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SPIRIT COMMUNION WITH MAN :

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A R E P L Y

TO

MR. H. G. TURNER.

BY

W. H. T.
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MELBOURNE:

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MDCCCLXIX:

The Reality of Spirit Communion with Man.



ON the 2nd September, Mr. H. G. Turner (the President of the Eclectic Society of Melbourne) read before that body a paper on Spiritualism. The more recent publication of the same, in the form of a pamphlet, challenges public comment, criticism, or refutation.

There are many gentlemen in Melbourne whose literary and scientific acquirements would enable them to answer Mr. Turner's arguments in a more masterly and telling manner; but, as there are no signs of any of them coming forward, I have undertaken the task of answering, as well as my limited time will admit, Mr. Turner's objections to Spiritualism.

In his introductory remarks, Mr. Turner alludes to the *clever jugglery* of the Davenport brothers, which he says has long since been exposed. This is something new to me, and I should like to know when, and under what circumstances, the exposure took place; for they are still carrying on, with unabated success, their public exhibitions and private *seances*, as the following extract from *The Banner of Light*, of May 8th, will show:—

"The great success which has attended the *seances* given by the Davenport brothers and Mr. Fay, at the Music Hall in this city, week before last, induced them to comply with the general request to remain another week. Consequently the spacious hall has been well filled every evening, except Wednesday, during the past week. *Seances* were also held on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons."

The *Journal* speaks of one of their *seances* as follows:—

"The Davenport brothers gave their fifth exhibition at the Music Hall last evening, in the presence of a large audience, the body of the house and the first tier of balconies being well filled. The exercises were essentially the same as on the previous evenings; the same unaccountable tyings and untyings of the brothers, the mysterious appearance of hands, &c., taking place as usual, all the various phases being supervised by a committee of four gentlemen selected from the audience. There was also a dark *seance*, at which a new committee officiated. Two of this latter committee were Mr. John H. Selwyn and Judge Putnam. Mr. Fay's hands were tied, as on previous occasions, the instruments were thrown about in a decidedly promiscuous manner, and Mr. Fay's coat was removed, his hands being discovered a moment after to be tied as securely as before. Mr. Selwyn placed seals upon the knots, so

“that they could by no possibility be untied, without subsequent discovery, and other means to detect the slightest movements on the part of Mr. Fay, or one of the Davenports, who also occupied the stage, had been taken from the first; but, notwithstanding these provisions, a coat belonging to one of the committee was placed upon Mr. Fay, who remained with his hands tied behind him. Some of the shrewdest and most respectable men of our city have been on the committees; among others, Wendell Phillips, Esq. He told the audience that there was no trick or collusion that he could detect. He was sure the mediums were securely tied, in the same manner as before the manifestations were made. If he knew anything, he knew that the hand shown belonged to neither of the mediums, for he was looking directly at them when the hand made its appearance, and if they had moved either of their hands he should have noticed it. He concluded his remarks by stating that it was evident to him, that some unseen power had aided in the manifestations.”

The Boston Post, of the same date, alludes to the manifestations in the same manner, and says “However these phenomena are produced, there can be no doubt of their *bona fide* nature.”

Mr. Turner also thinks we are fully justified in charging Mr. Home with fraudulent deception! Where prejudice is very strong against a subject such as that Mr. Home is connected with, it requires very little in the eyes of the prejudiced to justify any accusation, however absurd it may appear to the unbiassed mind.

I would ask Mr. Turner a few questions to see what he has to justify his charge. Has Mr. Home, during the whole time he has been before the public, been detected in any trickery or collusion? Has he not admitted to his *seances* men of science, sceptics, and enquirers in every grade of society? And where the investigators refused to acknowledge that the manifestations were produced by spirit agency, they have failed to give any philosophical explanation of the means by which they were produced.

If the thousands of sceptics and prejudiced persons who have visited him for the purpose of exposing, if possible, the affair, have failed to detect him, what grounds are there to charge him with deception? Were it necessary, I could rake up a host of evidence and testimonials in his favor, but my only desire is to show on what an unsubstantial basis Mr. Turner's charge against him stands.

Because poor Home, in a weak moment, accepted £25,000, forced upon him by a silly old woman, can this be gravely adduced as a valid argument, that his career in England had a “discreditable *dénouement*,” and that his *seances* were “fraudulent deceptions?” How many Christian clergymen would have refused such a gift; and had they pocketed the money, would that have upset Mr. Turner's faith in the New Testament? Such reasoning is puerile.

Mr. Turner next cites a few instances in support of his position that the communications are influenced by the views of the investi-

gators ; but this is no proof of their non-spiritual origin, but of the law of affinity, which attracts (where the circle is positive) spirits holding the same ideas as themselves.

Mr. Turner next alludes to writing mediumship, and thinks that is sufficiently explained by the action of the mind (before alluded to). But how does he account for the difference in the orthography ? I have seen a person write in several distinct hands at one sitting, and many, so far from concentrating their attention, will rarely look at the paper on which they are writing.

Trance-speaking, clairvoyance, spirit influx, and involuntary utterances are considered by Mr. Turner to be the result of animal magnetism, mesmerism, hypnotism, odylism, or whatever the mysterious phenomena, which have been reduced almost to a science by the researches of Reichenbach, Dr. Gregory, and others. Undoubtedly this is in some measure correct, but Mr. Turner loses sight of the intimate connexion these matters have with Spiritualism, and is perhaps not aware that Reichenbach's researches have led him into Spiritualism. I have seen a copy of a letter from Reichenbach to a friend, in which he acknowledges his belief, and sympathy for the cause, but says, were he publicly to announce himself a spiritualist, his *prestige* would be gone.

Mr. Turner states that the more startling phenomena of Spiritualism are not manifested to the sceptic, but only to the "devout believer," in a state of want of mind, "semi-stupefaction, or hypnotism." This is a rash assertion, utterly opposed to facts, for the most ardent and enthusiastic spiritualists of the day commenced their investigation of it as sceptics, and with a view to expose the "humbug and delusion," which silently forced conviction upon them by its own inherent truth. This was the case with Dr. Hare, Professor of Chemistry in the University of Pennsylvania, who constructed several ingenious mechanical contrivances in order to prove, that the impulse to the table came from the medium's arm, whether involuntary or not.* The result was that like the engineer, hoist by his own

* Description of an instrument constructed by Professor Hare, by which spirits were enabled to move a table under the influence of mediumship, yet in nowise under the control or influence of the medium employed, even clairvoyance being nullified.—The table is about 6 feet in length, by 16 inches in width. The pair of legs under the right side are upon castors ; those on the left side upon an axle passing through perforations, suitably made for its reception. The axle consists of a rod about half an inch in thickness. The axle serves for two wheels about 6 inches in diameter, of which one is grooved. A disc is secured upon a pivot on the outer side of the table, with the back of the dial towards the medium. Two detached wooden balls lie on the table, and the medium's hands rest on a board balanced upon these balls. A band passes round the grooved wheel (on which one end of the table travels) and encircles the disc. When the table is moved, either to the right or left, the alphabetical disc turns in accordance with the impetus given. The medium, by this arrangement, was incapacitated from exerting any influence to move the table in any direction, or to interfere with any influence otherwise imparted ; nevertheless, messages were accurately spelt out. Several other equally ingenious instruments were constructed by the professor, with like results.

petard, the Professor was converted by his own machines; for he found that the raps and tilts and movements occurred with equal vigour, and spelt out equally appropriate answers to questions, when, by means of rolling balls, and even a stage floating on water, he had made it a mechanical impossibility for the medium to produce them by muscular action: a power foreign to the medium, but acting through him, being the logical and inevitable conclusion. If Mr. Turner chooses he can convince himself in the same way. Both Judge Edmonds and Dr. Dexter commenced their investigations in a like manner, and with a like result; as did many others who are now in daily intercourse with the spirit-world. I never yet heard of any one, who earnestly desiring truth, and nought else, gave spiritual intercourse a fair and patient hearing, who did not convince himself of its actuality. Those who pretend to enquire into a subject of such moment, predetermined not to be convinced, whatever evidence is brought forward, or who at once avow scepticism because spirits are not at their beck and call at any moment, and are not omniscient and omnipresent, are of the class of minds who would not believe though one rose from the dead.

Even supposing that all of us cannot (as is very probable) obtain the more extraordinary manifestations, such as levitation without contact, pencil writing without the use of the medium's hand, and so on, we have evidence of a character amply sufficient to convict or acquit any of Her Majesty's subjects in a court of law, that such manifestations *have* taken place, and that frequently. If we are to reject the testimony of thousands of eye-witnesses, what proof have we of any one fact that does not occur to our own individual selves? Is it reasonable, or probable, or possible, that men like Judge Edmonds, Professor Hare, Professor de Morgan, Dr. Ashburner, and a host of others, who we know are possessed of a high development of the reasoning faculties on every other subject, should, the moment they approach the all-important field of observation of the positive evidence of the immortality of the soul, find themselves "electro-biologised, hypnotised, and in a state of want of mind?" If this be so, then good bye to man's boasted reasoning faculties; they are but a delusion and a snare, and we are at once plunged in a bottomless gulf of Cimmerian darkness; for there is no evidence that can prove anything; for we can't see with other people's eyes, and our own may be "hypnotised" without our knowing it; and Professor de Morgan may wake up some fine morning and find, that "because his attention has been concentrated" upon mathematics in the University of London all these years, two and two do *not* make four, and the angles of a triangle are together equal to more or less than two right angles. If evidence is of any value or necessity for the substantiation of a fact, then spiritual intercourse can be proved as conclusively as telegraphic communication, postal delivery, or any other fact known to one section of the world's inhabitants, and not to others; and the

statement that it has been used for mercenary purposes no more disproves its propositions, than simony and plurality in the church disprove the truths of Christianity.

Mr. Turner calls attention to the diversity of opinion among spiritualists as to the antiquity, or otherwise, of its origin. I think he will find that the vast majority of spiritualists believe that spirit intercourse has never ceased, and its antiquity goes beyond known records; but in consequence of their being no connected records of communications since the Apostolic era, many are apt to date the intercourse from the time of the first systematised manifestations in America.

Good reasons are given by spirits why the United States were chosen for the inauguration of modern manifestations; but time will not admit of my entering into that subject at the present juncture.

Mr. Turner estimates the number of spiritualists in the United States at 3,000,000. I may inform him that, in 1867, the number of believers in it was estimated (by the Roman Catholics) at 11,000,000.

Mr. Turner speaks of the disadvantages that the unbeliever has in dealing with the professed Spiritualist, but he entirely overlooks the disadvantages of the believer. Mr. Turner can come forward and argue against Spiritualism with impunity, and some credit to himself; whilst, on the other hand, any man dependent upon the public for his position, cannot come forward in support of it without serious pecuniary loss, to say nothing of the effect on his social position; whilst to professional men or ministers, a public acknowledgment of their belief would be absolute ruin.

Mr. Turner attributes the growth of what he is pleased to call this "popular delusion" to the difficulty of securing a common platform. I say that it is the want of a common platform that retards its greater progress. According to Wm. Howitt, there are 20,000,000 of the so-called deluded! and the number rapidly increasing. The fact is that, so far from being a delusion, Spiritualism is a great truth, which scientific men generally will not recognise, because it did not originate with them; but it is a science greater than their's—hence they oppose it, lest it should upset their long-cherished ideas. It is, however, useless for them to try to stem the tide. In spite of all opposition, spiritualism has steadily progressed, and the ratio of its progress is daily increasing. Better to meet it fairly than to be overwhelmed by it.

I will now proceed to answer Mr. Turner's propositions, and do not anticipate much difficulty in proving their unsoundness:—

1st. That a belief in spiritualism is not warranted by the results, even supposing them to be true.

Mr. Turner's conclusions as to the results, are very erroneous. Because he cannot see the beauty of the harmonial philosophy, and will not recognise its utility, he conceives that others are equally blind and prejudiced.

Mr. Turner pronounces "Nature's Divine Revelations," a farrago of pretentious humbug. Let us compare his critique with those of other scientific reviewers, certainly not less learned than Mr. Turner.

Professor George Bush, in an article in the "New York Tribune," mainly designed to prove the truth of what is claimed respecting the *origin* of the Book, employs the following language in regard to the intrinsic character:—"Taken as a whole, the work is a profound and elaborate discussion of the philosophy of the universe, and for grandeur of conception, soundness of principle, clearness of illustration, order of arrangement, and encyclopædical range of subjects, I know of no work of any single mind that will bear away from it the palm. To every theme the inditing mind approaches with a certain latent consciousness of mastery of all its principles, details, and technicalities, and yet without the least ostentatious display of superior mental prowess. In every one the speaker appears to be equally at home, and utters himself with the easy confidence of one who had made such subjects the exclusive study of a life. The manner in the scientific department is always calm, dignified, and conciliatory, as if far more disposed to excuse than to censure the errors it aims to correct; while the style, so far from "unmeaning bombast," is easy, flowing, chaste, appropriate, with a certain undescribable simplicity that operates like a charm upon the reader."

(It is but just to say, however, that Professor B. dissents from the *theology* of the work which he thus commends!)

The "New York Sunday Dispatch" says:—"Never has there been presented at one view a cosmogony so grand, a theology so sublime, and a future destiny for man so transcendent, in science, in religion, and in morality. It is a book which will be welcomed with rapture by the most enlightened, the loftiest, and the purest minds."

From the Rev. W. M. Fernald (in the "Boston Courier") :—"For ourself we must say it is the most truthful book we ever read; it is exciting and spiritualizing to the last degree, it throws in so brief a space, more light on the Bible than any other book, though there are passages which seem unjust to its great teachings. It is not remarkable indeed so much for the revelation of principles or laws, which have not heretofore been discovered, for all principles and laws in the material and spiritual worlds are eternal, and in enlightened society are generally known; but in the *combinations* of those laws in the numerous *forms* and *modifications* of truth, it is a vast storehouse of spiritual and intellectual treasure, such as the world has never before known. I say this after much reflection, coolly and deliberately."

The "London People's Journal" says, after a brief synopsis of the contents of the book, such is a brief outline of this extraordinary work:—"Extraordinary in every light in which we may regard it, for whether it be what it purports to be or not, it dis-

plays an astonishing, almost prodigious power of generalization, but if it be the work of young Davis, who is known in his normal state to be a young man of only ordinary acquisition and power of mind, then it opens up one of the most singular and wonderful chapters in all literary history. And that it is the unaided production of Davis, there are hundreds of the most respectable and sound-minded men most profoundly convinced, after a deliberate enquiry into all the circumstances of the case."

But, indeed, on simple grounds of fact apart from opinion, Mr. Turner's criticisms on A. J. Davis's great work are very easily disposed of. I suppose he does not claim to have clairvoyant powers himself, although he can satisfy himself this very day if he chooses that such do exist, and are being exerted daily for good; and such being the case, it is evident that he is not qualified to judge of those who claim to have such powers, being incapable to appreciate their extent.

It is all very well for Mr. Turner to criticise, disparage, and condemn books which 98 per cent. of his audience or readers have never seen; but this does not help to prove his position—it only throws dust into the eyes of the would-be investigator, and enables Mr. Turner to hold his position somewhat longer. When some of those who have been thus blinded, come to see the books for themselves, they will not have so much faith in Mr. Turner as a critic. Mr. Turner goes on to say that if the power of communication existed, it would permeate the tenderest and holiest relations of life. Most assuredly it does so, and I could bring many witnesses to prove it. He then goes on to deny that any spirit ever came back to this earth to communicate with its friends in the body! Does Mr. Turner deny the Scripture evidence? Does he believe that the millions of intelligent persons who assert that they have communicated with those who have left the material body, are laboring under a delusion, and were on all occasions in a hypnotic condition? If Mr. Turner discredits all evidence, and believes that he is the only competent judge of what is right or wrong, true or false, it is useless to argue with him, for nothing short of a miracle will convince him of his error.

Mr. Turner says he is told, but does not believe, that spiritualism has saved thousands from infidelity and atheism by convincing them of the truth of *Bible Miracles*. By whom was he told this? Certainly not by a Spiritualist for they do not believe in miracles, but attribute everything to natural causes, regulated by the *immutable* law of God.

That Spiritualism has, by demonstrating man's immortality, saved many from infidelity, I can well believe—being personally acquainted with some who were in that condition, and who have been, by the influence of spirits, satisfied of their immortality. Mr. Turner speaks of the hope that man intuitively has of a progressive hereafter, but this hope is in some but faint, and certainly not to be compared to a demonstration; and I here most emphati-

cally state, that any person who will enter into the subject in an impartial manner, and pursue it diligently for a short time, can demonstrate beyond a doubt the existence and proximity of the spirits of men and women, who were formerly denizens of this world. Mr. Turner associates too intimately the subject of Spiritualism with advertising mediums and quacks, and presumes that spiritualists generally are responsible for the pretensions of such. This is not just or reasonable,—he might as well try to make the medical profession responsible for the sins of quack doctors and impostors. Spiritualists do not believe that elevated or progressed spirits are at the beck and call of any body, or that any spirit is *necessitated* to answer to an earthly summons at all.

From Mr. Turner's remarks I should imagine he has read other books besides those he alludes to. Has he not gathered from some of them that spirits of all grades can communicate, and that their communications are regulated by the law of affinity, in accordance with the mental condition of the investigator, and the purity or otherwise of his aspirations are the influences that are attracted towards him? Hence to those who aspire to communicate with the good and wise there is a great incentive to purity of life, and the cultivation of all the highest faculties of our nature.

2nd. That the nature of the testimony on which it relies for support is eminently unsatisfactory. Mr. Turner is dissatisfied and suspicious, because he has not been so fortunate as to meet with a circle sufficiently positive to his influence to be undisturbed by it.

All the manifestations are the result of electrical, magnetic, and odyllic force or power, and a quietude or harmony of mind among the circle is necessary, to enable the communicating intelligences to control and bring into perfect action these powers. Where the manifestations are simply physical, this is not of so much importance; but where the impartation of intelligence is desired, it is absolutely necessary that the individuals composing the circle should be in a passive or receptive condition. It is not at all necessary (or indeed advisable) that the investigators should have their minds in a state of tension; indeed, the *best condition* is when the system is in a *perfect state of health*, and the mind calm and collected. When the investigators are in this condition they accumulate the odyllic sphere, which is the connecting link through which spirits communicate; but if a positive and sceptical person intrudes among them, it has a doubly disturbing influence, for in the first place his emanations disturb the harmony of the odyllic aura; and, secondly, there are sure to be some nervously susceptible persons who are disconcerted by his presence.

Mr. Turner says some of the writing, under influence, appears to present occasional difficulties as to how the penman acquired his information; but nine-tenths of these communications are of

such vague general import that they may be read in any sense, and *most* of the remainder is made up of statements which it would be as impossible to disprove as prove.

It is evident from the foregoing that Mr. Turner has met with some spirit-writing which he could not account for, or he would not have made an exception. Mr. Turner's complaints of the discrepancies of some spirit-communications are not difficult to dispose of, when we find some scores of different interpretations of the same scriptural text, and all claiming to be orthodox. Discrepancies are very weak weapons to use against Spiritualism.

Mr. Turner does not see the object of communications being given in foreign languages. I may state from experience that it is very rare for a communication of any length to be given entirely in such; and spirits do not write in languages unknown to the medium, except for the purpose of convincing them or others whom they see will be benefited by conviction.

Mr. Turner very hastily shuns the subject of spirit-writing, for very obvious reasons—it is a very tough customer to grapple with. If he can convince anyone that the fact (and it is a fact that he may witness himself) that uneducated persons, or children, if of suitable organization, will write distinctly in foreign and dead languages, is a phenomenon of “semi-stupefaction and hypnotism” (for to this amounts all his explanation of spiritual phenomena) he must himself be an electro-biologist of no mean powers. Either the brain of the medium does or does not influence the arm to write these languages. Let Mr. Turner explain it if he can upon any other hypothesis than that of spirit influence.

Spiritual clairvoyance is another phase which anyone may test for themselves through a medium suitably organized and developed. By a clue, such as a written paper, or a lock of hair, he will tell you the whole particulars of the bodily and mental condition of a person in any part of the world, and utterly unknown to him personally. There are mediums in Melbourne who can and do thus trace absent persons for medical purposes. Mr. Turner's whole arguments against Spiritualism rest upon hearsay, and what he has read in a few books, evidently perused in a very cursory manner. Surely if he is qualified to pronounce authoritatively on so momentous a question, he should have tested the so-called spirit-phenomena himself, and that in the fullest manner. He point blank suggests that Judge Edmonds is either a liar or an idiot, for bearing testimony to the writing or speaking of foreign languages by a medium; but has he ever endeavoured to test this fact himself, as he can do here in Melbourne, and if so, with what result? He calls Judge Edmonds a “ready-made believer,” but quite forgets to state that Dr. Dexter had his mediumship forced upon him against his will, though utterly undesirous to enter into the subject at all. Mr. Turner evidently falls into the common delusion that because an individual is in the spirit-world, he must therefore be omniscient, omnipresent, and truthful, which is quite

contrary to the fact. Each spirit retains its individuality, and has no more inherent power of knowledge than we have—that is, by education and acquisition. The idle, frivolous, or vicious man enters the spirit-world as an idle, frivolous, vicious spirit, and acts as such until better desires and aspirations tempt him to progress. We know by experience that many such take a delight in misleading undeveloped mediums for the sheer love of mischief, and are especially fond of simulating the great and good with the view of perplexing and irritating the medium. Such communications are of necessity contradictory, and it is only from the higher spirits of the wisdom spheres that entirely reliable knowledge can be got—their statements always agree in every particular. The immediate perception of the character of the influence is a matter of education and development, only to be acquired by practice. It is this unreasoning reception and publication of all matters received from the spirit-world, as genuine emanations from the spirit purporting to dictate them all, which has cast so much discredit on the study. Were communications given through progressed mediums alone, we should have no contradictory statements. The novelty and extraordinary nature of the subject has caused many foolish and unreasoning persons to take for granted everything that they receive as good, and often give it to the world, unthinking how much mischief they may do. All are not fitted for mediums for the higher spheres; it is a privilege accorded to few, as few have capabilities to become painters, poets, orators, or mathematicians; but anyone can convince himself of the fact of spirit-intercourse *as a fact*, if he prefers truth to a blind adherence to preconceived dogmas. We have no violent zeal for proselytizing, but are glad to give information to those requiring it in the genuine search for truth; but in simple fair play attacks should not be made on our belief by those unable by personal investigation to report upon so momentous a subject.

It is not at all surprising that persons who have not studied the laws regulating spiritual-communion, should, from ignorance of them, make answers and excuses for their non-success which fail to satisfy the sceptic. Is it not necessary in all scientific investigations to pursue a certain course, guided by laws and principles, to arrive at a demonstration? Even so with Spiritualism. It is capable of demonstration to the sincere investigator who gives heed to the laws and principles controlling and guiding it.

Mr. Turner next proceeds to disparage the testimony of Judge Edmonds, taking advantage of that gentleman's candour to make it appear that he was not *compos mentis*; but he carefully avoids any allusion to Dr. Dexter, who was his coadjutor, and who was a man of strong physical and mental calibre. Mr. Turner says, if the testimony of Judge Edmonds fails, he can produce no other like him in spiritual literature. Perhaps not. But I can; and would refer him to the Rev. Odin Ballou, S. B. Brittan, Dr. Child, Uriah Clark, Henry Clark Wright, Warren Chase, Professor

Hare, and many others, whose testimony to the truth and elevating nature of spirit-communion is equally strong.

I now proceed to Mr. Turner's third argument, viz. :—That the teachings are vague, contradictory, often mercenary, and inextricably confounded with fraud and chicanery.

Mr. Turner quotes from Thomas Brevoir's book, *The Two Worlds*, as follows:—"We must be careful to distinguish between the teachings of Spiritualism and the teachings of spiritualists. The latter is only another name for a creed. Beyond the common acknowledgement that spirits have always held and do still hold intercourse with mankind, there is but little necessary agreement. For concerning other important truths, as they differ in their powers of comparison and reasoning, their education, religion, philosophy, and modes of thought, there will be corresponding divergences in their conclusions, even from the same facts; and with the conviction of Spiritualism, there may in some minds, co-exist notions inconsistent and even logically incompatible with it."

The above seems clear and reasonable to me, but Mr. Turner draws different conclusions from it. It appears to me that Mr. Brevoir wishes it to be understood, that spiritualists form their ideas of what may be communicated in accordance with their peculiar idiosyncrasies, and in the absence of any canon, this is only natural; moreover, as I before remarked, spirits of all grades and in all conditions of developement, can and do communicate. Spirits communicate in accordance with their knowledge, and only the occupants of the wisdom spheres are competent to communicate infallible truth on profound subjects. I do not wish to be understood that spirits below that state are necessarily untruthful. Far from it. In all things those who were truthful in the body are truthful in the spirit; but it is not to be expected, although it often is so, that spirits who have only recently left the body are cognisant of all the truths and mysteries of the after-life.

Mr. Turner characterised the communications as uncertain and paltering, and infers that the disciples of Spiritualism are diametrically opposed in their construction of what is presented to them. This is not the rule but the exception. The differences of opinion are only in details, not in principles. Men who were untruthful whilst in the body, often remain the same when in the spirit for a long time. A discordant or inharmonious circle attract such, and they, from their gross and electrical nature can communicate more freely to such a circle. Many theologians assert that none but evil spirits can or do communicate. Mr. Turner seems to think that none but perfect ones should do so. I say, that by God's law, spirits of every condition can and do communicate, and hence it behoves us to receive what is presented or communicated at the bar of reason, and to accept or reject it according to the decision of that tribunal, and taking St. Paul's advice, "Try the spirits whether they be of God."

It is comparatively easy, *by experience*, to discriminate between unprogressed and progressed spirits, and you can judge of the value of the communication by the source from which it comes.

Mediumistic qualifications are organic; but pure teachings cannot flow through an impure channel. The communications from progressed spirits are necessarily adapted by them to meet the comprehension of the persons to whom they are communicating.

It is generally understood by those who are conversant with the subject, that the sixth sphere is the highest with which man can communicate whilst in the normal condition, and (no matter what medium they come through) the communications from that sphere are never contradictory, but always harmonise. There is an originality in the style characteristic of the spirit communicating, but the gist of their teachings is the same, and in a harmonious association. In communication with this sphere, any question of interest to mankind, relating to his moral, mental, or spiritual development, will be fully and philosophically answered.

I thoroughly agree with M. Allan Kardac, and endorse his assertion that Spiritualism conforms and proves the fundamental bases of religion.

I now come to Mr. Turner's fourth proposition, viz.—That its acceptance as an article of belief can only be accomplished by an entire surrender of our reasoning and enquiring faculties, and a practical denial of those fundamental cosmic laws on which alone true science can rest.

The foregoing proposition is to me the most extraordinary of the whole, for the *belief* in spirit-manifestations can only be acquired by the exercise of the reasoning and enquiring faculties.

After another rub at Mr. Davis, Mr. Turner goes on to say:—

"I propose now only to look at the *unnatural* perturbations of inanimate bodies, as said to be exhibited at some spirit *seances*. In doing this I do not abandon my own theory, that these movements, when beyond *natural* agency, are purely imaginary, but I wish to show how the spiritualist meets the difficulty of their 'being in opposition to the laws of gravitation.'"

Now in reply to this, there never was such a thing as an unnatural perturbation of anything inanimate, but the (to some) incomprehensible movements of tables, chairs, &c., of the fact of which there is abundant evidence, are the result of natural and easily explained causes. Their opposition to the laws of gravitation is only apparent, not real. I will give an explanation of the phenomena as given to me by a spirit of the sixth sphere some years since. I merely extract from the communication that portion bearing upon the subject, from which you will see that the law of gravitation is not suspended but neutralized by the law of attraction.

"I will now explain some of the physical manifestations that 'have astonished so many in America, England, and the continent 'of Europe.'"

"There are authentic records of persons being lifted from the ground, and suspended in mid-air, without any apparent visible agency; also of large and weighty substances being moved or suspended in like manner. The explanation of these phenomena is very simple to any person having the slightest knowledge of magnetic attraction. Take, for instance, an ordinary horse-shoe magnet, and place the unmagnetized armature, or a piece of iron or steel in a scale, with a weight in the balance of only one half of its weight. Suspend the magnet over the armature or iron at a proper elevation, and the magnetic attraction removes the pressure of the atmosphere upon the iron, altering its specific gravity and causing the balance to rise. The spiritual operation to raise matter is exactly similar. The matter is impregnated with negative particles to make it correspond with the armature, and the spiritual magnet, formed by the concentration of spiritual wills and energies, is suspended over the person, or matter, and the result is exactly similar to the experiment before described, the elevation or depression of the object being effected by the elevation of the magnet."

With all due deference to Professor Faraday, I doubt whether we do, at the present time, thoroughly understand the laws of nature; and, if not, we are not in a position to condemn anything which does not appear to harmonise with known laws.

Surely, if it is admitted that these revelations do take place, it devolves upon scientific men to give a philosophical explanation of the phenomena. If they fail to do so, they are not justified in denying the spiritualists' explanation.

I am glad to find that Mr. Turner recognises some good in Spiritualism, and that good of a reformatory nature. Whilst admitting the faults of spiritualists, and their harmful influence, I find in *Spiritualism* and its teachings all that is requisite for man's development, physically, mentally, and spiritually. It inculcates the highest morality, the strictest truth, the purest benevolence, and universal love. I find in it all the teachings of Christ, presented in a clear and comprehensible form, and its refining influence I have not only witnessed but felt. I am personally acquainted with many who date their acquisition of their earthly happiness from the time they became assured of the truths of Spiritualism.

It has its royal road to *wisdom*, with the healthy discipline of heavenly study. We cannot pry into the secrets of futurity, and wise spirits can only know of events to come, by their knowledge of causes, which they can trace to their ultimate effects, and do not reveal these to man, except when their wisdom teaches them it is good for them to know.

The *healthy* mind is not engrossed with dreamy speculations, nor are investigations fruitless when earnest and honest.

It elevates the intellect of its votaries, and enlarges and enhances the idea of a future state, and of the nature and goodness of God.

It offers solutions of the social evils that oppress mankind, it gives a formula for an improved organisation of society, it offers suggestions for the amelioration of poverty, and conveys to us valuable information on the paramount questions of health and happiness, disease and death.

It is a substantial aid to our efforts for the amelioration of the condition of our fellows who are less favorably situated than ourselves, and it recommends what Mr. Turner says we know, that by the direction of our unselfish efforts to the amelioration of our race on earth we ensure our own happiness here and hereafter.

Mr. Turner's peroration is indeed a wonderful piece of ignorant assertion on subjects of which he, by his own showing, has had the vaguest outline of knowledge. "Fruitless investigations!" Had he, as I and thousands of others have, received with breathless interest the teachings of our brethren and sisters who have "gone before," their glowing descriptions of the joys of reunion with those once loved on earth, and the glorious harmony of the Universal Brotherhood that reigns in the "Summer Land," he would not consider such investigations fruitless. Had he read their descriptions of the spirit-world—how every thought is worship of the Great Author of all, and every look is love to all his creatures; how with hearts purified and minds refined from the grosser drawbacks of the material body, they scan the mysteries of nature with clairvoyant eyes; and with perceptions enlarged to a degree hardly comprehensible to us, appreciate the divine essence permeating the whole system of creation, from the rolling ocean of worlds in the vast profound of space to the lowest organism in the great cosmogony—he would not say that Spiritualism "debases the intellect of its votaries, and degrades the idea of a future state!" Instead of the old-fashioned and puerile notions of heaven that many teach, as a place of endless idleness or a constant round of religious exercises, we are taught that the grand object of man's existence is *progress*. "Excelsior" is the spirit motto, and to be higher, wiser, purer, better, is their aim, till they rise beyond our finite ken, and reach so dazzling an eminence of God-like attributes, as to be as far out of our range of comprehension as the mathematics are to a toddling infant. Our conceptions of the Deity are vastly expanded by the contemplation of these. His ministers, whose powers, we are told, approach what we, in our feeble conceptions, have attributed to him alone. What then must He be whose servants they are? How could our boldest flight of reverend imagination picture Him when these bright beings of the celestial spheres, who can organise matter, who can sway the planets in their orbits, and who have passed thousands of years in the process of refinement and development, declare with awe-struck humility that they are not yet pure or holy enough to approach His presence! Does all this degrade the idea of a future state? For shame, Mr Turner!

To conclude—there are three sections of unbelievers in spirit intercourse with man. 1st. Those who deny the fact in *toto*. 2nd. Those who allow it, but attribute it to the devil. 3rd. Those who allow it, but deny that the communications are worth having. To which of these Mr. Turner claims to belong it is difficult to state. For a page or two he sides with the first class, then he suggests the second, and finally plunges headlong into the third. The mass of his lecture is a sort of mongrel between the first and third, which being contradictory, the result is hardly satisfactory to a logical mind, and completely endorses what the good Bishop told us the other night of the sterility of all hybrids.

Let me give Mr. Turner a few words of advice before taking leave of him. Do not condemn a faith that has, in twenty years, enlisted 20,000,000 of the most enlightened race that history has seen, till you, in your own person, have proved that faith a falsity. Do not encourage yourself in the use of the *suppressio veri*, as you have done in your reference to Messrs. Edmonds and Dexter—it so soon gets found out, and weakens your other statements. Try to see some honesty of purpose in those who differ from you on a subject that they have studied and you have not; and lastly, if you love truth more than you fear the prejudices of the world, enter on the study of Spiritualism, not in books or by hearsay, but in your own person. Ask honestly and straightforwardly for evidence, and you will get plenty of it. Do this in the fear of God, and fearless of man's sneer; and in a month you will be a Spiritualist; but if you prefer dignified ignorance in the chair of the Eclectic Society, leaving truth at the bottom of her well, forbear again to criticise a subject of which you know as little as the Indian prince did of the ice-bound lakes of Russia.

