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## THE REV. ISAAC "TAYLOR'S PHYSICAL THEORY OF ANOTHER LIFE," WITH REFERENCE TO SPIRITUALISM.

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A TRUTH once fairly started in the world is continually finding confirmation in collateral and often unexpected circumstances. Ever and anon it is found in turning over a volume written ~~before~~ this truth was theorized and advocated on a multitude of facts, that it had been almost demonstrated by the solitary reasonings of some acute and unprejudiced mind, and in a manner prophesied of. Such a book, as it regards Spiritualism, is Mr. Taylor's *Physical Theory of Another Life*. Mr. Taylor is a member and a minister of the religious body of Independents, a body, which, with few exceptions, has not advanced at all out of the old cart-tracks of theology, and entertains very vague notions of the future life. Many of them still write and talk of those who "sleep," rather than wake in Jesus; of the day of Resurrection to occur some indefinite number of ages hence, and of *probably* meeting those they love, some day after that distant event, in some far-off heaven. There are preachers and writers amongst them who still discuss the question whether we shall really recognize our friends in heaven, and look upon the dust of the burial ground as some day to be re-assumed by the souls who have continued so long to live in the spiritual world without it. To them, the words of the Saviour, that a time shall come to all of us when it shall be said, "That which is earthy, let it be earthy still," and that the future, or inner world, being a spiritual world, matter cannot enter therein, have no meaning. As to Spiritualism, the reception of it by the Independents has been cold and distrustful; it has done violence to the dogmas taught at their colleges, and some of its most rude and vituperative opponents in the public press have belonged to this body; amongst others, Mr. Turbeville, in the *Patriot*. Dr. Campbell of the *British*

*Standard*, in his bold and energetic acknowledgment of this great truth stands startlingly isolated amongst the people and ministers of his sect on this head, who go on preaching in the old style, as if the only business of the after life were to wave palm branches and sing psalms, instead of being actively engaged in carrying out the multifarious works of God in that world just as much as in this. As if perpetual hallelujahs could be as acceptable to the Great Fountain of all Love and Life as the perpetual execution of those deeds of benevolence which the suffering and tempted struggling through the haunted and miry earth demand at the hands of the redeemed. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation?" They go on teaching, that a sinner confessing the error of his ways will ascend at once to the presence of God and his Christ, and all others will descend to the Prince of Darkness. That, by some heavenly hocus-pocus, sinners leprous with sin to the very soul's core, will be miraculously converted into saints, and made fitting denizens of the higher of the only two regions of the invisible which they recognize—a process as unfounded in any Scriptural assurance, as it is in open contradiction to the whole analogy of God's economy which is one of gradual change from good to evil and evil to good. Even when through the blood of Christ the old sinner is really converted, he must begin again as a little child, and is far from being a man in Christ Jesus. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?" Can the old habitual sinner of perhaps three-quarters of a century, at once become a pure and perfect angel standing on the same plane of knowledge, power, and virtue as the faithful children of God who have spent a life in resisting the devil, the flesh and world, and harmonizing their nature to that of God and the regions of his saints? For this divine metamorphosis, there needs the "many mansions" which our Saviour has told us of, through which the disembodied spirits will have to pass in their way upward.

Yet in this very body which clings tenaciously to the creeds and dogmas of their schools rather than to the clear intimations of the Gospel, and to the traditions of the Christian Church throughout its whole course, there lives a man eminent for his philosophical writings, and of a distinguished literary family, who eight and twenty years ago wrote a volume, namely, *The Physical Theory of Another Life*, in which, by a process of sound and searching reasoning, he arrived at the most prominent teachings of present Spiritualism. Mr. Isaac Taylor's work was published in 1836, and it is now curious and most satisfactory to see how completely the revelations of Spiritualism have confirmed, as facts, all that he inferred from reason and Scripture. The work is one, which

had Mr. Taylor written nothing else, would stamp him as one of the most vigorous as well as the most independent reasoners of his age, and it is to be greatly regretted that his arguments do not seem to have produced a deeper and more general conviction amongst his fellow professors. They ought to have created a new and emancipating era in their theology, and as they have now received full demonstration by the teachings from the inner world, through thousands and tens of thousands of mediums, they again seriously claim their attention. From ourselves a brief notice of the main teachings of this remarkable volume, will be especially interesting and refreshing.

I naturally infer, as Mr. Taylor nowhere makes a single allusion to Swedenborg, that he was wholly unacquainted with his writings. Eight and twenty years ago, these writings were very far from having won the attention of theologians in general. At that time, I am free to confess, that though I had an old man in my employment who was an occasional preacher amongst the Swedenborgians, and though he was desirous to inform me of the doctrines of the great Swedish revolutionizer of theology, and lent me some of his books, they produced no conviction in me beyond that of Swedenborg being an honest visionary. Had Mr. Taylor read and imbibed any ideas from this source, I believe that he would have candidly stated the fact, as the whole of his writings shew him to be at once a bold and honest thinker. I, therefore, accept the whole of the deductions of this volume as those of Mr. Taylor's own clear and logical reason: and in that point of view they stand amid the philosophical writings of his professing body, as a lofty column on a vast and perfect plane.

It is necessary, in the outset, to let it be clearly understood that by a "physical theory of another life," the author does not mean a material theory. Physical is here used in its true, original sense of natural, or according to the constitution given by God, from the Greek word *φύσις*. It is translated in our New Testament, in the 15th chapter of the 1st of Corinthians, where speaking of the two bodies given to man, it says, "there is a natural body and a spiritual body," and it is in that sense of natural that Mr. Taylor uses the word physical. The translation, however, as Mrs. De Morgan has already shewn, is far from correct, for the words are *ἔστι σῶμα ψυχικόν, καὶ ἔστι σῶμα πνευματικόν*: a soul body and a spiritual body; the soul body being that in immediate connection with the nervous system, and the mere covering of flesh and blood hardly coming into the account. Mr. Taylor, on the authority of the words of the same text, "Howbeit, that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards that which is spiritual," infers that "all rational

orders are made to commence their course under the condition of animal organization, wherein they become thoroughly imbued with those imaginative sentiments which, in a refined form, they carry on with them throughout their immortality. That this order, or regular process, this transition, is the universal law of the intelligent creation." In this view he agrees entirely with Swedenborg, who asserts that the whole of the heavenly host have originated in the earth-planets, and in natural bodies. This theory appears the most rational of all the theories to account for the enclosure of souls in bodies, and puts an end to all the fancies of souls being selected and sent down to occupy bodies prepared for them. It infers a simple and mighty act of creative power, by which God has conferred on the human family the power of reproducing itself in individuals inheriting from their immediate parents the fulness of their own nature in body and in soul, as perfectly, man being an immortal as well as mortal creature, as the tree is produced perfectly by the seed of the tree, and the animal by the animal. In this point of view it is only that the whole human family is bound up in an immortal and not merely a mortal kinship. We are as much the children of our spiritual as of our earthly parents, and the idea of the divine power, by which an infinitude of souls is thus created by one fiat, is the sublimest conceivable.

There are many opinions of Mr. Taylor's connected with the nature of man which are deeply interesting, and which appear to me very true, which it will not be possible to notice in this article which must be restricted to a few cardinal points. Such is that of the apparent purposes of the soul's incorporation in its first stage, a view wholly in accordance with spiritual teachings. In his third chapter, the author refers to the different ideas of philosophers regarding the soul, such as that of its residing in the brain, and moving the body through the nerves by its volition. He shews that the soul resides everywhere in the body, and that the business of the brain is not to supply mind to the limbs, but to supply the galvanic power by which they obey the mind: "it is the mind present in the hand and arm (or other member), that is the real power." In Swedenborg's phraseology, the mind is the real man, the body its mere house. Mr. Taylor deems the power of mind in the human body a restrained power, and shewing evidence that in a different vehicle it will put forth that power in a far higher degree, inferences which the daily discoveries of spirit-forces and faculties most amply confirm. The strength which spirits display at *séances*, and on occasions of hauntings, in lifting heavy weights, and resisting the united efforts of half a dozen or more men, to say nothing of their power of conferring drawings, musical performance, and the

most living visions of persons, things and places, are sufficient proofs of the vigour and endowments cooped up in the mortal frame, like the eagle in the egg.

The author asserts that the perceptive faculties of the incarnated soul are clearly as vast and wonderful as its forces. That this is shewn by the sense of vision, which though limited by the naked eye, is extended by the telescope as far as mechanical art can extend the range of that instrument, and that how through it, we now perceive the nearest fixed stars at a distance of more than 19,200,000,000,000 miles, and the most remote of those that are distinctly visible at probably twice that distance. Hence he reasonably infers that our vision, when the husk of the material eye is removed, and we see by the eye of the spiritual body, will be boundless or next to boundless. "Our principle," he says, "is—that perception is, at present, a circumscribed faculty; and we consequently anticipate an era when it shall throw off its confinements, and converse at large with the material universe, and find itself familiarly at home in the height and breadth of the heavens," p. 60. Perhaps this supposition will be found truer as regards the spiritual than of the material universe, but such extension of vision as residing in the spirit has been proved to a great extent by clairvoyance, and is daily affirmed by the disembodied spirits themselves as possessed by them in an infinitely greater degree.

So also of the five senses. The author sees no reason, when the innate powers of perception receive free scope in the spiritual body, there may not be as well five hundred as five senses. "The ancient philosophy supposed there to be four elements, but we now reckon fifty; in like manner, as now we think of five species of perception, hereafter we may become familiar with a hundred, or a thousand," p. 62. He imagines that through these multitudinous avenues knowledge of the universe about us may extend not only from surfaces to interiors, but from effects to causes. That which science now draws forth with so much labour, and on which it prides itself far more than on that of the really higher mysteries of life, and which still extend but to the superficies of the earth, will be open to us. In fact, as Lord Byron expresses it, Mr. Taylor seems to believe that the soul will be—

"A thing all eyes, that all surveys."

"Nor need we," he adds, "fear pressing too near the veiled mysteries of creation; for INFINITE INTELLIGENCE will for ever be in infinite advance of us." And here he steps upon another faith of Spiritualism—that of infinite progress in spirit-life. This doctrine which has received so much abuse from the orthodox believers in a sudden "being made perfect in Christ Jesus," and

then an eternal stand-still of holy indolence, finds no favour with Mr. Taylor. What thousands of spirits have asserted to Spiritualists, Mr. Taylor's sound sense and study of the great law of analogy had asserted to him nearly thirty years ago.

The author, in his fifth chapter, rationally infers that the spiritual body in the future state, being only the instrument of the mind, and not of a divided obedience to mind and body, will be capable of a much greater exertion of both good and evil ; and that though this would enable the wise and the good to hold on their course with a more even consistency, it could not of itself render men wise and virtuous, but would send the vicious more rapidly forward on a vicious course—an idea full of awful interest, but fully supported by both the revelations of Swedenborg and of later Spiritualists. In his eighth chapter the author, treating of language, supposes it possible that spirits see so transparently into each other's minds that they have little need of other language, but that what they have is of infinitely more power than any human language. Let the reader recollect what the Seeress of Prevorst says on this subject, as in her own experience, and what spirits are continually saying, namely, that our languages do not enable them to describe the wonders of the spiritual world, in consequence of which objectors say the spirits tell us nothing that we did not know before, which although false, has a certain truth in it, from the limiting nature of human speech. Mr. Taylor well expresses this:—"After having vulgarized and enfeebled our conceptions and our sentiments, language then sufficiently represents and recombines what it has first reduced to its own level." It does this even in our own intellectual researches, and how much more in the communications of spirits who find an utter want of fitting symbols to represent their ideas. Mr. Taylor goes at length into the difficulties and even impossibilities placed in the path of intellectual science by this defect of human language, saying, that "Abstract philosophy remains where and what it was in the bright times of Grecian intelligence," and that each successive professor of metaphysics spends his life in coining new terms to express his ideas, which the next comer breaks up again. Whence, as Buckle lately and most truly observed, "Metaphysics has never yet produced a single new idea."

In his ninth chapter the author not only resumes the discussion of the successive and progressive stages of our future life, but he speculates as a strong probability on what every spirit now communicating shows to be a great truth, namely, that in our earlier stages in that world we shall probably carry a certain amount of the more subtle particles of matter with us, and that these we shall drop by the way as we advance towards the purer

and more concretely-spiritual spheres. In proportion to moral advance, he believes there must be correspondent freeings from the stains and tendencies of earth. He doubts whether in the next immediate stage of our existence we shall find ourselves more happy than we are at present. This to a certainty must depend on our degree of prepared relation to that world. "There are," he says, "indeed, the strongest reasons for supposing, revelation apart, that human nature is destined to expand its actual powers, and to occupy a wider sphere of action and of knowledge than it does in the present state; but then this future advancement, like some advancements of the present life, may rather expose us to heavier cares and pains than augment our enjoyment, or secure our peace. The actual condition of mankind, taken at large, will by no means warrant our confidently assuming that a physical and intellectual progression must imply an increase of happiness and virtue; nor when the moral state of a large proportion of the mass of mankind is duly considered, can we, on the strength of abstract arguments, drawn from the divine attributes of benevolence and wisdom, deduce with safety the inference that the millions of our fellow men are moving forward on the road to goodness and felicity. On the contrary, appalling facts that force themselves on our reluctant notice, in relation to the habits, usages, and propensities of several races of the human family, wear the most grim and gloomy aspect, and are such as to suggest forebodings as painful as the mind can admit." p. 121.

This is a very different doctrine to that of the popular theology of the day, which engages by a momentary repentance of a life of crime, sensuality, and injustice, to send the penitent of an instant into the highest heaven, and the highest presence, a pure and psalm-singing saint. But it is a doctrine not merely suggested by our author, but announced in sternest language by Swedenborg and by all worthy communicating spirits. Terrible pitfalls are these theologic fictions for the easy-going and here most comfortable sinners who put their trust in them!

Mr. Taylor, in his tenth chapter, pursues this train of ideas, and imagines that the very augmented powers of the disembodied soul become the means of its severer punishment:—"Let it then be imagined that the future man, new-born to his inheritance of absolute mechanical force—the inherent force of mind—and finding himself able at will to traverse all spaces, should, in the very hour in which he has made proof of his recent faculty, be stopped, either by malignant superior powers, or by the dread ministers of justice, and on account of forgotten misdeeds, be seized, enchained, and incarcerated," &c.

In this miserable condition of things, others of a criminal soul's new endowments would immediately operate to aggravate

his doom. "Consider the soul which has given itself up to a life of worldly pleasure, which has been smothered in the trumpery of vulgar and sensual delight—wedded by inveterate habit to all that is false and unreal, the new faculty of seeing through forms and semblances, and of keenly and clearly discerning the unadorned mechanism of things material, must at once strip it of its all, and reduce it to a pitiable destitution. The gold will no longer shine, the diamond no longer sparkle; the plumed pomp of rank will be a nothing—set about with quills; and this plump world, sleek with its delicacies, is at once shrivelled to an atrophy; and the natural universe, lately so gay and blooming to the idolatrous eye of its devotee, starts to view—as a gaunt skeleton, barely knit together with its scar sinews." p. 133.

Through several succeeding chapters, Mr. Taylor draws many inferences as warranted by the law of analogy, which are now all familiar truths to Spiritualists. These are that the human spirit retains the form of the body; that it maintains its identity and all the memory of the past; that it is probably destined to successive developments into purer and higher conditions; that its passage from this life to the next will be immediate; and that it may, very likely, be only astonished at finding so little apparent change in itself, and how little its personal consciousness has been disturbed. Swedenborg, in fact, says he saw numbers of souls who had just entered the other world who were not conscious of the transition, and persisted that they were still in this life. The author believes them to carry all their tastes, affections, and habits with them; which he says are living powers which vegetate and cover the entire surface of the soul. That the moral nature is, therefore, not at all changed by the process of death, but requires other and moral causes to operate favourably upon it. Nothing but a miracle, he says, can, however, renovate our moral nature after the issue out of the body; and hence we find spirits continually saying how much harder it is to become new-born there than here, and find them also coming continually to ask for the prayers of their friends still in the flesh, as more in sympathy with their condition. The author naturally infers that when the spirit is freed from the envelope of the flesh, its passions and emotions are liberated to an intenser action, and that this condition necessarily leads to vivid paroxysms of excitement, good or evil, pleasurable or painful. We learn all this from the spiritual world to be matter of fact, and hence the astonishment which many who receive spiritual communications feel, when they see that spirits, eager for some object on earth, perhaps the rectification of some injustice done in life, become as it were frenzied for it, forget all the obstacles in the way, and even demand from their hearers proceedings which would involve them in the most



serious dilemmas, and otherwise produce disastrous consequences. Yet all this time these very spirits, smarting in the remorse for the past, are longing, as it were, with an actually insane vehemence to redress it.

In his fourteenth chapter the author returns more fully to the theory of progression. He believes that every soul will start forward from the point of its moral condition here: that all will have their objects of pursuit and even of ambition; that God will employ every one in his place in helping to carry on the work of the universe; He will not leave his creatures idle spectators of omnipotence, but make them co-workers as here; that in the most favourable positions there will be circumstances to call forth the exercise of all their faculties, their powers of endurance, their patience and wisdom, as well as of their pity, love, and benevolence. In his fifteenth chapter, he asserts his belief in what Sir Thomas Browne asserted long ago, and what all Spiritualists are regularly taught from the inner world, that all the discoveries and steps of progress here are sent from that world, and at the times when the condition of mankind is prepared for their reception. All the discoveries of geography, astronomy, science, and art will, therefore, be found appearing at the exact epoch of development which demands them: and are frequently whispered to various accordant minds simultaneously by different spirit messengers, whence the constant recurrence of the conflicting claims of priority in discovery.

The speculations of Mr. Taylor are hitherto singular enough as existing in his mind anterior to modern Spiritualism, and supposing him, as I do, totally unacquainted with the writings of Swedenborg; but he opens his seventeenth chapter with a theory of spiritual life so perfectly agreeing with those of both Swedenborg and the Spiritualists, that the coincidence, regarding it as such, is truly surprising. Whilst his fellow-believers of the Congregational churches were, and, for the most part, still are believing that there merely exist beyond this visible universe, two regions heaven and hell, and that the heavenly region is in some immensely remote location, to which happy souls are borne wondering on the downy wings of angels, Mr. Taylor opens this chapter in the following manner:—

“But now we are to hold in abeyance, or altogether to exclude the conjecture above stated, concerning the material universe, as adapted to sustain three orders of intelligent beings, and on the contrary, shall assume that planets and suns alike, and all worlds visible and palpable, are the theatres of animal life merely; and that, whatever species may inhabit these spheres are subject to decay and corruption.

“This supposed, then our second conjecture is—that within

the field occupied by the visible and ponderable universe, and on all sides of us, there is existing and moving another element fraught with another species of life—corporeal indeed and various in its orders, but not open to the cognizance of those who are confined to the conditions of animal organization, not to be seen, nor to be heard, nor to be felt by man. We here assert, and insist upon, the abstract probability, that our five modes of perception are partial, not universal means of knowing what may be around us; and that as the physical sciences furnish evidence of the presence and agency of certain powers of nature which elude the senses, except in some of their remote effects, so are we denied the right of concluding that we are conscious of all real existences within our sphere.

“Something must presently be said with a view of loosening the natural prejudice which impels us to conclude that nothing corporeal can elude our senses, but first let the conjecture now in hand be distinctly stated. There prevails throughout the system of nature a pervading of the dense elements by the less dense, or the fluid or gaseous. Thus all solid bodies are penetrated, either by humidity, or by the elastic gases, or by the inponderable elements, light, heat, electricity, magnetism. Again, fluids are, in like manner, pervious to other fluids, with which they may combine; and also to elastic gases, and to the elements just named; and in its turn the rarest gas is traversed by and commingled with other elastic bodies, and by heat, electricity, or magnetism. In some cases the pervading element affects the element pervaded; thus heat expands the metals, and at a certain point fuses them, and so galvanism puts into activity the chemical affinities of many solids and fluids; but in other cases the pervading element takes its course through the pervaded body without giving any indication *upon that body* of its presence or its passage. Thus, electricity may pass, unnoticed, through a perfectly conducting substance, as the magnetic attraction takes its way through intervening bodies, which, in no sensible manner it disturbs; and thus, too, does the power of gravitation take effect at the greatest distances, without rendering itself sensible in any other manner than that effecting an approximation of masses.

“But is this constant principle of the visible world, which shews itself in a thousand ways around us—is it exhausted and done with in the instances which our modern physical discoveries have brought to light? We should confidently assume the contrary, and believe nothing less than that it has a still further and higher play in relation to the sentient and intellectual universe—that is to say, we insist upon the abstract probability of the existence, on all sides of us, of an invisible element, sustaining its own species of beings; some, perhaps, as slenderly endowed

with rational faculties as are the insect tribes of earth, and others in gradation, rising to the highest pitch of intelligence and moral dignity—some accountable and immortal, others ephemeral, and prompted only by instincts.

“Our present conjecture reaches to the extent of supposing that, within the space encircled by the sidereal revolutions, there exists and moves a second universe, not less real than the one we are at present conversant with—a universe elaborate in structure, and replete with life; life agitated by momentous interests, and perhaps, by frivolous interests—a universe conscious, perhaps, of the material spheres, or unconscious of them, and firmly believing (as we do) *itself* to be the only reality. Our planets in their sweep do not perforate the structures of this invisible creation; our suns do not scorch its plains, for the two collocated systems are not connected by any active affinities.” p. 222.

Out of the many inferences drawn from analogy in this volume, there are yet two or three others which I will notice, as shewing more completely the spiritual truth of the author's system. Though these two worlds co-exist, yet he imagines their inhabitants to be really related one to the other, and in fact, the one race an after-stage of the other. He believes all the spiritual beings of the invisible world to be as Swedenborg does, of mundane origin. That in a very large class of them there is a strong downward tendency, as we see amongst the people of this earth; that while in progress upward by destiny, yet by actual instinct and impulse, they are looking downwards, and crowd around the solid masses of the universe. That powerful agencies are in operation around us, of which we have no immediate perception. “And, now,” says the author, “let it just be imagined that, as almost all natural principles and modes of life are open to some degree of irregularity, and admit exceptive cases, so this pressure of the vast community of the dead towards the precincts of life, may, in certain cases, actually break the boundaries that hem in the ethereal crowds, and that thus, as if by accident and trespass, the dead may in single instances infringe upon the ground of common corporeal life.” p. 257.

As Mr. Taylor believes that “there is the familiar and ready intermixture of invisible and impalpable beings with human society; so that within any given boundary there may be corporeally present the human crowd and the extra-human crowd; and the latter as naturally and simply present as the former; the latter as vividly conscious of the material world as the former, and as energetically prompted by interests, and passions, by desires and fears;” so he believes, as they cannot make themselves heard, and have no mechanical power of giving evidence of their presence, this has been the cause of their invading the

animal corporiety of the human race, namely *possessing* men. He seems to think that there is a difference of species between the tempting, physically-imperceptible devils, and these unclean, invading spirits, who are not represented as tempters. He imagines that the possessions so frequent in the time of our Saviour do not exist now. On both these points recent events have abundantly shewn that his opinions require remodelling. The phenomenon now so familiar of mediumship, points out how spirits both bad and good can make themselves heard, felt, and understood by men; and if Mr. Taylor will consider the symptoms of insanity, he will not only find that *possessions* are as common now as at the period of the advent of Christ; but the discovery of this great fact will shew him that the true cure of insanity has yet to be adopted, or rather re-adopted—the mode of the Saviour. The great spiritual disorder can only be cured by spiritual means.

Mr. Taylor, moreover, attributing the appearance of ghosts to the occasional breaking of the spirits which crowd the frontiers of human life, through that frontier, says it is of no use asking "What good end is answered by the alleged extra natural occurrences? or is it worthy of the Supreme Wisdom to permit them? And so forth. It is a question," he says, "first of testimony, to be judged of on the established principles of evidence; and then of physiology; not of theology, or of morals," p. 259. And, he adds, "The time will come when, in consequence of the total dissipation of popular superstitions, and the removal too of the prejudice which makes us ashamed of seeming to believe in company of the vulgar, or to believe at the prompting of fear, it will be seen that facts of this class ought to engage the attention of physiologists, and then they will be consigned to their place in our systems of the philosophy of human nature. Notwithstanding prejudices of all sorts—vulgar and philosophic facts of whatever class, and of whatever tendency, will at length receive their due regard, as the materials of science; and the era may be predicted in which complete reaction shall take its course, and the true principles of reasoning be made to embrace a wider field than that which may be measured by the human eye and hand," p. 260.

Further,—“Should a rational and laborious examination of the Scriptural evidence relating to invisible orders, lead to a revival of the belief of Christians, and to the refreshment of their fading impressions,—should this take place in connection with a better understood theory of intellectual existence, very important consequences might be the result; and all religious minds, awakened to a sense of the simple reality of the spiritual dangers to which we are exposed, as tenants of this haunted planet, would be

impelled, with undiverted anxiety, to seek safety where always it is to be found." p. 253.

It is perfectly unnecessary for me to say how completely all these conjectures of nearly thirty years ago had been proved by Swedenborg, from direct observations in the spiritual world, to be actual facts; or by how many millions of persons since then they have been received in communications from that world as the same. In closing this paper, therefore, the question naturally presents itself, "What is the present belief of the author as to the truth of Spiritualism?" As during a continuous course of fifteen years, communities now comprising many millions in America and Europe—communities of civilized, religious, scientific, learned and other people, all assert that manifestations incalculable in number, and extremely varied in their character, have converted the author's hypotheses into great natural and psychologic facts, and that on the most consentaneous and accumulated evidence—how stands the author himself at this moment in regard to this great question? Has he who stepped out so immensely far beyond the inquiries and belief of his fellow professors on this topic, availed himself with the avidity which might be expected, to shew his superiority to the vulgar prejudice which he complained of as obstructive of the course of truth? As he asserted that the time must come when a reaction must take place—has he endeavoured to accelerate that reaction by hastening to examine the facts the fame of which resounding on all hands, cannot have failed to reach his ears? As Mr. Taylor most sensibly observes that the *cui bono* is not the rule, in the first instance of our procedure as to such an enquiry, but that it is to determine on evidence whether it be a fact in nature, has he proceeded to scrutinize the evidence now so superabundant? Again, as at p. 190, Mr. Taylor observes that the spirit of compassion and philanthropy glowing in many human hearts, proves of itself that we are only bursting the husk, in preparation for freer expansion under the beams of a warmer sun, and that we may infer from these swelling emotions of pity now working pent up in tender and noble hearts, that a sphere will at length be opened up to us, in which we shall find millions needing to be governed, taught, rescued and led forward from a worse to a better, or from a lower to a higher stage of life. And as thousands of spirits, speaking through modes now familiar, declare that such is the very character of the world towards which we are all hastening, has the author on this higher ground made any steps amid so much opportunity, towards realizing his conjectures and putting a substantial finish to his truly transcendental philosophy? On this head I know nothing. It is a curious point of enquiry.

Another point is more clear. The effect of Mr. Taylor's able teaching on his fellow professors of the Congregational churches, may be said to be almost *nil*. Some few of its ministers have shewn some desire to examine the subject, but even these, so far as my own observation has gone, have approached it with cautious and timid steps, like men fearing to tread amongst man-traps and spring-guns. The question, as it regards their body, is still—"Can these dry bones live?" But there is a life at large in the general public which is growing at a rate which places at no distant date, the reaction on this great topic which Mr. Taylor confidently predicts. To Spiritualists, the perusal of such a book as this on the *Physical Theory*, written nearly thirty years ago, and the comparison of its *conjectures* with the present wealth of psychological *facts*, must be a most refreshing and encouraging exercise.

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### G A R I B A L D I.

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THE hope of the oppressed! The hatred of the oppressor! The light of liberty! The bane of tyranny! The loving benefactor, the glorious liberator of the race! All hearts turn to thee! May all hearts aspire to be as thou art—the true, the faithful, the humble follower of thy Lord. Thy life has been unselfish. Thou hast ever thrown back from thy pure heart the toys and glittering baubles of the world. Thy watchword has been, and is, LIBERTY! Liberty to all—to the poor, to the enslaved rich, to the ignorant, to the wise—all hearts see thy worth, all hands are stretched forth to do thee honour.

Then go on, Garibaldi, in the glorious path that is prepared for thee. Thy star will never be dimmed; thy career will finish in glory; thy love and thy mighty influence will overcome the difficulties of ages! Thou art the willing servant of higher and nobler beings, and thy pure heart is ever open to their inspiring influx. Thy faith is great, and according to thy trust so art thou covered with protection. Thy heroic spirit walks in the strength and glory of innocence—a king amongst kings! Thou hast preserved the whiteness of thy soul! Were there more like thee, then might we "beat our swords into ploughshares and our spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it."—[Communicated by Spirit-writing.]

## MYSTERIES OF NATURE AND OF SPIRIT.

By THOMAS BREVIER.

## II.

How spirit can operate upon matter is to some minds so great a difficulty that they regard the thing itself as impossible. To those who believe that there is a spirit in man, it may, in reply, be asked, *How* does spirit, in its present union with the body, operate upon matter? And how do they know, or what reason have they to believe that, when this union is dissolved, all power over matter at once ceases, and under no conditions can be resumed? And of those who hold the hypothesis of Materialism, it may be asked, What is the vital principle? and *how* does it operate on the organic structure? What is volition? and *how* does it control muscular action? *How* does thought operate upon matter? or, *how* does matter create thought?\* Physiologists of this class refer us to the brain, which, they tell us, "secretes thought as the liver secretes bile." Well, it is found from chemical analysis that, in every hundred parts of brain there are about eighty parts of water, seven of albumen, five of fatty matter, and the remainder consists of phosphorus, osmose, and different salts and acids. Can, then, water hold in solution the problems of Euclid? Can fat secrete the idea—say of a principle of order governing the universe? Can a pinch of phosphorus thrown in stimulate men to die for their country? or salts and acids excite a sense of duty?

Is it reasonable,—I might ask—is it to the thinking mind conceivable, that any combination or organisation of these substances could have secreted *Paradise Lost*; or any vibration in their particles have produced *The Messiah*? If, indeed, we will not accept facts on evidence unless we understand *how* they are produced and all about them, our creed will soon be reduced to the single article—"I believe in nothing at all;" or perhaps to only this, "I believe that I have no belief;" for belief is the result of powers and processes which are in themselves inscrutable.

Matter and spirit has each its province or separate kingdom, analogous to the distinctions of mineral, vegetable, and animal; but is it not too hasty an assumption that spirit has no properties corresponding to those of matter?—that these are so contrary that, under no conditions, can either act upon the other? Do we not find that physical substances with contrary properties may be

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\* In pure physics we are confronted with difficulties and mysteries almost equally formidable and inscrutable; as for instance, that two invisible gases, muriatic acid gas and ammoniacal gas, by their union, form a solid salt.

brought into a state of union, as (to take a homely illustration) oil and water (proverbially opposites), by the interposition of a third substance (soda), freely mingle and unite, each having a stronger affinity for the intermediate body than they have of repulsion to each other? The principle of intermediates is of universal operation, and of the first importance to a true system of philosophy. What is creation, but a medium through which the Infinite Intelligence communicates with the finite understanding? Every natural object and being, being a symbol or expression of some form of thought or affection of the Divine mind, and a visible incarnation of some spiritual principle, the knowledge or idea of which it is an appointed medium to convey. The unity of creation, and all the processes of nature, are effected by mediation and consequent communication; each is bound to all, and all to each, either by direct affinities, or by union with that which has the power of combining other principles with itself and with each other.\*

To effect this every mediate must possess principles or properties having affinity to the two things so brought into harmony, or it could not effect their conjunction; thus, the bodily eye and ear must stand in relation to the spirit, as well as to the outward world, or they could not be instruments of communication. And this, I may remark by the way, is a striking confirmation that the human spirit is not the formless abstraction which metaphysicians have pretended, but that it retains the human form, and in the spiritual degree, all the organs and faculties proper to humanity.†

Because the senses thus act as media of communication between the soul and the material world, it has been hastily concluded that they are the sole inlets of knowledge; still more

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\* Thus, the atmosphere is a medium of conjunction and communication between the sun and the earth, and is also a medium for the communication of sound; light is a medium to effect the purposes of vision; heat and air are media for the support of animal life, and the bodily senses are media of communication with the natural world. Man is a medium between God and his fellow-man, for effecting Divine purposes, and the angelic heaven, according to Scripture, is a Divine medium or ministry. Indeed, this principle, faithfully followed out, conducts us into some of the deepest arcana of the Divine mysteries; in its light we may, without falling into Pantheism, learn with Cowper how that God is

"——— through all diffused,  
The life of all that lives."

The Divine influx flowing through creation in its several orders, series, and degrees of being, from centre to circumference.

† Van Helmont, in the thirteenth section of his treatise *On the Vision of the Soul*, relates, that having panted incessantly for eighteen years with an intense desire of knowing the nature of the soul, in a vision he had a sight of his soul, in the figure of a man whose whole was homogeneous, actively discerning, a substance spiritual, crystalline, and lucent by its own native splendour, but enshrined in a second nubilous part, as the husk or exterior context of itself.



rashly, the flute has been confounded with the musician, the telescope with the astronomer; the destruction of the instrument has been held to involve also that of the operator. I am not now setting forth the grounds and reasons which confirm the statement of the great Christian philosopher and apostle that there is a spiritual body as well as a natural body, but it must be evident that the theory of a spiritual body corresponding at all points to the natural body, being in fact the origin and formative power of the natural body—the internal mould from which it derives its form, and by which alone it lives; that such a theory, sustained alike by Scripture and the highest philosophy, is itself fully sufficient to meet all the difficulties arising out of this view of the Materialist, and to cut away the very ground of his objection.

But, further, some of the phenomena of mesmerism, especially of what is called clairvoyance, (which, it may be remarked, sometimes occur spontaneously, and independent of all mesmeric process,) demonstrate that the mind can, and, under certain conditions, does, act independent of the usual organs, and also independent, or nearly so, of the usual conditions of time and space, and that mind can act upon mind, and produce actual positive results, by the mere force of its volition. Those who are familiar with the literature of mesmerism, or with its practical exercise, will be able to call to mind many instances of this. The following is related by Dr. George Barth (*The Mesmerist's Manual*, page 101):—

“My professional occupation caused me to reside away from my family, who lived in the neighbourhood of Camden Town, whilst my residence in Essex was distant twenty miles, at least, ‘as the crow flies.’ At this time my wife, who had *not been previously mesmerised*, was suffering severely from a presumed engorgement of the spleen, and was under the customary medical treatment, but did not take opiates, as they invariably caused delirium instead of sleep. One Sunday morning I received a letter from her, in which she stated that she was no better, and that pain, restlessness and irritability deprived her of sleep at night—that she was often in the night obliged to rise from her bed, sit in a chair, or walk the room for an hour or two at a time, feeling so much distressed that she could not remain in a recumbent position, and too irritable to sleep. On receiving this information, I determined to try my power of mesmerising at a distance that very night. I considered that at half-past eleven she would certainly have retired for the night, and, accordingly, at that time commenced *willing* her to sleep, and making passes in the direction of the north of London, as if my influence could reach to her; I also willed that she should know that I was mesmerising her. I continued this operation for upwards of

half an hour. Next evening, Monday, I wrote to Mrs. Barth, telling her of my attempt, and enquiring if she had felt anything unusual. On Tuesday morning, I received from her a letter written on Monday afternoon, and which had, therefore, be it observed, *crossed mine* in course of post transit. In this letter she states :—‘ A curious thing happened to me last night—I went to bed soon after ten o’clock, but, as usual, I could not sleep. In about an hour I was obliged to get up, and sat, thinking, and sometimes walking about. By-and-bye, I drew up my blind, and looked out of window at the gardens and railway. Whilst I was looking, such a dreadful sleepiness came over me, I could scarcely keep my eye-lids open—they seemed as if they were being drawn down by little threads. I felt quite overpowered by it, and, at the same time, a strong impression came into my mind that you was mesmerising me ; it was as plain and distinct as if a whisper had told it me, only no whisper was audible. I felt alarmed, and thought what should I do ? I next thought that if you were mesmerising me, the best thing I could do was to get into bed again and lie quietly, which I did, and slept soundly until this morning, and was so soundly asleep, that they brought me my tea three times before they could awaken me to take it. Now, was not this curious ? Had you anything to do with it ?’

“ The receipt of this letter on Tuesday morning gratified me by an assurance of the complete success of my Sunday night’s operation, and my letter to my wife, already despatched, explained to her the cause of (and my participation in) her sudden and sound sleep. We immediately, and mutually, corresponded by letter again on the subject, and I arranged to induce sleep nightly at half-past eleven, by this distant operation, and succeeded in doing so for many consecutive nights. This was put an end to by the illness of a child who had whooping-cough. His mother would not entrust him at night to the care of a servant, and wrote to me begging me to desist from my nightly mesmerising, as she could not resist the influence, and became unable to attend to the child, who she feared might be choked by the paroxysms of cough were she unable to raise him up and pay the requisite attention to him. We next settled to have the sleep at half-past three or four every afternoon, and this also succeeded until discontinued at my wife’s earnest request, as casual visitors were sometimes present with her at the time. The tendency to sleep duly and suddenly came on ; she did not like to explain the cause, as it would appear to them monstrously absurd and ridiculous ; and, struggle as she would against it, she still kept dozing, and dreaming, and making *mal apropos* replies to their conversation, which she feared would really lead them to

imagine she had indulged in a habit opposed to ebriety. I could adduce various other striking instances of the possibility of inducing sleep on distant persons which have occurred in my personal experience."

The *Zoist* is a repository of valuable facts on this and kindred topics. I will trouble the reader with only two. Vol. X., contains an article on "Mesmerism in Australia," being a letter from Dr. J. B. Motherwell, of Melbourne, to Dr. Elliotson, of London. In this letter, among other remarkable instances of clairvoyance, Dr. Motherwell gives the following:—"One evening Dr. Howitt brought to my house a small piece of wood; no person except he and I knew what it was. I placed it in the hand of the clairvoyant and asked, did she know what it was? She replied, 'Yes; a piece of wood.' 'Well,' said I, 'trace that, from the time it was growing as a tree up to the present time.' She said she was taken by it (the piece of wood) across the sea to another land where she saw the tree growing. She described the appearance of the tree, the leaves, and fruit, which were those of an oak; she saw it felled, stripped of its bark, and the branches lopped off; she saw them about to remove its trunk, and she saw persons having the dress and appearance of sailors amongst them: it was brought to the sea shore, and she saw a ship at anchor near it, on board of which this log of timber was brought. The ship sailed away from that land. After sailing for some time, she saw some commotion on board—something was wrong. She saw smoke, afterwards flames, issuing from the hold; all the men got into boats, and left the ship. She remained with the ship; it seemed to sink to a level with the water, but did not go lower, as she thinks that the men must have done something to the ship before they left it, which prevented it: they had let water into the ship in some way. After a time she saw a large ship approaching, and she knew it was a man of war, as she saw cannon on board, and a number of men, some of them dressed in uniform. They sent a boat to the ship where she was, and after looking about the deserted vessel, they returned to their own ship; that she saw them looking at this piece of timber, and that it was afterwards taken on board the man of war: she went with the timber. The man of war then sailed away, and she saw it approaching land which she knew was England. She saw this timber brought on shore; she saw it cut up into planks, and the piece which she had in her hand was a portion of one of the planks, which was used in the construction of a large ship which she saw building. She saw that vessel completed; she described its launching, the crowds of persons to witness it, the firing of cannon, and the huzzaing and shouting. She then described its being rigged, masts and sails

put into it, cannon put on board, and this vessel going to sea. After some time she described seeing a smaller vessel as appearing in the distance, and its trying to escape from the vessel which she was in. She saw them firing cannon at each other; but at length the smaller vessel was overtaken, and she saw men from the larger ship going on board of her, and the crew taken out of it and sent on board the big vessel; then they separated. The big ship in which she remained, continued sailing up and down within sight of the land. She saw vessels between it and the shore. The big ship seemed to be waiting for them to come out from the land; but they seemed afraid to do so. After some time she saw three or four come out, and fire at the big ship in which she was; but as it approached them they went in closer to the land again. Afterwards she saw two vessels sailing away from the ship she was in, and which was trying to overtake them—that there was a great deal of firing, but the vessels got away from her. Afterwards she saw the ship she was in approaching land, which she knew was England; that she anchored there; that great crowds of persons came on board, and were selling things to the men on board. She saw the vessel leaning very much to one side; she thought that was caused by all the cannon being put to one side; she saw men doing something to the other side of the vessel. After a moment she said, ‘Doctor, do you know that is very dangerous; for I see the ship leaning over more and more, but they do not seem to be aware of it. Ah! there is one of them looking over the side, he seems to be aware of the danger; I see him going and speaking to another person, but he appears to have got some answer that does not please him, for he walks away quite sulky-looking. Oh! the water is rushing into the vessel, and she is sinking: I am going down with her. Oh! what a number of fish there are swimming about and eating the dead bodies: that is dreadful; there is nothing left but bones and skeletons. I think they are trying to get the vessel up again, for I see large hook things let down to try and lay hold of the vessel, but they are not able to do so. I see them letting down something like a barrel; what can that be for? Oh! I see smoke coming out of it, and it causes such a commotion, throwing up the mud and sand, and tearing the vessel to pieces. It has something to do, I know, with gunpowder, but how can that be under water? I have come up to the surface of the water with this piece of wood, and it is floated on shore; I see a sailor picking it up.’ *Then and for the first time was she told that that piece of wood was a portion of the Royal George, which sunk at Portsmouth many, many years ago.*

“I have not given this account in the voluminous and descriptive manner that she did. It could not have been cerebral

sympathy, as neither Dr. Howitt nor I could have imagined such a detail. If it was a dream, it was one of the best connected that I ever heard. The clear manner in which it was detailed bore the impress of truth, as if all the events were passing in review before her. Some time afterwards I was mentioning what I have just narrated to my friend, Major Davidson, who said, 'Well, doctor, I have something that I should wish to give her to trace, and no person in this colony except myself knows any- about it.' I said, 'Very well, Major, we'll try her with it.' He was going to tell me about it, but I said, 'No, Major, I would rather know nothing about it: bring it yourself, and we'll hear what she says.' That evening the Major came to my house, and, after I had mesmerised her, he put into her hand a small box such as is used for holding apothecaries' weights and scales. I asked her to trace that wood from the time it was growing as a tree. She said, 'Well, it (the box) takes me over the sea to another land, and I see a fine city; but I do not stop there; I am brought a long way into the country, and I now see the tree growing before me.' Asked to describe the place: 'It is growing in an extensive plain, and I see a large river near it' (most correct). Asked to describe the tree; its height, leaves, and what kind of seed it bore. She gave to the Major's great satisfaction a most perfect description of the *teak* tree; its thick large leaves, its remarkable seed, and their curious envelope. He said that the box was brought by him from Gualpara, on the bank of the Burrampooter, in the interior of India, and that he had been to Calcutta in his route to this colony. Major D. then asked her were there many more trees of the same kind; and she replied, 'Well, I have looked for miles around, and though I see a great many trees, I cannot see another of this kind' (most correct). 'Now,' said the Major, 'can you tell me how did that tree come by its death; by the saw, or the axe, or by what means?' She said, 'Well, when you asked me that question, I saw the tree lying on the ground with its roots torn up' ('Most correct,' said the Major). The tree was uprooted by the force of the wind. She saw it cut into pieces, and a tall black man making this box out of one of them. Asked how he made it? She said she saw him using carefully some small instruments which he held in his hand, and which she could not see plainly; that she did not understand it; but that she did not see him using any planes or chisels in making it, and that she did not see any glue about the place. The box was made out of a solid piece of wood, having its cavity dug out."

It was the knowledge and exercise of this power of the will and the transmission of mental influence, and the study of the latent spiritual faculties in man, and the conditions of their de-

velopment, which constituted the ancient magic. Its ignorant and perverted application in later times was a chief element in the so-called witchcraft; and the power of the active will over the passive subject is avowedly the agency in what are now termed biological experiments.\* When will our philosophers learn that the facts of the soul are at least as deserving of study as the nature of beetles, and, instead of allowing this important field of inquiry to be appropriated by empirics, give to it that patient careful study which now seems wholly reserved for physical investigations?

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### MR. ROBERT BROWNING ON SPIRITUALISM.

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THE press is quite alert and looking up again on the subject of Spiritualism, and is loud in the praises of Mr. Robert Browning's latest effort in poetry, of which sixty-eight pages are taken up with a violent explosion of his feelings, under the title of "Mr. Sludge, the Medium." It has not been often, nor from any great number of the critics that Mr. Browning has found hitherto any strong sympathy for his poetry, nor has he taken it much to heart that his readers and admirers were so few. It has rather fed his vanity the fuller, and has the more convinced him of his one idea that he was a poet before his time. He has been *Forstered* into this feeling by a few earnest friends of the press, who have never ceased to shew their friendship for the man, by writing up the poet, and assuring him that his metal had the true ring in it. He has never wavered in this belief himself, and he is so sensitive in his vanity, that if he could have doubted it he would have collapsed at once as poor Keats did, under an adverse review. His overweening vanity, however, aided by his few devoted friends, has saved him to us, and he is happy to add still to his posthumous fame by occasional essays of his genius. We can only sit, after vain attempts to follow his ideas, in wonderment at the awful vastness of the human mind, which can complacently give birth to such red hot words about something that we cannot understand, and of which we are rather glad than otherwise, that we are not the posterity that will have to decypher the meaning. A high priest of nature is he, ministering in the temple alone,

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\* Van Helmont, in a work translated by Dr. Walter Charleton (Physician to Charles the First), *A Ternary of Paradoxes, &c.* (published, 1650), in speaking of "coma, vigil, or catalepsy," states,—“In man there sits enthroned a noble energy, whereby he is endowed with a capacity to act, *extra se*, without and beyond the narrow territories of himself, and by the natural magic of his will is enabled to transmit a subtile and invisible virtue, a certain influence that operates upon an object at a very great distance.”

and on a pedestal which he, happy man, never feels to be unsteady beneath him. What a striking wonder is this faculty which some men have of self-satisfaction, and of living in an atmosphere which they fancy to be of serenest ether.

We knew him well years ago, when he was making his first soaring flights, and were almost frightened for him when the coarse critics dealt with his sensitive nature. Then it was, however, that he conquered them for ever by determining them to be fools, and wrapping himself in the mantle of posterity. This was his happiest hit of all, and to give him its full benefit, he only wanted the assistance of a few friends, who were in his eyes endued with the heaven-born quality of understanding him. Nothing after this could touch him more, or penetrate his armour; and the more the critics have raved at him, the more he has despised and contemned them with words more rancorous and violent than their own, for daring to criticise the prince of poets—the man who was before his age.

It is necessary to go through this little outline, in order to have some idea of the mind of the man who is just now condescending to give us the overflow of his genius on the subject of Spiritualism. None but one of such a nature, and only after he had received a special wound, could have got up the holy fire to such a pitch, as Mr. Browning warms himself by, in attacking Mr. Sludge the medium. What can poor Sludge have done to the poet, for beyond the rancour which he feels towards mankind in general, the poet must surely have some personal injury to resent? It is not quite easy to see that Mr. Home is intended to be the victim, but whether it be he or not, the press has at once taken it as meant for him, and has charged him upon the facts or fancies mentioned in the poem. An intimate friend too of Mr. Browning's has been so far taken in by the statements, as to find it necessary to inquire if such scenes ever happened as are described, and Mr. Home has had to say in answer that the whole is mere invention. It would, therefore be better to take the bull by the horns at once, and to treat the poem as a violent, rancorous attack upon Mr. Home and his private character, intending to lead or allow the public to believe that the scene depicted is taken from life, and that the poet has only dressed it up in verse according to his fancy, filling up the interspaces with the usual spasms which characterize Mr. Browning's effusions.

Even poetry, where such personal allusions and charges are made, should preserve its basis of truth as the apple of its eye. The imaginative element should not be applied to facts, or the versifier degenerates into a slanderer. A kind friend of ours, when our children tell fibs, says they are only poets, but we think he mistakes the word. We have therefore thought it best to

reduce Mr. Browning's poem, so far as his facts and narrative are concerned into plain prose, and thus to lay bare what was in his mind when he began to write. As to the rest of the poem there are some good things in it which we could see a glimmering of, and all these we are content to leave to that posterity which is the last refuge of the author, as patriotism is said to be the last refuge of the scoundrel.

To do this fairly, and to raise the issue between Mr. Browning and his probable victim, Mr. Home, we have very carefully gone through his sixty-eight pages, and we will afterwards give the key to the rancour and virulence which are observable throughout. It is not often that we can hope, from personal knowledge of both parties, to get to the very pith of the affair, and to shew the secret springs of action, while the poet for long years is nursing his wrath to keep it warm.

The poem, then, of "Mr. Sludge, the Medium," opens with the heaven-born poet's knuckles in the medium's windpipe, consequent on his having just caught him cheating the poet by giving some bogus revelation from his mother. Mr. Sludge at once owns to the cheat, and, on the ground of its being his first offence, he begs him to remove his knuckles, and not to expose him as an impostor. He protests that it was the poet's champagne that put the folly in his head. The poet, however, is relentless, and Mr. Sludge, not being able to rid himself of the knuckles, offers to tell him all about the tricks—he makes a clean breast of it, and confesses that the whole is imposture, and that he will change his trade and cheat no more.

Mr. Sludge commences by saying that it is the fault of the curious gentlefolk more than his. He hears them talk of ghosts, and breaks in with the words "I saw a ghost;" at once finds sympathy, and gets into their society. Once there, it is necessary to keep alive the means by which he mounted. He continues the fraud, satisfies one and then another, till he has many friends, and when a sceptic comes, they all set at him, till he, too, must succumb. At this comparatively early stage, while Sludge's conscience is yet tender and he has some qualms, is it to be expected that he will spoil all his good fortune by confessing. Having made the first step, would you thus retrace it? No! You would go on deeper and deeper, like Sludge. It is too late—he must go on. Now he makes raps, shews stars, and succeeds in producing an audible voice. The spirits now are at his command, and his delighted friends crowd round him. As he receives them at his own house, as his guests, the poet asks how guests can be critical; but if one out of a dozen should say a word all the eleven pounce on him, and Sludge waves his hat in triumph.



Visions no longer suffice and the friends want something external. It is but a step more. He jogs the table about and learns his other tricks and sleight-of-hand turns, shoves, and tilts the table, cracks his joints, manages his feet, works wires that twitch the curtains, plays the glove at the end of his slipper, puts out the lights, and then—every one is delighted and satisfied. There are sentences given by raps—a message from a dear child to its mother. Is that a time for the mother to be critical? Oh, no, poor thing; she is an easy dupe. It gives a test answer that it was six years old and rode a rocking-horse. How could Sludge have known these facts? Oh! he makes it his business to pick up these little particulars that your uncle was a tailor and thought to have married Briggs but missed him and hit you. Then with those who have been duped, how are they to be undeceived again? They won't believe it was possible to cheat them, and say that even if Sludge admitted that he cheated them they wouldn't believe him. They prefer to believe in a lie, and urge on poor Sludge to play the spirit medium for a livelihood, rather than to take him as he is and keep him fat. So he excuses himself, and says that he helps religion by his tricks, and lays the Atheist sprawling on his back, and props up St. Paul or Swedenborg at least. It is just the proper way to baulk the sceptics, and no use in being squeamish as to the means you use.

Another excuse which Sludge gives is, that beyond all this there is in human nature a real love of a lie which liars find ready made for the lies they make, as hand for glove, or tongue for sugar plum. It is for them he cheated when he could, rapped with his toe-joints, set sham hands at work, wrote down names weak in sympathetic ink, rubbed odic lights with ends of phosphor match, and all the rest.

The admitting of the supernatural element in the Bible, which comes to us from our mothers, prepares us, or some of us, to see instances of it still in the world, and to accept omens, prodigies, and special providences. If Sludge sees Charles's Wain at twelve to-night, it warns him to have his hair cut without a day's delay; and he spies a providence in the fire's going out, or the kettle's boiling; he has presentiments, his dreams come true, and he itches at the elbow when at whist he ought to trump.

After all these his confessions are done, he is foolish enough to ask the poet to shake hands with him and finds it hard that he refuses. The poem closes with a hearty curse from Sludge upon the poet.

This is not much to get out of nearly seventy pages, but it pretends to describe a scene which so far as it relates to Mr. Home has no foundation in fact, and Mr. Browning has further made the story the vehicle of a distinct allegation that the

manifestations of Spiritualism are nothing but gross imposture from beginning to end, at all times and under all circumstances. This is what it comes to, and it is unfortunately only in accordance with the general turn of Mr. Browning's mind to deny not only these things, but others related to them of much more importance to his own soul. There are many indeed who bear him sad company in this denial of all supernatural power and providence, and he is particularly unfortunate in this respect among his intimate friends; but it is almost painful, if he be a poet, either for us or for our posterity, that he should try to infect his readers with the disease which so maddens him. Especially, however, do we lament that the man who merged the name of Miss Barrett in that of Browning, should come forward now after her departure to deny what was the very soul and essence of one of the best and truest Englishwomen who have ever lived; and of the greatest poetess, it has been said, of this or any other age. It is a shocking libel on his wife and on her dearest beliefs. There are many coarse jesters, and hard men of science to whom it is allowed to deny all spiritual action in the affairs of men; but for the husband of Mrs. Barrett Browning it was not permitted to desecrate her memory and her sweet muse by this ribald nonsense.

With a man of his vanity, however, and that wounded, as will presently be seen, by Mr. Home, in years gone by, but not forgotten, everything must give way to his contemptuous rancour against the man, and against a spiritual world, the existence of which he looks down upon from his throne, as a personal affront to himself and to his poetic majesty.

This is, perhaps, not the place to say all that we should wish, to shew our sense of Mrs. Barrett Browning's sweet character, and of that deepness and innocence of her soul which brought her at once and by sympathy into communion with the spiritual. This was the secret of her power, however, as a woman and as a poet. Every one loved her, for the love that was in her towards all, and which made an atmosphere about her that it was so enchanting and pleasant to dwell in. Happy was it for Mr. Browning to have the right to call her wife, for it gave him the best chance he could have in this world of becoming alive to the spiritual beauties of the vast inner world, which he still denied. But if he lost this golden opportunity, he gained in more earthly advantages, though again at the cost of increasing his vanity, for, after his marriage with Mrs. Barrett Browning, he became invested, as her husband, with much of the respect and admiration which her qualities willingly drew from the world, and his critics became more friendly still to him, out of their love to her. Even the griffins of the press could not find heart to

abuse the husband of so dear a friend. So everything we see has tended to blow him up still larger, and no one can tell yet what will be the end of it. Should he finally burst, *The Examiner* and others of his friends will have much to answer for.

As we wish to make this little story complete in itself, and not to have again to add to it, we will now give an exact account, for the truth of which we can vouch, of the only two interviews which Mr. Browning and Mr. Home ever had. It is given in the shape of a narrative by Mr. Home, and the reader will see how the wine turned to vinegar on the poet's stomach, when his vanity was touched, first by the wrong direction of the poet's crown and by being asked to leave the room, and next by being refused another *séance* when he asked for one: *Tantane animis cœlestibus iræ?*

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#### MR. HOME'S ACCOUNT.

"I have never seen Mr. Browning but twice. The first time was at the house of Mr. Rymer, at Ealing, at a *séance* there. Mr. Browning was then married to Mrs. Barrett Browning, whom I had known by repute, and through intimate mutual friends, for several years, and I thus became aware of her deep interest and belief in Spiritualism, which continued up to the time of her death. Mr. and Mrs. Rymer and their family were present at the *séance*, which began by several of the ordinary manifestations. Mr. Browning was requested to investigate everything as it occurred, and he availed himself freely of the invitation. Several times during the evening he voluntarily and earnestly declared that anything like imposture was out of the question. Previously to the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Browning some of the children had been gathering flowers in the garden, and Miss Rymer and I had made a wreath of clematis. This wreath was laying on a table, at a little distance from that at which we were sitting. The wreath was afterwards put on the table at which we were sitting, but whether naturally or by spirit hands I do not remember. During the *séance* this wreath was raised from the table by supernatural power in the presence of us all, and whilst we were watching it, Mr. Browning, who was seated at the opposite side of the table, left his place and came and stood behind his wife, towards whom the wreath was being slowly carried, and upon whose head it was placed, in full sight of us all, and whilst he was standing close behind her. He expressed no disbelief; as, indeed, it was impossible for any one to have any of what was passing under his eyes, whilst Mrs. Browning was much moved, and she not only then but ever since expressed her entire belief and pleasure in what then occurred. It was the remark of all the Rymer

family, that Mr. Browning seemed much disappointed that the wreath was not put upon his own head instead of his wife's, and that his placing himself in the way of where it was being carried, was for the purpose of giving it an opportunity of being placed upon his own brow.

"Shortly after this a communication was made, requesting that all would leave the room, excepting Mr. Rymer and me, as something was to be told of an important matter private to Mr. Rymer. During Mr. Browning's absence with the rest of the family, I was afterwards told by them that he seemed quite hurt at being sent out of the room, and said he was not aware that spirits could have secrets. Still he indicated no doubt of anything he had seen. On returning to the room he appeared to be very much out of temper, but I paid no attention to him, as Mrs. Browning was so kind and attentive to me. All that was done was in the presence of eight persons, besides Mr. and Mrs. Browning, all of whom are still living, and are ready to testify to the truth of every word here written if it should it be gainsayed by Mr. Browning.

"Two days afterwards Mr. Browning wrote to Mrs. Rymer requesting that he might be allowed another *séance*, and to bring with him his friend, Miss Helen Faucit. Mrs. Rymer replied that owing to my ill health, and her engagements, and the arrangements previous to our going to the seaside, it would not be possible to receive him again before we left town. A few days subsequently I came to town with Mrs. Rymer and her eldest son, to make some farewell calls, the first of which was to Mr. and Mrs. Browning. We were shown into the drawing-room, and he, advancing to meet us, shook hands with Mrs. Rymer; then, passing by me, shook hands with her son. As he was repassing me I held out my hand, when, with a tragic air, he threw his hand on his left shoulder, and stalked away. My attention was now drawn to Mrs. Browning, who was standing nearly in the centre of the room, and looked very pale and agitated. I approached and she placed both her hands in mine, and said, in a voice of emotion, "Oh, dear Mr. Home, do not, do not blame me. I am so sorry, but I am not to blame." I was wonder-struck, not knowing in the least what the curious scene meant—indeed, it would have been comical, but for the deep emotion from which Mrs. Browning was suffering. For a moment all was confusion, but at last we were seated, I scarce know how, when Mr. Browning began in an excited manner, saying, 'Mrs. Rymer, I beg to inform you that I was exceedingly dissatisfied with everything I saw at your house the other night, and I should like to know why you refused to receive me again with my friend.' I replied to this, 'Mr. Browning, that was the

time and place for you to have made objections regarding the manifestations, and not now. I gave you every possible opportunity, and you availed yourself of it, and expressed yourself satisfied.' He said, 'I am not addressing myself to you, sir.' I said, 'No; but it is of me you are speaking, and it would only be fair and gentleman-like to allow me to reply.' Mrs. Rymer said, 'Mr. Home is quite right, and as regards not being able to receive you and your friend, we could not do so on account of our engagements.' Mr. Browning's face was pallid with rage, and his movements, as he swayed backwards and forwards on his chair, were like those of a maniac. At this moment I rose to leave the room, and, passing him, shook hands with Mrs. Browning, who was nearly ready to faint. As she shook hands with me she said, 'Dear Mr. Home, I am not to blame. Oh, dear! oh, dear!'"

In conclusion we have only to say that, as this is a matter of fact and not of opinion, we shall be quite willing to give insertion to any reply, in prose, from Mr. Browning, if he will write it so as to be intelligible to the present generation of men who compose our readers, and we shall be all the more pleased that he should have this opportunity of explaining himself, as it is a pity he should be knocking his head against this hard subject, just at the time when his contemporaries of the first rank are one by one publicly declaring their full belief and knowledge of its truth.

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## PASSING EVENTS.—THE SPREAD OF SPIRITUALISM.

By BENJAMIN COLEMAN.

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### THE TREATMENT OF MR. HOME IN THE PAPAL STATES.

As the readers of this journal will doubtless have seen that Mr. Home's expulsion from Rome has been made the subject of complaint and enquiry in the British House of Commons, it will not be out of place to make a record here of so interesting an episode in the history of modern Spiritualism. I extract the report as published in the *Morning Star* of the 31st of May last:

MR. ROEBUCK rose to ask the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any steps had been taken to obtain from the Papal Government redress for the injuries done to Mr. Home by that Government. The hon. gentleman said Mr. Home believed he had the power to call spirits, and he was what was publicly termed a "Spiritualist," although he (Mr. Roebuck) did not exactly know what that meant. He did not believe in it, but that had nothing to do with the present case. Mr. Home he believed to be a man of perfectly good

behaviour, and the question was whether he was to receive protection from the Government of England. The facts of the case were these. Mr. Home went to Rome to study his art, and he incurred considerable expense to carry out this object. Some time after he arrived there he received a notice from the head of the police requiring him to attend at the police-office. Mr. Home did so, when a number of questions were asked him. In the first place, the police official asked him his age, and Mr. Home gave a reply, and he was naturally a person that ought to know his own age. The official told him that he was eight or ten years older, which Mr. Home denied. The signor then said, "You have published a book in France and in England saying that certain spirits waited upon you." Mr. Home admitted that he had done this. The signor said, "Will you undertake that no spirits shall come to you while you are in Rome?" (Laughter.) Mr. Home said, "No, I cannot do that; the spirits come to me of their own accord. I cannot answer for them; but this I will promise, that I will hold no *séance*, and I will do nothing to solicit their coming to me; and further, I will do nothing contrary to the laws of the city of Rome." Upon this the signor gave him to understand that he should not be interrupted. Some time after this, the second in command of the police sent for Mr. Home. Mr. Home went in company with the French Consul, but he found nobody at the police-office. When he got home, there came a peremptory note calling upon him to be at the police-office. Mr. Home went the second time, when the official said, "You were not here yesterday at the hour at which you were required." Mr. Home said "Yes, I was." "Well," said the official, "you must leave Rome in forty-eight hours." Now this was the whole of the matter. (Hear, hear.) He (Mr. Roebuck) wished to know whether the Government would protect a British subject who had been treated in this way. Whatever might be the wonderful and mysterious power of Mr. Home, he ought to be protected as a British citizen. He observed the President of the Board of Trade in his place—(much laughter)—but he (Mr. Roebuck) had no feeling for Mr. Home's profession, further than having a contempt for the whole thing; but still Mr. Home, being a British citizen, should be protected. He had great respect for the old gentleman at the head of the Papal Government—(a laugh)—and he wished that he might long live to enjoy himself; but England must protect her subjects. Mr. Home had been ignominiously expelled from Rome, after having incurred considerable expenses there, and when Earl Russell was asked what he would do, he said "I will do nothing." (Much laughter, caused by Mr. Roebuck imitating the voice and manner of the noble lord.) He asked the noble lord at the head of the Government to protect this unfortunate gentleman against the tyranny of the Roman Government.

Mr. LAYARD regretted that Mr. Home should have placed himself in a position to lead the Papal Government to call upon him to leave Rome, but he appeared to have infringed on their rules. ["No, no," from Mr. Roebuck.] Well, the Roman Government thought that he carried on intercourse with spirits, and they called upon him to leave Rome in consequence. He (Mr. Layard) gave no opinion as to whether or not Mr. Home had intercourse with spirits, nor did he seek to palliate the conduct of the Roman authorities; but such was the law of Rome, and he did not think that the Government could interfere. The Roman authorities feared that these spirits would communicate with Mr. Home whether he wished it or not, and they objected to their making Rome their dwelling-place. (Laughter.) All this might be very foolish, but he did not see that there was any cause for the interference of the British Government.

Mr. HENNESSY pointed out that the stringent laws in England against fortune-telling and witchcraft were founded on the same principle as the laws of Rome. He had always heard from English visitors at Rome that they received the greatest attention from the Papal Government.

Mr. V. SCULLY did not see that either the Roman Government or Mr. Home were to blame. The real parties against whom to bring the complaint were those unseen spirits who visited Mr. Home whether he wished it or not. He complained that the hon. member for Sheffield should have spoken of the Pope as "the old gentleman" at the head of the Papal Government. In regard to Mr. Home's revelations, he did not believe in any spirit, except the case of the

Witch of Endor—(a laugh)—but as they had been discussing “spirits” all night he hoped they would have no more on the subject at present.

The subject then dropped.

As I have a great respect for Mr. Roebuck, whom I believe to be a bold and honest politician, I regret that he felt it necessary to qualify his remarks by stooping to meet the prejudices of his compeers in expressing his “contempt for the wonderful and mysterious power of Mr. Home.” If the power be, as Mr. Roebuck admits, “wonderful and mysterious,” it is illogical and irrational to condemn that which he does not understand.

It is more than ten years since I first spoke to Mr. Roebuck on the subject of Spiritualism, and described to him the “wonderful and mysterious” character of the phenomena which I had then witnessed. My statements were corroborated by two or three other persons present, and as Mr. Roebuck exhibited a total unbelief in these statements, I asked him, as a lawyer, what amount of human testimony it required in his opinion to establish a fact; because I could, if testimony were of any value, obtain any reasonable number of witnesses. He did not answer that question, but ended the conversation by a significant shrug and smile, implying very plainly that he pitied me, and doubtless had he been presiding as a Master in Lunacy at an investigation into my mental condition, he would not have hesitated to pronounce me incapable of the management of my own affairs.

Mr. Roebuck, since that period, must be aware that thousands of men and women in this country, his equals in character and intelligence, have been confirmed in “the delusion” under which he supposed I was then labouring; and therefore I repeat that it is with feelings of surprise and regret that I find one who has been in advance of the age on most subjects, venturing to sneer at a subject upon which, if he be closely questioned, he would be forced to admit that he is profoundly ignorant.

The two Roman Catholic members, Mr. Pope Hennessy and Mr. Vincent Scully, had better have refrained from making observations which lead us to suppose, contrary to the feeling of every enlightened man in this country, that they approve and justify the bigoted fanaticism which led to the expulsion of Mr. Home from the papal dominions. In particular Mr. V. Scully did not shew his docility as a Roman Catholic in avowing his disbelief in all spirits excepting that of the Witch of Endor. Did he mean thus publicly to brand all the spirits of the Romish Church, and its Ladies of Salette as spurious and fraudulent concoctions of the Pope and the priests? I happen to know that if Mr. V. Scully will ask the opinion of the prince of his church, Cardinal Wiseman, he will find a very different measure of belief. It is only a few weeks ago that Cardinal Wiseman in speaking of

the modern spirit-manifestations to one of his flock who is an occasional contributor to these pages, said that he entirely believed in them, and that he could not be a Catholic without doing so.

If what is said of the Pope by his own people be true, Mr. Home has good reasons to be thankful that his Holiness did not give him his blessing instead of giving him his *congé*.\* From a most interesting work, treating of persons and things in Rome, I make the following pertinent extract:—

Even the Pope himself has the reputation of possessing the Evil Eye to some extent. Ask a Roman how this is, and he will answer you as one did me the other day, "They say so; and as for me, really it seems to me true. If he have not the *jettatura*, it is very odd that everything he blesses makes *fiasco*. We all did very well in the campaign of '48 against the Austrians. We were winning battle after battle, and all was gaiety and hope, when suddenly he blesses the cause, and everything goes to the Devil at once. Nothing succeeds with anybody or anything when he wishes well to them. See, here the other day he went to Santa Agnese to have a great Festival, and down goes the floor, and the people are all smashed together. Then he visits the column to the Madonna in the Piazza di Spagna, and blesses it and the workmen, and, of course, one falls from the scaffolding the same day and is killed. A week or two ago he arranged to meet the King of Naples at Porto d'Anzo, and up comes a violent storm and gale that lasts a week; then another arrangement is made, and then comes the fracas about the ex-Queen of Spain. Then, again, here was Lord C—— came in the other day from Albano, being rather unwell; so the Pope sends him his special blessing, when, pop! he dies right off in a twinkling. There is nothing so fatal as his blessing. For my part I don't wonder that the workmen at the column refused to work the other day in raising it, unless the Pope stayed away."

In Mr. Home's autobiography he recounts several instances I believe, but certainly one in particular where his life was saved by the interposition of Providence, through the recognized agency of spirits. As he is himself of the Roman Catholic faith, I assume that he would have been happy at any time to have secured the Pope's blessing; and, therefore, he may, on calm reflection, be disposed to think that by a special Providence, he has been miraculously saved from the possible consequences of such a calamity.†

#### SINGULAR FULFILMENT OF DREAMS.

The following curious circumstance was related some time since, in the *Liverpool Albion*, a paper of great local influence. A merchant residing in Liverpool made a visit to Dublin, where he lost his pocket-book, containing a large sum of money. On the second night, after a fruitless search, he dreamt that it had been thrown into the River Liffey, where it would be found

\* *Roba di Roma*. By WILLIAM STORY. Vol. ii. p. 312.

† We are sorry to say that Mr. Home already labours under the infliction of the Pope's special blessing. We have seen the original document signed by his Holiness.—ED.]



opposite to the Custom House, which building stands close to the side of that river. He rejected the dream as too absurd to merit attention. But on the following night he dreamt again that his pocket-book was in the river about the spot indicated. This made so strong an impression on his mind that he determined to have a search made, without mentioning his object to any one. He accordingly employed two men to drag the river opposite to the Custom House when, to his great joy and astonishment, his pocket-book was actually found, with its contents undisturbed. I requested a friend to call on the editor of the *Albion*, to ascertain the *bonâ fides* of this story, and the name of the gentleman, whom, from my extensive acquaintance in that town, I thought it likely I should know. The editor assured my friend that the facts as related might be relied upon, but the gentleman did not wish his name disclosed, lest he might be subject to unpleasant remarks from his sceptical neighbours.

The *Times*, in a leading article upon Spiritualism, which appeared some time back, objected, among other reasons, to the unsatisfactory and unreliable character of the messages which purported to come from the spirits. In the writer's low view of the whole subject, he argued that the spirits never told us anything of practical value. If, he said, the spirits would tell us who was to be the winner of the Derby that would be something valuable and worth knowing.

Though I have heard of many less worldly, but in my estimation much more valuable predictions and premonitions being made by spirits, I had never heard of such a case as the *Times* required for its satisfaction. We have, however, only to wait patiently, as it would appear, for almost every demand made, even by the most obdurate sceptic, to be realized; and the following fact, which can be satisfactorily proved, may, perhaps, lead to the conversion of the editor of the *Times* :—

A gentleman, Mr. B——, who is a member of a highly respectable mercantile firm in the City, who knows nothing of Spiritualism, and is wholly unacquainted with the mysteries of the turf, dreamt, some time before the last Derby Day, that No. 19 would be the winner. He mentioned it to his partner and several of his immediate friends, and was himself so strongly impressed by the premonition that he was inclined to bet a considerable sum on the faith of this dream, or, as I should call it, spiritual impression. He was restrained, however, by his senior partner, and induced to limit his stake to ten pounds. Enquiries were made as to the name of the horse, but at that time the official list with the numbers of the horses had not been published. Mr. B—— commissioned a friend, better acquainted with betting matters, to lay ten pounds on No. 19, whatever horse

it might be, and so earnest was he on the value of his dream that several of his friends were induced to follow his example, even after the list was published, and when it was seen that No. 19 was far from the favourite. It is now matter of sporting history that No. 19, Blair Athol, was the horse that won the Derby. Perhaps the editor of *The Times* will take the trouble to enquire as to the literal truth of this statement, and, if satisfied of the facts, give publicity to it, and proclaim his conversion forthwith.

#### SPIRITUALISM IN SCOTLAND.

In my last paper on "Passing Events," I alluded to the growing interest which the subject of Spiritualism is exciting in Glasgow. Since then, my correspondent informs me that the "Wizard of the North" has been giving his entertainment in that city, and there repeating his trashy pretence of exposing "spirit-rapping," which he attempted in London some years ago, when the subject was first exciting public attention here; and in proof of the interest which the good people of Glasgow evince to know something more, this very inferior *Professor* of the art of legerdemain—for such is his real status, supposing him to be Mr. Anderson—manages to draw together an audience of 3,000 persons to hear his *exposé* of the mysterious "delusion." My informant, however, tells me that "The Wizard's" explanations and illustrations do not satisfy the majority of his audiences, though it serves the purpose of "putting money in his purse."

Every reader of this journal knows that Mr. Taylor lectured at the Colosseum for many months, and gave great satisfaction to the multitude by *his* pre-arranged tricks to expose "the spirit-rapping impostures." But every reader does not perhaps know that Mr. Taylor was from the very first a believer in Spiritualism, and was himself fully aware that his *tricks* in no way accounted for the real phenomena of true mediumship. His wife, Mademoiselle Prudence, was a medium and clairvoyante, and through her he obtained some of the most remarkable manifestations.

It no longer "pays" to lecture against Spiritualism, at least, to a London audience; and I have the best authority for saying that Mr. Taylor expressed his desire a short time since to enter the field as a lecturer to uphold what he honestly believes, *viz.* :—The truth of Spiritualism and the reality of its phenomena. It may be that he has been deterred for a time from carrying out his expressed intentions by the fact that he has been forestalled by Mr. Sheldon Chadwick, who has for years, as a public lecturer opposed Spiritualism, and for aught I know to the contrary, with perfect sincerity; but who, having discovered his error, is now not only lecturing in support of its truth, but has gone so far as

to start a paper called *The Spirit World*, in which the facts and philosophy of Spiritualism are upheld by him.

At Glasgow there is a second "Daniel come to judgment" in the person of a pamphleteer too modest or too wise to give his name on the title page of his work. His pamphlet has been sent to me and bears the following title page:—

‘SPIRIT-RAPPING  
IN GLASGOW IN 1864.

A TRUE NARRATIVE,

BY

ONE OF THOSE PRESENT.

"I can call spirits from the vasty deep."

"Why so can I, or so can any man—

But *will they come* when you do call them?"—*Henry IV.*

"Aye, there's the rub."—*Hamlet.*

GLASGOW: THOMAS MURRAY & SON,

1864.

The writer opens his subject in a very pretentious manner, by asking, "What is spirit-rapping? Its claims are lofty—it lifts the veil of Isis—it opens the portals of the tomb—levels that dread barrier before which all men in all ages have hitherto knelt in vain. By it is the seal of silence broken, and the living have converse with the dead. It prys into eternity—fathoms secrets of the unknown—all highest reach of philosophy left far behind—finds the sternest difficulties simple—the unsolved enigmas of the wise easy, even as a child's puzzle," &c., &c.

This is indeed a lofty prelude to most important revelations which are nothing more nor less than "a true narrative" of proceedings which took place at several *séances* held in Glasgow, when it was discovered that Mr. Conklin was not a medium for spiritual communications.

It appears that "some sixteen gentlemen" spiritually impressed no doubt with the feeling that they had "a call," to investigate and to settle the question once for all, determined to enter upon the enquiry.

They applied to the "Marshall mediums, who could not come to Glasgow, and they engaged from London," so the narrative states, "a Mr. Conklin, warranted by the aforesaid mediums to be even more highly favoured in spiritual matters than themselves—a medium of thirteen years' standing, an intimate friend of Mr. Home, and a powerful contributor to the spiritual press."\*

Of course these "sixteen wise men of the north" had no prejudices. "Our object was to arrive at the truth. We had heard

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\* We believe the writer has spoken in advance of the truth in both of these statements. We know that Mr. Conklin is not a friend of Mr. Home's, and we know of no contribution of his to the spiritual press of this country.—ED.

much and read more—were not unwilling to believe, but had never had any personal contact with mediums," &c., &c.

Seven sittings were held, which were considered to be of a most unsatisfactory character, and at the last, a trap being laid, the medium fell into it, according to their pamphleteer's explanation of the facts, and satisfied these "sixteen gentlemen" that Mr. Conklin was a charlatan, and also led the writer to a "strong suspicion that Mr. Conklin's more famous brethren differ from him but in degree; that, tracked with a like patience, and met with, of course, a subtilty proportionate to their own, their inflated pretensions would collapse, even as this man's did, and vanish amidst a like laughter."

Now I know nothing of Mr. Conklin, who is an American. As he did not bring letters from any of the respectable Spiritualists residing in the States, which he might easily have obtained had he been entitled to attention on this side the Atlantic, I purposely avoided meeting him, and have never seen him. He is, however, "a charlatan," according to the writer of the narrative, who thinks that if mediumship is "true, it deals in *sacrilege*; if false, in *blasphemy*;" but who, nevertheless, asserts that he commenced the investigation "without prejudice to arrive at the truth," and "not unwilling to believe." In what?

After reading this pompous, illogical, and very foolish narrative, every thinking man will arrive at the conclusion that, if Mr. Conklin be a charlatan, there were, at least, *two* present at these Glasgow *séances*, both making pretensions to power and knowledge to which they have the smallest possible claim, and that one of them, who is apparently a man of education, has done a very silly act by publishing a pamphlet to prove that the other, an uneducated, unaccredited man, is not a medium; and—*therefore*, that the mass of well-attested facts, recorded during the last thirteen years, by men of the highest character and intelligence, in Europe and America, are altogether delusive, and without foundation in truth.

This writer has taken the very lowest ground of opposition. Though "he has heard much, and read more," he does not appear to be aware that many learned and scientific men have entered the arena to do battle against "the delusion," and that each in turn has been overthrown, and forced to admit, after devoting years, not hours, to close investigation, first—that the phenomena are indisputable; and, secondly, that the most ingenious theories suggested to account for them by purely physical agencies were untenable in the face of accumulated and still accumulating evidence of spirit power.

My own convictions upon this subject were not formed upon superficial examination nor upon slight evidence; and, though

my belief may be of little value to the world, I am, by patient investigation, fortified to this extent:—Give me the best theory that can be suggested, excepting the spiritual one, to account for the phenomena, and I will give you a fact, of my own experience, that will destroy the theory.

The pamphlet, unfortunately for its author, has attracted the notice of Mr. Howitt, who wrote a severe letter upon it in the *Spiritual Times*. This letter caused the author to throw off the anonymous, and to write in his own name to explain his position, and to conciliate the “genial author.” This answer has brought from Mr. Howitt the following letter to Mr. Paterson:—

Highgate, June 10, 1864.

SIR,—My letter to the *Spiritual Times* is the honest expression of my disgust in reading what you now avow as your pamphlet on what you please to call Spirit-rapping. And, pray, is the phrase of Spirit-rapping any more respectful towards those who call themselves Spiritualists, than any phrase in my letter on your *brochure*, or on the conduct of the sixteen persons sitting in judgment on Spiritualism? It is just as respectful, and meant to be so, as it would have been in the old Pagans to have dubbed Christians Water-dippers because they practised baptism.

I do not take Conklin into the account. He may have been a cheat, or he may not. I say now, as I said before, if he be so, let him be shewn up. But it is the manner in which this shewing up is done, which I condemn, and condemn most heartily. You avow your belief in the whole theory and practice of Spiritualism being an imposition, and endeavour to mix it up with the conduct of a charlatan. That is the point on which I take you; and I, firstly, condemn an examination commenced on such a basis, and conducted in the manner in which you represent the one at Glasgow to have been conducted. You say you take all the responsibility of the pamphlet,—that is not the question. The question is the conduct of the sixteen testers of Conklin, as related by you. Taking it for granted that Conklin is a cheat, there is still a gentlemanly and an ungentlemanly manner in which an enquiry, even into trickery, may be conducted, and, as you state it, the manner of the Glasgow enquiry was most ungentlemanly and most offensive to Spiritualism at large. I have not heard a different opinion from any one here who has yet read the pamphlet.

You defend your assertion that “all departed spirits are holy, and, therefore, not to be meddled with.” If damned souls are holy—why are they damned? If they are holy, because they are God’s creatures, then it makes the devil holy, for he is God’s creature just as much as they are, and the idea of a holy devil, is certainly one original enough to have figured in Burns’s *Holy Fair*, in which, by-the-bye, he has well hit off the Glasgow-Conklin junto:—

“A robe of seeming truth and trust  
Hid crafty observation,  
And secret hung, with poisoned crust,  
The dirk of defamation.”

And again, how exactly he touches off the spirit of the junto:—

“My name is Fun—your cronie dear,  
The nearest friend ye hae;  
And this is Superstition here,  
And that’s Hypocrisy.  
I’m gaen to . . . . . Holy Fair,  
To spend an hour in daffin,  
Gin ye’ll go there, you runckled pair,  
We will get famous laughin’  
At them this day.”

And I must say that the studied false questions, and the demoniac fits of laughter, would have well become a corner of Alloway Kirk the night when Auld Nickie Ben was piping to the Cutty Sark.

As to the souls of the departed being meddled with—no one can meddle with them, without their own consent; no one can invoke spirits, or, at least, can compel them to come. No Spiritualist pretends to do it, or believes in it. But that souls both good, bad and indifferent, are ready to come, and communicate with those in the flesh, all history and all Scripture testify, and the facts of all ages and countries corroborate this truth.

You talk of the sacredness of those "who have seen the face of their Maker!" Who are they? Do you suppose that one in ten thousand, who has left this life of late years has seen the face of his Maker? I do not. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Yes, but not till they are pure in heart, and that will probably be, for most of us, not till we have passed many a long stage of purification in the progressive spheres. But this is what astonishes me in the Scotch: they have stuck so stedfastly to their spirit, whiskey, as the *Glasgow Herald* says, and to the "Geneva" which Knox imported, that they are absolutely ignorant of what the Jews and the first Christians fully believed—the intermediate state—the *Sheol* of the Old Testament, the *Hades* of the New. Since Luther mistranslated those terms, confounding them everywhere with *Gehenna*, and was followed by the other Protestant translators, to get rid of purgatory, and as some one has wittily observed, "enlarged the bounds of hell by adding all purgatory to it," Protestants, and it now appears the Scotch pre-eminently, have totally lost sight of those vast and very necessary regions of the spirit-world, and believe in no places there but heaven and hell, and that souls go at a leap to one or the other. Oh! admirable theology! Why, the great bulk of mankind at death are fit neither for heaven nor hell, and the revelations of Swedenborg and of all the spirits since, have confirmed the truths of the ancient Hebrews and Christians that *Sheol* and *Hades* exist, with all their progressive and probationary spheres as much as ever. That spirits do return, or rather, that they are existing all around us; that the spirit-world exists all around us, are facts proved by the every-day experience of millions, and that this intercourse is destroying Materialism and restoring faith in God and Christianity, is a fact of the most consoling and vital importance to the world at large. If the Scotch, contented with the vague, misty, and castrated theology of two or three centuries ago, choose to know nothing of this, let them at least refrain from sneering ignorantly at those—more in number than the whole of their nation—whose happiness and privilege it is to have found again what the Protestant Reformers so mischievously threw away. We choose, on this point, not the conventional and mutilated faith of modern sects, but the whole large faith of the Bible, and of the ancient world in *toto*, both Jew and Greek, Christian and Pagan.

If Conklin says he is a friend of Mr. Home's, then I am quite ready to transfer the falsehood to him. If there be any of the examiners of Conklin's pretensions, who are believers in the truth of Spiritualism, and did in reality conduct themselves as gentlemen and Christians at the *séances*, I am willing to believe it, but certainly your pamphlet gives us no evidence of it. The whole scene appears just what might have been expected—you went with a desire to trick, and it seems, you got tricks; you put false questions—substituting *hungry* for *happy* and so on, and you got false answers. The devil seems to have fooled you to the top of your bent. Whether the medium had been truthful or not with such schemes and such a spirit the result must have been the same.

When you seek for the truth of Spiritualism in a truthful and philosophical spirit, it is sure to be found: and the more so if you avoid paid mediums, and form circles amongst yourselves, as those most convinced of its truth have done, amongst whom is,

JOHN W. PATERSON, Esq.,  
183, Albert Terrace, Glasgow.

Yours faithfully,  
WILLIAM HOWITT.

To men, such as this Glasgow pamphleteer, who push aside history, and ignore the best human testimony, the following incident will have no value; but to the general reader it will, no doubt, be sufficiently interesting, and it affords further

evidence of the power of departed spirits to communicate with us who are still in the flesh :—

#### A SPIRITUAL MESSAGE VERIFIED.

A lady who is a medium and well-known to the spiritual circles of London, is intimately acquainted with a learned divine, one of the most popular preachers of the Metropolis. This lady has for some time past unsuccessfully endeavoured to impress her friend with the truth of Spiritualism. Being at his house recently in the company of his wife, who, I believe, has herself become a medium, they sat at a table, and among other messages there was one addressed to the clergyman, which purported to be from the spirit of a friend of his, who gave the name of John. That, however, as the clergyman remarked, was a name too common to identify him. "John who?" was asked. "John S——," was the reply. "That is true," he said; "I have a very old friend of that name; but I am not aware that he has passed from this life." In answer to other questions it was stated by the spirit that he died two days previously at a certain hotel in the town of A——, in France. Some few days after, the message was verified. The body of John S—— was sent from A—— to London, for interment, and the clergyman had the melancholy duty of reading the funeral service over the remains of his late friend.

I should think it impossible that this reverend gentleman can be in future indifferent to the claims and realities of Spiritualism, though I have known many instances where men driven by some such manifestations from their first position of total unbelief, and admitting, as they were forced to do, that these were not the result of imposture or delusion, as they had at first supposed, have jumped to a second untenable conclusion, *viz.*, that they are all of the devil, and must not be encouraged by Christian men and women. This, too, in the face of the fact that since the advent of Spiritualism, and by its plain evidences of the reality of a spirit-world, thousands have been converted from the errors of Materialism who could not obtain the satisfaction they needed through the teachings of the orthodox churches. It is a natural result. Give sceptics some tangible evidence—bring it home to their own senses, let them be assured that contrary to their reasoning, it is a fact in the present day, that a hand belonging to no mortal can present itself as in the days of Belshazzar, and write a sentence visible to all, and you at once tear away the film which has precluded them from seeing the truth, and you force an acknowledgment, that after all, the Bible may be a sacred reliable history, and not the fiction which they have been accustomed to think it is.

MR. L——, OF NEW YORK.

I am aware that there is very great interest excited in the minds of many readers of this journal to hear further particulars of the progress of my friend Mr. L——'s most marvellous experiences. No doubt there are many readers who have become interested in Spiritualism since I recorded the principal facts, published in the second and third volumes of the *Spiritual Magazine*, who know nothing of this extraordinary case. I may then briefly say that Mr. L—— holds a leading position as the senior partner of one of the most influential mercantile firms in New York; that his statements are now endorsed by Dr. Gray, a leading physician, and by the medium Miss Kate Fox, and that it is Mr. L——'s intention to proclaim the facts with his own name so soon as he is freed from the trammels of business, which, I regret to say, are so engrossing as to preclude him from giving me details of his more recent experiences. One advantage, however, he will possess by still withholding his name from the public. When he does declare that he has been the recipient of these most wonderful manifestations, it will be too late, for those at least who know him and have been in daily intercourse with him during the whole period that he has been receiving visits from the spirit-form of his wife and Dr. Franklin, obtaining written communications and other tangible proofs of their actual visible presence, to say that he is mad. In a letter received from him this day, the 21st June, he says—"I am, and have been so overwhelmingly immersed in business, as to leave me no time to undertake the work of preparing anything further for publication. My records, however, have been kept—my experiences continue with equally powerful manifestations. I feel that there is danger of one's becoming less spiritual and more sordid by this demoralizing business of money-making; I must submit either to be completely immersed and submerged in its daily cares, or retire altogether, and I am yet undecided as to which alternative I shall accept. Dr. Gray is also as usual, very much occupied with his professional duties, and is not over-strong in health."

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MR. AND MRS. S. C. HALL ON "THE USE  
OF SPIRITUALISM."

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WE have much pleasure in being able, with the consent of the writers, to lay before our readers the solemn declaration of Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, which has been recently issued by them. It was printed for private circulation only, but, on our application, we have received permission to give it more extended publicity,



and we have no doubt that such a document, emanating from such distinguished persons, will fully answer every objection which a reasoning person can have as to the use of Spiritualism. We have only to add that, although Mrs. Hall is in entire agreement with her husband in all he has here written, she could not sign the whole, because the doubts which perplexed him, never at any time of her life perplexed her. All her many books shew this, and in her eloquent and touching tribute to the memory of Mrs. Home, which is printed in Mr. Home's recent work, she says—"Spiritualism has been to me a blessing, for which I cannot be enough thankful, less for my own sake than for the sake of others, who are very dear to me; for though it brought me more sunshine, it has given me no new light."

REVEREND SIR,—I desire to answer the question you have asked me,—What is the "USE" of Spiritualism? and your doubts as to whether it be good or evil in its origin and purpose.

If it were of *no* "use," religious thinkers and men of science are bound to enquiry concerning it: for it has been well said by one who is not only a learned man, but a Christian clergyman,—"Testimony has been so abundant and consentaneous, that either the facts must be such as they are reported, or the possibility of certifying facts by human testimony must be given up." It is only of late years we have discovered the "uses" of a hundred things that our fathers considered either useless or obnoxious. The great lever that now moves the world—steam—was useless until within a comparatively recent period. How rapidly, in our day, do scientific inventions pass from the marvellous to the familiar. Who now wonders when he receives a message by the electric telegraph, although he knows that the sender a thousand miles away, is waiting for his reply. Some of us are old enough to remember when he who had his child vaccinated was considered accursed. Dreams are "admitted facts," yet of what *use* are they? Not one in a thousand can be recalled at all; not one in a million is of any value.

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

But my purpose in writing is to shew the USE of Spiritualism: I will endeavour to do so, humbly, earnestly, and briefly as I can.

To me, it is certain that belief in Spiritualism is not only consistent with reason, and sustained by experience, but is sanctioned by Revelation,—upheld by the Book of God.

Belief in supernatural influences seems inseparable from humanity: a part of our universal nature. It has been received and cherished among all nations, in all ages: not only is it rife among refined and cultivated peoples, it is found alike in "farthest Ind," and in the *ultima thule* of civilization. The Old Testament is full of evidence. While, in the New Testament, I find frequent references to spirits,—to spiritual power and spiritual influence,—I find nothing that infers peril to mind or soul arising from such belief. I know we are warned against "seducing spirits teaching doctrines of devils," and that we are cautioned to "try the spirits, whether they are of God;" but while there is much to warrant, nay, to encourage, the belief, there is nothing to prevent such belief from being accepted as another proof of the will of that God who ever

"Moves in a mysterious way."

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

Pause, therefore, reverend sir, before you attribute this *new revelation of an old power* to Satanic influence, for so it is pronounced to be by many, who, unable to withstand the proofs of "Spiritualism," resist it upon this unnatural and unchristian ground; as if it can be for an instant admitted, that while God *does* allow evil spirits to be with us, communicating with us, influencing us, teaching us, He absolutely forbids just and good spirits from counterbalancing the effects that evil spirits are continually striving to produce. Surely, that is arraiging, not only the mercy but the justice of God.

If we admit the being of a God—All-mighty—we must admit the *possibility* of miracles; that He *can* change the conditions which seem to govern, and do generally govern, natural laws; for we only mean by the "supernatural," occurrences that cannot be accounted for by the operation of such natural laws. It is asserted by some, that to express belief in the supernatural is to supply evidence either of credulity or imposture; there are not a few who openly, in speech and by writing, proclaim such men as I am—and such as are far higher in intellect and belief in life than I am—to be either "rogues or fools."

You, as a clergyman, believe and teach that miracles *have been*: although, probably, you may maintain that they *have* ceased. While you tell us that miracles were wrought to induce conviction of Christ's mission ("to the intent ye may believe,")

and as means of conversion to truth, you deny that they are in operation *now*, when there are on earth millions more than there were in Apostolic times, who do not believe in Christ, and though you know that Materialism is widely spread, and increasing over the earth.

I am coming to the point of my letter, and the purpose for which it is written.

If I were writing to "the general public," I should give a detail of wonders—every one of which is a miracle, according to the accepted interpretation of the term! hundreds of which I have seen at different times, in different places, and with various persons present to testify to the phenomena. There are thousands of witnesses to these phenomena: witnesses, the exactitude of whose testimony upon any other subject would not be doubted by any one of the many who *will* doubt them on this: eminent men—men eminent for integrity, intellectual strength, continual exercise of the enquiring faculties, who *have* enquired, repeatedly, and with *suspicious scrutiny*, (as in my own case), applying all the tests that reason and the senses can supply, under circumstances that rendered imposture and self-delusion equally impossible; and who have obtained entire conviction, that the spirits of those who have been in the flesh can and do communicate with those who are still in the flesh; and that "holy angels" are permitted to give us evidence that they *do* "succour and defend us on earth."

It is easy to mock at the "meanness" of manifestations by "table-turning," "raps," and so forth—the lowest rails of the spiritual ladder; not more unreasonable is it to sneer at a contemplated railway, while nothing of it is perceptible but the clay that is to form the roadway. As easy is it to condemn and abuse "mediums" as cheats, forgetting that the orator, Tertullus, representing the high priest, described St. Paul to Felix as "a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition," that in refined Athens he was stigmatized as "a habbler," and that in all ages men who have brought new lights into the world have been persecuted, outraged, and slain.

But my purpose in addressing you is to shew the "use" of Spiritualism, and not to proclaim the power by FACTS; that has been well and often done. The mockers and sneerers at Spiritualism are almost exclusively those who have seen nothing of it, know nothing about it, and *will not* enquire concerning it. As rational and respectful would it be for me to reprove Professor Owen for saying that a certain mark on a stone was the mark of an antediluvian bird's claw—which, to me appeared nothing more than an accidental impression—as it would be for one, who has seen and known nothing of Spiritualism, to tell me, (I say it with all

humility), who have seen and studied it much, that I am deluded and deceived—believing myself to see, to hear, and to feel, that which I neither feel, hear, nor see.

But to the point of my letter:—belief that Spiritualism is another power sent by God, and therefore of “use.”

It is no doubt right for clergymen to tell us we have the Bible, and that the Book is all-sufficient for salvation: although they thus ignore the fact that ministers are appointed by God to be its interpreters. “Understandest thou what thou readest?” was the question put by the apostle Philip. “How can I, without a guide?” was the answer of the eunuch. I deny, however much I may deplore, that they—not the one, but both in combination—suffice *always* to induce conviction of the mysterious truths of Christianity. They certainly did not suffice in my case; for I did not, and could not, believe in miracles, although from my youth upwards, I had been taught to study the Scriptures, and had been “guided” by Christian men of the Established Church. There are hundreds of thousands of professing Christians who are circumstanced as I was—who do not and cannot believe that three men were put into a burning fiery furnace, and issued thence, unscathed: that a man who had fallen from the second story, and was taken up dead, was restored to life at the word of a fellow-man: who, in short, do not believe in aught they cannot test by reason and the senses, and who, therefore, whatever their profession may be, are *not Christians*.\* It has happened to me, more than once in my life, to be told, “I would give all I have in the world to believe fully and entirely, and without a shadow of doubt, in a future state.” In the Christian, as in the Jewish Church, there are Sadducees who do not believe in a Resurrection.

Now, reverend sir, as to the “use” of Spiritualism. It has made me a Christian: I humbly and fervently thank God it has removed all my doubts. I can and do believe all that the Bible teaches me: in the efficacy and indescribable happiness of prayer: in the power of faith to save: in the perpetual superintendence of Providence: in salvation by the sacrifice of the Saviour: in the mediation of a Redeemer—in a word, I am A CHRISTIAN.

It is with others as with me! many who within my own

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\* While I was writing this communication I received a letter from a gentleman, whose name, if I could feel justified in using it, would carry due weight. It is as follows: “No doubt a belief in spiritual manifestations removes from some minds the chief stumbling-block to the reception of Christianity: refuting as it does by an appeal to the evidence of one’s own senses the infidel argument against the possibility of miracles. This is the great intellectual difficulty of some minds. It is a difficulty too which the lapse of ages tends to increase—and therefore the importance of these spiritual phenomena may be only, as it were, beginning.”

knowledge, were more than "doubters," are now believers; humble, but fervid disciples of Christ—made so by Spiritualism. I will refer to the solemn declaration of but one of them—William Howitt.\*

"The true mission of Spiritualism, and it is a great and magnificent mission, is to recall to the knowledge, and restore to the consciousness of mankind, the Christian faith, with all its divine and supernatural power. Spiritualism has not yet revealed any truth that is not existent in the Gospels. Its business is to exhibit the reality of its connection with God and his angels. with the life and spirit of the Divine world, and to open our earth-dimmed eyes to perceive all the wealth of celestial wisdom in the Christian Revelation."

But that I should make this letter far too long, I could quote abundant instances of conversion to belief from unbelief—of some to perfect faith from total infidelity.

If this be so—and God knows it is so—is there no "use" in Spiritualism?

Reverend sir, shall I surprise and shock you if I say there are among intellectual men as many who will sneer at me for recording my belief in the Divinity of Christ, as there are who will laugh at me for expressing my belief in Spiritualism?

You will perhaps require to know something of *facts* beyond this statement: I will give them to you as far as regards myself. To the wonderful phenomena I have witnessed, I shall here make little or no reference; neither shall I (with one or two exceptions), to the communications I have received, or that have been received by others in my presence, through what are usually called "mediums," i.e., persons who are used by angels and spirits, under God, to be a means of intercourse between them and us. Why this power should be given to some and not to others, is one of the mysteries that perhaps never will be explained on earth: but it is so. St. Paul alludes to "diversities of gifts," one of which is "discerning of spirits." Mediums are not remarkable either for intellectual or moral qualities; that is one of the inexplicable FACTS by which Spiritualism is surrounded.

I confine myself to my own experience in association with that of my wife. You know us, I think, too well, to believe us victims of continuous self-delusion, delusion extending over years—evening after evening—while you will not suspect us of blasphemy, (for it is no less than blasphemy if there be wilful deception,) in the details I give.

I extract from a book in which we enter the "messages" we receive:—

"We receive these messages—we two—while sitting at a

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\* This probably alludes to Mr. Howitt's once holding Unitarian views. In no other sense are we aware that he was ever more than a doubter.—Ed.

small table, the table tilting thrice (as one of us repeats the alphabet) at each letter that forms part of the sentence.

"We never sit without prayer that God will permit us to receive only communications from holy angels and good spirits; usually repeating the Lord's Prayer, and generally, also, the prayer that precedes our Sacramental Service, 'God, to whom all hearts are open,' &c.

"The messages are what we term spiritual messages: we believe them to be delivered to us by spirits, some of whom have been in the flesh—commissioned by God to do this work for our souls' good, and to promote our earthly happiness.

"S. C. HALL.

"A. M. HALL."

This book contains upwards of one hundred messages *given to us two, sitting together*, no other person being present. Of these messages, I copy some—

"Count your blessings."

"Let not faith fail: in Christ is strength."

"Work: trust: and do not pray for worldly things."

"Have patience: Christ has patience even with angels."

"Persevere in carefulness and prayer."

"Pray less for worldly good: leave all to God: Remember the lilies."

"The arrow of light comes brightest out of the darkest cloud."

"Peace be yours in Jesus."

"Bitter waters strengthen the feeble: Christ turned the water into wine."

"Stand firm and fearless: meet your anxieties like a Christian, and put the world gently from your Sabbaths."

"Pray and investigate: God gave light to see the truth."

"Take sweet council with Jesus: nothing fearing. Amen."

"In Christ only is salvation: the spirit Triune is Truth: Be firm and fearless in Christ."

"Peace be with your souls: joy in your hearts: calm in your minds: and prayer in your spirits."

"A blessing on the pure in spirit, and in the flesh, for they only shall bask in the glory that mildeweth not."

"Wait upon God: nothing fearing but fainting: wait: pray fervently until prayer is answered."

"Trust the Triune: be patient, and all things will expand as roses to light celestial."

These extracts will suffice to shew the nature and character of the whole: they extend over a period of three years. We never "sit" without receiving some message: sometimes we are told the earthly name of the spirit who gives it, generally, however, when we ask the name we receive no reply.

I give but two or three messages received by us when "mediums" were present with us:—

"Beloved children, we whom you remember lovingly, gather round you lovingly: freighted from God with blessings,—the odorosity of which shields you from the spirit of the world, and will become a telegraphic power between heaven and earth; celestially-homed parents, and terrestrially-housed children."

"Christ be with you, friends: I love to communicate with your sympathetic hearts, and pray fervently for all Divine blessings to descend upon you. Christ

reign in your hearts, and may blessings grow stronger and stronger upon you. Bless you now, and fare you well in Christ."

We have received many such messages as these: I will add but one more:—a prayer that was dictated to Daniel Home, (in our drawing-room,) he being in a trance: seven other persons being present, most of them for the first time at a "sitting."

"Father of all love and mercy, we bow ourselves in all meekness and humility before Thy Holy Will. Teach us, O Father, to be humble: teach us forgiveness: teach us to love and serve Thee. Allow, in the plenitude of Thy mercy, our loved ones to watch over us, and bear our prayers upwards. We only dare to ask it in the name of Christ, who died that we might not die, but live."

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

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

Now, Reverend Sir, will you ask *me* if there be any "use" in Spiritualism?

It has given *me* faith in Christ; it has made *me* a Christian; to me, therefore, the "use" has been great beyond all I can express in language, for which I thank and bless God,—praying with all my heart, all my soul, and all my strength, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven!"

And is it nothing to have the continual consciousness that I am watched and guarded by those who loved me while they were on earth,—the knowledge that I am ever surrounded by them, earnest in efforts and in prayer to keep me right, and prevent the influence of the evil spirits I know to be as constantly near me, eager to instil *their* principles into my ear, and my heart? Is not death thus deprived of its sting,—the grave of its victory? Is the counsel I ask of my departed friends a vain thing,—asking that God and my Saviour may permit them to give it! and the knowledge that he *does* permit them to give it?

[In a word, is it of no "use" that I am now enabled thus to pray—"The peace of God that passeth all understanding, keep

my heart and mind in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ: and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be with me, and remain with me for ever."

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your very faithful Servant,

Essex Villas, Campden Hill, W.

S. C. HALL.

May 30th, 1864.

### DEATH OF MR. NASSAU W. SENIOR.

"WE have to record the death of Mr. Nassau William Senior, late Master in Chancery and Professor of Political Economy in the University of Oxford. On the 4th of June, Mr. Senior, having gone through the usual curriculum at Eton, entered at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he graduated in 1811, taking a distinguished first-class in classics. Amongst his college contemporaries were Sir John T. Coleridge, the Earl of Delawarr, the Bishop of St. Asaph, the Provost of Oriel, the Dean of St. Paul's, and other gentlemen who have raised themselves to prominent positions in the learned professions and in literature. In 1818 he was called to the bar, and in 1836 he was appointed a Master in Chancery, during the Chancellorship of Lord Cottenham. In 1825 he was elected Professor of Political Economy at Oxford, being the first incumbent of the professorship which was founded in that year by the late Mr. Drummond, M.P. He resigned it in 1830, and was succeeded by the late Dr. Whately, Archbishop of Dublin. In 1847 he was re-elected to the same office in succession to Dr. Travers Twiss. For some years he held the office of Examiner in Political Economy in the University of London. He has written many works on the science to the pursuit of which he devoted his life, and has contributed to the *Quarterly, Edinburgh*, and other reviews. Mr. Senior was seventy-three years of age."—*Morning Star*.

We have only to add, as a further tribute to the attainments and honours of Mr. Senior, that he was by long enquiry and experience, a firm believer in spiritual powers and manifestation. Mr. Home was his frequent guest, and Mr. Senior made no secret of his belief amongst his friends. He it was who recommended the publication of Mr. Home's recent work by Messrs. Longman, and he authorized the publication, under initials, of one of the striking incidents there given which happened to a near and dear member of his family. When such names as Mr. Senior's are identified with the facts and belief of Spiritualism, we need no wonder that it continues to make such rapid strides amongst the classes of the community.