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ANCIENT AND MODERN TESTIMONIES TO SPIRITUALISM.

BY A TRUTH SEEKER.

III.

“Yes”! it is said by some “the Bible does indeed recognize Spirit-intercourse with men as a fact, not as a mere pretence or delusion, but it brands such Spirits as evil: possibly, it was by their aid that Jannes and Jambres the magicians who withstood Moses, worked those wonders which hardened Pharaoh’s heart:—that the witch of Endor called up the Spirit of one of Israel’s prophets at the bidding of an impious King. It is distinctly asserted that it was an evil Spirit which troubled, or, (as it is expressed in the marginal reading) *terrified* Saul; and, that it was an evil, lying Spirit who deceived Ahab by the mouths of his prophets; Micaiah previous to their obsession, having seen the evil Spirit and heard him speak: Yes! the Bible recognizes this intercourse of men with Spirits; but only as a subject for warning and denunciation. In the Old Testament it is prohibited under penalty of death; and in the New, the Gospel narratives sufficiently indicate what manner of Spirits they were who manifested their power in those days.”

The testimony of the Bible is indeed conclusive against those who altogether deny the agency of evil Spirits; but it falls far short of establishing the conclusion that all spirits who come into communication with mortals are to be placed in this category. Both the Old and New Testament we think teach the reverse.

Without endorsing the exclusiveness in the following passage from Sir Walter Scott, we solicit a careful consideration of the conclusions therein expressed, "No man can read the Bible, or call himself a Christian without believing that, during the course of time comprehended by the divine writers, the Deity, to confirm the faith of the Jews, and to overcome and confound the pride of the heathens, wrought in the land many great miracles, using either good Spirits, the instruments of his pleasure, or fallen angels the permitted agents of such evil as it was his will should be inflicted upon, or suffered by, the children of men. This proposition comprehends, of course, the acknowledgment of the truth of miracles during this early period, by which the ordinary laws of nature were suspended, and recognizes the existence in the spiritual world of the two grand divisions of angels and devils, severally exercising their powers according to the commission or permission of the ruler of the universe."

Nor do we think it by any means self-evident, that, as regards spiritual intercourse, we are under the prohibitions of the Mosaic Law. It will scarcely be contended, that everything binding upon, or interdicted to the Ancient Hebrews applies equally to us, and to all time. It will need to be shewn, that the same reason which existed for a command or prohibition then, exists now; or,—that the subject is one, not grounded or, in any way dependant upon considerations of time place and circumstance, but (like the Moral Law of the ten commandments) of permanent and universal obligation.

Let us ever bear in mind as the key to the whole Jewish history, that the Jews were, according to the Bible account, a peculiar people; that they were immediately, and so to say visibly, under the Divine Government; that they were called out to protest against the universal idolatry of the polytheistic nations by whom they were on every side surrounded; and to be to all the earth a witness for the one living and true God. All their Institutions, Laws, and observances, had reference primarily to this end, and in many cases are scarce intelligible unless considered in this relation. Keeping this steadily in view, let us ask, What was the idolatry against which they were called upon to bear this emphatic testimony? Whence did it originate? How was it sustained? It is necessary to arrive at a right understanding of these questions before we can form a correct judgment upon the subject of our present enquiry.

We are not about to propound a theory of our own, or, of any particular of the views we advocate. We are willing to take the exposition given, by perhaps the most learned and able opponent of the current Spiritual-

manifestations on the ground of their evil character and anti-scriptural teachings—the Rev. Charles Beecher; who, in his “Review of the Spiritual Manifestations read before the Congregational Association of New York and Brooklyn,” in his chapter “On the teachings of the Bible,” thus sums up his argument:—

“Both the law and the history therefore concede the reality of the practice doomed with death, and the reason of the penalty is manifest. Polytheism was the disease to be cauterised. The worship of the dead was the root of Polytheism. Converse with the dead was the root of worship. Odylic arts” (i. e. the understanding and supply of proper conditions) “were the root of converse. Therefore the law struck at the root, by prohibiting the whole on pain of death.” “The Baalim” of the Old Testament he tells us “were lords, heroes, deified dead men. Hence it is said ‘They joined themselves unto Baal Peor, they ate the sacrifices of the dead’;—the two lines of the parallelism repeating the same idea in a different form,” and he adds it was to these deified dead men, to whom, as testified by Moses and the Psalmist, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters.* Need we wonder then that when consulting the dead fostered these idolatrous and inhuman practices, that, to cut them off the more completely from such dangers, and from those who practised these arts, using them for evil purposes, they should be wholly interdicted to the Jews; especially if we bear in mind that spiritual and divine guidance was otherwise vouchsafed them. We are told that when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. These being then the authorised and divinely appointed means of spiritual communication. To depart from these and enquire after the manner of the heathen therefore not only implied in itself a tendency to idolatry, but was an open disobedience to the command of their Divine King; an act of rebellion against Him. Hence it is said “The sin of rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.” The sin of both consisting in casting off that allegiance which they owed to their rightful sovereign.

Are the circumstances of our time at all similar in these respects to those of the Jews? Is the spiritual intercourse of the present day of the same illegitimate idolatrous kind as was then condemned? Do the reasons which rendered the condemnation necessary then exist now?

* This view we think derives confirmation from the language of St Paul, “But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils, (i. e. *demons*, evil Spirits.)

These are questions which require to be answered in the affirmative and the truth of the answer proved before any inference against modern Spiritualism can be fairly drawn.*

* Considerable opprobrium is thrown upon Spiritualists by confounding them with Necromancers, Wizards &c. Let us see how far these terms fairly apply to them. Robinson uses the term, Necromancer, as synonymous with, "A sorcerer, a conjuror, who professes to call up the dead by means of incantations and magic formulas, in order that he may give response to future things." Webster defines Necromancer as 1. Properly. One who pretends to fore-tell future events by holding converse with departed Spirits. 2. The more usual sense. One who uses enchantments or practises sorcery. This last word again he uses as synonymous with "Witchcraft: divination by the assistance of evil Spirits." Following up our enquiry, let us ask in what Witchcraft consisted, borrowing our light in this instance from the Encyclopedia Metropolitana. We think the account of it here given will also be found confirmatory of the views advanced in the text.

"The ancient Witch was generally only a dealer in spells, amulets, poisons, and incantations, to which character the profession of fortune telling has been found annexed from the earliest ages. Against such the punishment of death was probably denounced by Moses not merely because witches were cheats, who practised on the credulity of mankind, but still more, because they insulted the majesty of the true God, by pretending to the power of divination, and because they corrupted the people by introducing practices borrowed from idolatrous nations. In fact all the denunciations against witchcraft and enchantment, in the Old Testament, are combined with condemnation of idolatrous practices.

The modern Witch was a very different character; in addition to the power of prediction, she claimed that of working evil upon the life, limbs, & fortunes of her neighbors. This power, it was vulgarly believed, was acquired by an express compact, sealed with her blood, concluded between her and the devil himself. By the terms of the bond it was understood that the Wizard or Witch renounced the sacrament of baptism, and after a certain term of years, devoted his or her immortal soul to the evil one without power of redemption."

In the name of common sense, what identity is there between Necromancers and Wizards ancient or modern as above defined, and modern Spiritualists? Can any sane person be found hardy enough to assert, or silly enough to believe, that Spiritualists, or Spirit-mediums, are fortune-tellers, poisoners, dealers in spells and amulets, that they practise incantations and magic formulas, (unless prayer and praise to God is to be so regarded) that they claim a power of working ill upon the life, limbs and fortunes of their neighbors, or that they make a compact with the devil and seal it with their blood? And yet, men who ought to know better, avail themselves of popular prejudices by this misapplication of words. According to the view above quoted, the Spirit was always a medium for the Wizard. In Spiritualism a mortal is the medium of the Spirit. The difference is a radical one.

The only point of resemblance between the Necromancer and the Spiritualist, is, that both alike seek to hold "converse with departed Spirits." That it is wrong to do this with evil Spirits, or for evil purposes, is clear. But that it is wrong to do so with good Spirits, and for laudable ends is not apparent either from Scripture or Reason.

Sensible Englishmen are begining to complain of the absurdity of retaining the law which compels a legislator-elect solemnly to abjure allegiance to a family that has no longer a living representative. The restoration of the Stuarts, or the Heptarchy, is however scarcely less likely than the restoration of polytheism. In both cases the danger having died out, the laws concerning them ought fairly to be considered obsolete. The tendency to idolatry, may indeed in one sense be as rife as ever, but it is not in that direction. We are no more likely to deify our dead, or to worship Baal, than we are to deify the idols in the Missionary Museum, or to worship Thor and Odin ; or, Gog and Magog. We agree with Mr. Beecher, that "if the mental attitude of the Circle, viz. submission to unseen guidance is essentially like that of the old devotee, idolatrous and contaminating, then God's word will stand ; 'I will set my face against that soul and will cut him off from his people.'" But when he assures us that "from the admitted character of the Spirits next behind the veil, and from the very conditions necessary to obtain communications, such idolatrous contamination is inevitable," we can only conclude that he is mistaken on both of these points, and remind him that no proof of this assertion is offered. We can aver from some not inconsiderable experience and enquiry, that at all events, "submission to unseen guidance is *not* one of the conditions necessary to obtain communications from the spirit world," and that it is an attitude of the Circle, which they, (the Spirits) altogether discountenance ; insisting upon the necessity of using, and making constant appeals to the reason, conscience, and voluntary agency which God has given us, and which constitutes our true humanity, and our resemblance to Him.* Judge Edmonds writes:—"There was never yet, I venture to

* It is of course to be expected that there will be found Spiritualists, especially among those whose convictions are but recent, who, with little experience and many preconceived false notions of Spirits, attach an undue importance, and a factitious, indiscriminating value to all spiritual communications, and in particular to those of which they are the direct recipients ; and there are not wanting vain spirits, weak enough, and wicked enough, to play upon this ignorance and these mistakes. But it would be manifestly unjust and absurd to make Spiritualism responsible for all the errors and crudities that grow up around it. Fortunately those here alluded to are generally short-lived.

Let me commend to the consideration of the reader what is said upon this subject by Adin Ballou, whose work on Spirit Manifestations, as Mr. Beecher says, "is generally allowed to be able and candid." "You (Spiritualists) are no more obliged to receive a tenet, or an opinion, or a statement, or a prediction, or a promise, or a prescription of duty, or a direction how to act in a given case, from a *departed* Spirit, than from an *undeparted* one. Are we not all Spirits ? Have we not all a common nature ? Do not all Spirits differ in degrees of wisdom and goodness ?"

say, a religious creed promulgated among men, which so entirely eschewed blind faith, and so fully and always demanded the exercise of the judgment and the supremacy of the reason." Dr. Dexter, says of the Spirits, "They ask no blind faith in their identity or in their doctrines; they have inculcate love to God and love to our race as the governing principle of life on earth and life in the spheres, and yet they have left it to our unbiassed judgment to decide whether they have taught truth or falsehood."

As to the alleged "idoltrous contamination inevitable" to spiritual intercourse, it is an allegation unsupported by evidence: perhaps the tendency, though inevitable, takes a *long* time, a *very long time* to develope itself. Hitherto its tendency appears to have been all the other way. The writer of this can say, that in his own experience he has found its "inevitable tendency" to be, not to draw the soul *from* God, but to draw it nearer *to* God: he has been led to conclude that its "inevitable tendency" is to "unthread the rude eye of rebellion and welcome back again discarded faith," to withdraw man from the idolatry of materialism and mammonism, to quicken his spiritual nature into healthful, active life, and thus bring him into closer union with God and fellowship with his kind. "Love, first God, then His Word, then His Messengers," was a spiritual communication to Mr. Rymer. The idolatrous tendency of such advice is not *very* manifest.

We have dwelt upon this argument of Mr. Beecher's, because the whole weight of the objection derived from the prohibitions of the Mosaic Law rests upon it; it is the hinge upon which this part of the controversy turns; and here, where strength was most needed, weakness it seems to us is most apparent. The case breaking down here, breaks down hopelessly and irreversibly.

We have considered the evidence, and examined the objections drawn from the Old Testament; let us see what light is cast upon the subject in the New.

IMPRESSIONAL WRITING.

The following has been forwarded to us by our friend J. D. of London:—

Attention has recently been called in your pages, to that phase of Spiritual communication entitled, "*Writing from impression.*" The following is a specimen of the hand of a friend, Mr. S., who four years ago, was a writing medium, but who lost the faculty soon after he exhibited it; it was written in my pre-

sence, Mr. S. merely felt an impulse to take pencil and paper, he suggested no theme, nor did I ; a word "came into his mind," as he phrased it, and he wrote it in his ordinary way and state: that done another word came, and so on until the subject was completed,—and that with tolerable rapidity:—"Take it for what its worth," said he, "I don't know what its about."

My friend, Mr. S., is an active laborious man, whose practice in writing is limited to letters of business. Here is the copy of his impressional writing:—

"Man! thou art debarred from many things that would enhance thy spiritual progress. Time!—that meter of earthly works—is measured out too scantily for the Spirit's onward rapidly-progressing bounds: let, therefore what you have (of time) be used frugally—not in useless altercation with mean minds, but in communing with the more exalted, soul-expanding intellects: to these let thy affections cling. Yes, my friend to those 'who live before their time' shouldst thou resort, if still in the flesh, and to the good works of those who are dead to your world!

Let your minds be passive to all that appertains to Spirit, but active to good works or words—whether emanating from embodied or disembodied Spirits. Let wisdom be your aim, and Knowledge—Knowledge must be the first and wisdom will assuredly follow.

Ignorance is the stumbling block of mortals. The knowledge of truth cannot percolate the dross which covers the immortal; divine day cannot enter the tabernacle to dispel the gloomy doubts—the disdainful beatings of the outer antagonisms of the world. Flesh and blood are too much at variance.

Reconcile thyself to what may befall thee. Call no one thy enemy. Make all men thy friends—yes, thy friends,—by thy humility, by thy love of truth,—and, lastly by thy example. Let scoffers receive thy pity. Let thy friends know that thou feelest their respect. When the time shall come for sickness to overtake thee, then be—as far as with thy nature is possible—a spectator to thy own body—and resigner of thy Spirit to God who implanted it.

Useless you imagine this method of writing—disjointed sentences,—improper words improperly placed;—but train thyself to it and the words and the *works* you ought to do, will assuredly follow, not only *grammatically but consecutively in Order.*"

ROBERT OWEN'S CONGRESS AND SPIRITUALISM.

We take the following extracts from a letter of J. P. Hazard to Robert Owen. The letter is published in the Report of the meetings of congress Convened by R. Owen and held during the months of May in the present year. The letter

was written by Mr. Hazard in answer to objections to Spiritualism urged by Mr. Robert Cooper, one of the speakers at those meetings.

In reply to the objection of Mr Cooper that at a Circle which he attended for the purpose of investigation, the alleged Spiritual-Manifestations could not be elicited in his presence ; Mr. H. justly observes that the argument from failure in some cases cannot counterbalance the argument from success in others.

Every man of science "perfectly well knows there are many chemical and other experiments and processes, the success of which depending on delicate or easily disturbed conditions, are very subject to imperfect results, or entire failure even, in some chemical experiments the success is not once in a hundred attempts, or *seances* if you please. But *one* success is enough : a century of failures is of no avail against it." Failures only prove that what is true of all other things is true of this viz "that certain conditions are necessary to certain results. A very little dust defeats the end of the daguerreotypist. The slightest flaw in a wire destroys all the magnificent powers of a harp. One degree of heat constitutes all the difference (in results) betwixt an effete acorn and a noble oak.

I am quite sure that one who had spent his life in a mine, having only heard of the beautiful stars of the heavens, would not be competent testimony in opposition to the opinion of others who had been more fortunate. And should such an individual emerge from his cavern during some cloudy night, whatever might be his disappointment upon looking toward the skies, *no* expression thereof could possibly be construed as proof that others had been mistaken. His *ignorance*, in however strong terms the declaration, would hardly be accepted as the boundary of all that might be known upon the subject of the existence of stars.

It is in vain to reply that the declaration of the existence of these manifestations is the voice of a small minority. It is the voice of an *immense* majority of investigators, and their numbers are millions. Nor are these millions, of those who are most likely to be the victims of authority, or of superstition and tradition. They comprise a large portion of independant enquiring minds who have gone forth in obedience to a love of truth and believe they have not searched in vain. I have never known an individual who has advocated these errors (if they be such) at the dicta of others, but only in obedience to the irresistible testimonies its facts offer to the human *senses*. I have never found an individual who had given sufficient attention to the subject to enable him or her to become familiar with what it has to offer who entertained a doubt of the facts themselves, and only comparatively very rare instances of doubt of their spiritual origin."

In reply to the conjecture, that these phenomena are attributable to physical causes not yet understood he answers "that the manifestations, be they from whatever source, declare they are from spirits of men who have lived on earth.

Now, is nature, or is matter a liar, will logs of wood speak untruths? Human agencies may make them do so, or Spiritual agencies may do the same doubtless. But, if matter is the agent as is constantly urged, that resort is cut off."

In reply to the suggested propriety of understanding the laws of nature and the powers of matter before we attribute any facts to spiritual sources, he observes. "Men must be governed by the facts before them, they must assign phenomena to what appear to be their real sources. To say we will listen to no convictions which lead us to spiritual solutions would be no less adverse to the principles of a true inductive philosophy than would be an abandonment of all facts referable to physical causes until we had exhausted the spiritual.

If we find one obstructs the other, let us separate them by all means, if indeed it be within our power to do so; but neither the necessity nor possibility of such a divorce has yet been demonstrated."

Mr Hazard's letter is throughout an able piece of reasoning and full of pertinent reflections.

T. S.

Poetry.

UNA FATA MORGANA;

OR, A VISION OF 'WHAT MIGHT BE.'

Weary and sickening of the dull debate,
 And clang of politics ; weary of hate
 Toss'd at our heads from o'er the Atlantic main,
 With foolish speeches ; weary of the pain
 And sorrow, and calamity, and crime
 Of daily history told us in our time ;
 Weary of wrong that reared its hydra head,
 And hiss'd from all its mouths ; dispirited
 With rich man's apathy to poor men's hurt,
 And poor men's ignorance of their own desert,
 And for a moment hopeless of mankind
 And that great cause, the nearest to my mind,
 Progress — the dream of poet and of sage —
 I lean'd back in my chair, and dropped the page
 Diurnal, filled with all the misery,
 And fell asleep ; if sleeping it could be,
 When, in their natural sequence in the brain,
 Thought followed thought, more palpable and plain

Than when I waked ; when words took music's voice,
 And all my being inly did rejoice.
 And what I saw, I sang of at the time,
 With ease unparalleled by waking rhyme,
 And to this tune, which, many a day since then,
 A haunting music has come back again.

Oh the golden city,
 Shining far away ! —
 With its domes and steeples tall,
 And the sunlight over all ;
 With the waters of a bay
 Rippling gently at its feet,
 Dotted over with a fleet ;
Oh the golden city — so beautiful to see ! —
 It shall open wide its portals,
 And I'll tell you if it be
 The city of the happy,
 The city of the free.

Oh the glorious city,
 Shining far away ! —
 In its boundaries every man,
 Makes his happiness a plan
 That he studies night and day,
 Till he thinks it, not alone
 Like his property, his own :
Oh the golden city — so beautiful to see ! —
 But spreads it round about him,
 Till all are blest as he ;
 His mind an inward sunshine,
 And bright eternally.

Oh the splendid city,
 Gleaming far away ! —
 Every man, by Love possess'd,
 Has a priest within his breast,
 And whene'er he kneels to pray,
 Never breathes a thought unkind
 Against men of other mind :
Oh the golden city — so beautiful to see ! —
 But knows that God Eternal
 Will shower all blessings free,
 On hearts that live to love him,
 And cling to Charity.

Oh the gorgeous city,
 Shining far away ! —
 Where a competence is bliss,
 And each man that lives has this
 For his labor of the day ;
 A labor not too hard,
 And a bountiful reward :
Oh the golden city — so beautiful to see ! —
 Where mighty wheels creative
 Revolve incessantly,

And Science gains, to cheer him,
A daily Victory.

Oh the glorious city,
Shining far away ! —
Neither Misery nor Crime.
Nor the wrongs of ancient Time,
Nor the Kingly lust of sway
Ever come within its walls,
To degrade or to enthrall :

Oh the golden city — so beautiful to see ! —
But peace, and Love, and Knowledge,
The civilizing three,
Still prove by Good that has been,
The BETTER that may be.

This dream'd I, to this rythm, or something near,
But far more copious, musical, and clear ;
And when I wakened, still my fancy ran
'Twas not all dream ; and that large Hopes for man
Were not such idle visions as the wise,
In days like ours, should heedlessly despise :
I thought that Love might be Religion yet,
Not form alone, but soul and substance met :
The guide, the light, the glory of the mind,
Th' electric link uniting all mankind ;
That if men loved, and made their Love the Law,
All else would follow :—more than ever saw
Poet or Prophet, in the utmost light
Of heavenly glory opening on his sight.
But dream, or no dream, take it as it came :
It gave me Hope,—it may give you the same.
And as bright Hopes make the Intention strong,
Take heart with me, and muse upon my song.

MACKAY.

Communications from the Spiritual World.

SELECTIONS FROM THE SYBILS.

Dr. Ennemoser says that there is no doubt of the ancient Sybils having been *clairvoyant* women, and that it is impossible so much value could have been attached to their books, had not their revelations been verified.

I.

There is one God, who alone rules : He is greatest and unbegotten : This one God is above all, who made the heavens, sun and moon and stars, and the fruit-

ful earth and the swelling waves of the sea ; He alone is God the Creator, being himself most pure and uncompounded : He made the forms and figures of men and he mixed the nature of all the generations of living Creatures.

I will now begin to prophecy concerning all events.

When the threats of the great God were accomplished with which he threatened the men who built the tower of Babel, in the Country of Assyria, when all spake the same speech and seemed to design to ascend as high as the stars ; then the Almighty God sent a wind and when it had overthrown the lofty tower and had occasioned a contention among its builders, men gave to that town the name of Balylon, but after the tower fell and the speech of men differed, then all the earth was divided.

The beginning of all evils is covetousness and folly ; for men desire much deceitful gold and silver and think nothing better than these : not the light of the sun, nor the heavens nor the sea, nor the vast earth, where all things are bred ; nor God himself who gives all things and is the Father of all ; nor do they prefer the faith and righteousness of these : This is the fountain of impiety and the author of all disorders, the contriver of wars and the enemy of peace, which makes fathers enemies to their children and achildren to their fathers and no honor is paid to marriages, equal to what is given to gold. The earth shall have bounds set to it and guards to every sea. It is measured out deceitfully to those who abound in gold, who desire always to enjoy the fruitful land. They will destroy the poor that they may possess more lands and boast that they have become their slaves ; and if the great earth had not been so remote from the starry heavens, the light had not been equally divided among men but it would have been bought for gold and made subject to the rich, and God must have made another world for the poor.

And one of the priests clothed in linen shall say, let us build a true and beautiful temple for God ; come let us change the evil customs of our ancestors, by which they were taught to make pomps and feast-days and to sacrifice to Gods of stone and earth, and let us turn our hearts to praise the Immortal God, who is father of all and will always be the governor of all, the most true King, the father and preserver of souls, the great God always living.

And then there shall be a great pure temple built in Egypt and the people who serve God shall bring their sacrifices and God will enable them to live purely.

Then God shall pour forth his vengeance on the unrighteous and there is none that shall spare them on the earth, because they did not observe the traditions which God gave them.



Notices of New Publications.

LIGHT IN THE VALLEY.

Published for the Author by G. Routledge.

We have now before us a neat little volume, the production of Mrs. Crosland, author of several other works. Her husband, Mr. Newton Crosland, some time ago published his experience in Modern Spiritism; while she too, being a convert to our noble cause, is following in his steps by placing before the world her experience in those matters.

In addition to a variety of communications obtained in her presence we have also several beautiful drawings produced through Spirit agency.

In our humble opinion, the work as a whole, contains more doctrinal points than are desirable especially for one portion of the public. However, apart from these we have much sound reasoning and interesting facts. As a specimen of this we quote the following:—

“And behold a hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands.

“And he said unto me, O Daniel; a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright; for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.

“Then said he unto me, Fear not Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.”

Surely, if we had only this passage for our warrant — and there are many such in the Bible, — it could not be thought unscriptural to believe that one of God's favourite methods of answering prayer is by sending angels and ministering Spirits to our assistance.

“I am come for thy words,” in the mouth of an angelic messenger, is a declaration of the fact.

In this same wonderful chapter there is further mention of Daniel's physical exhaustion, and immediately afterwards he observes:—

“Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me,”

Now this is quite in harmony with the teaching which in our own day has been received. Every experience we have had shows that, even in the performance of what we term miracles, God works by instruments, and keeps, not breaks, the laws His own Infinite Wisdom has framed; and the being mesmerized, or, more properly speaking magnetized, by disembodied spirits, is one of the facts which have come within the last year under my own knowledge and experience.

“And behold a hand touched me,” said Daniel. And on the awful occasion of

Belshazzar's impious festival, when the golden vessels taken from God's own temple were degraded to services of idolatry, blasphemy, and debauchery, the prophet writes :

"In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaister of the wall of the king's palace : and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote."

The whole of this impressive history is too familiar to need repetition here ; for "Belshazzar's Feast" has long formed a favourite subject for painters and poets and the phrase "the writing on the wall" has become the type of some sure prophecy near upon its fulfilment. Thus the story has become the property even of profane minds instead of, like some exquisitely significant Scripture narratives, remaining little heeded except by Bible-readers.

But of the thousands — apart from that limited band, the really Christian public — who admire the picture and the poem, and talk learnedly of their rich colouring and fit Oriental accessories, I fear there are too few who, if put to the test, would avow a literal belief in the narrative on which poem and picture are founded. It may be they believe, in a vague undecided way, that there was some strange appearance on the palace wall that affrighted the conscience of the impious king, perhaps a miraculous appearance, but more probably 'coincidence' or some "natural phenomenon," to be accounted for by chemical science ; or perhaps it was the artifice of a professional juggler about the Court. But a spirit hand, that in the presence of that royal company was clothed with flesh, and so "came forth fingers of a man's hand !" — no, no ; in their inner hearts such sceptics do not believe this.

Yet surely such sceptics would believe the literal truth of the story, if they could really know that there are hundreds of persons now living who have been touched by spirit hands, have seen the writing of spirit fingers, have beheld the spirit hands become incarnate, and move, and handle visible objects, and have then watched their material covering — for such, in some sense, I believe it to be — fade away, even as a thick feather of steam apparently dissolves into nothingness.

I am one individual among these hundreds who have seen, and felt, and heard ; and I write this little book because I, among others, have a Truth to declare and proclaim, and I will not wrap in a napkin the Talent of Spiritual Experience which has been vouchsafed to me. * * *

I do not mean to say that I have seen the very faces of the departed restored to my view, but I believe certain trustworthy witnesses who assert that they have done so ; and I have myself been privileged to behold, — when wide awake, and in broad daylight, — on numerous occasions, certain spiritual appearances, which recall to mind some of the Bible descriptions of such thing in a very awe-inspiring manner. But I must add, that I have been present on occasions of spiritual manifestations when spirits professing to be the spirits of those I had known in life, have spelt out their names, and many curious circumstances connected with their histories which were unknown to the other persons present.

