

ADDRESS

BY

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WE propose this night to address you on a subject that you will ere long be called upon to consider as a portion of the spiritual philosophy, namely—the METEMPSYCHOSIS, OR TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS.

The subject may seem to be somewhat unconnected with the object of these meetings. We stand here prepared to present you with any other that you may be pleased to select; since, however, you have left the choice with your speaker, we propose to address you as Spiritualists, and to call this hour our own. It is not to sceptics or investigators merely that we shall appeal to-night. We would not stand here willingly to repeat, night after night, the alphabet of the spiritual science whose investigation is open for all, but rather call upon Spiritualists to remember what they have already learned, to consider the demands which the attainment of that knowledge imposes upon them, and that too ere the hour which is to try their faith shall be upon them. The present is the seed time, but the summer of our spiritual experience approaches, and the time is not far distant when the world will expect to see what harvest we are gathering in from the fields of this great spiritual science. Is it not well for us to pause and contemplate the ground in which we have laboured, that we may render in full our answer as to that which we have sowed? Enough of spiritual revelation concerning the state of the soul in the life hereafter has already been given to you, at the spirit circle, to enable you to appreciate the nature of one part of the harvest of knowledge which

we have gathered up, and therefore it is that I propose to speak on the subject of the Metempsychosis. This question is one that has underlain religious systems almost from the beginning of historic ages to the present hour, and it is still a subject of speculation to some of the thinkers of the day, and occupies a place of some prominence even amongst the believers in modern Spiritualism; and yet, although it has been constantly interwoven into systems of various theologies, it is one of those human opinions that stands without the least foundation in the realm of received phenomenal facts.

The doctrine of the transmigration of souls is one of those beliefs that have grown out of human speculation only. It is a metaphysical attempt to solve one of those vexed problems of the relation between spirit and matter, to which no age but the present has ever yet been able to offer a scientific and demonstrable solution. Still and notwithstanding the tangible facts of the spiritual science which we possess, as so many Spiritualists still cling to the vague and shadowy opinions of the doctrine alluded to, and as those opinions are casting the shadow of their own dim unreality over the still questioning minds of unresolved investigators, we consider a candid discussion of the subject will be appropriate to the demands of the hour.

Our first inquiry concerns our possession of any data in history for the origin of this belief, and we find we have little or none, except when we attempt to refer back to the most ancient form of theological teaching in Hindostan. From this we find the doctrine of the metempsychosis clearly taught, and that, too, in records written in the language of the Sanscrit, whose very origin is lost in the night of antiquity, but whose existence, even in an early period of the Hindoo dynasty, gives us the assurance that it must be one of the most ancient tongues in the world, from the fact that even in ante-historic periods it was already complete, full, and very rich in ideality and imagery. The people, therefore, who possessed this "perfect language" had many ideas to express; and it is in their tongue that we recognize the first clearly defined teaching of the belief in the transmigration of souls. The ancient Hindoo was by nature and habits disposed to metaphysical speculation. His southern temperament, indolent habits, and religion of caste, formed a combination of circumstances which induced in the Brahmin (the only caste who was permitted the privilege of exercising thought upon religious subjects) a train of speculations on the unsolved problems of creation which favoured the strange and peculiar doctrine.

Amongst the most perplexing of the questions which belong to man's origin and destiny arose the mystery of evil. Whence

came it? If from the infinitely good, from Brahma the mighty, the Cause of Causes, the All-wise, All-powerful, Infinite, and Eternal, for what purpose? Was it a part of Himself? Could it be a representation of Him—the Supreme Good? The speculative theorists of Hindostan decided against the affirmation of this position, and determined that evil grew out of the association of the perfect and godlike spirit with matter, and they assumed that from matter sprang all the movements to crime and evil in the human soul. They taught that inherent virtue, and all tendencies to good, belonged to the spirit only, while the base passions and gross appetites, which deform the soul's nature, grew out of and belonged only to matter. From this point they next proceeded to reason upon the various modes in which spirit was related to matter. They perceived fragments of spiritual life, of thought and intelligence in the various animals, and assumed that all the representations of human passions were to be found in the animal kingdom; the ferocity of the tiger, the nobility of the lion, the blood-thirstiness of the hyena—in a word, all the fierce passions which degrade the soul were to be found represented in various of those lower creatures that in some sort they found to typify man, and so they supposed that they discovered in these representative natures the fact of a close alliance between man and the brutes, and also that each of these in their degree represented some of the lowest conditions of the human soul. But ere they could arrive at the conclusion of the metempsychosis, or the degradation of the human soul into the animal form, we must remember that, though the ancients had mastered some of the many problems of astronomy, and had even made much advance in this science, they had not our present knowledge either of the movements of bodies in space or of their composition. We know now some of the very constituent elements which exist in the mystery of the mighty sun. By aid of the "solar spectrum" we are enabled to determine something of the composition of the atmosphere issuing from this vast body, and to realize that minerals of similar character to those on our own earth exist within it. We are enabled, also, by the present status of astronomical science, to decide upon the weight, density, distance, and motions of the planets, called, by the ancient Hindoos, "wandering stars." The telescope has revealed to us the immensity of space filled with worlds, and science has disclosed so much of their characteristics, and even of their composition, nature, and similarity to our own earth, that we know that the entire of what man calls space is but an illimitable realm filled with life and being analogous to our own.

The ancients knew not this, and but few of their philosophic

minds dared venture on so grand a speculation. Narrowed, therefore, in their conception of creation to the existence of this little world of man's alone, they deemed that this earth was all of life and material existence that the Creator had appointed for man's probation. On this planet only, they supposed the sublime image of Deity appeared in its full perfection, and that earth was the scene of all the various grades in which God permitted man to pass through the probationary stages of life incarnate in matter.

We have no such excuse to-day for the petty egotism, or cold Materialism, that would limit the pilgrimage of the soul, to this little dew-drop in space—the earth. Science reveals to us millions of worlds of matter; Spiritualism reveals its corresponding states of spiritual probationary spheres. The ancients limiting their views of material existence of this earth alone, supposed that all human experiences must be here performed: to them, all the countless bodies in space, were either angelic thrones of the subordinate spirits of the universe, the glittering lamps of the Paradises of their gods, or the eyes of Brahma shining through the immensity of space. And so they deemed that earth must be the sole scene of the soul's probation, and that upon this earth were to be performed all those various rudimental conditions by which the spirit was to be purified for its ascent into the Paradises of eternity. Upon these foundations they built up the belief in the transmigration of souls. From the kingdom of Hindostan, we find the radiating lines of intelligence stretch away to Egypt, Syria, Assyria, Arabia, and the various dynasties of the East; though each one modified the doctrine according to the specialities of the nation by whom it was received, the central idea remained, and in all the lines of migrating thought that flooded the nations of the East with tributary streams, whose source was to be found in Hindoo theology, the one stationary belief of the metempsychosis is ever found. Another idea of ancient metaphysicians was the demand for universal justice for the soul of man, and this they thought they perceived in its transmigration through various material states. They beheld the inequalities of different conditions; above all, the brand of injustice, which themselves had imprinted by the trick of priestcraft upon their fellow creatures, in the cruel laws of caste. They realized as we do, that human life is a harp, upon whose many strings fashioned of human heart-fibres, and struck by the master hand of God, every tone, from the lowest bass to the highest treble, should be sounded. They felt the inevitable fact of inequality and variety in every member of the human family; but in place of aiming to arrange these varieties into order, by instituting high ranks for mind, granting patents of royalty for

intellect and nobility for soul, they determined that the law of hereditary caste should form the rule of arbitrary distinction on earth; and in part as a sterling article of belief amongst them on the ground of their natural philosophy, and in part by way of atonement to the victims of injustice whom they branded with the law of caste, they interwove into their theology a system which promised that justice to man hereafter which themselves denied to him here, and declared that all chances of progress and ultimate perfection which the soul had the right to demand of Creative Justice, was to be found in its transmigratory states.

And it is ever so; where man himself is the author of his theology, he seems compelled to fashion his system, with a view of rendering that justice to his fellow-man which his civil laws deny him else. Human and divine laws are commonly supposed to correspond; doubtless they do in one respect, at least, for divine laws are the substance of justice—human, alas! but too generally only the shadow; and so in this case, the metempsychosis was a shadowy attempt on the part of priests to render that justice that God has allowed to all in the laws of natural life. Repeated, as I have said, in the various theologies of most ancient nations, the metempsychosis struck its deepest roots into the philosophies of Greece and Rome. We find, that amongst the most prominent of its advocates in these countries is the honoured name of Pythagoras. By some it has been believed even that the “Pythagorean doctrine,” and the transmigration of souls, were such synonymous terms, that its promulgation has been ignorantly attributed to the great Samian sage; but Pythagoras was but the culminating point of his age. All great men are the torch-bearers of the century, the mirrors in which are reflected the various intellects of the time. So of Pythagoras; he the concentration of the grandest thoughts of his period, taught and realized the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, not only as the idea of the age, but also because his strict sense of justice and his tender humanity demanded compensation for the suffering and unequal conditions of the degraded classes of his race—unhappy ones, for whom there seemed in those dark ages no other compensation in a degraded destiny than the chances of progress hereafter through the soul’s transmigrations.

We now quit the mythical ages, and arrive at a period when the transmigration of souls assumes a yet darker and even more superstitious form; we mean, when in the age of Christendom, it appears in the shape of a physical resurrection of the body, for this is nothing but a transmigration of the soul, and that without the beauty and justice which the ancients taught, in the belief that transmigrations were progressive, and were permitted for the purpose of reform and improvement. But the resurrec-

tion of the physical body is merely a degradation of the soul, by assuming that after having enjoyed a spiritual freedom from matter, it is compelled to return to it again, and re-assume all the inevitable tendencies to crime and material attractions which matter, as such, must ever impose upon the spirit associated with it. So that either we must believe that the spirit slumbers in an unconsciousness, which prolonged through ages becomes tantamount to annihilation; or else living and acting as consciousness and intelligence must, the spirit which has escaped from the painful trials and material experiences which life upon earth necessarily entails upon it, after passing through countless ages in eternity, and experiencing the inconceivable changes of those vast periods which, if progressive, must carry the spirit onward and upward through spheres of ever-widening and glorious existence must, after all, return to this dull, cold life of matter, quit heaven, or migrate from Paradise, and from the bright and glorious psyche, a purified and spiritual essence, become once more the dark and mournful grub incarnate in the prison-house of matter.

And mark, here is the point that I would have you note. Whence comes this gloomy and fantastic doctrine? whence this opinion so fatal to the truth and justice of that divine teaching which you call Christianity?—a teaching so full of spiritual doctrine and replete with assurances of the soul's immediate entrance through the gates of death to a spiritual existence, where the experiences of life practised in compensative and retributive states are still continued, that I repeat, amongst the followers of Him who declared, even on the very threshold of the land of souls, that spirit should meet with spirit in Paradise! and hence that spirit slumbered not, nor lost its consciousness in death. Most strange it is, that this impossible doctrine of the return of the soul to a physical resurrected body should obtain amongst those who avow themselves worshippers of Christ and followers of Paul, who so graphically describes the shedding of the natural body and the putting on of the spiritual as the result of the decay of the natural form of earth.

When we reflect upon the full and elaborate descriptions which the noble Apostle Paul gives of the spiritual body, and its triumph over the natural, we can only account for the perversity which would acknowledge his authority and yet deny his teaching, by remembering the tendency of mankind to worship mere personalities and forget principles—to be contented with crying the name, and beneath its sanction inaugurate the vague theories of long-cherished superstitions and antiquated and therefore *sacred* errors. And thus mankind has contented itself with acknowledging the name and worshipping the personality of its masters

and apostles; and whilst battling over mere phrases and dogmatizing about words, designed only for the time and enunciated merely for the age and personages to whom they were spoken, they have forgotten or neglected the sublime principles taught in those words, and substituted for them the teachings and traditions of men. The teachings of Christ as principles were given for eternity. His doctrine was the gathering up of the good and true of all other ages. "The Christian religion," says Eusebius, "was nothing new nor strange." The doctrine of love and the belief that the sword of kindness ever conquers evil, the realization that to do good is to build up the kingdom of heaven within us,—all this was no *new* teaching of the age of Christendom; it is and ever was the realization of the "Word made flesh" which God has incarnated in every age in all that is good and true, and pure and beautiful.

But we have forgotten all this, and the great query of what became of *the body* of Jesus, the desire to determine that of which no absolute record exists, has superseded with thousands the Sermon on the Mount, and for the sake of a mooted point in history, even with the fact that in the evangelical records of the disposal of the body of Jesus there is marked discrepancy,—even with the fact that traditions existed at the time that "the body was stolen,"—age after age we have kept piling up volume upon volume and filling libraries with disquisitions, in attempts to settle the question of the physical resurrection of that very flesh and blood which Christ while inhabiting it, declared could not inherit the kingdom of heaven. And so I repeat, in the resurrection of the *physical* body we have reinaugurated the old material doctrine of the transmigration of souls and their degradation from a spiritual to an animal life; but I say that the teaching of the possible return of the risen, ascended, purified and progressed spirit to the dust which it has spurned, is even a worse version of the transmigration of souls than was ever *rendered* by Buddha or Pythagoras.

And now arises another point. This material myth is again cropping out to overshadow our spiritual atmosphere to-day. We have a revelation given to us of the great and glorious truth—in a word, Spiritualism is a combination of all the truths for which religion in every age has been searching; it is the promise of the Master that the day would come when the Comforter should reveal to us all of truth that we are able to bear. The teachings of all systems of religion ever include the belief that the soul shall maintain a continued existence after death which we call immortality.

But independent of all systems of religion, the soul itself is its own witness of immortality in the realization of its own

consciousness. I believe, if we could disintegrate that mysterious function of mind which we call consciousness from the rest of the intellect we should find that immortality is there concentrated as the one sole fact of consciousness. Annihilate that, and we annihilate our being; change it even in the least respect, let it be so tampered with as to make the recognition of self, imperfect, and we have found that which all nature denies, the fact of annihilation. We know not the falsity or truth of pre-existence. There are many spirits who teach it, many who believe it, some say they know it. Be that as it may, we know the fact of our own existence here. We may attempt by sophistry and hair-splitting of words to question the fact of self-consciousness, but so long as man can say *I am*, he is self-conscious. Change the characteristics of that consciousness and let the question be doubtful of the soul's identity to itself, and, I repeat, you have found annihilation. You cannot put out of existence one grain of dust; you cannot destroy from the realm of being the largest or the smallest atom. All which you may call in its infinite littleness even an indivisible atom lives for ever. Can you destroy, therefore, one function that makes up the integrity of the soul? You may not touch it, we may not tamper with it, and Spiritualism *proves* that which nature and science teaches.

We hope for, trust in, and even intuitively feel, the truth of a spiritual existence. The poor savage knows it. He buries bow and arrows by the side of the dead, and supplies, in his trusting faith of continued existence, the mouldering form of death with provisions for the inevitable future to which he believes the risen spirit has passed. Save the traditions of his fathers, no priest or gospel instructs him of immortality, and yet he questions it not, for he feels it in his own soul. From the time when man first eat of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, from the time when he learned to think, and looking, in the face of his fellow-man, loved, and seeing him fall like the last year's snow, and decay in dust and ashes, while love and life and consciousness stiffened into the rigid monumental form of death, the soul has followed the departed spirit into the land of spirits, and believed in its unquenched and unquenchable existence. But the age of reason and analysis has come, in addition to the age of intuition. We know that there are men who have stood in our midst—men of mind, and power, and station—who have written volumes to prove that we have no existence at all; that life is a shadow, and the substance of life a myth. Philosophers there have been who not only question the existence of spirit, but chop logic on the query of—whether there is even matter. And who can answer them? We feel we know; but this is no admitted argument. Destitute of the angelic phenomena which

in a spiritual existence prove all things, infidelity, in the unrepented past, has swept the earth, and those who have thought the most, speculated the deepest, and analyzed in the most profound realms of being, have come out of the investigation shorn of the glorious belief in immortality. They have looked upon this sorrowful life, and so many a pilgrimage of pain and woe; they have beheld the beggar, the outcast, the cripple, and the blind, and have thought that life and death was all of them.—life a failure and death a terror, and yet this was all! They have seen young children die—sweet buds of promise blighted!—and thought there was nothing more of them but their blighted life and death. But this dark philosophy ends not here: it bears its fruits in action;—mark them. Bring to the tribunal of human practice the influence of such a belief as this, and let it become disseminated as a fact among all people. We know that the psychology which we call public opinion originates first from the leadings of one or two master minds, and then spreads among the masses until it becomes public opinion. It is the “little bird” that whispers first in the ear of one and then another, and carries the tidings far and wide, until it masses itself into public opinion. And what did infidelity do in the shape of influence upon public opinion, when the psychology of Danton, Marat, and Robespierre, had banished the belief in God and immortality from the land of France, in the days of the Red Revolution of 1793? We know that so long as the restraints of law are about us, we act as if the restraint proceeded from within. We do not know ourselves or realize what we would be in the large liberty that is void of all restraint; but we know what we have been when such restraints are removed; and woe to a nation of infidels! woe to a nation that has no hope beyond the grave! and woe to the individuals who govern it, the people who riot in it, the souls that are wrecked by it. It may begin in “reason,” but the reason that narrows down life,—cause and effect, responsibility and being—to this dark and finite section of existence bounded by earth, is madness, not reason; blindness, not light; slavery to animal passions, not liberty in spiritual good. Hence, its rule is vice, passion, sensuality;—it begins in licence and ends in blood—dethrones a king and sets up the rule of an executioner—upsets a throne to elevate a guillotine!

To the people, such a condition is but the government of tigers and panthers thirsting for blood; to the rulers, it is the war in heaven, where the fabled Lucifer, incarnate in the demoniacal form of the human mind, that rejects in its blind and miserable pride the rule of God and the responsibility of a hereafter—calls itself a monarch in its supposed freedom from

the light of religion. Alas! such minds only wake up at last, like the rulers of the Red Revolution of France, to find that they are but monarchs in Pandemonium, and that the laws of God, whom they have spurned, find them out even in the hell they have vainly thought would hide them from His presence. To the Spiritualist assured of the inevitable fact of a hereafter, conscious that man's vain boast of annihilation cannot avail to quench the life he is not master of—to those who smile at the baseless conceit of theoretical philosophers, that life's mistakes may be atoned for by the myth of re-incarnation—to those who feel as we do, that our deeds must follow us and that every wasted drop of blood man sheds, and all the throngs of victims he sends out, in the power of a wild and lawless rule, to death, array themselves in a ghastly tribunal, before whose awful judgment seat his ever-living spirit must appeal—to those who feel that such a doom awaited the men who proclaimed in fated France, "there is no God," "there is no immortality"—think, think of the doom of him who stood in the dying hour of his blood-stained, shipwrecked life, but still in the insane triumph of his age and time, went forth from the day of reddest crime to the day of inevitable retribution, crying, "I am Danton. My age is thirty-five, my abode will soon be in nonentity; but my name will live in the pantheon of history."

Friends, it is for us to answer the question whether that name of terror has outlived that soul of crime. WE KNOW that Danton still lives; but how, and for what, is with him, not us, the question, except for a sign and waymark to the insane Materialist who would follow in his darkened footsteps. Danton may yet be within this very chamber, and still cry, "I am Danton! my *name* will soon be nonentity, but I SHALL LIVE FOR EVER!"

Like the Jews of old, when we would offer man the glorious light of Spiritualism, he cries, "We have our Moses and the Prophets; what need have we of strange new revelation?" Had not Danton, Marat, Robespierre, with all their destroying myrmidons, this faith in heroes and the Prophets to rely on? Have not the blind eyes of Materialism, which throughout the length and breadth of Europe is even now spreading its pall of darkness over religious faith, their heroes and the Prophets? Have not the solemn utterances of Christianity been reverberating for eighteen centuries through the corridors of time, and been chanted forth by the lips of highest civilization, but in the ears of thousands of earth's greatest thinkers with such little meaning that thousands would say to-day with Danton, "My name will live, while my soul will be nonentity." If, then, a true spiritual faith is the mightiest law of life that can bind the soul of man

and compel him, in the fetters of eternal responsibility, to live, not only for time but for eternity, may we not say, "Thank God for modern Spiritualism! Bless Him that we have now the assured knowledge of immortality!" And were there no other results outworking from this knowledge, at least we may fairly calculate that every rap that proves the continued existence of a human soul will make its impress of conviction in the salvation of a human soul from the blindness of infidelity. But this is not all that Spiritualism has done, or will accomplish for mankind. One of its basic revelations is the fact of a law of mind, and the clue to the discovery of a science of mind. Other ages have revealed to us the fact that all things in nature (mind excepted) are governed by laws immutable. Science has taught man to discover law in everything—law in the tossing wave, the falling leaf, the blossoming flower, the pattering rain. All nature moves within the circle of eternal law, save mind alone; and for lack of a science and law of mind, we have not known the causes of crime. We have visited upon our criminals punishment instead of reform. We have taken vengeance for the errors of society, which itself has created criminals, because we have not comprehended the links of causation, nor understood why the solemn edict of Moses that "the sins of the fathers should be visited upon the children," was not the vengeance of God, but the writing of an eternal law in mind as well as matter. But with the comprehension that mind was shaped by the human organism, that matter helps to stamp the character of mind with the revelation of phrenology; with the fact of clairvoyance piercing through the outward form, and beholding there the secret of disease, and diagnosing character through disease; with the fact that an electrical magnetic battery is a revelation of character through a diagnosis of the cranium, determining by its susceptibility not only the diseased form but the poisoned mind as well; with all these revelations brought to light by even our imperfect investigations of the spirit-circle, I say that we have this day the dawning of a science of mind, and are beginning to discover that mind, character, intellect, and all the faculties, moral and intellectual, of the soul are under the dominion of law, and that there is a cause for them all, as there is an effect for them all in the hereafter. With all these revelations we are at last commencing to obey the charge, "Know thyself;"—we are at last beginning to reduce our knowledge to a practice here, and an influence upon our destiny hereafter. We know now that there are differences of spheres and progressive states for the soul; we may look over the mass of mankind, and almost begin to determine what will be the condition of every soul we behold in the spheres

hereafter by what they are to-day. The mystery of evil, too is solved by the dawning of this science of mind. The justice of God is vindicated by it; for when we go down to the dens of crime and contemplate the underground stratas of life, beholding the poor deformed and degraded objects in whom the spark of Divinity is scarcely visible, but still realize that there is a life as glorious for them as the highest and the noblest amongst ourselves—that there is not hope, but assurance, certainty, and confidence of world upon world, and sphere after sphere of progress for them as for us—when we see the angel's hand stretched out above them, and realize that for them as for all, are the grand developments and noble unfoldings of mind that ourselves have profited by—comprehending as we do all this, in the midst of sorrow, and trespass, and disgrace, we may truly say, "He doeth all things well."

And shall they come to us now, and tell us, that perchance, instead of progress in the spheres of the hereafter, we must retrograde, to be born in this weary earth again? that the souls we fondly hoped were speeding up the steps of time in eternal progress, are lost to us, and returned to do penance in some mortal form again, while the precious ties of family and kindred all are lost and broken? Shall they tell us, that after leaving this sphere of sorrow and tribulation, and groping our way in blindness, suffering, and sorrow, through earth's bitter pilgrimage, we may not rest nor labour on in hope, in a better and a brighter land, but must come back here to a cold and sinful material form again—the precious ties of kindred all unheeded or rent, and torn asunder, and all because God's providence is not enough for them beyond the grave? There is no room in space for them to progress, no angelic ladder with another round for them to step upon, except in return to earth. In all the vast rolling worlds, suns, satellites, and glittering systems—in the shining roads, full of bright star-dust, vast walls, piled up with worlds reaching to the throne of God Himself—shall they tell us that there is not room enough in all of these, for our souls to progress, and grow pure, and good, and great through, without returning to this little dew-drop earth, and groping once more in blindness through the veil of matter which spirit has rent in twain?

Away, away with such wild fantasies! They are the destruction of hope, the blight of the soul, and a pernicious poison, that is being poured over our bright and beautiful revelation. I call upon you, Spiritualists, though yourselves may not have drunk of this poisoned cup, to note that it is now being presented to human lips. And yet you thinkers, who have realized the fact of eternal law throughout the realm of nature, and now perceive it in the realm of mind, must know there is a standard of truth

for the soul as well as for the testing of atoms, must know there is a standard of true knowledge for the mind, and eternal laws for the soul and its testing, which cannot change with merely theoretical opinions.

To save yourselves from these, accept of no authority then, but that of principles. Accept of no standard of belief, no doctrine or teaching that is not in harmony with the divine truths of law and principles. You will find this authority of truth as manifest in mind as in matter. You will find these principles as plainly proven for the soul as for the body. I have already pointed to the fact that we are at the dawn of the science of mind. I do not propose to lay down for you what that science is, but in the conduct of your spirit-circles, in the phenomena of life and magnetism which they reveal to you, you cannot fail to find the laws which regulate the changing spheres and eternal progress of the spirit as clearly marked as chemistry and science teach the history of atoms. The time is now at hand when you Spiritualists will be questioned of your doctrine, you will be asked "What is your faith? What do you teach, and wherefore have the spirits come?" And if dancing-tables and vibrating floors are all the results of the great outpouring of the spirit you may well be asked what then is the use of 'Spiritualism? You must answer to the world what you have learned of spiritual truth beyond the mere belief in the phenomenal exhibition of the power of spirit to act on matter. What answer will you render? When you reflect upon what that outpouring has been on some amongst you, when you remember how the scales have fallen from your eyes, how your house of mourning and bereavement has been filled by the presence of returning spirits purified and holy, how the lonely heart has been cheered by love's precious message, when you remember what a glorious unfolding of life beyond the grave Spiritualism has been to you who have truly realized it, how much are you bound to give that light to others which yourselves have received so fully. Oh, widow! when you walk the streets once so desolate and lonely, and remember that again your loved companion is by your side, no more a suffering sinful mortal but an angel now;—Oh, mother! when you realize that ever by your side is the precious child you mourned as lost, lost to you for ever;—you may be old, and poor, and comfortless, but though all human kind forsake you, angels are about your footsteps—angels bright and holy.

With such a view of a bright and angelic world guarding and permeating earth—with such a realization of spiritual surroundings, hovering around our faltering way, and guiding our failing footsteps, what matters all that man can do against us? Why friends, we are standing with the Jewish boy of old, before

the mountain, blazing with the horsemen, and the chariots of God's guardian hosts of spirits! If this knowledge is comfort, strength, and consolation to yourselves, then it belongs to you to give again to all who need that strength;—to keep it pure from vain and idle theories, to base it on the corner-stone of truth, revealed to us in law, and facts, and science, and to proclaim it through the land without fear or favour. Proclaim it with the clarion voice of truth in your halls of legislature, and make it a living fact for those who rule the people, for those who hold the lives and liberties of thousands in their grasp, who legislate for the poor, the ignorant, and darkened; and either by neglect or false legislation keep them in darkness and crowd them into sin. There are thousands and thousands of victims disappearing from out of this city, driven into untimely judgment by the wrongs of bad legislation; tell their rulers that they wait for them in the land where right, not law, or power must rule. Tell them this, nor let them think to escape the deeds that follow them through priestly mediation, or ceremonial rites. Tell them this, nor let them hope to put off the day of just and inevitable retribution, by coming back again to earth to undo its mistakes, and repair its past short-comings, through incarnations, doubtful chances of living better lives, or perhaps, beneath the ever-present attractions of matter, *sinking yet still lower*.

Heed the poet's warning, and "lay not such flattering unction to your souls." God returns not ever on His footsteps,—nature never repeats herself; but God and nature, law and life, and all things thereto belonging, move to the eternal burden of creation's day—"Onward, for ever onward!"

Glorious as is the light which Spiritualism brings to the mourner, fearful as is the voice of warning with which it awakes the evil-doer from his slumber of irresponsible annihilation; better it had never come at all, to give men our human faith in immortality, if it is to be masked by the hideous pall of that doctrine which admits of a sinful life, not only scattering its poison through one baneful career of mortal sin, but permits the re-incarnation of earth's monsters, until long ages may be too short for the burdened earth to endure the horror of the ever-returning load of guilt, until it consumes itself, and purifies itself at earth's expense, in successive re-incarnations.

Better that Spiritualism had not assured mankind of immortality on the faith of undoubted science than that the holy, just, and pure who have borne the bitter drops of mortal suffering should go hence, assume their crown of glorious immortality to find it torn from martyred brows, and themselves thrust back to re-act their goodness on the insatiate earth that craves for them back again. Are there not demons enough in one generation, but we

must keep on sending them back through succeeding ones? Can we not manufacture crime enough in one life, but we must spin it out to the length of many? Or is there no other place in illimitable space for the soul to progress in but this little floating dew-drop in immensity—this one poor burdened earth of ours? Is goodness so scarce in God's angelic hierarchies of worlds, and suns, and systems, that one bright soul must endure its dismal round of re-incarnated pilgrimages, and stretch out its solitary excellencies through successive ages? Or are God's ways so narrow that He can find no other means to instruct His creatures than by returning age on age the self-same soul to be born again in matter? Is the hope of the mother instructed by blessed Spiritualism that she shall meet her loved and lost one in Paradise a myth, and when she would clasp her precious child to her maternal heart in spirit-land, must she be told her dearer one than self has gone back to earth—the earth that she left with anguish—to be some other mother's child in a dismal re-incarnation? Oh, foul and baseless doctrine! unsustained by facts, or love, or reason, nature's harmonious law of progress, sense, fact, or justice!

Believing that Spiritualism is a science, that as a science it will grow, and demonstrate all truth to man, as man is fitted to receive it, I have no fear that this pernicious theory will long survive our facts—in a word, I hope everything from Spiritualism; I expect everything for the race from Spiritualism; I only put home to yourselves, Spiritualists, the earnest charge that you shall think out this subject deeply for yourselves, and analyze it to its very foundation. In doing so start with the proposition, "What is Truth?" Resolve that Truth is, "that which is." Determine that all things shall be tried by that standard—Truth—that in right and wrong you will abide by it, and it alone; that by its standard all things shall be tried, and you will accept of no other authority than that of Truth. I see a Coming Man whose presence is foreshadowing amongst you. You may call him by the name of the righteous Nazarene if you will; and so long as that name can realize to your mind the truths He taught, so long as it presents the gracious figure of Him who, in His dying moments, pleaded for His very murderers, so long as it gives to your view the perception of all the holy all-conquering truths that are knit up in the glorious sole commandment, "Love," why, worship Him, if ye needs must worship any but your God? Worship Him, not for His name, or the book wherein it is written, but worship Him for the very truth's sake; because He spoke and lived and taught the self-same truths which God in nature teaches, and immortality and heaven demands, and nature sanctions. And let all nations

bend before your Teacher; for teaches He not by the authority of truth?

Meantime, remember that it is not in the name that your faith can save you; it is not in the fabled evil serpent that your sins can find excuse, nor in the name alone of Christ that they can find atonement. Your spirit friends are already in the judgment of their earthly lives. As they are, so will you be—can you doubt them? You have trusted and known them in life: trust and know them still; but if they do no more for you than enable you to realize the consciousness of their presence—if they do no more for you than reform your opinions concerning the mere phenomena of spirit action upon matter, you are no true Spiritualist; you are no power to the world; you will be no benefit to it; you are not the torch-bearers of Him who sent the spirits. When they questioned Jesus of the destiny of others, He answered them saying, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." It was not the following of the man, nor of the risen spirit, nor of the Master that He demanded then; *it was the following of His teachings*, the following of His principles. Have men followed these? If not, does not Spiritualism come, in its purity, its warning tone and voice of sweet encouragement, to lead us back to those principles, too often sacrificed in idle worship of the name of Him who taught them? Let no idle promises of extenuation for the value of a name tempt you to close your ears against this solemn charge. Let no fantastic hope of atoning for a misspent life by a farther re-incarnation induce you to evade the stern command to let all else be naught to you, but follow the spirit of the highest truth you know, whether this be incarnate in the form of Vishnu, Christ, or Buddha; or be the voice of God in all and each that speaks of love and purity and truth and beauty.

As for this vague and baseless theory of man's re-incarnation, I conclude as I commenced, by warning you, that of all the eccentric forms in which the human spirit has sought to approach its God and solve its destiny in systems of religion, this is at once the most wild, unfounded and untrue to reason, sense, and justice. It has arisen, too, in human fantasy, and is a mere side issue, arising only when men step aside from the authority of truth, and rush off into the theories and vagaries of strange and fantastic doctrines.

We search through the realm of nature in vain to find evidence of retrogression; we search in the realm of chemistry, and it will assure you that even the insensate atoms progress. There is a spirit of progress in every drop of water: leave it in its mobile state, it is nothing but a drop of water; vaporize it into steam, and in its progress it becomes a mighty force; and the lightnings that flash destruction before our eyes, that rend

the rocks, and destroy the noble works of art, in their progress through mechanical laws become one of the greatest and most useful elements of science. And so of every single atom in creation. Progress is the genius of being. Where do these Re-incarnationists find their doctrine? Where in the whole realm of nature do those who plead for the return of the risen spirit to the atoms of dust which it has left, find their evidence? Not in science, not in God's laws, not in God's realm of nature, not in God's law of love, not in God's own witness of the soul's immortality, which is for ever and for ever self-conscious, and whose identity you cannot touch. This doctrine that is now becoming patent amongst mere *Spiritists* (in the attempt to explain some problem yet unsolved), is put forth in the mere desire to enunciate theories and set up human authorities; but Spiritualists accept it only as a stimulus to enquire for the authority of truth, and bend before that shrine, ignoring all doctrines else.

I have taxed you overlong, and I conclude with once more urging upon each a yet deeper search for truth. In this age, above all others, the restless inquisition is going on into the realm of truth in morals, science, religion, politics, and governments. All things are being brought to judgment. You, Spiritualists, who are entrusted with the noblest and grandest truth of the age—you who have been favoured with the brightest and noblest revelation of comfort, hope, and certainty that ever was granted to man—who are permitted to be pioneers of the grand science of mind—I would ask each one of you to go hence from this place and, whether ye be accepters or rejecters of the name of Christ as God Himself incarnate in the form of flesh—none can be here with reason, sense, and goodness, who honour not that name as the highest mark of pure and true example at which humanity can aim,—in the name, then, of that teaching, in the name of that Divine instruction, whose duty both to God and man was condensed in the one word, "Love," heed naught of human teaching or human revelation that silences the voice of that spirit of truth that in the midst of theory, diverse opinions, and fantastic doctrines, ever cries, "What is that to thee? Follow thou Me!"