to see what is valuable and permanent in *all* religions—and to recognize far deeper meanings in the words and life of the Christ of Judea than the Church has ever exemplified—meanings which the scorning world is sure to miss.

I had hoped to give from my note-book some specimens of the simple and practical, sweet and hallowed lessons given from day to day from this source, but space will not permit. Nor can I

more than allude to the general philosophy of life and of the universe which these teachers have opened to us—eminently rational as well as truly spiritual. I will only say that they never attempt to dominate or control, but respect one's mental and moral freedom to the fullest extent; they suggest, stimulate inquiry, seek to instruct, to enlighten, to uplift.

In all these manifestations and ministrations from the supernatural world there is nothing "supernatural" in any objectionable sense of the word. Natural (from *natus*) means *that which is born*. If man is really a spiritual being, he is born so, and in process of time he is born out of the cumbrous flesh into a more spiritual state of existence. Then, if *love* forms any part of his spiritual constitution, he will naturally and necessarily feel an interest in and care for those who are left behind, still "struggling in the mire of earth," and will seek to serve them if he can. Angelic ministration, then, is *higher-natural*, not *un-natural*; and instead of being a thing intrinsically improbable and incredible, to be disputed and antagonized to the last extent—"spirits are the last thing that I will give in to," are the words of a distinguished *savant*)—is a thing most natural, reasonable and to be expected in a universe where LOVE has any part—where God, who is love, reigns.

If any imagine that it detracts from the regard due to the Supreme Being to recognize the agency of intermediate beings as ministers of wisdom and of good to us, they should remember that it is *the good*, or *the God in them*, which alone prompts them to this kindly service. The infinite spirit of good surely dwells in all loyal beings, and it is by and through their personal agency that He is everywhere present "to will and to do." This affords a rational and intelligible—I think the *only* rational and intelligible—conception of the Divine omnipresence and providence.

While my convictions have been formed mainly on the basis of facts of the class described, occurring in the quiet of my own family, and through the instrumentality of one who has never acted for pay (and thus has no motive for deception, even supposing deception possible, which is not conceded), I am also familiar with phenomena of various other classes, produced through numerous other instruments, probably equally trustworthy, which afford abundant corroboration to the same general truth. Of course, I am not unacquainted with the various theories,

often learned and highly ingenious, advanced by "scientific" men, and men not scientific, to account for and explain away these facts on different grounds. I have made it a point through all these eventful years to carefully note and consider everything of importance that has been put forth against the view which has been forced upon me; but am obliged to say, conscious of the full meaning of my words, that no "explanation" which has been offered—no theory of "automatic or unconscious cerebration," of "diseased or abnormal action of the brain," of "separate activity of the cerebral hemispheres," of "hypnotic hallucination," "self-delusion," or what not, as urged on the one hand; or of "masquerading and deceiving spirits," "demons," "astrals," "shells," etc., as set forth by others—at all meets the case. However astute or pretentious these expositions, or however plausible the case they have made out, a single interview with one of these celestial visitors, under favorable circumstances, has sufficed to brush aside the flimsy reasonings and give to the winds any doubts they may have raised. To question the distinct and incarnate personality of these intelligences is intellectually impossible, while to repel them indiscriminately as deceivers and ministers of evil or semi-conscious "elementaries," would be to do violence to the moral nature—in fact, to "blaspheme against the Holy Ghost."

Nevertheless, the fact is not to be disguised, because established by abundant experience, that unwise and promiscuous dealings with the unseen world are full of danger. Frivolity, insincerity, or any sinister, mercenary, or selfish purpose, invites, by the very law of spiritual affinity, the presence of beings of a corresponding quality, with whom any familiarity is unprofitable, and liable to prove perilous. Spirit communion should be sought only for the highest and worthiest ends—only in the earnest love of truth and good for their own sake. But this fruitful theme cannot here be dwelt upon. A word to the wise is sufficient.

To conclude, it will be seen from the foregoing that I am a spiritualist perforce of proofs personal to myself, so strong that were there no other of like belief in the world I should still be compelled to be one. But the fact that millions of other persons, in all parts of the civilized world, including in their number some of the brightest intellects and acutest men of science the age has produced, have, within a few years, been brought to substantially

the same conviction by similar proofs, independently witnessed, does not weaken my assurance.

Nor does the fact that a body of professional scientific men and experts acting under the auspices of a respectable University in our country—some of them eminent in special departments of investigation—have, after a few ill-conducted attempts at experiment with certain professional mediums—attempt notable chiefly for *what did not occur*—gravely announced that they have discovered nothing but evidence of trickery and fraud, have any appreciable weight in the case. Even were all the professional mediums in the world proven to be unconscionable tricksters—which seems hardly more provable than that all other professionals are equally untrustworthy—such a fact would have no bearing upon the convictions herein set forth.

A. E. NEWTON.