

The Christian Spiritualist

"Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone—that in all things He might have the pre-eminence."

ST. PAUL.

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THE CREDIBILITY OF SPIRITUALISM.

THERE was a time, within the limits of the present Christian era, when what is called the doctrine of the resurrection was openly denied, or doubted by some. For when the Apostle Paul made his defence before Festus, Agrippa, and Bernice, at Cæsarea, he asked this question: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?" the word *you* there referring not only to King Agrippa, but to the general audience before whom he was speaking. The doctrine of Spiritualism challenges the world, through its advocates, in precisely the same manner: "Why should it be thought a thing *incredible* with you that those who have passed away should return, and manifest the continuity of their existence by material signs? Why should it be thought a thing *incredible* with you that we who profess and call ourselves Spiritualists should teach that spirit is the power underlying all matter, and that there is a bond uniting the life that now is with that which is to come, the world in which we now dwell with other worlds unrealizable by the natural eye?"

A man would betray great weakness of mind, or ignorance, who should believe many of the statements made in connection with Spiritualism, or who should suppose that all Spiritualists are intellectually or morally reliable. In this, as in every other matter with which created beings have to do, the "treasure is in earthen vessels,"

while it is equally certain that the largest sincerity and openness of mind are not absolute guarantees against deception. Many a table has tipped, many a message has been written, many an impression has been made, many a communication has been received, which have not owed their existence to the agency of disembodied spirits. Indeed, we ourselves have been accustomed to say, and now repeat it in a public and formal manner, that we should be quite willing, if it were necessary, to give a discount of ninety per cent. off all accounts of so-called Spiritualistic phenomena, because the remaining ten per cent. would be quite enough for our purpose as evidence. We do not mean by this statement that nine-tenths of the phenomena of Spiritualism and the statements of Spiritualists are really unreliable; but we do mean that if such were in reality the proportion, our faith in Spiritualism, as such, would remain unshaken. For in addition to evidence which is personal, and leaves no alternative but that of believing it, there is, first, the evidence derived from testimony; and, secondly, the evidence derived from probability. And not until the opponents of Spiritualism are prepared to show that, in itself and in the abstract, our doctrine is positively incredible; or, without going to that length, that the evidence hitherto adduced is practically worthless, are they entitled to sneer at it, or pass it by with supreme indifference.

How much evidence do our opponents want to produce conviction? Do they want five, ten,



twenty, fifty, a hundred, or a thousand facts? If so, they can be supplied by persons who in every other respect are felt to be, and relied upon as being intellectually and morally trustworthy. If the ranks of Spiritualism were made up of a few deceivers, and many dupes; if the large majority found therein were constitutionally weak-minded, uneducated, and unprincipled; or, without being any one of these things, if they were simply impulsive fanatics, one could see a reason for whatever they might advance on the subject of Spiritualism being passed by as not worthy of notice and examination. But it is known by many, and should be known still more extensively, that hundreds—yea, tens of thousands of Spiritualists, in England, on the Continent, and in America, are men and women of large endowments, cultivated powers, and unimpeachable integrity; who have believed, and who still believe, because there has been evidence to compel conviction, and who would no more think of doubting the truth of what we call Spiritualism than they would the facts of their own consciousness. Of course, the evidence upon which belief in given cases rests is, oftentimes, of such a kind as cannot very well be told in public without exposing matters that are purely private, and which could not be thoroughly understood by strangers. We ourselves have had proofs, from time to time and abundantly, of actual communion with the spirits of those whom we call the departed, proofs which refuse to be explained upon any other than the Spiritualistic hypothesis, and yet which could not be given to all and sundry without manifest injustice and indelicacy. We think it should also be remembered that Spiritualism boasts a considerable literature—how considerable only those can know whose interest or duty it has been to inform themselves on the point. (For example: see a list in the *Spiritual Magazine* for March, 1867). And here, again, while it is true that some of the writers have been ignorant, fanatical, and insincere, a fair proportion of them have been cultured, sober, and morally trustworthy. We know, and admit the fact with sorrow, while this very periodical is proof of our estimate of the fact, that the advocacy of anti-Christian views is sometimes mixed up with the advocacy of Spiritualism, especially in America; but surely one who disbelieves or doubts Christianity may still be competent to give evidence on another subject, and that evidence be

worthy of our regard. We know, also, that what is called modern science has through some of her great high-priests pronounced against Spiritualism. But this only proves that Spiritualists have the task before them of reconciling their faith with the known laws of this universe, while it does *not* prove that Spiritualists are therefore and necessarily in the wrong. Modern science is, at its best, only a statement of what men know, or suppose they know, respecting the order of God, and scientific men are no more infallible than others, although, undoubtedly, their carefully considered and expressed objections are entitled to our notice, and should command from us fitting replies. No, let this statement of the inherent incredibility of Spiritualism cease to be repeated, for it is a very foolish one, and altogether unworthy of those who profess to be enlightened above their fellows. We will listen, with candour and attention, to all objections that appear to be in the least degree worthy of the slightest notice; but we will never, no never, give in to sneers, to ridicule, to contempt, to indifference, or to the most persistent opposition, until we are convinced that we are in the wrong path. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen," said the Saviour to Nicodemus, and we say the same with respect to Spiritualism; and though we have to add, as He added, "ye receive not our witness," the witness itself remains true, and we should be cowards indeed and base beyond measure if we shrank from standing by what to us is the truth of God. For although, as we have already hinted, much of the evidence is private, and, therefore, inappreciable by the general public, there remains a mass of evidence open to the examination of every man, and by which we are content to be judged. As for Christians, who believe in their Bibles and are sure that Christianity is "the power and wisdom of God," we give to them the warning which St. Paul uttered in the synagogue of Antioch in Pisidia, when he claimed from his Jewish brethren a belief in his message:—"Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; 'Behold, you despisers, and wonder, and hide yourselves; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye will not believe, though one explain it unto you.'" Christianity once stood at the bar of the world's opinion, and was largely condemned, but where is it now? To-day Spiritualism stands at that

same bar, and shares that same fate. But it is true, and "the day will yet declare it."

A RELIGION OF SIGNS.

IN the summer of 1869, a remarkable volume of sermons was published by Hamilton, Adams, and Co., London; the author being the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, M.A., Honorary Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen, and editor of the Life and Letters of the late Rev. F. W. Robertson. The following paragraph is taken from page 202 of this volume, and forms part of a very noble discourse on the "Religion of Signs :"—

The melancholy superstition which is called so ironically Spiritualism unfits its devoted votaries for their daily work. Some play with it, and it does them little harm; but others, embarking in it with energy, get into an excited, inoperative, unhealthy condition, in which a quiet Christian life becomes all but impossible, in which duty becomes a burden if it separate them from their experiments, in which it seems better to sit at a table slothfully waiting for a Spiritual communication than to go with Christ into the middle of the arena of life, and do our duty there against the evil. It is there, in faithful following of him, that we shall have Spiritual communications; it is there, in self-sacrificing action, that we shall feel inspired by God to act and speak; it is there that we shall realise our communion with the host of all great spirits, in enduring like them all things for the truth; it is there, by faithful prayer and resistance to temptation, by the warfare against sin within and wrong without, that our hearts will begin to beat with the excitement which ennobles and the enthusiasm which does not decay; it is there, loving our Saviour's Spirit above all things, and aspiring to reach His Divine perfection, that we shall enter into the true Spiritual world, and feel, not the miserable presences of beings which, on the impossible supposition of their existence, it is a disgrace to associate with, but the very presence and Spirit of God within us; hear, not a futile and laborious noise, but the voice of God Himself, saying to us, after the conquest of sin or the performance of duty in His strength, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

The hearts of most devout Christian Spiritualists will respond to the deepest thought contained in this very beautiful passage, while objecting to some of its expressions, and utterly denying from personal experience many of its statements. Knowing how great an influence is wielded by Mr. Stopford Brooke, not alone over his own congregation, but, through the press over a still wider circle of mind, one cannot help feeling the importance of any printed utterance of his, and regretting that he has been apparently so unfortunate, judging from the impressions he has received, as to have come in contact only with the lowest, most earthly, and most external forms of the philosophy called Spiritualism, and with the least earnest and steadfast of its professors.

The evidence of the nearness of Spiritual beings to our material world, the well-authenticated facts of communication between them and mortals—the proofs, external and internal, that these communications proceed from men and women who, having cast off their fleshly taber-

nacle, live still, with all their identity and personality, in another state, and in a body intangible and invisible to us, except under extraordinary conditions—the history and theory of the Supernatural in short—do not in any wise constitute a *religion*, and do not necessarily or of themselves tend to make men more religious, or even moral, still less to lead them into any special creed. The continued existence of the departed, their sustained interest in this earth, and their occasional appearance after death, have been believed, more or less dimly, in all ages, in all nations, and in all religions. Each has had manifestations from its own special spirit sphere, and thus has received confirmations of its own special mode of belief. In England and America we have given the name of "Spiritualism" to the present wide and vast exhibition of the agency of spirits, vouchsafed to this latter half of the nineteenth century. A name in some respects to be regretted, because it has led to misconception and hard judgments. But yet it is not easy to find a better in a single word. Lengthy, compound names are never desirable. The word "Spiritualism," however, seems to convey to outsiders the idea of something pure and holy, as a *sine qua non*. When they hear of a "spiritual communication," they picture to themselves something sublime, and are accordingly disappointed when some good commonplace message is shown them, of no special elevation or dignity. Perhaps we should be wiser and more correct if we spoke of "Spirit communications," "*stances* with Spirits." We should cause less misunderstanding than by calling these things "*Spiritual*."

Mr. Stopford Brooke appears to have been influenced in his condemnation considerably by the *unspiritual* character of that which he understood essentially to claim Spirituality. Not being himself a Spiritualist, he does not seem to realise that a spirit, like a human being, may or may not be elevated, may or may not be Christian, may or may not be spiritually minded, and able to give "*Spiritual*" communications to others. As we choose our friends in the body, so must we choose those emancipated from it. As we go amongst some on earth to gain good, and amongst others to give good, so must it be in our intercourse with our fellow-beings on the other side of death.

It would seem from his remark that, "on the impossible supposition of their existence," association with such beings would be a disgrace. Mr. Stopford Brooke considers us as knowingly in communication, not ever or at all, with human spirits, but solely and altogether with demons, in whose existence, although decided by him to be impossible, we are credulous enough to believe. Some of us, it is true, are credulous to

the extent of accepting the teachings of the Church and of the Bible as to the existence of evil spirits, not of this earth or from amongst men. But it is not with them that we desire to converse. "*Non ragiam di lor, ma guarda e passa.*"

Earnest enquirers into Spiritualism become so, generally, from one of two worthy motives. Either that they may speak with the dear ones whom death has taken out of their sight, and after whom their hearts are crying with an "exceeding great and bitter cry," or else that they may test for themselves, in all honesty and sincerity, whether these strange phenomena of which so much is spoken can help them to any satisfactory answer to the awful question surging in their souls, "Is there another world?" Each of these motives is a sufficient one, and each may be the first footstep on the ladder by which we ascend to God!

He who enters upon any philosophy, religion, or undertaking as a mere excitement or amusement, not only will reap no solid good, not only will he be unfitted for daily duty, and grow feverish, restless, and unstable, but he must inevitably be injured morally. Mr. Stopford Brooke speaks of those who play with Spiritualism being little harmed—but can this be really so? Even setting aside the danger which we Spiritualists recognise of coming frivolously into contact with frivolous spirits, is there no harm, no spiritual injury likely to follow an attempt to seek, for selfish and earthly motives, into the unseen, to pry into the future (this being usually the unworthy object of those who play with Spiritualism), to dabble half in fear, and half in fun, with what the poor foolish soul suspects to be the awful and forbiddaen, and admits to be the mysterious?

Such are indeed likely to find daily work unpalatable, for their lives have no centre and no aim but that of self-gratification. They are as yet incapable of perceiving the solemnity of either life or death. The Spiritualism of such may well be called a "melancholy superstition." It belongs only to the region of wonder, and has no firm basis, either in patient research or firm conviction.

Entered upon with a deep, wide, aspiring love for God, spirit communion, whether it be given in answer to prayer and invocation, or follow upon any form of voluntary or involuntary obedience to the conditions of intercourse, never hindered any man or woman in the "common round, the daily task," but gave to them, instead, added vigour and new courage. Of many a saint in the Church and of many a Spiritualist of to-day may it be said, looking on their lonely lives, that "a strength was in them from the vision," and that they were able more energetically to labour for mortals when they had had

speech with angels for a while! There is no true spiritual life, therefore, no true spiritual communion between any souls, in any state, except *in God and for God*. That which we have not, we cannot communicate. Only so far as we are united to Christ, the Lord and Head of humanity, can we have any fellowship, in any real and spiritual sense, with any spirit, embodied or disembodied. The "life which is eternal" is the only life. Most entirely do we agree with Mr. Stopford Brooke that in the faithful following of Christ along the thorny path of self-denial, shall we be inspired by God, and receive the highest of all spiritual communications, even the communication of the Holy Spirit of God, by which we shall be guided into all truth here as we are able to bear it, and by and bye, in the everlasting future, into the bosom of Him who is the Truth. To talk with those who have passed beyond the grave is strengthening to our faith; to receive sweet greetings from those dear to us as our own souls gone on before, is joy and consolation; to listen to the holy words of saint or angel is deep blessedness; but still we are not satisfied. Our natures yearn for something yet. Our hearts hunger still. It is God we need. "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God!" Spirit communications come not to us that we may be content to rest upon them. Onwards must we go and upwards. As Beatrice bid Dante, in his great vision and grand poem, seek Paradise not in her eyes, but higher, so would each spirit who has had one glimpse of Heaven bid us look above whenever we would fain lay down our weary heads and aching hearts upon the merely human sweetnesses and softnesses of messages, however pure and tender from the world invisible. Bless and help us, help us they may and should; but our all in all they must not, cannot be.

Spiritualism must not be to us "a religion of human affection." But even still less—for that is lower yet—must it become to us "a religion of phenomena," or what Mr. Stopford Brooke entitles "a Religion of Signs." To every Spiritualist, who feels himself in danger of the dominion of the marvellous, we commend the wise words of this admirable sermon. A very subtle temptation is this love for the marvellous, a form of that deplorable worship of the outward and the seen which prevails so largely in the days in which we live. It intrudes itself into every phase of religion, from the grand ceremonial of the Roman Church to the Revival Meeting within white-washed walls, where groans and shoutings stir and sustain the flagging interest of the congregation. Mere excitement, whatever be its manifestations, is of the earth earthy, and springs not from what is most divine within the soul. It is "of the flesh," and not "of the Spirit." It is true that in some instances it may

precede the birth of the spiritual. But those whose experience this has been must see that they go forward, not looking back regretfully to the phenomenal and the sensational, or risking to be again entangled in them. Let them not desire to return to the period and the region of the storm, of the fire, and of the earthquake, when they should be hearkening for the "still small voice," with which in the hush of the human God will speak to the soul.

Alice E. Hacker.

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THE HEALING POWER.

Respecting the Healing Power there are many different opinions, as there are various experiences; but the latter ought, at least, to have opened the eyes of the Spiritualist to the fact that the most extraordinary cures effected by it are not always of the sudden and apparently "Miraculous" (for want of a better term) character. When this fact shall have taken a deeper hold upon the public mind, when folks will give up watching for sudden, startling events *only*, then will the vast power that lies in Healing Mediumship be better and more fully appreciated. It is asked, "What is healing power? and wherein does it differ from ordinary mesmerism?" In endeavouring to write a few words upon this deeply interesting and most important subject, let me at once disclaim any personal credit for such help as may be given in these words to aid others to come to something like a definite conclusion (if such can *at all* be attained). All that seems so clear to me is so from the teaching of my Spirit guides, aided undoubtedly by the experience I have gone through in my own restoration to health by their aid. That "Healing Power" is mesmerism is true. But this term is, of itself, *boundless in extent of meaning*. Mesmerism, I am taught, is the *Life-Force of the Universe*, the World Soul, that permeates all space, the negative principle to the "Divine Essence" which to it is "positive," and which, acting conjointly with it, produces life in every sphere. Each individual, man, woman, and child; each animal that walks the earth; every blade of grass that grows, and every majestic forest tree, gives out a power of mesmerism little dreamed of by those around. The very stones of the Mineral Kingdom, being receptive of, also give forth strong and varied powers of mesmerism. Mesmerism of a pure and high degree, by which I mean, that which is most in harmony with the Divine Nature, is life-giving, supporting and healing, while mesmerism of an adverse kind produces every physical and moral evil. By the harmony

of the magnetic spheres, disembodied spirits are enabled to communicate with those still in the body. This harmonious "condition" wanting, no power of free, clear communication remains. We know not yet, how wide, how deep this power lies. We cannot fathom or *measure* it, but we do know that by it the two worlds are so completely united, so closely intertwined, that a small knowledge of it has, in a great measure, already thrown down the wall of separation that materialism has built up. Science, in all its appliances of steam and electricity to the means of locomotion, and to the transmission of thought, has rendered communication with every corner of the material globe easy and habitual, and has thus annihilated space in a degree unthought of fifty years ago. But, if science has put round the earth the girdle of intelligence, that is rapidly making "rough places plain" and spreading knowledge to the farthest end of the world, it is the higher Science of Spiritualism which must help us to pass from the nature around us to the super-nature equally around us, but beyond the reach of material eye or telescope. And our highest earthly inventors and discoverers, whose achievements are bringing about the state predicated by Spiritual prophet long ago, little suspect that all their wonderful works would never have been done, but for the help of the "Ministering Spirits" always at hand, and who, whether recognised as such or not, still form a great cloud of witnesses and band of efficient teachers. But to return to the healing power in its especial connection with "mesmerism." It is, we are taught, this mesmerism condensed by the good Spirits over each patient, and conveyed to him or her by the aid of the presence of the healing medium. It differs widely from ordinary "mesmerism," inasmuch as that *that* may consist only of the magnetic power resident in the physical frame of the mesmeriser, the giving out of which produces exhaustion, and the exercise of which must be extremely limited. Not so with the healing medium. The influx of Spirit healing power being poured through him (in the same way as all Spirit powers are poured through all mediums) produces a helpful soothing influence; the more the power is brought into exercise, the greater the number of patients placed thus en rapport with the healing power, the stronger will the medium feel physically, *as an ordinary rule*. Where the ordinary "mesmerism" may relieve a few isolated individuals, the healing medium will give out power to relieve hundreds. What ordinary mesmerist *could* relieve, and give effectual aid to hundreds, day after day, and month after month, as has been done by Dr. Newton and the "Zouave Jacob." The healing power having been infused into the system, does not in the majority of

cases produce immediate results. It rather so acts upon the whole physical organisation as to produce a *strong reaction*, by which means latent and often unsuspected mischief is brought to the surface, and thence thrown off, *after which* relief, and probably entire recovery may come. All this is well explained by M. Jacob, to every patient who goes to him. The *want* of this explanation has doubtless done much to bring discredit upon the good Dr. Newton. "You are cured from this minute," he would say, and the patient would perhaps find himself *much worse* in a few days, and so lose all faith and hope, and in such cases as were no doubt ultimately helped by his power, the improvement would not be looked upon as the natural result of the unpleasant effect. "The cure has set in," M. Jacob said to me, "but how long it will be before the result will be perceptible, I cannot say; probably in your case it will be months." Proofs of the correctness of M. Jacob's teachings about reaction have come to my knowledge, but I cannot enter into such particulars now. I hope these few words will help to show that the healing power is presented to us in many different forms. Sometimes the healer will find it necessary to take each patient separately, and to have two or three (or more) interviews. Sometimes, as in M. Jacob's case, the presence of numbers "*en séance*" helps to bring a stronger influx of spiritual power. Where the patient is suffering only from want of vitality, and not from any distinct disease, reaction probably will not occur, but immediate relief and increasing power will speedily become apparent. Cases of paralysis, rheumatism, stiff joints, &c., may receive more evident benefit at once than such forms of deep-seated chronic diseases as may arise in those who are of a consumptive habit of body. It may be, also, that in many cases no result will follow, and here let me point out one very distinct difference between the "Healing Power," and ordinary mesmerism. In the latter case, the patients become *en rapport* with the Physical Spheres of the Mesmeriser, which for many reasons (entirely independent of any personal feeling) may prove not only *inharmious*, but positively hurtful. The Healing Mediumship is of benefit only where it can be the means of establishing the necessary "*rapport*" between the sufferer, and the healing and, *necessarily*, the good spirits. Should this rapport fail to be established the result is but negative, and the physical state of the patient unaltered. One remark more, and I must conclude, having already taken up too much space, but the subject is of such vast interest that it is difficult to condense it. Of all people on the earth, the Spiritualist ought to be the most alive to the urgent necessity of living a *prayerful life*, this being the only means whereby we can become

receptive of the higher and purer influences. Our pulpits teach this *theoretically*. Spiritualism teaches it *practically*. Like seeks like, and they who live in an unearthly low state, are in harmony only with earthly low spirits. One great condition of success in the Healing Medium (as one of the highest forms of mediumship) is so to live a life of purity and truth, by prayer, as to be in harmony with the higher spheres of spirit life. I can recall no instances of successful healing power where this condition has been neglected. M. Jacob never commences a *séance* without the words, "Rest in the Lord, and *Pray to God*." Instances innumerable are recorded where the sick have been healed by prayer. And Christ's words to His Disciples (see Matthew 17, 21) in reference to their want of power to cast out an evil spirit, is full of significance; after rebuking them for their unbelief He says "Howbeit this kind goeth not out *but by prayer and fasting*."

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[It will be seen that the word "mesmerism" is here used for that subtle influence called the "healing power." As some justification for its use, we refer our readers to *The Spiritualist* for February 15, 1871, pages 137 and 141.]—ED., C.S.

TRICKSY MEDIUMS.

"HE who steals my purse, steals trash."
"But he who filches from me my" confidence in the Supreme, and, by trickery, purports to give messages from spirit relatives, but which are merely his own human ignorance of theological questions; saps the foundation of previous belief, and makes me a sufferer for all time. Such an one should be scouted from religious and moral society, and should be punished as "a rogue and a vagabond," for "obtaining money under false pretences."

I have *frequently* detected trickery by mediums, and sham mediums; and I know not anything more saddening to a Spiritualist, who has seen and heard the true, than to find out rascality, and know portions of the mischief done by tricksters. I, therefore, commend the article on "Paid Mediums," in the March number of the *Christian Spiritualist*, and regret much to have read a letter from "A Medium" (in *The Medium* for March 3) advocating *non-punishment* of mediumistic rogues. Human law is based on the Divine. Human law rightly punishes, according to the extent of the crime. Divine law, as unfolded in national and family punishments, proves the same. Therefore, however disagreeable it may be to mediums to incur and receive

punishment for trickery, yet punishment ought to follow. The Author of Christianity stated that He had not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil (or sustain) it.

"Trance" tricksters have done our common Christianity much harm; as nothing is more easy for such, when the "conditions are favourable," than to jerk their limbs, shut their eyes, and "go it," with any ideas their readings or learnings may have settled as "good dodges" for the "fogies" at the sittings; and then, if the ideas do not harmonise, the hitch is overcome by the plea that an "undeveloped spirit" has shoved the developed one out of action.

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March 8, 1871.

[In reference to the letter in *The Medium* above alluded to, we will only quote the following sentences from Thomas Carlyle's "Latter Day Pamphlets," page 81, as expressing our own feeling about the matter:—"Not the least disgusting feature of this gospel according to the platform is its reference to religion, and even to the Christian religion, as an authority and mandate for what it does. Christian religion? Does the Christian or any religion prescribe love of scoundrels, then? I hope it prescribes a hearty hatred of scoundrels;—otherwise, what am I, in Heaven's name, to make of it? Me, for one, it will not serve as a religion on those strange terms. Just hatred of scoundrels, I say; fixed, irreconcilable, inexorable enmity to the enemies of God: this, and not love for them, and incessant whitewashing, and dressing, and cockering of them, must, if you will look into it, be the backbone of any human religion whatsoever." We commend *the whole* of the pamphlet from which these words are taken to the attentive consideration of Mr. Morse, as he will therein find a healthier mode of dealing with the base than he himself prescribes, and thinks to be the right method.]—Ed. C.S.

THE NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL.

By DR. HEDGE.

THE antagonism between the natural and supernatural is not in the thing, but in the thought. It is a classification, under these two heads, of ordinary and extraordinary phenomena and powers. The term "natural" is used to denote the stated and intelligible facts of human experience—those which have been investigated, referred to known agencies, and ranged under all formulas which we call laws. Together they constitute the "system of Nature," so called, which of course can mean nothing more than our observation or systematisation of Nature. The system is in us, and not in

the things themselves. Whatever transcends these familiar experiences—facts which are not embraced in this system, and seem not to tally with it, are either denied or classed as "supernatural." They are denied by those who cannot tolerate that their little system, with which so much pains has been taken, should be proved imperfect by facts or alleged facts, which it will not take in. It is the feeling of the child who fancies he has made a perfect figure with the bits of ivory in his Chinese puzzle, and subsequently discovers that one of the seven pieces has been left out. He would fain suppress the refractory piece. It is certainly more agreeable to question the facts than to entertain the suspicion of the "more things in heaven and earth" of which the poet speaks. Nor is anything gained, that I can see, by admitting the facts, so long as they are excluded from the sphere of Nature, to which humanity with its destinies belongs. The term "supernatural" supposes two distinct agencies—Nature and God; *i. e.*, it separates Nature from God, it makes Nature godless, and so introduces into the scheme of religion a dualism which is Manichean and anti-Christian. The progress of Christian thought will abolish this dualism, will teach that the ordinary and extraordinary in human affairs are equally natural and equally divine. All phenomena are natural, and all causes that produce them are natural. A genuine miracle would be the most natural of all; it would be Nature in her immediateness, Nature unveiled, without the illusion of statedness which so befogs poor human wit, and stands instead of Nature in the vulgar mind. The spirit is Nature's innermost life; he who has most of it is most natural. Who so natural as Jesus? The miracles recorded of Him are proofs of His naturalness. Suppose them mythical, they would still, in a certain sense, be illustrations of it, as legitimate impressions of His great Nature on contemporary minds. Whoever shall attain to the same spirituality will experience that *rapport* with the central power which the record ascribes to Jesus; he will have that sympathy with the universal Will that shall make all things possible which seem desirable. If miracles show themselves in Him, they will be the most natural things which He does. In proportion as men grow toward spiritual maturity, it will come to be seen that there is but one power in the greatest and in the least, in the resurrection of the dead and the shooting of a grain of wheat. In the fulness of that spiritual maturity, the godless distinctions of false religion will be done away, and natural and supernatural be atoned.—*Monthly Religious Magazine*, May, 1868.

WHAT DID SHE SEE WITH?

By MISS E. STUART PHELPS.

(Author of "The Gates Ajar," "Hedged In," &c., &c.)

I could not have been more than seven or eight years old when it happened, but it might have been yesterday. Among all other childish memories it stands alone. To this very day it brings with it the old, utter sinking of the heart, and the old, dull sense of mystery. The object of my story is simply to acquaint you with a few facts, which, though interwoven with the events of my mother's life are quite independent of it as objects of interest. It was about a year and half I think after my father died that she sent for Aunt Alice to come to Creston. "Your

Aunt loves me," she said, when she told us in her quiet way, "and I am so lonely now." They had been the only children, and they loved each other—how much I afterwards knew. And how much they love each other now, I like to think—quite freely and fully, and without shadow or doubt between them, I dare to hope.

A picture of Aunt Alice always hung in mother's room. It was a pleasant face to look upon, a young, pure, happy face—beautiful too, though with none of the regal beauty crowned by my mother's massive hair and penciled brows. It was a timid girlish face, with reverent eyes, and ripe tremulous lips—weak lips as I remember them. From babyhood I felt a want in the face.

She was teaching school out West when mother sent for her. I saw the letter. It was just like my mother: "Alice, I need you. You and I ought to have but one home now. Will you come?"

I saw, too, a bit of a postscript to the answer: "I'm not fit that you should love me so Marie."

When it was all settled and the waiting weeks became at last a single day, I hardly knew my mother. I remember how she looked, framed there in the doorway, while we were watching for the coach, her head bent a little, with eager parted lips, and the girlish colour on her cheeks, her hand shading her eyes as they strained for a sight of the lumbering coach.

The coach lumbered on and rattled up and passed.

"Why she hasn't come!" All the eager colour died out of her face. "I'm so disappointed!" speaking like a troubled child, and turning slowly into the house. The next day the coach lumbered up and rattled past, and did not stop,—and the next day, and the next.

"We shall have a letter," mother said, her eyes saddening every afternoon. But we had no letter.

"She is sick," we said; and mother wrote to her, and watched for the lumbering coach, and grew silent day by day. But to the letter there was no answer.

Ten days passed. Mother came to me one afternoon to ask for her pen which I had borrowed. Something in her face troubled me vaguely.

"What are you going to do, mother?"—"Write to your Aunt's boarding place. I can't bear this any longer."

She wrote, and asked for an answer by return of mail. Aunt Alice had left for Creston on the appointed day.

Well, weeks wore into months, and the months became many years. More than that we never knew. Some inquiry revealed the fact that a slight accident occurred on the Erie Railway to the train which she should have taken. There was some disabling, but no deaths, the conductor had supposed. The car had fallen into the water. She might not have been missed when the half-drowned passengers were all drawn out.

And so the years slipped by. And then something happened, as the veriest little things—which, unnoticed and uncomprehended, hold the destinies of lives in their control—will happen. It came about that we hunted the township for a handmaiden, and that our enquiring steps led us to the poorhouse. A stout, not over-brilliant looking girl, about twelve years of age, was to be had for her board and clothes, and such schooling as we could give her—in country fashion, to be "bound out" till she should be eighteen. She came. Her name was a singular one—Selphar. I used to call her Sel, for short. She was a good, sensible, uninteresting-looking girl, with broad face, large features, and limp, tow-colored curls. She proved to be of good temper, as honest as the daylight, dull enough at her books, but a good, plodding worker, if you marked out every step of the way before hand. I do not think she would ever have discovered the laws of gravitation; but she might have jumped off a precipice to prove them, if she had been bidden. Until she was seventeen she was precisely like any other rather stupid girl; never given to novel-reading or fancies; never frightened by the dark or ghost stories; proving herself warmly attached to us after a while, and rousing in us in return the kindly interest naturally felt for a faithful servant; but she was not in any respect uncommon—quite far from it—except in the circumstance that she never told a falsehood. At 17 she had a violent attack of diphtheria, and her life hung by a thread. Under such nursing as she had, she slowly recovered, but her old stolid strength never came back to her. Severe headaches became of frequent occurrence. Strange fits of silence came over her; her volubility had

been the greatest objection we had to her hitherto. Her face began to wear a troubled look.

One morning she slept late in her little garret-chamber, and we did not call her. The girl had gone upstairs the night before crying with the pain in her temples. While we were at work in the kitchen, Clara heard her kitten mewling out in the snow, and went to the door to let her in. The creature darted away behind the well-curb. Clara flung her trailing dress over one arm, and was off over the three-inch snow. The cat led her a brisk chase, and she came in flushed and panting, her feet drenched, and the tip of a Maltese tail ust visible above a great bundle she had made of her apron.

"Why!" said mother, "you have lost your ear-ring."

Clara dropped the kitten, felt her ear, shook her apron, and the corners of her mouth went down into her dimpled chin.

We hunted outdoors—on the steps, on the well-boards, in the woodshed, in the snow, but the ear-ring was not to be found. We hunted indoors, in every possible and impossible nook, cranny, and crevice, but gave up the search in despair.

When we were half through breakfast, Selphar came down blushing and half frightened out of her wits.

"It's no matter at all," said mother, kindly; "I knew you felt sick last night."

Having set the girl at her ease, we forgot all about her. She stayed, however, in the room to wait on the table. It was afterwards remembered that she had not been out of our sight since she came down the garret stairs; also that her room looked out upon the opposite side of the house from that on which the well-curb stood.

"Why, look at Sel!" said Clara, suddenly, "she has her eyes shut."

The girl was just passing the toast. "Selphar, what is the matter?"—"I don't know."

"Why don't you open your eyes?"—"I can't."

"Hand the salt to Miss Sarah." She took it up and brought it round the table to me, with perfect precision.

"Sel, how you act!" said Clara, petulantly; "of course you saw."—"Yes'm, I saw," said the girl, in a puzzled way, "but my eyes are shut."

Mother told her that she might sit down till she was wanted, and we returned to our conversation about the ear-ring.

"Why!" said Sel, with a little jump, "I see your ear-ring, Miss Clara; its out by the well."

The girl was sitting with her back to the window, her eyes, to all appearance, tightly closed.

"It's on the right-hand side, under the snow, between the well and the wood pile. Why, don't you see?"

"Selphar," mother said, "this is nonsense. It is impossible for you to see through the walls of two rooms and a woodshed."

"May I go and get it?" said the girl, quietly.

We looked at each other, and let her go. I followed her out, and kept my eyes on her closed lids. She did not once raise them, nor did they tremble as lids will tremble if only partially closed.

She walked, without the slightest hesitation, directly to the well-curb, to the spot which she had mentioned, stooped down, and brushed away the three-inch fall of snow. The ear-ring lay there, where it had sunk in falling. She picked it up, carried it in, and gave it to Clara.

We watched Sel carefully through the day. Her eyes remained tightly closed. She went about her work as usual, and performed it without a mistake. We tied a handkerchief tightly over her eyes; see through it or below it she could not, if she had tried. We then sent her into the parlour, with orders to bring from the book-case two bibles which had been given as prizes to Clara and me at school when we were children. The books were of precisely the same size, colour, and texture. Our names, in gilt letters, were printed upon the binding. We followed her in, and watched her narrowly. She went directly to the book-case, laid her hands upon the books at once, and brought them to my mother. Mother changed them from hand to hand several times, and turned them with the gilt lettering downwards upon her lap.

"Now, Selphar, which is Miss Sarah's?"

The girl quietly took mine up. The experiment was repeated, and varied again and again. She made no mistake. All this was done with the handkerchief drawn

about her eyes. That evening we were sitting quietly in the dining room. Selphar sat a little apart with her sewing, her eyes still closed. The parlour, which was a long room, was between us and the front of the house. The curtains and shutters were closely drawn. Suddenly Sel turned pale, dropped her sewing, and sprang from her chair.

"Robbers, robbers!" she cried; "don't you see? They're getting in the east parlour window! There's three of 'em, and a lantern. They've just opened the window—hurry, hurry!"

Mother put out the light, opened the parlour door noiselessly, and went in. The east window was open. There was a quick vision of three men and a dark lantern. Clara screamed, and it disappeared. We went to the window, and saw the men running down the street.

When we went back to the other room, Selphar was standing in the middle of it, a puzzled, frightened look on her face, her eyes wide open.

"Selphar," said my mother, "how did you know the robbers were there?"

"Robbers!" said the girl, aghast.

She knew nothing of the robbers, nothing of the ear-ring. She remembered nothing since she went to bed the night before. And, as I said, the girl was as honest as the sunlight. When we told her what had happened, she burst into terrified tears.

One Sunday there was an evening service, and we all went to church. Mother let Sel take the empty seat in the carryall beside her. A darker night I think I have never seen. Literally we could not see a hand before our eyes. Selphar had been quite silent during the drive. I looked closely into her face, and could dimly see that her eyes were closed.

"Why," she said at last, "see those gloves?"

"Where?"

"Down in the ditch; we passed them before I spoke. I see them on a blackberry bush; they've got little brass buttons on the wrist. May I get out and bring 'em to you?"

Three rods past now, and we could not see our horse's head! Prince was reined up, and Sel got out. In about two minutes she came up, a pair of gentleman's gloves in her hand. They were rolled together, were of cloth so black that on a bright night it would never have been seen, and had small brass buttons at the wrist. Winthrop came on Saturday noon. We attended *en masse* a picnic, and Winthrop lost his pocket-knife. Sel, of course, kept house at home. When we returned, Winthrop made some careless reference to his loss in her presence. About half an hour after, we observed that she was washing the dishes with her eyes shut. The condition had not been upon her five minutes before she dropped the spoon suddenly into the water, and asked to go out to walk. She "saw Mr. Winthrop's knife somewhere under a stone, and wanted to get it." It was fully two miles to the picnic grounds, and nearly dark. Winthrop followed the girl, unknown to her, and kept her in sight. She went rapidly, and without the slightest hesitation or search, to an out-of-the-way gully down by the pond, where Winthrop afterwards remembered having gone to cut some willow twigs, parted a thick cluster of bushes, lifted a large, loose stone, under which the knife had rolled, and picked it up. She returned it to Winthrop quietly, and hurried away about her work to avoid being thanked. Of several peculiarities in the development of the girl I made at the time careful memoranda, and the exactness of these can be relied on:—

1. She herself, so far from attempting to bring on these trance states, or taking any pride therein, was intensely troubled and mortified by them—would run out of the room if she felt them coming on in the presence of visitors.

2. They were apt to be preceded by severe head-aches, but came often without any warning.

3. She never, in any instance, recalled anything that happened during the trance.

4. She was powerfully and unpleasantly affected by electricity from a battery, or acting in milder forms. She was also unable at any time to put her hands and arms into hot water; the effect was to paralyse them at once.

5. Space seemed to be no impediment to her vision. She has been known to follow the acts, words, and expres-

sions of countenance of members of the family hundreds of miles away, with accuracy, as was afterwards proved by comparing notes as to time.

6. The girl's eyes, after her trance became habitual, assumed and always retained a most singular expression. They were not—smile if you will—human eyes. The most horrible circumstance about them—that always made me shudder, familiar as I was with it—was, that though turned fully on you they never looked at you. Something behind them or out of them did the seeing, not they.

7. She not only saw substance, but soul. She has repeatedly told me my thoughts when they were upon subjects to which she could not by any possibility have had the slightest clue.

8. We were never able to detect a shadow of deceit about her.

9. The clairvoyance never failed in any instance to be correct, so far as we were able to trace it. After a while there came that which I suppose was poor Selphar's one unconscious, golden mission in this world—on a quiet summer night that ended a long trance of a week's continuance. Mother had gone out into the kitchen to give an order. I heard a few eager words in Selphar's voice, and then the door shut, and it was an hour before it was opened.

Then my mother came and told the secret to me. Selphar had seen Aunt Alice. "She says,"—and then mother told me what she said. She had seen Alice Stuart in a Western town, seven hundred miles away. Among the living, she desired to be counted as dead. And that was all. Mother broke off sharply, "We will say nothing about this. I do not believe a word of it."

We said nothing, but Selphar did. It clung to her, haunted her, pursued her, week after week. To rid her of it, or to silence her, was impossible. Thus a year wore on. But it ended at last. Mother came to my room one night, and stood with her face turned from me. Then said, "Sick and in suffering, Sarah—the girl—she may be right, God Almighty knows! I am going."

Selphar's trances just at this time were somewhat scarce and fragmentary, and the information she had professed to give came in snatches—the trance being apt to end suddenly at the moment when some important question was pending, and, then, of course, all memory of what she had said, or was about to say, was gone. The names and appearance of persons necessary to the search had, however, been given with sufficient distinctness to serve as a guide in my mother's undertaking. Just three weeks from the day mother started for the west, the coach rattled up to the door, and two women, arm in arm, came slowly up the walk. The one erect, royal, with her great steadfast eyes alight; the other bent and worn, grey-haired, sallow and dumb, crawling feebly through the golden afternoon sunshine. We took her gently upstairs and laid her down upon the bed. She closed her eyes wearily, turned her face to the wall, and said no word. What was the story of those tired eyes I never asked, and I never knew. She lingered weakly there for seven days, and then one morning we found her with her eyes upon the thorn-crowned face, her own quite still and smiling.

I have given you facts. Explain them as you will. I do not attempt it, for the simple reason that I cannot.

(Abridged from the *Manchester Weekly Times* of Nov. 9, 1870.)

ST. CHAD, BISHOP OF LICHFIELD, A.D., 673.

THE Venerable Bede gives a beautiful description of the end of this good man, which, together with some additional remarks, we take from *The Banner* for March, 1871, published by John Hodges, 47, Bedford Street, Covent Garden, London. Bede says:—

"When he had gloriously governed the Church in that province two years and a half, Divine Providence so

ordaining, there came a season like that of which Ecclesiastes says, 'That there is a time to cast stones, and a time to gather them;' for there happened a mortality which, by the death of the flesh, translated the stones of the Church from their earthly places to the Heavenly building. And when, many of the Church having been taken, S. Chad's hour also drew near to pass out of this world to the Lord, it happened one day that he was in the aforesaid dwelling with one brother, called Owini; his other companions being, upon some reasonable occasion, returned to the Church. Now Owini being employed out of doors, while the Bishop was reading or praying alone in the oratory, he suddenly heard the voice of persons singing most sweetly and rejoicing, and appearing to descend from Heaven. Which voice he said he first heard coming from the south-east; and that afterwards it drew near him, till it came to the roof of the oratory where the Bishop was, and entering therein, filled the same and all about it. He listened attentively, and after about half an hour, he perceived the same song of joy to ascend from the roof of the oratory, and to return to Heaven with inexpressible sweetness. When he had stood some time astonished, the Bishop opened the window of the oratory, and ordered Owini to come into him. He accordingly went hastily in, and the Bishop said, 'Make haste to the Church, and cause the seven brothers to come hither, and do thou come with them.' When they were come, he entreated them to practise peace among themselves, and towards others; and to observe a strict discipline, such as he had always striven by his conduct to set before them. He then revealed to them that his departure was near at hand; 'For,' said he, 'that amiable guest, who was wont to visit our brethren, has vouchsafed also to come to me this day, and to call me out of this world. Return, therefore, to the Church, and speak to the brethren, that they may in their prayers commend my passage to our Lord, and that they be careful to provide for their own departure, the hour whereof is uncertain, by watching, prayer, and good works.'

After he had thus spoken, and they, having received his blessing, had gone away in sorrow, he who had heard the Heavenly song returned alone, and prostrating himself on the ground, said, "I beseech thee, father, may I be permitted to ask a question?"

"Ask what thou wilt," answered the Bishop. Then he added, "I entreat thee to tell me what song of joy was that which I heard coming upon this oratory, and after some time returning to Heaven?" The Bishop answered, "If thou hearest the singing, and know of the coming of the Heavenly company, I command thee, in the Name of our Lord, that thou do not tell the same to any before my death. They were Angelic Spirits, who came to call me to my Heavenly reward, which I have always longed after, and they promised they would return seven days hence, and take me away with them." Which was accordingly fulfilled, as had been said to him. For being presently seized with a languishing distemper, and the same daily increasing, on the seventh day, as had been promised to him, when he had prepared for death by receiving the Body and Blood of our Lord, his soul being delivered from the prison of the body, the Angels, as may justly be believed, attending him, he departed to the bliss of Heaven."

He thus departed joyfully to the rest which he eagerly longed for. His life was conspicuous for his many virtues: humility, teaching, prayer, voluntary poverty, and above all, an extraordinary fear of God. If a strong wind arose when he was reading or otherwise engaged, he immediately entreated God for mercy upon all mankind. If the wind increased, he prostrated himself on the ground, and prayed more fervently. But if thunder and lightning filled the air, he entered into the Church, and prayed unceasingly until the weather became once more calm. Being asked why he did so, he made the following reply:—"It behoves us to answer His Heavenly admonition with due fear and love;

that, as often as He lifts His hand through the trembling sky, as it were, to strike, but does not yet let the blow fall, we may immediately implore His mercy; and searching the recesses of our hearts, and cleansing the filth of our vices, we may carefully behave ourselves so as never to be smitten."

S. Chad died on the 2nd of March, A.D. 678. His remains were translated to the present Cathedral of Lichfield, A.D. 1148. The Church commemorates his memory on the 2nd of March.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A REMARKABLE VISION.

(To the Editor of the Christian Spiritualist).

MY DEAR SIR,—I do not know whether the following account may be too long for insertion in your next number, but as it refers to the project I had in contemplation when you did me the pleasure of calling upon me, I forward it for your consideration.

Mrs. Tebb called on me on Friday, February 3rd. I mesmerised her, and she passed into trance; but as she continued silent, I enquired whether she saw anything, and she slowly answered, "February 22nd, 1871—it is written on everything I can see; there is a mark after the 22 like a very old-fashioned d; Mrs. Houghton is here; she points to that mark—(may I ask if she can give us any explanation of it?); I cannot get any meaning, but the numbers have multiplied; they hang on trees, written on strips of something—February 22nd, 1871—(I suppose we shall learn in time what it means). Yes, they will leave the tree in that corner (pointing to the portfolio stand); it is like a fir tree. There is an especial significance; it is connected with your drawings. The tree will remain there during the *séance* you are going to have."

After a short pause, she suddenly awoke with a start, and said, "I was just watching some oranges grow on a tree, and in great numbers; but they seemed to change; they were first green, and then yellow, and I think I got frightened, they grew so fast."

On the 14th of February I held the *séance* thus alluded to, the circle (of eight) being nearly the same as usual. After a variety of manifestations interesting to us all, the spirits spelled out the message, "No more darkness." So, having lighted the candle, I gave pencil and paper to Mrs. Ramsay, and mesmerised her until she was influenced to draw. Mrs. Tebb was seated next to her, and I was then led to mesmerise her, having likewise supplied her with paper and pencil. Mrs. Ramsay was then drawing with great rapidity, sometimes on her

own sheet of paper, but at others on Mrs. Tebb's and on the porcelain slate. Mrs. Tebb passed under influence, and I asked her what she saw; to which she answered, pointing to a kind of palm tree that Mrs. Ramsay was doing on the slate, "I see that all covered with two's." Presently, in a jerky sort of way, she wrote "February" on the paper before her on which Mrs. Ramsay had been drawing, and then on the slate, close to the tree "22," when it struck me that the whole manifestation referred to the vision she had had on the previous Friday week.

The tree drawn by Mrs. Ramsay had also a good many round fruits upon it, which were probably typical of the tree seen in the latter part of the same vision, which was covered with oranges ripening rapidly.

Of course we looked forward to something occurring on the 22nd of February, but the day passed off without anything especial to mark it, and in the evening I had a note from Mrs. Tebb, mentioning that I had been much in her thoughts; when all at once the elucidation flashed into my mind. I had called, on the 11th, at the Dudley Gallery, upon Mr. McNair, the gentleman who is going to undertake the management of the intended exhibition of my spirit drawings, to confer with him on the subject, when we arranged that he was to make every enquiry as to what gallery could be hired for the purpose, &c., &c. My spirit friends appointed Tuesday, the 21st, for me to call upon him again to learn all particulars, and he then mentioned the New British Gallery, Old Bond Street, as being available at the time I wished, and in every way suitable for my purpose, and I was to write to him that evening, giving my decision. I accordingly did so, and he received my letter on the 22nd, authorising him to go to the landlord and arrange the matter. That, then, was *the event*—a momentous one, indeed, as connected with my drawings.

Something still remained uninterpreted, for I felt sure that some meaning must be involved in the fact of Mrs. Ramsay having drawn a palm, whereas the tree Mrs. Tebb saw in her vision was a fir; but in a letter I wrote on the 24th to a friend who had been present at the *séances* I spoke of the fulfilment of the prophecy conveyed by "Mrs. Tebb's *date-tree*," simply meaning the tree covered with the said date, and the very expression taught me all it implied, for the *palm* is the *date-tree*, and thus the whole was made clear.

The first positive step was thus taken on the 22nd of February, and I hope all may go on favourably for the opening of my exhibition on that day three months, May the 22nd.

Believe me, my dear sir, yours sincerely,
GEORGINA HOUGHTON.

20, Delamere Crescent, W., March 11, 1871.

DIRECT SPIRIT WRITING.

To the Editor of the Christian Spiritualist.

SIR,—The following was written in five seconds, without mortal contact, on a half-sheet of initialed note paper, in the presence of ten persons whose names and addresses are as follows:—

Mr. and Mrs. Britten, Mrs. Floyd, Mrs. Wilkin-
son, all of 6, Vassall Terrace, Kensington.
Miss Nisbet, of Glasgow.
Mr. Henderson, 49, King William Street, City.
Mr. Hockley, 167, Liverpool Road, Islington.
Myself, Mrs. Everitt, and my son Frank.

"Some people have an idea that spiritual communications have ceased, because they are no longer necessary. Now the *Word* lends no countenance to that at all. It does *not* tell you that in the latter day all spiritual communications shall cease, but declares in the latter day the influence of the Holy Spirit shall be more powerfully felt, the connection of man with the Spiritual world shall be closer and the probability of Spiritual intercourse greater (Joel 2nd, 28-29). There is not a single passage in the Word of God which asserts that all communications shall cease with the Spiritual World, but there are many which assert an abundant outpouring of the Divine Influence and a diversity of Spiritual gifts not known before. Very few now seem to deny the possibility of man being permitted to behold the secrets of the invisible world, their great objections are that such persons are not to be looked for at the present day, and that even were man so favoured the things above are unutterable, and he could not therefore explain them to others; this they ground on Paul's words which by no means prove the conclusion which has been drawn from them. It was not that he *could* not have described what he had seen (for John afterwards both saw and described) but because he was forbidden to describe them. It was not lawful or it was not permitted for man to utter them. The Lord said to His disciples, I have many things to say unto you but ye cannot bear them now. For this very reason the Apostle was forbidden to declare the things he had heard and seen in the Spirit World; the time was not then come, they could not have borne it. This is not the slightest proof that the things in Heaven or the Spirit World cannot be described; but on the contrary, if light is to be given to the world it must come through the medium of a human instrument, and how is that instrument to be qualified for his task unless he has intercourse with the invisible world." On turning over the paper we found written on the other side, "This paper is intended for the religious world generally."

Our religious meeting or *séance* was commenced as usual by an invisible intelligence arranging us in harmonious relations to each other, then indicating by raps the following passages of Scripture to be read : Acts 22 c. 6 to 17 v., 2 Cor. 12 c. 1 to 4 v. Mrs. Britten offered up a most earnest prayer to "Our Allwise Father, Fountain and Author of all Light and Love," that His choicest blessings might come down upon our little meeting. Each petition was accompanied with emphatic raps from our invisible friends.

It is not necessary for me in this paper to enlarge upon the beautiful Spirit lights or the delicious perfumes wafted by heavenly hands in soft refreshing breezes, filling our souls with ecstatic joy and delight; or the more palpable phenomena of moving massive furniture without mortal contact, inasmuch as these things have often been commented on in other Spiritual periodicals. But it does occur to me that a few words here to the ministers of religion would not be out of place.

It is to me, sir, a great marvel that the Shepherds of the Lord can stand aloof from those heavenly meetings, and still continue to frighten their flocks, our more timid brothers and sisters, from receiving and listening to the elevating instruction of those heavenly visitants, by telling them it is the work of the devil and his agents. Therefore the poor sheep are afraid to entertain angels, lest they should not be able to distinguish them from devils. A little experience and reflection would prove that their ministers were at fault, and that it is about as sensible to tell them that they cannot distinguish between black and white, good and evil, falsehood and truth, or night and day. Does it not remind us of the religious teachers in our Lord's day, who could not distinguish the difference between good and bad works, but declared that those beneficent and merciful acts of the All-loving Saviour were done through the instrumentality of the devil. How strange they cannot see that the Lord's Ministering Angels are truly on a mission of love, love to their brethren who are still on this side of Jordan tabernacling in the wilderness, bewildered and benighted, not knowing which way to go, amid this babel of religion, this confusion of creeds and professions. If the Shepherds of the Lord were wise in their day and generation, they would look abroad and see that the fields are already white for the harvest, and that the reapers have come, and are already at work in the harvest field. And what a mighty work will be accomplished now the true workers have come! And if the eyes of our ministers were opened they would see what a great and blessed privilege it is to be permitted to labour with those bright and shining Ones, and also that a great ingathering might be the result of

this spiritual influx now flowing like a tidal wave from the Spirit world. Already there are many thousands convinced of man's immortality through Spirit intercourse, who need more especially now the genial influence, the loving sympathy and guiding hand of our Christian teachers, to lead them on to the fountain of living waters. Do they not know, or have they forgotten, the emphatic declaration of Holy Writ, that in the latter days "the Spirit of the Lord shall be poured out upon all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; on My servants, and on My hand-maidens, I will pour out in those days of my spirit, and they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in Heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath." O ye guides and leaders of the people, can ye not discern the signs of the times? Know ye not that this prophesy is to-day being fulfilled in your midst? And can ye not see the hand of the Lord in the signs, wonders, and miracles, which are taking place at your very doors? If not, how applicable the words of the Lord, "Ye have eyes, but see not, ears have ye but hear not, neither do ye understand," or you would be up and doing now, especially as ye have such auxiliaries as Heavenly Messengers to labour in the field with you, and help to bring about that glorious time when all shall know the Lord from the least even unto the greatest. Could you accept the ministrations of Angels and their teachings, how much more powerful and effective would preaching, from such inspirational knowledge, be, than from faith only, which to thousands is a dead letter.

Trusting that ministers will be wise in time, and cease to preach against, ignore, despise, and attribute to an evil source, that which has been, and still is, an unspeakable blessing to thousands; and a source of consolation and happiness to many poor, bereaved, and weeping Rachels, who cannot be comforted, except by the knowledge of the fact that their dear departed loved ones still live,

I am, dear Sir,

Yours truly,

T. EVERITT.

26, Penton Street, Pentonville, London,
February 8, 1871.

SPIRITUALISTIC JOURNALISM.

To the Editor of the Christian Spiritualist.

SIR,—In your "First Words" you have given your reasons for starting yet another journal in the cause of Spiritualism; your main object being to show that Spiritualism is not opposed to Christianity and thus you hope to secure, I suppose, the attention of those who may have turned away from a fair consideration of its

claims by the Anti-Christian Spirit which pervades most of the American, and two, at least, of the English journals.

I am not a theological controversialist; I have no Sectarian bias to uphold, and yet I hail the appearance of *The Christian Spiritualist* with great satisfaction; and, seeing that you are working single-handed, without even the expectation of pecuniary reward for your labour, I trust your journal will accomplish its object, and thus that your unselfish devotion to the cause of truth will be fully compensated.

There is, however, something more required of an Editor than the diffusion and defence of his principles and religious views, and that is—that he, whilst upholding his own conscientious convictions, should take care not to insult nor offend by heedless language those who may differ from him—neither to write, nor to publish, vulgar and personal *diatribes* which others may write—to avoid putting in print the fanatical vagaries in which “Brother” A or “Sister” B indulge in pursuing their investigations of an exciting subject; and, in a word, that Spiritualistic Journalism should be conducted with sobriety, impartiality, and judgment; so as to command, like all other journalism, the respect of the educated classes of this country. I have, sir, no fault to find with you so far as I have seen in the three numbers of *The Christian Spiritualist*; but it may not be out of place to warn you, thus early in your career, of what is expected of one who undertakes to educate the people upon a subject so liable to misapprehension, and so easily turned to ridicule in many of its phases by the uninitiated, and thus to avoid the grave errors which some have committed who have gone before you in Spiritualistic Journalism.

My remarks, which have a meaning and direct application, will be understood by claiming your attention to the following letter which I received some months ago. The writer had been an active coadjutor of Mr. Burns, and is himself a journalist. He writes:—“Don’t you think that the time has now arrived when those interested in Spiritualism should meet to confer on the influence that its journalistic literature has upon the movement? I intended to have written to you on the subject some time ago, believing then, as I do now, that the influence as above stated is of a maleficent character; but I am prompted to do so without further delay by the appearance in *The Medium* of last week of one of those articles which from time to time appear in Mr. Burns’s serials, and which from their flippancy of statement, and the apparent bad spirit in which they are written, are, I hope, not to be found equalled in the works issued by any other publisher in this country. The special article to which I now refer is an editorial one, commenting on an article written by Mr. Crookes in *The*

Quarterly Journal of Science. Every editor has a right both to hold and to express his opinions; when however he arrogates to himself the position of a representative man, he is bound, in the interest of the cause he professes to serve, to employ in doing so language that is at least civil and courteous, without intemperance or vulgarity of assertion. I mix a good deal with journalists and scientific men, and from their expressions of opinion concerning the unhappy prevalence in *The Medium* of what one of them designates “literary rowdyism,” I am compelled to believe that this journal is doing an incalculable amount of mischief to the cause of Spiritualism. Mr. Burns himself I assume to mean well, but in many of his articles he employs language of the exact value and meaning of which I prefer to believe he does not entertain a true conception, and educated persons will consequently keep aloof from any movement thus supported. With the conducting of the *Spiritual Magazine* and the *Spiritualist* no fault whatever is to be found, but a hebdomadal is or ought to be of more importance as an organ of a movement than a monthly, and concerning the ‘weekly’ now in question I am ashamed to send a copy of it to a friend. It might be worth trying if Mr. Burns would not, for a consideration, allow his *Medium* to be supervised by some experienced Spiritualist, who should also be a person of literary ability, tact, and such gentlemanly feeling as would ensure its being purged of the errors of grammar and style, with the ‘publisher’s puffs,’ discourteous language, and apparent (I don’t say *real*) bad feeling by which it is now unfortunately characterised; and it is with the view of bringing about such a desirable result that I ask the question with which I commenced this letter.”

Previous to the receipt of the foregoing letter, I had written a very temperate letter to the editor of the *Medium* to complain of the articles written by Mr. Burns in reference to my venerable friend, Mr. William Howitt, which Mr. Burns refused to publish. I subsequently wrote to Mr. Burns himself, privately, to remonstrate with him upon his general unfitness for the post of editor, and to beg that he would seek advice and be guided by the decision of two or three of his own friends. He returned, as he said, my “very amusing letter, for which he had no further use.” I wrote again, asking him to publish my letter, that he might ascertain the real state of public feeling, and this, too, he returned, accompanied by remarks made in the *very coarsest language*. Further efforts to bring him to reason were therefore useless, and I declined to interfere in the way his former friend had asked of me. It was just possible, I thought, that there were a number of people who liked Mr. Burns’s peculiar displays. But Mr. Burns, notwithstanding his

boasted independence, avoided putting this to the test, by refusing, as I have said, to publish my letters.

I and those who are shocked at his extraordinary manifestations must, I suppose, be content to wait until the evil cures itself. How near the end it may be I am not able to judge, but your journal taking up a distinctive position will, in addition to the *Spiritual Magazine* and the *Spiritualist*, act, I hope, as a counterpoise to the intemperate flippancy and irreverent vulgarity which disgrace the pages of the *Medium* and *Human Nature*.

I am, sir, yours obediently,

BENJAMIN COLEMAN.

1, Bernard Villas, Upper Norwood,
6th March, 1871.

[We print this letter from Mr. Coleman without any other remark of our own, save one, viz., that should Mr. Burns desire to reply to it, he shall have space equal to that which Mr. Coleman has occupied. The subject of the letter is one upon which we prefer offering no opinion, but leaving the parties in question to "say their say."—ED. C. S.]

OUTLINES OF SERMONS.

No. 4.

"And the Apostles said unto the Lord, increase our faith."
—LUKE 17 c., 5 v.

1. The context will show the occasion upon which the words of the text were used. The Apostles did not for one moment question the authority of their great Teacher, nor did they presume to doubt the entire justice of the precept of forgiveness He had just given to them. They believed in Him, and they also believed the precept. But seeing at once how large a demand the precept made, and feeling how weak their own faith was, "they said unto the Lord, increase our faith." Their case was one in which a distinction is to be drawn between the *actual want* of faith, and the *realization* of those objects upon which faith is fixed. Their case was one in which there was faith, but one in which faith needed strengthening and increasing.

2. And there are such cases every day, in our own day. We profess, and actually have, some measure of faith in God, Christ, the Scriptures, Immortality, Prayer, and the final triumph of right and truth over wrong and error. But in how many instances do we succeed in *realizing* these objects, until they stand out before us with a distinctness which excludes all doubt? The bare condemnation of doubt is a cheap and easy method by which some fancy it is to be got rid of. But bare condemnation of it never yet removed it, and never will. Add to which fact this other, that he whose faith is at length the most intelligent, strong, and settled, must, ere he come into that state, feel doubt, and grapple manfully with it. Christian faith was never yet attained by the ostrich trick of sticking one's head in the sand, under the impression that all is safe if you will but shut your eyes.

3. And yet the case of deficient faith, of that which is not a realized one, is a very sad case. Gradually, the objects of faith become more or less unreal; we as certainly lose faith in human nature; we become weak to do and bear, and enquire; while a cold despair creeps over the life, and robs us of much of that warmth of feeling and hope which a man must have if he would work, and

endure, and wait the results. Faith, by which, of course, I do not mean credulity, gives reality to "the things that are seen," and strengthens man's whole nature. "According to your faith be it unto you."

4. Why is it that the faith of a Christian is so frequently at a low ebb? The causes are manifold. Bodily ailments; giving a disproportionate regard to matters of doubt; forgetfulness that all evidence, except that which is mathematical, is a thing of degrees, are some of the causes. Secret sins, too, will, sooner or later, eat their way into, and weaken, the life of faith. Failing to draw a distinction between professors of Christianity, and Christianity itself, is another cause. Dwelling too exclusively upon the merely beautiful aspects of things, weakens faith. So, too, if our faith, especially in Christianity, is a traditional one, held because others hold it, and because we have been taught to do the same, it must, in some fearful hour, prove its own weakness. Personal trials may be added to the list of causes which, while they ought not, do, nevertheless, weaken the faith of many.

5. Now with these facts before him, what is an honest man to do? Is he to content himself with merely saying, "O that I could believe," or with submission to his condition, as an inevitable one; or with a selfish envying of the condition of those who can, and do, believe? No; mere wishes, stolid submission, and envy, will not work the cure. But let him, first of all, understand, and lay to heart, the fact that, not perfect knowledge, but faith, is a settled condition of life, from which no man can escape, or ought so much as to wish to escape. Let him ask himself *what* it is that he does really doubt. Let him, further, ask himself with perfect honesty *why* it is that he doubts. Let him do what the Apostles did in the case of our text, go straight to Christ, and hear what He has to say upon the matter, and open himself to the influences which will stream in from Christ upon his whole being, if he will but open himself for their reception. Finally, let him pray honest prayers to God, for teaching, for guidance, for support. Then, as certain as is the law of sowing and reaping, of cause and effect, his faith will not pass into perfect knowledge, but it *will* increase, and become a vital, abiding thing to him. He will still "know in part," but he *will* know; while what he knows not now, experience will gradually reveal to him.

F. R. YOUNG.

(Preached at Yeovil, Trowbridge, Swindon, and Swansea).

POETRY.

A LITANY.

1.

Thou, who dost dwell alone,
Thou, who dost know Thine own,
Thou, to whom all are known,
From the cradle to the grave,
Save, O save!
From the world's temptations,
From tribulations,
From that fierce anguish
Wherein we languish:
From that torpor deep
Wherein we lie asleep,
Hav'ny as death, cold as the grave,
Save, O save!

2.

When the soul, growing clearer,
Sees God no nearer;
When the soul, mounting higher,
To God comes no nigher;
But the arch-fiend Pride
Mounts at her side,
Foiling her high emprise,
Sealing her eagle eyes;
And, when she fain would soar,
Makes idols to adore;

Changing the pure emotion
Of her high devotion
To a skin-deep sense
Of her own eloquence ;
Strong to deceive, strong to enslave—
Save, O save !

3.

From the ingrained fashion
Of this earthly nature,
That mars Thy creature ;
From grief that is but passion,
From mirth that is but feigning,
From tears that bring no healing,
From wild and weak complaining,
Thine own strength revealing—
Save, O save !

4.

From doubt where all is double,
Where wise men are not strong ;
Where comfort turns to trouble,
Where just men suffer wrong ;
Where sorrow treads on joy,
Where sweet things soonest cloy,
Where faiths are built on dust,
Where love is half mistrust,
Hungry, and barren, and sharp as the sea,
O set us free !

5.

O let the false dream fly
Where our sick souls do lie,
Tossing continually.
O, where Thy voice doth come,
Let all doubts be dumb ;
Let all words be mild,
All strifes be reconciled,
All pains beguiled ;
Light brings no blindness,
Love no unkindness,
Knowledge no ruin,
Fear no undoing
From the cradle to the grave,
Save, O save !

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

The Harp and the Cross.

GHOSTS OF SPIRITS AND THE BIBLE.—There are persons who feel as though ghost stories infringed on the Scriptures, as to the revelation of another world. And there have been persons who have held that there never was any knowledge of a future life till the preaching and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Yet it is plain, from the four Gospels, that Jesus did not address men as apes or gorillas, but as believers in a world to come. Jesus did not invent the words "Spirit," and "soul," "heaven," and "hell." And when he first used them they were very old words, and meant conceptions that were ancient. Actually there are theological writers at this present time who have less knowledge as to the soul than what was taken for granted by Paul with the heathen, and by Jesus with the Jews. In the middle ages, and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, theology vindicated for the service of the Church, such facts as are common in the records of animal magnetism. But to-day animal magnetism is commonly the terror of theologians. Yet men will never be religiously what they ought to be, in the light of these latter days, nor be Christians with Paul's courage, till it shall be understood that pneumatology is a handmaid in the household of faith, and not a suspicious vagabond about the temple who will not be driven away. —*Miracles, Past and Present*, by W. Mountford.

TO INQUIRERS.

Persons who desire to inform themselves of the fundamental principles and evidences of Modern Spiritualism, are recommended to read, first of all, the following works :—
Howitt's "History of the Supernatural."

*"From Matter to Spirit."**Epes Sergeant's "Planchette ; or, the Despair of Science."**Brevior's "Two Worlds."**Owen's "Footfalls on the Boundary of the Other World."**Home's "Incidents in my Life."**Phelps's "Gates Ajar."**Ballou's "Glimpses of the Supernatural."**"Confessions of a Truth Seeker."**Wilkinson's "Spirit Drawings."**"Does Spiritualism Demand Investigation?" By William Carpenter. London: Pitman, 20, Paternoster Row. Price 6d.**Judge Edmonds' Spiritual Tracts.*

All these works may be obtained from Mr. James Burns, 15, Southampton Row, Bloomsbury, London. The Editor of this Periodical does not, of course, pledge himself to every single statement made in any one of these books ; but he still considers them to be worthy of perusal, and invaluable aids to those who do really wish to know what Spiritualists have to say for themselves, and the grounds upon which their belief reposes.

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5—Narrative of Astonishing Transactions at Stockwell.

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ton Row, Holborn, W.C.

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1. When correspondents send Articles relating to sittings, entrancements, or Spiritual phenomena of any kind, they must, in the communication, give dates, names of places, names of persons, and residences, in full, and for publication. Unless they do so, their communications will not be inserted. It is due to the public, who, from whatever cause or causes, are more or less sceptical about Spiritualism, that they should be furnished with details which they can trace and verify; and if Spiritualists are not willing to submit their statements to that ordeal, they will please not to send them to the *Christian Spiritualist*.

2. The names and addresses of contributors must be sent to the Editor, for publication. The rule by which anonymous contributions will be excluded will be absolutely obeyed; indeed all communications, of whatever kind, which are of an anonymous nature, will be at once consigned to the waste-paper basket.

3. The Editor will not undertake to return any rejected MSS., or to answer letters unless the return postage be enclosed.

4. A copy of the *Christian Spiritualist* will be sent by the Editor to any address in Great Britain and Ireland, for 12 months, on pre-payment of 2s. 6d. in stamps. Where any difficulty is experienced in obtaining it, it is hoped that the Editor, Rose Cottage, Swindon, will be written to at once.

5. Contributors will please to write as briefly as is consistent with explicitness, write on one side of the paper only, and number each page consecutively.

6. Books, pamphlets, tracts, &c., sent for Review will be noticed, or returned to the Publisher.

7. Readers who may know of persons who would be likely to be interested in the circulation of this periodical, would very much oblige the Editor by sending him lists of names and addresses, when the parties indicated will be communicated with.

8. The Editor will be glad to receive newspaper cuttings, extracts from books and periodicals, and any useful matter bearing upon the general subject of Spiritualism. Friends sending such information will be pleased to append names and dates, as the case may be.

9. In the event of any article in the pages of this Periodical having no name and address appended to it, it is to be understood that the Editor is responsible for its contents as well as its appearance.

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