

*Robt. Owen*

THE  
SPIRITUAL TIMES

A WEEKLY ORGAN DEVOTED TO THE FACTS, PHILOSOPHY, AND  
PRACTICAL USES OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

WE HOLD THAT GOD IS OUR FATHER, MAN OUR BROTHER, IMMORTALITY OUR DESTINY.

"Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

"The life that now is shapes the life that is to be."

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Spiritualism unfolds to our internal senses substantial realities, presenting us not only with the semblances, but the positive evidences of eternal existence, causing us to feel that the passing shadows we speak of belong not to the spiritual, but the material world. It is easy to imagine that we are dealing with the absolute and enduring, because we associate our thoughts with the external and apparently lasting; but, on reflection, we discover that the only absolute and enduring facts are beyond the tomb.

NEW EVIDENCES OF SPIRIT-POWER.

We visited Kingston on Good Friday with the desire to learn if any new phase of development had manifested itself in the little boy Turketine. His uncle, with whom he is residing, received us with pleasure, and at once commenced detailing certain experiences which had come to the family during the past fortnight. If testimony is of any value, we are bound to place reliance on the statements of Mr. Champernowne, the medium's uncle, since Mr. Pilborough and Mr. Constable, his neighbours, vouch most emphatically for their truthfulness. The witnesses aver that voices have been heard, and whole figures of departed relatives seen. Not only this, but the invisibles have eaten, or absorbed, food. Whilst we all sat at dinner the little medium was made to write—"Dear father, give me an egg; I'll eat it!" (Mr. Champernowne says the spirit operating is his own child). Immediately the little fellow ran to the pantry and returned with an egg. He held the egg in his left hand, and, with his right one, drew the window-shutter close, and, in a second, exclaimed, "They have broken it." He then drew back the shutter, and at once disclosed the egg-shell crumpled into fragments, but there was neither yolk nor white; and the medium's hand, with the exception of an infinitesimal spot, was dry. The astounding quickness with which this was done puzzled us in no small degree. Where was the inside of that egg? The shell was dry, so was the boy's hand, with the exception of that minute spot mentioned. After some exclamatory interruptions from the whole party, we endeavoured to finish our dinner, but the invisibles were disposed to give us grace after their own fashion. A tumbler containing beer was placed by little Turketine on a table removed several feet from the dining-table, the shutter was again drawn close; in a few seconds light was restored, and the tumbler was empty. We examined the glass, the table, and the floor, but no traces of damp were there! Where could the beer have gone? Where, we cannot say. Did the spirits drink it? We don't know; but we do know the beer was in the glass when the shutter was being closed, and that it was not to be seen when it was drawn back again.

Of course, we thought, after two such miracles as we have described, we should have liberty to finish our dinner.

Not so. The shutter was again drawn, and we were told by the medium the beer would be brought back to the glass. A brief pause, and the boy exclaimed—"Right, it's done!" and on, giving us light, he gave us proof of the fact. The glass contained almost as much as it did when it was first placed on the table. Now, we have no proof that the spirits absorbed the beer; the supposition is, they simply transferred it to the jug on the dinner-table, which contained beer. But as it is only a supposition on our part, it is worth very little. Suppose they merely extracted the beer from the glass and lodged it in the jug on the other table, it may satisfy the mind, but the puzzle of the egg remains. The mind cannot find a solution for it. In both cases there is evidence of intelligent power, but in the case of the beer a possible solution presents itself in the fact that the jug contained beer. There was an evident impatience manifested by the invisibles to display evidences of their power for the moment. The cloth was cleared, and a *séance* formed at their own suggestion. The room was darkened, and some manifestations of an ordinary character were exhibited; after which, the spirits were asked to show us some lights, and then commenced a series of luminous appearances from the size of a sixpence to the size of half-a-crown. These luminous stars seemed to obey the voice of the medium, rising higher or taking certain directions at command.

We know not how to describe this novel and beautiful phenomenon. Its soft, bright beauty surpasses all attempts at description. The darkness which has been so often alluded to by sceptics as being used for fraud in the various mediumistic operations is self-evidently necessary to these appearances.

These few facts we present to our readers with no view to excite idle curiosity, but to give additional evidences of the mighty power which is daily manifesting itself to the world. We cannot doubt the facts which have presented themselves so prominently before us; and we would warn Mr. Champernowne against the too common fault of incautiousness. He should sift every phase of the phenomena which present themselves thoroughly, and neither be over credulous nor unduly suspicious. With respect to the medium, we think he should not be too much taxed, but a reasonable reliance should be placed on the power that manifests itself through his organism.

Mr. Champernowne, the boy's uncle, is an exciseman in Kingston, a man much respected, and we think no one could converse with him five minutes upon the subject of the extraordinary manifestations which have lately taken place in his house without perceiving his thorough and enthusiastic earnestness. We mention this that those who read this article may know that all supposition of trick is removed from the argument. The little boy, had he the idea, of himself is incapable of perpetrating

so complete and stupendous a hoax upon his uncle and others.

It is very natural that the people of Kingston and the adjacent villages should be excited about the matter, and, as in all evidences of the kind, motives, not very creditable, should be placed to the account of the uncle; and that some should go so far as to throw the onus of the whole affair on to the boy. Yet in the face of all this, it is gratifying to find that Mr. Champernowne is proof against fear; he has performed his duty nobly, and has asserted that no amount of persecution shall interrupt the manifestations. If he is only cautious, and will himself watch the proceedings at *séances*, and will allow no one to control them for him, we venture to predict that little Turketine will prove to be a very useful medium. Already he has had numerous birds singing, his coat and waistcoat have been taken off, spirits have been seen in his presence, he writes and speaks, &c. The versatile character of his manifestations is somewhat marked. We can only repeat that the most careful precautions should be taken by the uncle to prevent the possible stultification of the mediumship; then the rest may safely be left to Providence.

#### AN ITEM ABOUT THE DAVENPORTS.

THE Davenport gave a private *séance* at the house of the Editor of the *Standard* on Saturday. The manifestations came off with *eclat* as usual. Complimentary speeches were addressed to Dr. Ferguson, and reference made in them to the late cabinet smashing.

Ira has left for Paris. William, Mr. Fay, and Dr. Ferguson, will soon follow him. Mr. Palmer is no longer a partner; we believe he has already set sail for America.

#### THE MORALITY OF THE *TIMES*.

MRS. MARSHALL sent the following advertisement to the *Times*—"A test *séance* will be given at the Spiritual Lyceum, 14, Newman-street, Oxford-street, on Wednesday evening next. *Séance* to commence precisely at 8 o'clock. Admission, 5s." It was rejected, and the bearer told that it would be admitted if Mrs. Marshall would place the word "Conjuring" over it. What splendid morality! Mrs. Marshall must tell or lie to have an advertisement inserted in the *Times*. Surely the times are out of joint that such a rule should hold good. Besides, look at the consistency of the leading journal: it admitted the whole of the Davenport advertisements, and never put "Conjuring" over them! Why does the *Times* act fair to Americans and unfair to an Englishwoman? Because it says—"We will have nothing to do with Spiritualism." We can only say, if it had anything to do with Spiritualism, it would teach it to respect the truth, and to do justice; but these are virtues the *Times* ignores. God grant that the Church and State authorities may in future look after their own virtues. The *Times* cannot, it has lost all virtue, according to its late dictum, but the virtue of gross materialism.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

[We do not hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.]

#### THE SPIRITUAL CONTROVERSY AT PRESTON.

To the Editor of the *Spiritual Times*.

Sir,—Presuming that your object, like mine, is the discovery and propagation of the truth, though our methods may differ, and the results at which we have arrived may be different, too, at present, I venture to hope that you will allow me an opportunity of correcting an error which appeared in the issue of the 15th inst. A quotation is given from a letter of Mr. Bullock, which appeared in the *Preston Guardian*, in which I am charged with appropriating to myself a theory of Hugh Miller and Coleridge. In that extract I am made to say that my theory of reconciling Genesis with geology is, "that Adam got on the top of a hill, fell asleep, and dreamed a dream or had a vision, that this dream or vision showed him how the world was made, &c."

In reference to the above statement, I beg to say that this is not my theory at all. The dream or vision was mentioned and described in my lecture not as my own, farther than the description, not to reconcile Genesis with geology, but simply to account for the manner of revelation. The dream is thus introduced in the report of my lecture in the *Preston Guardian*, March 18, 1865:—

"Adam could not discover, by inquiry, how the garden was made or peopled, or he and his partner formed. His knowledge was a matter of revelation. The method of revelation is not given; but it must have been by word or by vision. Adam, was described, by the lecturer, leaving home, &c."

The idea of a vision as the means of revelation I did not pretend to be originally mine, and the idea is itself so simple, that it would suggest itself to almost every reader of the Bible. I did not say the idea belonged to Hugh Miller or Coleridge, inasmuch as I know it had been suggested ages before, and has been mentioned by more than a score of writers beside Miller, since Coleridge, in England and in Germany as any other simple or common idea, without any reference to its origin. My theory according to the report which was before Mr. Bullock's eyes, is thus given,—

"The lecturer proceeded to state and examine the theory of Dr. Pye Smith. This was the only theory which harmonised with science, but as Dr. Pye Smith assumed that the heaven and the earth in the first verse were to be taken in their most unlimited sense, and in the remainder of the narrative they were taken to signify a limited locality; he (Mr. Lewis) rejected this theory also. He would now explain a theory of his own, which was slightly different from the last. . . . He took the word "heaven" all through to signify the air as defined in the 8th verse. . . . The earth mentioned by Moses was the land which afterwards became the scene of Eden. *The first chapter in Genesis did not refer in any way to the origin of the universe. The Bible was a book for man and about man. The narrative referred simply to the creation of Adam and Eve, the preparation of Eden for their abode, and the formation of the domestic animals and plants.*" If the reporter had added that I took the word "day" to signify not twenty-four hours, as Dr. Pye Smith, nor a period of unlimited extent, as Currier and Hugh Miller, but a short period, my theory would have been fairly stated. I have read very extensively on the subject, and have not met with any theory such as the one here given. It may not be as satisfactory to others as it is to me. I say nothing of its merit, but, good or bad, it is mine. I shall cheerfully give up my claim to it if I find it published previously by any other author.

I have confidence that your courtesy and love of truth will permit this correction of the mistake published in your last, to appear before your intelligent readers. If my belief in modern Spiritualism has a narrower limit than that of some others, that is no reason why a theory of reconciling Scripture with science should be palmed upon me, which is not mine, and that my own theory should be suppressed. Hoping that the nature of my grievance will be accepted as an apology for my wish to trespass upon your space and kindness.

I am, yours truly,

Accrington, 18 April, 1865.

EVAN LEWIS.

ANOTHER cabinet and dark *séance*, *a la* Davenport, has been produced lately at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester. The following, from a correspondent, will present some idea of the bungling manner in which the manifestations of the Brothers are imitated:—

To the Editor of the *Spiritual Times*.

Sir,—This part of the performance was the real attraction, and a very numerous and respectable audience there was. The Cabinet had no dons whatever. The process of tying was effected as usual; but the performers quickly released themselves, and did all the kicking of instruments and ringing of bells, &c., &c., which appeared, after the explanation, to be very satisfactory to the whole audience. But, as to the dark *séance* part, it was the most trashy attempt at imitating the Davenports I ever could witness, and its explanation the most foolish ever heard—the floating of the instruments being represented by one man getting on the shoulders of the other, and flourishing the guitar in all directions, stating its height to appear much greater when in darkness, so that, therefore, was an optical illusion—the flying cont being represented by the tied man slipping out of the ropes, and quickly doffing his coat and tossing it anywhere. To those who have witnessed both sides of this subject, like myself, I pronounce this performance at the Free Trade Hall to be the most futile attempt at solving the Davenport phenomena I ever could conceive by Manchester men. The performers themselves know in their hearts it is no solution of this spiritual subject, and time alone will show it.—Respectfully yours,

14th April, 1865.

C. BLACKBURN.

## TESTIMONY TO MRS. MARSHALL.

To the Editor of the *Spiritual Times*.

Sir,—Having been one of Mrs. Marshall's first friends, I feel much gratified with the notice you have taken of her power. I gave an account of a *séance* with her and her niece in the *Spiritual Telegraph*, October 15th, 1858, which brought her into notice and induced a great number of those zealous Spiritualists who afterwards became her patrons, to visit her. When nearly all were against her, I fought for her integrity, and was at last gratified by hearing recantations from those who had publicly and privately denounced her as an impostor. Many Spiritualists who denounced her, relented—the Lord having shown them the truth by increasing her power ten-fold. When I first visited her the rappings were the only manifestations; but by degrees her powers were developed, and after a short time I had the pleasure of witnessing in full light the tightening of knots in pocket handkerchiefs, which were thrown into person's laps; night after night the guitar was played in correct tune, and with the greatest feeling, while held under the table by myself and various visitors.

I have a collection of spirit writings, obtained on glass rubbed with wet paint. Some most beautiful writing. The glass was placed at the feet of the medium, and in general immediately written upon. I suggested this method because at this time all other methods had failed—the medium's power not being strong enough to get writing with a pencil. In the presence of perhaps a dozen persons I have seen the spirit-hand come up from the end of a large table and ring a bell, and I, as well as others, have touched the hand, and been patted by it; many have been made to start in the greatest affright from the table, while others were soothed by the touch of some departed child or friend. While the labours of other mediums have been restricted to a class, Mrs. Marshall has been the medium for the many; numerous Spiritualists in London have been made such by seeing the extraordinary manifestations through her mediumship.

I am a medium myself; my powers are various, but I am not a strong physical medium. I am a peculiar seeing medium, and the spirits tell me that I have the power of bringing out mediumship in others; which would seem to be the case, for the very first person—a lady—I sat down with here, proved very soon one of the most powerful mediums I ever saw, and has been the means of converting scores in this city, where, as in London at one time, Spiritualism was my shame in crowds, my solitary pride, and where, as in London too, I was almost hunted out of society for it. Thank God times are fast changing, and the chariot of truth is rolling onward, not crushing fanatics, not like the car of the Indian idol, but the hard-hearted sceptics at every turn of its wheels. Those who drive it by the grace of God and through the love of Jesus Christ, will reap their reward in due time.

When I was in London fighting the battle of truth, the spirits wrote out "the Lord will reward you," and he has rewarded me—not with wealth or worldly honour, but with powers which exceed all I could have imagined, and which Spiritualists would scarcely believe if I were to tell them. Jesus Christ cautioned his apostles and told them not to rejoice in their power over the spirits, and I never speak of mine but I lose strength. I am rather reluctant, therefore, to enter into particulars, unless privately to a confirmed Spiritualist.

Now, sir, to return to Mrs. Marshall, I beg to say that I am glad to see notice taken of her power by an influential paper like yours. She has power to do all that Spiritualists can desire for the conviction of the sceptic and the dissemination of truth, and has, and will do, wonders in that way. That she may be blessed with health, and yourself too, in order that you may conjointly and separately continue the great work, is the wish of your sincere well-wisher.

H. WHITAKER.

[We have received a couple of diagrams of the knotted handkerchiefs alluded to. We shall be glad to shew them to friends interested.—ED. S. T.]

## SECTARIANISM.

The very essence of Sectarianism is inhumanity. Its voices are groans from the body of him whom it has broken and pierced. Its word is "unity" still; but it is the unity of a clique, a section, a party, a denomination; the ground of it is barren as barrenness itself—being an assent, not of the heart to vital principles, but of the head to speculative tenets; the bond of it is exceedingly attenuated, for it is outward attachment to coterie; the spirit of it is dry and technical—sometimes bitter—often bigoted. It uses God's fair, liberal world, as a field for partisan warfare, and raises the play of theological argument to the dignity of an absorbing interest in life. The object for which its unity is constituted, and the end for which it is used, is the building up of a dogma, or the extending of a denomina-

tion, or the aggrandizement of a party, or the supremacy of a school, or the filling up of a treasury from the hard earnings of the people, to be emptied again for services by which humanity, in its vital, social interests, is not likely to be benefited. It is a barren and desolating Spirit. Nowhere does it touch a controlling principle of human existence; nowhere does it grasp a profound truth of human nature; nowhere does it fall in with a deep law of human life; nowhere does it reach any plane of thought or sentiment or conviction, which can substitute a unity beneath diversity for that poor fiction of unity in diversity. It sucks up the vitality of men, and wastes it on metaphysics, it drains the resources of thought, of feeling, of sentiment, of purpose, of soul and spirit-wealth, and squanders them on figments and nonentities; it would make the industry of a country subservient to the whining of theologians; it would make commerce an instrument for transporting away its own wealth, to be poured out, in vain missionary enterprises, on the sands of Africa or the steppes of Asia; it would combine the forces of civilisation to introduce in remote climes the same dissensions it keeps alive at home; and it does all this piously, in the name of the Christ, and with honest professions of devotion to Him and His cause.—*The Friend of Progress*.

## SPIRITUALISM AND MESMERISM.

"In the beginning of this year, I had occasion to go to a circle, about a mile from Dudley. It was a very cold night, and I caught cold in the left side of my face, which pained me very much. I got home as quick as possible and went to bed: it got a little better, and I went to sleep. At twelve o'clock I was awoke by the rain; and soon after I heard, as it appeared to me, some one whispering the following words in my ear, "You tell people to ask for what they want." Well, thought I, what does this mean? "Ask for what you want." I suppose it means that I should pray inwardly to the Father of all goodness that He would relieve me from this pain. I did so, and then another whisper came, saying, "Pass your hand down the side of your face a few times,"—which I did, and the pain ceased.

"Since the above, my eldest daughter, who generally has bad health, caught cold, and it settled on her face and gave her a great deal of pain: there appeared on the side of her face a hard substance, about the size of a small egg. I felt very sorry for her, and I thought I would try to relieve her by making a few passes to remove the pain; and, while doing so, I felt a tingling at the tips of my fingers, as though I was drawing the pain out. The thought came into my mind that I would sooner have it myself than she should be afflicted with it, for she had enough with her regular complaint, and I was better able to bear it than her. That instant I felt a pain in my face, and a substance began to form itself, which, in the morning, I found to be as large as hers, though the pain was not so bad. My daughter's pain instantly left her, and the substance was gone before the following night from both of us.

"On the 4th of March last she had been having a vapour bath, and for fear she should get uncovered after she got to bed, I sat in the room with her to watch. I took up the *Educator*, a spiritual work which I had, a day or two previous, received from London. While I was looking at it, a voice, in a whisper, told me to make a few passes over my daughter's face. I wondered at this, for I was not a mesmerist, and should not know what to do if she should go into the mesmeric sleep; when the voice came again, and said, "Go and make the passes." I instantly obeyed the invisible agent, and commenced making the passes over her head and face, when, to my great surprise, she closed her eyes and went to sleep. I soon lost sight of her face, for she was enveloped in the nervo-vital fluid, and while I was looking at the fluid, I saw on the pillow, by her side, a shadow, the form of a head and shoulders of a man or woman, and as soon as my eyes rested upon it, passed over my daughter and I lost it. Instantly three raps came on a table, about a yard or so from me. I then asked if it was a Spirit that made those raps, and it answered by three more raps, meaning Yes. I then asked if it wished to communicate to me through the alphabet, and two raps came, meaning No. I looked towards the table, wondering what to do next. Presently I felt as though I was going to fall through the floor; then the clock in the room struck four times and stopped, although the time by the same clock was twenty minutes past eleven. This, to me, was very strange, for it appeared to me as though the Spirit passed from my daughter to the table, and from the table, through me, to the clock, to convince me that it was spirit power. I then went to my daughter and found her still asleep (for, to tell you the truth, I began to be alarmed.) I had heard of reverse passes, therefore I made a few, and she awoke, to my great delight, for I was afraid I could not wake her. I asked her if she had heard the raps &c., but she said she had not heard them, for she had been asleep. This proved to me a connection between Mesmerism and Spiritualism, and I am satisfied that there is some great meaning attached to this, but, I have not learned what it is. T. DUFFELL.—*The British Spiritual Telegraph*.

Dudley.

## A LECTURE,

By the Author of *The Two Worlds*,In Review of a Course of Lectures on Spiritualism, at South-Place,  
Chapel, Finsbury,

By the REV. M. D. CONWAY.

Delivered at the Spiritual Lyceum, April 2nd.

THE Chapel, South-Place, Finsbury, will long be held in grateful remembrance by many minds as the scene of the pulpit ministrations of William Johnson Fox, one of the best and clearest thinkers, and most accomplished orators of this or indeed of any age. He laboured for many years, and with eminent success, to show that the freest thought could co-exist with the deepest faith; that not only was religion not incompatible with the advancement and elevation of mankind, but that, divested of the trappings and rust which had gathered around it, it was an essential element of human progress; and he delighted to trace its bearings in literature, philosophy, science, art, freedom, social economy, and whatever tended to advance the best interests of humanity. That Chapel was, therefore, a place of worship, and something more—a Spiritual Lyceum, for the cultivation of the spiritual nature in harmonious co-operation with the reflective and reasoning faculties. The congregation assembling there have been accustomed to a variety of topics, a breadth of treatment, and an absence of conventionality; and have so acquired a degree of mental independence, and admit in their pulpit a degree of freedom, conspicuous even among the churches of Unitarian or liberal Christianity. Perhaps in no other church in the metropolis, or, indeed, in England, could a chapter from the New Testament have been followed by a reading from Voltaire, after the fashion of Mr. Conway on last Sunday morning. This congregation was, therefore, in some respects, one of the fittest to entertain the discussion of a subject everywhere spoken against, as, if true to their own professions and general practice, they would consider it, on its own independent evidences, unaffected by the obloquy and clamour of the press and other misleaders of public opinion.

Mr. Conway is known to many present as an American clergyman, and an earnest reformer and philanthropist, who has especially exerted himself, and made personal sacrifices, to promote the abolition of negro slavery. Many present had the pleasure of listening to him in this Lyceum a few Sundays ago, and those who did so must have been favourably impressed with the evident sincerity and earnestness, as well as general ability, which he then evinced. When, then, a course of Lectures on Spiritualism by Mr. Conway was announced, I anticipated that the question would meet not only fair and candid treatment, but that it would be fully and thoroughly examined. On the whole, there is no reason to take exception to these lectures on the former ground. Mr. Conway, according to the light he has, has shown an evident disposition to do justice to his theme. He treated Spiritualism with respect, as deserving of most careful consideration for its social and humanitarian tendencies, and as the greatest spontaneous movement of heart and brain that had originated with the common people since the birth of Christianity. This declaration, however, served only to increase my disappointment at the very imperfect and inadequate representation of the subject which Mr. Conway in these four lectures has given. This, I think, resulted mainly from two causes. It soon became evident, as these lectures proceeded, that Mr. Conway was treating the subject not only, or chiefly, for its own sake, but as a means of getting at something else—that he was applying it as a test of the faith of Christendom, and especially of the churches, in regard to the supernatural; and also for illustrating his own conceptions of the laws of thought—of the action and reaction of the human mind in relation to nature and the supernatural. Now, these points, no doubt, are worthy all the attention that he has given them, but I venture to suggest (especially as I see that Mr. Conway is present) that Spiritualism, by his own admission, is a question of sufficient magnitude to be discussed *per se* on its own merits alone, without any collateral issue; and I hope that on some future and fitting occasion, Mr. Conway will give it his entire thought, and direct the undivided attention of his audience to its consideration.

But further, and without any disrespect to Mr. Conway, it seemed that that gentleman had not a very deep or intimate knowledge of the subject he had introduced; obviously so, at least, in some of its phases. And it is worthy of remark—though, unhappily, his case in this respect is not a singular one—that it was just on those points where, confessedly, he was least informed, that he spoke with the greatest confidence, and pronounced his verdict with the most undoubting assurance.

Thus, in his first lecture, he told his hearers that he had been to the Davenport exhibition on one occasion only, a few days previous. The meeting was a crowded one; there was much excitement, and angry, hostile feeling. Mr. Conway had to make his own observations, with the aid of an opera-glass. These were certainly not very favourable conditions for investigation; and it must be evident that no great weight could attach to any conclusion arrived at on such premises; and yet, with such slender and imperfect evidence as was alone possible under these unfavourable circumstances, Mr. Conway rushed to the seat of judgment, and pronounced an adverse and most unqualified decision.

Of course, a man of Mr. Conway's powers of mind could only arrive at such result on some ground that would be satisfactory and conclusive to his own mind at least. The consideration of the ground actually assigned by him will lead us at once into the heart of his great difficulty in accepting Spiritualism—to the principle which seemed to be involved in and to underlie all his objections—to constitute their fundamental root and essence.

Mr. Conway then, assured his hearers that there were some statements which did not need investigation, concerning which we might save our time and labour;—there was a certain touch-stone by which we could at once determine that certain alleged facts could not possibly be true. I

waited with eager expectation the announcement of this great discovery, for which the ages have waited—surely the most important ever communicated. He who could give the world a touch-stone the application of which would at once detect the false currency that was being palmed upon us as the genuine coin of truth, would surely be of all men the greatest benefactor of his race. His name would shine in the intellectual firmament a star of the first magnitude, before whose splendour such lesser luminaries as Columbus and Galileo would pale their ineffectual fires. I have heard of Fortunatus's purse, of Aladdin's lamp, of Amphion's lyre, and of Herr Teufelsdröckh's Time-annihilating hat, but I would give all these properties, if I had them, for this more magical, more miraculous touch-stone. And now this great gift was to be freely, unconditionally presented; and we were at once to be put into possession of this short-cut—this royal road to truth. But when the oracle had spoken, and the magic formula was uttered—

“Oh, what a fall was there, my countrymen!”

This precious touch-stone proved no better than a common pebble; the fairy gold we had been promised turned to worthless leaves.

We were told that the human mind contained within it an ideal of order, of fitness, of the necessary relations of things; and that whatever was contrary to this ideal was a violation of the laws of thought—an outrage on the human mind—and was, therefore, inconceivable, incredible, impossible.

Let us examine the truth of this proposition before considering the particular application made of it on this occasion.

No doubt it is true, and the truth is a very important one, that every mind, consciously or unconsciously, forms to itself a certain ideal of the true, the beautiful, and the good. It is well to bring this image of the mind clearly and vividly within the light of our own consciousness, so that we may approximate ever nearer and nearer to our highest conceptions, and grow towards the perfect stature of a man.

But this is very different from making our ideals the test and measure of truth. These fulfil none of the necessary conditions: they are not consistent, absolute—“an ever-fixed mark;” not like the Polar Star, which guides mariners in every sea, but rather like the boat whose course is affected by winds and tides and storms. They are variable both with individuals and communities. Geography and chronology, time, place, and circumstance;—the state of society, the condition of civilization, as well as individual idiosyncracies, have much to do with their formation. Take, by way of illustration, one or two of those questions with which, as a clergyman, Mr. Conway will be most familiar.

If (outside of a very limited area, to which I shall presently refer) our ideas were a test of truth, we should expect it to be so in our conception of the Divinity—of the Highest, the Absolute, the Perfect. And yet, how far is this from the reality! We find in early times that the gods were earth-dwellers—beings little removed from ordinary humanity;—they loved, they fought, they feasted, they conversed familiarly with men, they assembled on the brow of high Olympus, they walked in the garden in the cool of the evening. The earliest form of society was that of the Family. We have a faithful picture of this condition presented in the Book of Genesis. The patriarch was surrounded by his children and grandchildren, his numerous domestics, and his flocks and herds. They wandered over the vast plains of Asia as fresh water and pasturage were needed, or circumstances required. Well, the God they worshipped—that is, their ideal of God—grew out of these conditions. He was a patriarchal Deity—a household God—the God of the family or tribe, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. He dwelt with them in their tents: He accompanied them in their wanderings: He promised, as the reward of their obedience, the increase of their cattle, and the multiplication of their posterity. As the Family, the tribe grew and became a nation—their ideal of Deity expanded—He was to them a local—a national God—their special Protector—the God of Israel. As they emerged from a pastoral into an invading and a warlike people, and came in conflict with surrounding nations, Jehovah to their minds became the Lord of Hosts—the God of the Armies of Israel: He was invoked by their poet-warrior as his sword and buckler—his strong tower, and wall of defence—the Lord who taught his arms to war, and his fingers to fight. As society assumed a more settled form, as order prevailed, and the supremacy of law and government was established, then the ideal of God was that of the Great Lawgiver—of the Sovereign Judge—whose law was their delight, and in the keeping of whose statutes there was great reward. In the time of their adversity, when a vanquished and subject people, then, in the bitterness of their captivity, they cried to God as their Redeemer, their Deliverer who was to break every yoke, to restore the kingdom unto Israel, and reign over all their enemies. And when One came among them with Divine insight, in whose pure and holy nature was reflected all the glories of Divinity, an ideal was presented transcending all that the popular mind had hitherto conceived. To Him, God was not local, partial, warlike, vindictive, to be specially worshipped in this mountain or in that temple: He was the God of the whole earth—a Spirit to be spiritually worshipped by his spiritual and reasonable creatures. He had made of one blood all nations of men, and they were to conceive of him under the most endearing relation—to worship him as OUR FATHER.

The corresponding ideals of Heaven are equally divergent. At first, Heaven seems to have been located, not in some far-off region, but in our homely earth. It was placed, not in the future, but in the past; it was not so much a hope as a memory—not an anticipation, but a recollection. It is a fact significant in its bearings on those modern theories which regard man as a development from the lower animal creation, that the earliest legends and traditions are not of a time when man roamed the forest, half-brother to the ape, but of a Garden of Eden, of a Golden Age, when man was nearer to the angel-world, when there was no flaw in the integrity of his nature. Primeval man was in more direct communion with nature, and hence the earliest and purest ideals of Heaven were the reflection and exaltation of all natural beauty, untainted by sorrow, and unsoiled by sin—of Paradise, and Elysian fields, and Islands of the Blest, where Spring was robed in immortal beauty—where flowers withered not, and the groves were of never-fading verdure, and the flowing waters were shaded by the Tree of Life. And then, as men congregated together,



and society became more complex, men conceived of Heaven more as a social state—as the Holy City, New Jerusalem—with its pearly gates, and its golden streets, and its joyous songs of the redeemed, like the sound of many waters, and its worshipping multitudes. To the Indian, Heaven is a happier hunting ground, as—to the grim Northmen of Europe, whose lives were spent in feasting and in fight—Heaven, the Walhalla of the Gods, was the scene of ever-renewed battle and banquet. To the Turk, with his warmer climate and more sluggish and sensuous nature, Heaven is a place of voluptuous enjoyment, where he will be waited on by dark-eyed houris, and surrounded by sensual delights; while the phlegmatic but intellectual Saxon pictures forth a metaphysical, transcendental Heaven of contemplation, and music, and worship, and the enjoyment of the beatific vision. But, it may be said, that these illustrations belong to the realm of abstraction pieced out by hints and analogies, and the workings of the mind upon them and upon itself. I answer, that for that reason they offer the best test of the principle under consideration, as they approach so nearly to the realm of the pure ideal. But will it fare better if we test it by cases based on familiar and universal observation?

Nothing is more familiar to us than the human form. Surely then the ideal of beauty—beauty in form—in its highest degree, will be constant, universal, admitting of no deviation; if there be any ideal which is a touchstone of truth, we would expect to find it here. Is it so? Let us see. The Carib mother flattens the heads of her children that they may correspond with the Carib ideal of beauty; the Chinese mother, for the same reason, cripples her daughters feet, and I have heard it reported that some ladies nearer home cripple the more vital portions of their own bodily frame, under the same impression, that in this matter they are wiser than God, and can by their own devices improve the shape that He has given them. The Egyptian ladies blacken their eyebrows and finger-nails, our British ancestors coloured their bodies, and, it is whispered, that some relics of this custom still remain among their descendants. Some savage tribes bore their noses for the insertion of ornaments, and some people who are not savages, bore their ears for the same purpose. Among the Borneese, corpulence is the test of beauty. Mr. Banting, if he sought to carry out his theory among the fair sex in that region, would be regarded as a monster. The belle of the village there is the one who weighs the heaviest. An ideal of beauty not without its advantages, as it admits of the settlement of rival claims by the impartial arbitration of the nearest weighing machine.

Or again, test this theory of the ideal by its application to the practical affairs of life. I mentioned a few Sundays ago that when Stephenson first talked of travelling by the locomotive at the rate of ten or twelve miles an hour, he found all the practical mind as well as all the theory of the country arrayed against him. It was so contrary to experience, it so violated the existing ideal of the fitness and nature of things, that engineers of the greatest weight assured the Committee of the House of Commons that any engineer who could propose a scheme for such a purpose must be out of his senses, and a fit candidate for Bedlam. They declared the thing impossible and undeserving of investigation, and would have dismissed it in as summary a manner as Mr. Conway dismissed the phenomena of the Davenport exhibition.

Instead of testing alleged facts by our ideals, the true method is just the converse of this, we should test the truth of our ideals by the careful observation of facts. That is the true method of philosophical inquiry, and the only method of any real value. When some friends of Sir Isaac Newton thought that some facts had been discovered, of which the effect would be to call in question the truth of one of his great discoveries, they were anxious to break it to him as gently as possible, thinking it might cause him pain, but the great philosopher only felt interested in what he heard, remarking, "It may be so; there is no arguing against fact and experiment." That is just the difference between the method of the Spiritualists and that of Mr. Conway. He would test their facts by a pre-existing ideal in his mind of the possible and the impossible; they, on the contrary, like Sir Isaac, refer to the arbitration of fact and experiment.

That voracious traveller, Mr. Lemuel Gulliver, tells of an island called Laputa, where philosophers are engaged in very abstruse researches, such as extracting moonbeams from cucumbers. If I remember rightly it is he who tells us of a certain tailor who carried on business on "strictly philosophical principles." He had, from the depths of his own consciousness, excogitated an ideal man, a model of perfect symmetry of the human form; and he made all his garments to fit this ideal form. Of course, it sometimes happened that they didn't fit his actual customers. But what of that? He could demonstrate that they ought to do so; if they were not up to this ideal that was their misfortune, but it was their business and no concern of his. In like manner, Mr. Conway carries on the business of thinking on "strictly philosophical principles." His ideals are ready made; the facts ought to fit his theory—what if they don't? Well, I suppose—so much the worse for the facts.

"At the Davenport exhibition," said Mr. Conway, "I saw the hand, supposed to be a manifestation from the spirits; I saw distinctly, without doubt, a human hand. Now, we know of what a human hand is formed, and it is, therefore, impossible that spirits could have had anything to do with it." Here we perceive how a false theory may be not only absurd but mischievous, as not only a hindrance to the recognition of the true character of phenomena, but as necessarily engendering suspicion and leading to the imputation of fraud. That in this instance the imputation was unfounded, was virtually confessed by Mr. Conway on the Sunday following the lecture in which it had been advanced; he having, in the interval, been appointed on the Committee of Investigation at a subsequent *séance*, and at which he was able to fully satisfy himself of the *bona fides* of the mediums. Had not his first conclusion been predicated on a false theory, he would not have been led to an inconsiderate statement which subsequent experience, a few days after, made it necessary to recall.

The whole point of the objection, it will on reflection be seen, depends entirely on the ideal formed of the nature of a Spirit. What Mr. Conway's ideal is he did not inform us, and I am unable to divine, but, if it is at all like what metaphysical writers and theologians have put forward,

the objection is reasonable and has great force. Metaphysicians tell us that of spirit itself we know nothing; but then, despite the maxim that "nothing can come of nothing," out of this nothing they contrive to extract what they think to be something. The process is simple and ingenious—a neat little sum in subtraction. Spirit is the converse of body; you have therefore only to abstract all the qualities of body and find your remainder, and that is Spirit. Thus body has form, colour, extension, and is conditioned in space. Spirit, therefore, must have neither form, colour, nor extension, and cannot occupy space. It becomes nobody and goes nowhere. What then is the remainder? Well we are variously told that it is "a pure essence," a "thinking principle," a "substance un compounded and without parts," "an unextended indivisible monad," "a pure simplicity." I hope you may find some satisfaction in these phrases, and in such a future as, according to the Gospel of Metaphysics, lies before you. For my own part, I would as soon join the Laputan philosopher to extract moonbeams from cucumbers as make the attempt. We are, however, consoled with the assurance that when we have thus reached our lowest terms, being without parts we are not any further divisible, and hence are indestructible. It must be a great pleasure to know that when we become nonentities we cannot be annihilated.

Now if Mr. Conway's ideal of the human spirit be anything like this I can fully appreciate his difficulty. How can an indivisible monad possess members, or a pure simplicity exhibit hands? This, however, is not the ideal which Spiritualism puts forward. I believe that the only true ideal, because it is the actual, is that presented by the eminent spiritual seer, Swedenborg; and his statements on this head are fully confirmed by the modern mediumship and manifestations. Swedenborg taught that the spirit was the inner, the essential man; that it was in the human form; or, rather, that we had this bodily form, because such was the spirit form. The body being to the spirit, what the clothing is to the body, only corresponding to and fitting it far more perfectly. As when we take off our clothes we still retain our bodily form, so when we put off "this muddy vesture of decay," we stand forth in our true spiritual body; for, as St. Paul long since taught, "there is a natural body and there is a spiritual body." We are disembodied but not unembodied. These views were advanced by Swedenborg, not merely as speculation but from things "seen and heard" by him in the Spirit-World, and of which he has given us several "Memorable Relations."

If then the Spirit be the *real man*, it must have the form, the members, everything which constitutes the man; and consequently, a spirit-hand. Is it impossible then for a Spirit to temporarily clothe the hand with a material covering so as to render it visible and tactual? How this is done, it is not now necessary to discuss, but that it is done is not a matter of speculation but of observation and testimony. We have all read, and Christianity professes to believe the record, that in ancient times a Spirit-hand did appear, not to obscure and ignorant persons, but to King Darius on his throne, surrounded by his astonished and terrified courtiers; aye, and the hand was seen to write, so that there was not only the Spirit-hand, but direct Spirit-writing also. The evidence of this phenomenon recurring in our own times, not in one instance or with one medium alone, is before the world, and none have been able to disprove it. And here, I may incidentally remark, we may begin to see the necessity of mediumship, and of the strict observance of certain conditions which experience shows to be necessary or favourable to such manifestations, but which inconsiderate people are too apt to overlook; for if spirits are to manifest at all through physical channels, it can only be in accordance with those laws which govern physical conditions and their corresponding spiritual relations.

Why should not a Spirit-hand be made sensible to vision? The history, the religion, the traditions of all nations and times, aye, I might say, the history and traditions of almost every family and household, testify to the appearance not of the Spirit-hand alone, but of the entire form. And if the entire form of a Spirit can be made visible, how much more easy it must be, one would think, to make visible only a single member of that form.

When, then, Mr. Conway tells us Spirit-manifestations are incredible, this alone is a sufficient answer:—That it is and has ever been one of the most universal faiths of mankind. It is of no use for a man to assert that he cannot be put in the stocks when he is already there.

But let us go a little further into this question. Spirit-manifestations are incredible. That is the assertion. Let us ask how and where this incredibility begins. I can understand that an Atheist may say, "Sir, there is no Spiritual World, there are no spiritual agencies, consequently, can be no spiritual manifestations." Were I reasoning with such a person, I should in substance reply:—"The argument is at least, consistent, given the truth of the premises, and the inference undoubtedly follows. But the truth of these premises is the point in question, and their falsehood is proved by the very facts you impugn on the strength of your own unfounded assumption." But there is no need in the present instance to follow out this line of argument, as the Spiritual World and the immortality of the soul are on both sides fully recognised. But it may help to make the question clearer if we ask, in the first instance, What is a Spirit? I am now not speaking of the form, but of its interior nature, of that which is necessary to its conscious personal identity. Whatever differences there may be on this point, I think we shall at least agree, that the Spirit must possess intelligence, volition, affections. Without these there could be no continuous life—no conscious identity. The future life would be altogether independent of the present life. Memory is an integral part of our intelligence, in its absence there could be no continuous intellectual life. How significant are the words in the parable,—"Son, Remember that thou in thy life-time," &c. Ah! what a joyful, and it may be also, a terrible word, is that:—Remember. How penetrating, how all-pervading should be the consideration, that not alone the actions—but that every thought, every secret impulse, our temptations, our shames and triumphs—all are written by ourselves in indelible characters in the book of our own immortal life. Can then, I ask, can the tender devoted mother—ready to sacrifice her life—nay, why did sacrifice her life for her child, daily and hourly sacrificing the ease, the comforts, the enjoyments—that which to the merely selfish nature is the life of life. Is it incredible

that, when removed from that child by the change of death, leaving it perchance among strangers; is it incredible, I ask, that she should still remember that once loved—may we not say, still loved one? Ah! is it not incredible (incredible I am sure it must be to the heart of every mother) that she can ever forget it, ever cease to take an intelligent interest in its welfare?

Would there exist the desire to manifest that affection? Who that knows anything of the nature of affection can for an instant doubt it? Does the lover not seek to pour forth his passion? Does the affectionate child not desire to sit on the mother's knee, and clasp its chubby arms around her neck? or the mother not desire that it should nestle in her bosom? Love, and the desire to manifest that love, are indeed inseparable; but if love, and the desire to manifest love, survive death, is it, finally, incredible that that desire should be realised? We are told that Heaven is a place of perfect happiness; but could there be perfect happiness if one of one of the most legitimate—one of the strongest and holiest demands of our nature were to remain ungratified?

And that demand is mutual. It has gone up from the heart of every people and nation through all time. It has the force of a universal instinct. Only a few days ago we had the pleasure of listening, in these rooms, to an elaborate argument from Mr. Conway to prove the immortality of man. He argued that wherever God had implanted an instinct—a strong natural desire—he had provided for its gratification. The desire, the craving, the instinct for immortality was the Divine promise and pledge of immortality. Whatever force there may be in this argument, and I think it has great force, applies, in an almost equal degree, to the craving of the heart for spiritual communion. Who that has loved and lost, has not longed with passionate yearning for some token—some affectionate remembrance—a word of consolation, a look of forgiveness? In the agony of bereavement we cry—

“O for the touch of a vanished hand,  
And the sound of a voice that is still!”

The heart pleads for spiritual communion, reason attests its truth, and the full tide of human experience flowing through the ages bears on its broad waters the evidence of a Love that conquers Death and

“Springs immortal in the human breast.”

Let us look at the objection in another aspect. Either the facts alleged by spiritualists are incredible, or the general conclusion they deduce from them is so. One or the other it must be, if either. Now take the most common phenomena of the current manifestations—those to which Mr. Conway more particularly referred; the rappings without visible or known agency, the movements of ponderable bodies, the exhibition of the “Spirit-hand.” Now these things, in the first instance, are matters of simple observation, of which the senses take cognisance, and of the reality of which they are fully competent to judge. For observe, the senses have nothing to do with the *causes* of phenomena. Whether those to which Mr. Conway referred are caused by muscular agency, or electricity, or a new force, or spirit-power, the senses cannot, and do not profess to determine. It is beyond their province. But they can determine whether sounds are heard, whether a table rises in the air, or hands are visible. Their testimony on these points cannot be affected, or be rendered unworthy of belief, by the judgment we form as to the agencies concerned in their production. Do then these phenomena become incredible only when we attribute them to spiritual agency? Or is it only the belief in such agency that is in redoubt? But here the question is no longer one of phenomena, but of reasoning. If that is wrong, point out where and how. Let us know what is the flaw in the argument. It is not a question of credibility, but of right reasoning, of sound logic.

Of course I cannot now enter into that argument,—into the general evidences of Spiritualism. I would only, to prevent misunderstanding, remark that no mere sounds or movements or sights, however eccentric and unaccountable, would of themselves prove a spiritual agency; they might possibly furnish probabilities of the existence of a “new force,” but that is all. When, however, these are combined with the qualities of which I have spoken—intelligence, will, affection, the conditions of the problem are no longer the same. If I receive a telegram informing me, for instance, that Mr. Conway is about to begin a course of lectures at Finsbury Chapel, I don't attribute the message to electricity; or the wires, or a new force, or to some latent intelligence, evolved from the battery; but to an intelligent correspondent, who employs the telegraph as his medium of communication. So the table, the raps, and other means, are but the instruments, the telegraphs for spiritual communication.

Is Spiritualism incredible from lack of evidence? On this point Mr. Conway's testimony was full and explicit. He drew a parallel between the evidence for Scripture miracles and for the modern manifestations. Those occurred eighteen centuries ago, in a rude, unscientific age, credulous of marvel and miracle; these, in our own day—in a cultivated, scientific, critical, materialistic age; those were attested by units, these, by multitudes; the witnesses of those were obscure illiterate fishermen, not exactly sailors, said Mr. Conway, but (making a somewhat unflattering joke) mariners, and we have a proverb as to the credibility of that class of persons; some of the witnesses of these are men of high distinction in literature and science; the records of those were not written till many years after they were said to have occurred, and are of doubtful authority; these have been written at the time and place of their occurrence, by living men who can be questioned and cross-examined, and their evidence has the publicity of the printing press, which at the time of the former was unknown. Mr. Conway went on to show that the conditions under which some of the ancient marvels took place, were similar to those of some of the modern marvels; and he made a series of comparisons to show that on the score of dignity, the modern manifestations were on a par with some of those which the belief of ages has consecrated; and he finally declared that while the evidence for the ancient miracles would not be sufficient to send a man to prison for a day, one-fourth of the evidence for Spiritualism would warrant a jury in sending a man to the gallows.

If with all this admitted evidence, Spiritualism is still incredible, I fear it must ever remain so. The verdict should be, not simply as Mr

Conway urged, “not proven,” but, “not proveable.” It is not that the evidence is not sufficient, but that *no evidence* can suffice.

I intimated in the early part of this lecture that though I could not recognise the ideal as a touchstone of truth, there are certain necessary truths with which no other truth can conflict,—such as the truth of the multiplication table, and of the problems of Euclid. Beyond the truths of number and form, which admit of demonstration, we soon get into debatable ground. There are, however, certain moral instincts or laws, corresponding, I think, to mathematical truths, inasmuch as the mind cannot conceive them to be otherwise. For instance, let the mind realise the idea that God is Love—the Infinite Good; that he is the Universal Father, loving His children with a deeper and truer love than that of any earthly parent. If then any one should attribute to Him conduct of which no parent, no good man—no bad man even, would be guilty, would not this be as incredible, as manifestly impossible as that two and two make ten, or that the definition of a triangle is identical with that of a circle.

Again, it would violate the laws of the human mind to believe that effects could be without causes, or be the result of causes obviously and demonstrably inadequate to their production. Thus, when Mr. Conway attributes the movements of tables at *séances* to the involuntary pressure of hands upon them, it may possibly apply to some cases, but when, as has happened in my own experience, a delicate woman has rested only the tips of her fingers lightly on the upper surface of a table, which has risen from the ground notwithstanding the utmost effort of two powerful muscular men to keep it down; or when, again, as has also happened in my experience, and in the presence of witnesses some of whom may be now present, it has risen *without contact*, at the distance of more than a yard from anyone present, and has kept perfect time to a tane played, like a *baton* in the hand of a music master, then, to attribute such phenomena to the cause named by Mr. Conway, is to assign them to a cause manifestly inadequate to their production, or non-existent; it is, as he would say, to “outrage the laws of thought,” and, is therefore “incredible and impossible.” Spiritualism violates no necessary truth of mathematics or of morals, nor does it affirm that phenomena occur without a cause adequate to their production. To affirm that they are caused by invisible or spiritual agency, is not to say that they are *un-caused*. All causes are invisible, and we need trace them back but a very little way to find that they are so. I lift this book, it is—a manifestation of spiritual force. Yes. The hand that raises it is moved by the muscles of the arm, which are acted on by the brain and nerves; but what is it which acts upon them? The impelling power is not in the body. There is no movement in a corpse: it is the indwelling spirit which moves and acts. And if the spirit has this power while tabernacled in clay, may not the freed spirit have the power to move a book, or table, or to rap, or otherwise manifest its presence according to its intelligence and surrounding conditions?

The final conclusion of Mr. Conway was, that in Spiritualism there is a small nucleus of facts, chiefly of the mesmeric kind, but that attached to this, like the tail of a comet, is a vast body of superstition. “Superstition,” that is now-a-days a terrible word; it is the bogey which frightens grown up people—there is, however, really no reason to be scared by it. People simply mean by it some religious belief more comprehensive, or some practice stricter than their own. Everybody thinks some one else superstitious, and is in turn thought so himself. To the Atheist, Mr. Conway is superstitious for believing there is a God. He thinks that Dr. Cumming, for instance, is superstitious for believing in the miracles of the New Testament; and both think the Spiritualist superstitious for believing that miracles, so-called, occur in the Nineteenth century as in the First. If there is any superstition in believing facts—not upon mere authority, but upon fair evidence and investigation—I, for one, am not anxious to put in a disclaimer.

But these facts are chiefly of a mesmeric character. Well, there are some people who seem to think that giving a thing a name is equivalent to furnishing an explanation. “Why is clay sticky?” asks a school-boy, “Because it has adhesive properties,” sagely replies the pedagogue. The answer sounds learned, but it may be doubted if the boy is any the wiser for it. Of what use is it to say that the facts of Spiritualism are mesmeric, unless it can be shown that there is no alliance between Mesmerism and Spiritualism—that they have no common origin—that Mesmerism in none of its phases is the manifestation of a spiritual power. This Mr. Conway did not attempt, it is not therefore necessary to enter on the consideration of this point, especially as the relation of Mesmerism to Spiritualism was the topic of last Sunday's lecture.

But in connection with this branch of his subject, Mr. Conway related an experience which first led him—ten years ago, to the consideration of Spiritualism. He was on a visit to Boston, and his next neighbour, with whom he frequently conversed in the garden, was an intelligent old gentleman, and a firm believer in Spiritualism. He was in the habit of visiting a Mrs. Freeman, a medium in Boston, through whom he believed himself to be in constant communication with his departed friends. Believing that his neighbour was under a delusion, and wasting his time and money, Mr. Conway remonstrated, and at length the old gentleman said to him “You go to Mrs. Freeman and if you don't get something satisfactory I'll give up going there.” Mr. Conway went to Mrs. Freeman, who was put into the mesmeric state, and they were left alone. “Do you wish me,” she then said, “to visit the Spirit-World or some place on earth?” “Go to my home, and tell me what is doing there,” was the reply. “I was a perfect stranger in Boston,” said Mr. Conway, “and I was sure no one there could know anything about me.” Mrs. Freeman then gave an accurate description of Mr. Conway's house in Virginia; but as the description might have applied also to other houses, this did not go for much. She then described certain conversations and events as taking place, and gave the name of a gentleman there—a name utterly unknown to Mr. Conway. The whole circumstances seemed so improbable that he abruptly closed the interview; and when he got back he informed his neighbour that Mrs. Freeman had told him what he was sure could not possibly be true. The old gentleman seemed disconcerted but kept his word, and for a week did not go to Mrs. Freeman's; but at the end of a week, Mr. Conway received a letter from home, relating very unexpected

occurrences, so similar to what Mrs. Freeman had told him, including the very name she had mentioned—that of an entire stranger—that Mr. Conway felt himself bound in honour to tell his neighbour how the case actually stood. "But this," said Mr. Conway "though extraordinary, may have been only Clairvoyance or it might have been but coincidence." "Clairvoyance," well, that is simply a statement of the fact, it is no explanation of it. Of course there was clear seeing, but what we want to know is what or who was thus clear-seeing. It could not have been natural vision, for Mrs. Freeman's eyes were closed, and had they been open ever so wide, she could not have seen what was taking place five hundred miles away. But there was also clear hearing for she gave an account of the conversation as well as of the events: more, there was mind reading, for she gave the name of a stranger there, evidently the knowledge of a fact within the consciousness of the individual. This may have been the development of some latent spiritual power in Mrs. Freeman, or it may have been a spirit-friend of Mr. Conway's, desirous of his conviction, and who communicated through her organism. In either case, it was what I think I am justified in calling a spiritual manifestation, certainly it was not the reading of Mr. Conway's thoughts, in any sense, as his only thought on the matter was, that it was all untrue.

But "it might have been only coincidence." This is only another ringing of changes on words. Of course, it was coincidence, that is, the two things—Mrs. Freeman's statement and the facts—were in agreement. But, for this phrase to have any meaning as an explanation, it must be understood to mean, that it was an *undesigned, unconnected* coincidence. But let any one consider the probabilities of the case, and he will at once see the absurdity of this explanation. As many houses as there are in America (to go no further) so many to one are the chances against the particular one in request being selected; as many as are the probable topics of conversation, so many to one are the chances against just the right one being hit; so with the facts described; so with the name given; and then, you have to consider these chances not only singly, but in combination. Let any one try a simple experiment. Take the letters of the alphabet, and put them separately in a bag, then shake them out, and how long will it be before they so combine as to form a word—any word; and how much longer before they indicate a particular word; how much longer before they form themselves into sentences, describing a complex series of transactions? Is not the supposition of the possibility of anything like this so inconceivable as to violate the laws of the human mind, and thus, as Mr. Conway tells us, be incredible.

Some other explanations were hinted at. The raps, Mr. Conway thought, proceeded from bodily electricity, and which, as in the case of the gymnosis, could be projected at will. But every medium for the raps knows that they cannot be projected at will—that any action whatever of the will is a disturbance of the necessary conditions of their manifestation, that a state of passivity is a primary condition. Nor are all the sounds confined, as Mr. Conway seemed to think, to a little ticking noise, like that of a watch. In the Memorial presented to the Congress of his country on this subject, signed by thirteen thousand persons, it is stated in enumerating a "variety of sounds" that "at times powerful concussions occur, not unlike distant thunder or the discharge of artillery."

Again, Mr. Conway considered the modern manifestations might possibly arise from peculiarities of climate and organization. Thus, in America, where they have taken place on the largest scale, this might arise from its cold dry atmosphere, and from the highly nervous organization of the people, who, I was astonished to learn, were deficient in one of the tissues found in other races. Now, I am far from thinking that physical conditions have nothing to do with this subject. We know, for instance, that the marvellous faculty of second-sight is found chiefly in the Highlands of Scotland, and other mountainous regions. Any manifestations through physical channels must conform to physical conditions, and the laws governing their relations.

And here I may remark that in the investigation of these conditions and relations is a great work within its own province for science to accomplish, and in which any man qualified for the task might achieve an honourable and lasting reputation. But that this is no solution of the problem is proved by the fact that Spirit-manifestation and communion take place under the most opposite conditions of climate and of race. In China, for instance, where the people are not distinguished for any great intellectual activity, or for their nervous impairment, and where they are not, as far as I am aware, deficient in any of the tissues they have been known for two thousand years. And in our insular land—with all its damp and smoke and fog, and where waistcoats are made of larger girth, the same phenomena occur as across the Atlantic. To explain these, some deeper, more occult agency is needed than nerves, or atmosphere, or electricity. This Mr. Conway thinks may be found in the reflex action of mind; a conclusion so far hopeful that it is generally the last halting-place of the scientific mind on the road to Spiritualism; it gravitates to this as naturally as the theological mind gravitates towards the Devil as the final cause of mysterious and unexplained phenomena.

In support of this view, Mr. Conway dwelt on the different aspects of Spiritualism in America and in England. There, where there was more mental freedom and greater divergency from orthodox opinion, the Spirits were heterodox; he believed that Parkerism was the farthest point of orthodoxy they had reached. Here, on the contrary, where there was more conservatism in religion, they were decidedly more evangelical. *Séances* were here often opened by prayer, which was never the case there. This, I may remark, is an exaggeration. There is a Spiritualist newspaper, which has been in existence some years, called *The Banner of Light*, one page of every number of which is occupied with a report of Spirit-messages given at free *séances* at the office of that journal; and these *séances* are almost invariably opened by prayer and invocation. Again, in the volume called *The Educator*, consisting chiefly of messages on a great variety of subjects, given through the mediumship of our venerable friend, Mr. Spear, about twenty pages at the end are occupied with forms of prayer dictated by Spirits as suitable for various circumstances and occasions. Still, it is true that there is a general agreement or correspondence in the communications to the character of those to whom they are addressed. It may be, said Mr. Conway, that being an

insular people, the English, as Swedenborg affirms, have a Heaven of their own. Perhaps, after all, Swedenborg was right. His representation may have some truth in it—

"What if Heaven be like to Earth  
More than on Earth is thought."

Heaven, as corresponding to man's nature, must be a social state. What is the law which governs association there? What governs it here? I speak not of association for business or convenience, but of that arising from the nature of man:—for that law must operate wherever, and under whatever circumstances man is found. It is the law of *sympathy*—the attraction of mutual affinities. I do not say that there will be those prejudices and antipathies of nation and race in the Spirit-World which, unhappily, there is in this. God forbid! But it is surely not unreasonable to think that Spirits will generally be in more intimate sympathy and association with their kinsmen and friends, and countrymen, and co-religionists, and cotemporaries,—those whom they have known, with whom they have most in common, than with others. And this will, at least, in some measure, explain the law of spiritual communication; for those with whom they would most naturally wish to communicate on the earth are those who are in corresponding conditions and general agreement with themselves. Not uniformly so, for I have known "Free-thinkers" become Christians, and Unitarians Trinitarians, whilst others again have become Unitarians, or Swedenborgians through the arguments and representations Spirits have addressed to them; and I have not unfrequently known Spirits maintain views quite contrary to those of all present, and which, therefore, could not have been any reflex action of their minds; but the general coincidence in tone of thought in the circle and in the communications received by them is, I think, satisfactorily explained by that law of affinity to which I have referred.

On one point Mr. Conway and I fully accord. He affirmed that if the communications of the Spiritual-World with men could be demonstrated, it would be a greater boon to mankind than even the miracle of raising the dead to life. It would revolutionise our whole system of thought and philosophy. This is, I think, our ample justification in pressing this inquiry. It is not to minister to a craving for the marvellous, but that we believe it has important bearings upon the deepest questions of this and of all time; that it tends to establish a higher faith and a truer philosophy, both working in harmony, and so carrying out the designs of Providence in the advancement of the best, the noblest interests of humanity.

Mrs. MARSHALL gave another *séance* at the Lyceum Hall, on Wednesday evening. Test questions were answered with marvellous correctness. A gentleman's gold chain was placed near a tumbler under the table and was dropped into it. A lady held a pocket handkerchief firmly against the top of the table, which was perceptibly pulled from underneath with great force. Mrs. Marshall's *séances* are of a very satisfactory character. To us it is a simple cause for marvel, how sceptics can witness the manifestations and fail to find conviction of their spiritual origin. We are pleased to inform our readers that she will give another *séance* next Wednesday, admitting the members of the Spiritual Lyceum at half-price. See advertisement.

#### THE ANGEL.

Why should'st thou fear the beautiful angel, Death  
Who waits thee at the portals of the skies,  
Ready to kiss away the struggling breath—  
Ready with gentle hand to close thine eyes?

How many a tranquil soul has passed away,—  
Fled gladly from fierce pain and pleasures dim,  
To the eternal splendour of the day;  
How many a troubled heart still calls for him.

Spirits too tender for the battle here  
Have turned from life, its hopes, its fears, its charms;  
And children, shuddering at a world so drear  
Have, smiling, passed away into his arms.

He whom thou fearest will, to ease its pain,  
Lay his cold hand upon thy aching heart:  
Will soothe the terrors of thy troubled brain,  
And bid the shadow of earth's grief depart.

He will give back what neither time, nor might,  
Nor passionate prayer, nor longing hope restore;  
(Dear as to long blind eyes recovered sight)  
He will give back those who have gone before.

O, what were life, if life were all? Thine eyes  
Are blinded by their tears, or thou wouldst see  
Thy treasures wait thee in the far-off skies,  
And Death, thy friend, will give them all to thee.

Household Words.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

T. DUFFELL.—Thanks for the number of the "British Spiritual Telegraph."

Mr. Spear is expected in London some time before the month is out.

B. D., who has occasionally contributed to the correspondence columns of the *Spiritual Times*, has made an appeal to us on behalf of a Spiritualist, in whom he has great confidence, but who is now unfortunately involved in misfortune. B. D. desires to reach the sympathies of those who have spare means. We have no space for his letter, but shall gladly forward any monies that may reach us.

CORRESPONDENTS will please to write legibly on one side of the paper only, and as concisely as possible. If this rule is not observed we may be compelled to reject even valuable compositions.

OUR readers will favour us by sending accounts of Apparitions, Hauntings, &c. We wish to give as many facts as our space will admit. Correspondents should allow their names and addresses to appear; accounts of a supernatural character should be given to the public free from all suspicion.

MRS. MARSHALL will give a Séance at the Spiritual Lyceum, 14, Newman-street, Oxford-street, every Wednesday evening, until further notice. Admission, 5s. Members of the Lyceum half-price. Tickets to be had of Mr. J. H. Powell, on the premises.

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TO THE TRADE.—The *Spiritual Times* is published at Ten o'clock on Friday morning, at the *Spiritual Times* Office, 14, Newman-street, Oxford-street, and by Job Caudwell, 335, Strand.

COMPLAINTS have reached us that the *Spiritual Times* does not always find its way to country subscribers. Those who have difficulty should send to us at the office 14, Newman Street, Oxford Street, W., and we will forward it direct through the post. Subscribers taking four copies can have them post free, by remitting 8s. 8d. per quarter.

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The growing spread of Spiritualism in England renders a central institution necessary to organize means to give distinctive

life to the various methods which abound in isolated forms all over the kingdom. To effect this most desirable object Mr. R. Cooper has established the Lyceum, and earnestly solicits aid from all friends. Many sincere and influential Spiritualists have already subscribed, some two, others one guinea each (the latter subscription being the minimum). Those who subscribe one or more guineas annually will be entitled to the privilege of attending all Lectures free. Spirit Drawings and Works of a progressive character will be added from time to time. Mediums of recognised integrity and power will be encouraged, and it is hoped facilities may be afforded for the development of such connected with the Lyceum.

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We feel persuaded our work will not be in vain, being assured amongst the many thousands of true Spiritualists in this country alone there are many who will gladly aid us.

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Mr. Powell's statements of the answers he received to queries are remarkable, and as he is evidently a truthful writer, we cannot do otherwise than advise the public to consult the work. \* \* \* Many persons will read Mr. Powell's narrative with interest, for it has no lack of the marvellous set forth in vigorous language.—*Public Opinion*, March 12th, 1864.

The sum of the matter is, that if one has a curiosity to know what Spiritualism is, and what it actually aims at, he will gain a better and clearer view of it from Mr. Powell's volume than from any other that has yet been published, not even excepting that of the great apostle medium, Mr. Home himself.—*Caledonian Mercury*, March 12, 1864.

This is the fourth book that has recently come to our hands on the same subject, and, whilst it is the smallest, it is yet the most striking of all the former, perhaps, from the brevity with which the subject is presented, and the nature of the facts or assumptions with which it is crammed from first to last. \* \* \* There is much, very much to excite thought, whether to compel conviction, or not. The enquiry is by no means the contemptible thing that many people wish to consider it. It deals with alleged facts, which, if true, are astounding; and, if false, still they are objects of interest, and they ought to be disposed of.—*British Standard*, March 18th, 1864.

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MR. AND MRS. WALLACE beg to announce that they have taken the Lyceum Hall, 14, Newman-street, Oxford-street, for a series of Friday Evening Séances to commence on Good-Friday, April 14th. Séances to commence at half-past 7, p.m. Admission 1s.

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