

*Y. H. Terry
Melb. Public
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A LETTER

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TO THE

VERY REV. DEAN MACARTNEY,

BEING A  REPLY

TO

RECENT  ATTACK

ON

SPIRITUALISM,

BY

A GRADUATE OF AN UNIVERSITY.

PRICE SIXPENCE, or 4s. a DOZEN.

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MELBOURNE, 1872,

PUBLISHED BY W. H. TERRY,

96 RUSSELL STREET.

"If we give way to a dread of danger from the inculcation of any truth, physical, moral, or religious, we manifest a want of faith in God's power, or in the will to maintain his own cause; in the case of anything which plainly appears to be the truth, every danger must be braved; we must maintain the truth as we have received it, and trust to him who is the truth to prosper and defend it."—

WHATELY.

VERY REVEREND SIR,

I venture to call your attention to what I consider some of the weak points in your last published attack on Spiritualism. I trust that you will not regard my addressing you thus publicly without affixing my name to this letter, as any violation of that courtesy which ought to be independent of our beliefs, and which you by your office and years are justly entitled to. My justification if any is necessary, must be that men and women are still estimated by their beliefs and not by their actions, that the epithets "unbeliever" and "infidel" are still employed as terms of reproach and as aids to spiritual despotism, and that therefore the most fearless lover of the truth must hesitate before exposing himself unnecessarily to moral persecution.

You allude at the very commencement of your attack to the passions overpowering the reason; this is a very hopeful remark, for the foremost article of the spiritualistic creed is the supreme position that is due to the reasoning faculties. The passions and emotions are by spiritualists of all classes strictly subordinated to the intellect as the only guide the universal Father has bestowed on all his children; in varying degree it is true, yet markedly enough to indicate responsibility, and to distinguish them from the mere animals. Spiritualism teaches moreover that although errors may be committed in the employment of this divine gift, yet that all mistakes and misconceptions are preferable to the blind surrendering of the faculty of judging to any claim of infallibility, set up by, or on behalf of, any external authority. It teaches that it is the duty of each to investigate minutely the pretensions of all things asserted to be true; this is plainly expressed in a very remarkable work* dictated under spiritual control by an uneducated lad of nineteen and to which I would direct your attention. It was published twenty five years since, and contains predictions that have since been fulfilled. It says "Reason is a principle belonging to man alone. The office of the mind is to investigate, search, and explore the principles of nature, and trace physical manifestations in their many and varied ramifications. Thought, in its proper nature is uncontrolled, unlimited. It is free to investigate and to rise to lofty aspirations. And the only hope for the amelioration of the world is free thought and unrestricted inquiry. Anything which opposes or tends to obstruct this sublime and lofty principle is wrong. Free and unrestrained inquiry is necessary to moral and intellectual progress and therefore should be encouraged. Truth is an eternal principle, and any institution, creed, denomination, or any influence of a sectarian character, that opposes in any way the free and unrestrained investigation of truth must evidently be founded on ignorance, superstition, and bigotry, and moreover anything which tends to restrict the spirit of inquiry openly manifests its own error. Every principle opposed to free and unrestrained investigation shows distinctly the fear of light, and knowledge. Light upon any subject of a moral nature, should be received free from interests or local prejudices; and if free investigations or the most unlimited exercise of the human mind is obstructed, the obstruction proclaims its authors own condemnation; for this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men choose the darkness of bygone ages, and foster it, rather than light, because their institutions and actions are evil."

You open your pamphlet with the question of the "supernatural" and miracles, and you appear to be wholly unaware of, or to totally

ignore the vast strides made by modern critics, scientific thinkers, and indeed clerics themselves, from the views you advance. You do not it is true, subject yourself to ridicule by telling us as did a most genial priest lately that the world is six thousand years old;† that the universe was made in six days; that a man was carried about in the interior of a fish for days without food or air; that the earth was stopped in its daily course to assist murderers; but you imagine that your readers are so ignorant as not to be aware that the very authenticity of the history of Moses and his "miracles" is to say the least extremely doubtful. If then the authorship of a narrative be disputed, its genuineness may fairly be questioned, and specially in your story of the "mighty Nile from its first cataract rolling its course of nearly 800 miles one volume of blood," which illustrates admirably your assertion that, when the passions are brought into play they will overpower the reason.

After a discursive although temperate treatment of the subject, you summarize your conclusions, thus; "1st. That the spiritist manifestations are nothing new, but that from the magicians of Egypt to Mr Tyerman, the world has never been without something of the kind." All spiritualists will appreciate this important admission. They hold that communion between the two worlds, the natural and the spiritual, has through all time, among all peoples, been as universal as life, as natural as death. This is illustrated in an instructive work‡ by the Honourable J. M. Peebles, late American Consul at Trebizonde, in which he treats of spiritualism past and present, as Indian, Egyptian, Chinese, Hebraic, Grecian, Roman and Christian. I have called this an important admission, because it evidences the certain although gradual progress made by the truth. You will remember that until quite recently the reality of the facts and phenomena of spiritualism were denied; the thousands who testified to what they had seen, heard, felt, who solemnly declared they had the evidence of their senses for their belief, were called cheats, impostors, deluded visionaries; they have had heaped upon them all the epithets of opprobrium that language could afford; no term was too vile, from the pen of the gentleman of the press who wrote of what he was supremely ignorant in accord with the tastes of his subscribers, to the powerful Doric of Mr Carlyle. A change is however observable in the language of the opponents of spiritualism. We are no longer cheats but cheated, not impostors but imposed upon. All who investigate honestly, admit there is something mysterious, marvellous, superhuman at the bottom of it. Mr. Symonds, Dr. Boak, Mr. Nish, Archdeacon Stretch confess to this. All however differ in their explanations. Those partially acquainted with the facts, endeavour to cover their ignorance by the employment of mystical language; "unconscious ideomotor action," says the Quarterly Reviewer; "automatic brain power, unconscious cerebration" say others, "Psychicforce" says Mr. Sergeant Cox; "involuntary muscular action" said the late Mr. Faraday; "nothing at all" say the Atheists, Mr. Bickford, and the Melbourne Eclectic society; "the Devil" say several old ladies, Dr. Boak, and his Lordship Bishop Perry. Despite however ignorance, prejudice and interest, those powerful opponents of truth and all progress, the lengthy report of the committee of the London Dialectical Society, the recent experiments of Mr. Crookes, detailed in the Quarterly journal of science, the ex-

† This was written before the speech at the Bible Society's meeting in April.

‡ The Seers of the ages 4th Edition 1870.

perience of hundreds among us here in Melbourne, of others at Sandhurst, Castlemaine, Stawell, Geelong, Bacchus Marsh, Hobart Town, and throughout the colonies generally, demonstrate beyond further doubt the existence of a force or power in nature, which up to the present nineteenth century has not been tabulated or formulated by science.

Unlike other notable discoveries this great fact has not been brought to light by any one individual: it comes not heralded by any recommendation from any professors of science, or from theologians. It has revealed itself, made itself manifest not in the laboratory but in the cottage, not to the wise and prudent but to the veriest babes. Spiritualists have been insisting on its existence for the last twenty five years. They have reiterated through continuous and virulent abuse the fact. They have offered the only solution for the phenomena that can possibly cover all recorded incidents. It is Very Reverend Sir, ignorance of these facts that leads to the condemnation of spiritualists, all of whom were as prejudiced against truth at one time, as are now its most virulent opponents. Each holds his own opinion as truth until he is convinced of its falsehood; but seeing that it is now admitted by all who have any knowledge of the matter that the assertion of these investigators of nature relative to this force, *has a foundation in truth*, nay is substantially correct, I would suggest that it is probable they may be discovered to be also correct in the explanation they offer as to the cause of these phenomena. Humility not dogmatism seems to me therefore, the most becoming attitude for those who have condemned as fiction what is being now gradually recognized as truth.* Believers in the reality of spirit power have always expressed themselves as willing to yield their explanation to any better that could be brought forward. It is worthy of your consideration that this has not yet been done. The late Professor Faraday was considered to have exposed the art and science of table turning. You will remember that his ingenious instrument showed that in some cases involuntary muscular action was the motor power. This solution had however no sooner gone to the world than material bodies moved without contact, and consequently independently of voluntary or involuntary muscles. One theory no sooner is broached than another is required. Signor Damiani, of Clifton near Bristol, offers a reward of one thousand guineas to any one who can prove spiritualism to be an imposture.† Many even of the clergy imagine they can find a solution in animal magnetism, and clairvoyance. It is amusing to perceive that these subjects once denounced as impostures, nay as diabolical arts, are now offered in explanation of spiritualism of which they are indeed only the means, the agents. The time approaches when those devoted to science will be drawn to this subject as the most important of the age. The composition of the sun and stars, the causes of the corona and the nature of its photosphere, the habits of the animal world, the histological structure of vegetables, all possess real interest; this however fades before the greater question of humanity's future: whence do we come? whither do we go? Spiritualists believe they are lifting the curtain that has hitherto obscured their knowledge of these questions. The newly manifested force declares on interrogation, that there is an intelligence connected with it, that it is the work of beings who are inhabitants of another

*Even Dr. Carpenter said at the Chelsea Literary Institution January 19th. "He thought the fairest attitude towards Spiritualism in its present stage was to suspend judgement about it until scientific men had pronounced an opinion."

†See The "Spiritualist" 1870. 1871.

state of existence; these beings are able to establish their identity with those who once occupied a place in our domestic circles and who still live in our hearts. They declare that they have left their natural bodies in the grave, and are now clothed with spiritual bodies. Under certain favorable conditions they are able to demonstrate their objective reality by exhibiting hands, faces, forms, lights.† The literature of spiritualism teems with narratives of these occurrences testified to by unimpeachable witnesses. The many hundreds of volumes in which evidences of spiritualism are related, are obtainable in this city, and are thus within your reach; your ignorance or neglect of the claims of your fellows to be considered truthful and honest are therefore inexcusable. Teachers and rulers in the churches owe it to their people, not less than to themselves, that they should above all things love the truth.

In your second corollary you say "That all kinds of this pretended intercourse with the occult world are condemned in scripture as the worst form of rebellion against God, the crime of rebellion being set forth in its utmost blackness in being as the sin of witchcraft."

In designating spiritualism as a pretended intercourse with the occult world, you appear Very Reverend Sir to have somewhat modified your views. In your opinion publicly expressed in a letter to the *Argus*, and in the article reprinted from *The Church of England Messenger* and approved of by you, it is laid down virtually ex cathedra, that all that is real in the phenomena is diabolical. You now say of them that you are unable to arrive at a certain conclusion as to their nature.* This is another remark of a hopeful character as it indicates a state of mind more open to a reception of truth, than the dogmatic assertion of Diabolical agency. You say† "nothing here said, is intended to condemn or discourage philosophic inquiry into the *marvellous* phenomena which *undoubtedly* are exhibited." No spiritualist has become one without searching personal investigation, and inquiry often of a prolonged character. We thus differ from our opponents; *they* dogmatise, and deny, and ridicule what they are completely ignorant of. We have sought until we have found, and we have knocked until it was opened to us. It has happened to some to have a long period of inquiry before their reason was convinced, to others their admission is easy. I would ask what inquiry have you or the other leaders of religious opinion who denounce this matter so volubly, made? Have you before attacking it so publicly, made yourself acquainted with its claims as a philosophy and a religion? On what grounds or by what experience do you justify your doubt of the truthfulness, honesty and capacity of the hundreds of thousands, nay millions of your fellow beings of all classes who have examined first and believed afterwards? A wise man has said "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him;" yet there are many who in their denunciation of spiritualism shew that they have answered a matter they have really never heard and considered. The apostolic injunction was to "Prove *all* things," connected we may infer with morals and religion. There is here no mention of any deference to the opinions of men, or churches, or books; the individual responsibility is recognized and the very proving implies the application of the reasoning powers. The proving of spiritualism is like other matters often difficult. William Howitt proved it by establish-

†See Dr. Ashburner's work on "Animal Magnetism." "Communications with another world," by E. Sargeant. "The Spiritual Magazine" for the last ten years &c.,

*Page 5.

†Page 6.

ing a circle in his own family, so did the gentleman you name, Mr. Tyerman, so did the writer; this if it can be done is best, for many reasons. The peculiar conditions regulating spirit intercourse are as yet imperfectly understood; those desirous of studying them, labour under many disadvantages, owing to the prejudice existing against this embryonic science; the little that is known however indicates the existence of laws regulating this as all other things. It cannot be denied that there is delusion, pretence, and imposture intermingled with every phase of the subject; it is undeniable that there are those who employ spiritualism for their own selfish, mercenary ends, that in fact there are dishonest men and women, who bring discredit on this truth. But I need hardly remind you that Spiritualism is no exception to any of the other sciences or religions that have engaged the attention of mankind. Human nature exhibits its various phases in priests and ministers, as well as in mediums.

The main point however in your whole argument is, that this "pretended intercourse is forbidden in Scripture."

This assertion has been so repeatedly made by the clergy in relation to any new discovery or invention, that it carries weight with a very limited number, now happily decreasing year by year, who are unable or unwilling to exercise their own faculty of judging. I must remind you that the establishment of the Royal Society of London was opposed on similar grounds; that Life assurance and Vaccination were denounced from the pulpit; that fanners for wheat were anathematized, and those who employed "The Devil's wind" were debarred the sacrament. The sciences of Geology and Phrenology were denounced by the clergy as opposed to the plain teachings of Scripture, while animal magnetism which Mr Nish drags into his service to explain spiritualism, secular education and chloroform, met the same fate.

The denunciation of all these discoveries has so completely failed to stay their recognition as truths, that the same may be predicted of the opposition to spiritualism. Your arguments bring in a consideration of the question, what is this Scripture that has in all ages been vainly put forward as an opposing force to every advance of the race? It is a collection of inspired writings by different men, in different places, at various times. The authorship of many is disputed and certainly by no means settled; † but of many hundreds of MSS a few were collected and to the exclusion of the others, were voted the only "word of God," by whom? By fallible men like ourselves, but possibly not so capable or honest, subject to the same passions, and having theories on religious points to subserve; what claim to infallibility then can be made for venerable writings selected by persons interested in the selection? The doctrine of infallibility dates only from the reformation; neither the venerable Catholic Church, nor the book itself make any such claim. This is well put by a recent writer‡ "The scriptures make no claim to be a book. It is a fascis, not a rod, neither does it claim in whole or in part to be inspired. The writer of Luke speaks of his undertaking as suggested by like undertakings on the part of many others; he thinks himself justified as well as they in 'compiling his narrative' by means of the opportunities he had, referring obviously to human opportunities; he does not claim to be inspired, to have had a revelation, nor even a knowledge of the facts at first hand. But it will be said, the declaration is made that

† "The Pentateuch." "The Hebrews." "2nd Epistle Peter" &c.,

‡ Baring Gould.

all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine' &c. the same writer adds 'the real meaning of this is, every sacred writing given by inspiration of God is profitable' &c.; and we are left in the dark as to what writings are inspired, and as to the extent to which inspiration goes; we call Dante and Shakespeare inspired, and their writings may also be applied to teaching reproof and correction."

"If the infallibility doctrine be true, the Bible ought to contain an inspired catalogue of the sacred writings and a statement of the limits by which inspiration was bounded. But on the contrary the canon of scripture was not settled till late, some books were rejected by some churches, and received by others; on what authority do men claim inspiration for the song of Solomon, and refuse it to the Book of Wisdom? why are the epistles of Paul quoted as canonical, and the epistles of his fellow labourer Barnabas rejected?"

These are simple questions and plain truths Very Reverend Sir, the consideration of which ought to be entered upon with reason as our guide, without any importation of the passions into the question. Spiritualists value the good in the Jewish and Christian scripture, but they deny that it is *the only* "holy writing" the sole "word of God" to the exclusion of all other holy writings. The early Christian Fathers themselves did not agree as to the component parts of the book. It is well known that Ireneus, Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian, rejected the second epistle of Peter, as well as the second and third of John, and did not agree as to Philemon and others. Several of the Fathers quote from the Apocryphal gospels, as Clement from the Gospel according to the Egyptians. The authorship of "The Hebrews" is still an unsettled point. The collection of writings which the Reformers set up as their idol, and endowed with the claim of infallibility in lieu of the church they left, was not then sent down from heaven as a book. It is a translation of MSS by unknown authors, the history and dates of which are not preserved. They express the writers' experience of Nature and the Deity; they contain historical records of value, they abound in poetry, hyperbole and allegory, they contain moral and spiritual teachings; but inasmuch as the inspiration came through human mediums they are not free from error; they abound in contradictions. Having been translated and retranslated from the oldest documents none of which date earlier than the middle of the fourth century after Christ, mistakes and interpolations are frequent. These facts are admitted by earnest truth-lovers even among divines. A Bishop of your own church demonstrates that Moses who wrote of his own death, could not have been the author of the Pentateuch; Dr. Raleigh, a President of the Congregational Union admitted there "*were mistakes in the Bible*;" attention to the discrepancies in Kings and Chronicles and the failure of prophecy* was called by the clerics and critics in the celebrated "Essays and Reviews," and lovers of truth have been gradually awakened to the fact that the loveliness of the superstructure cannot be an argument for the rottenness of the foundations. As spiritualism is often misrepresented upon this very question of Bible infallibility, I shall lay before you exactly what it teaches. Firstly Mrs. Hardinge Britten thus expresses her own views and I believe the views of many others. "The grandest monumental record that we possess is the old Jewish scriptures; not as an object to fall down and worship, not as a finality by which we dare to assume that the God of ten thousand million worlds, revealed himself alone to the re-

* Jer. XXXVI-30 Isaiah XXIII Amos VIII-10 to 17.

bellious stiff necked Jew, but as a providentially preserved record by which the words, thoughts, deeds, and manifestations of ancient men have come down to the nineteenth century." Secondly the following is the direct teaching of Spiritualism on the subject.† "Far back in the depths of humanity's history, there lived individuals who were morally and spiritually advanced beyond the medium development of the age. These individuals residing upon an elevated plane of thought were enabled to hold communion with the spiritual beings, which in all past time have been hovering in profound sympathy around the dwellers of this darkened planet. In consequence of this spiritual communion, which resulted from the interior refinement and elevation to which they had attained, they manifested to the surrounding mass the evidences of a superior wisdom, and an unusual foresight of approaching events, and since they themselves did not understand the cause or philosophy of these wonderful powers, they were content to yield to the superstitious sentiments of the people, who regarded them as being directly and immediately inspired by the Divine Being. By the individuals who are here named, we refer to the persons mentioned in the writings of the old and new Testament, as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Christ, Paul, and John. These persons were seers and prophets. In their system dwelt that peculiar essence of spiritual life which prepared them for an intercourse with the dwellers of the spheres, and while they were unconscious of this truth, and knew not the source of their inspiration, they naturally ascribed the impressions which they received, to the direct agency of the Supreme Being, and really imagined that they wrote and spoke as they were dictated by the Deity himself,

At this distant period, the nearness and influence of the spiritual world being entirely unknown, the spirits had as yet discovered no method by which the reality of their presence might be demonstrated to mortals. Yet wherever there were minds that were sufficiently impressible, the spirits opened an intercourse with the world through this medium, and revealed those truths and principles that were adapted to the stage and progress of the period. Thus the seers and prophets of the Bible were mediums of impression and influx, and hence they were employed as agents of the spiritual world then unrevealed, to elucidate and promulgate those truths which would be useful and appropriate at the time when they were given, and also those prophecies of approaching events which were important as the evidence of spiritual endowments, on the part of the individual by whom they were delivered. The Bible is not the direct and infallible word of God, and did not originate in the Divine mind as its immediate source. It was not the revelation of the Supreme Being as given under his own seal and signature, but it was and is the production of minds residing in the body, which were impressed as clearly as existing conditions and influences would admit, by the influx of thought from the spiritual world, which influx was received by the seers and prophets of the past, as the direct inspiration of God.

The Bible therefore should be regarded in the light of an ancient history; a history which can claim no reverence on account of its age, and which can be no more authoritative from its having passed through all the errors and corruptions of past generations. It should be known that even the primitive records have been so mutilated and defaced as scarcely to preserve their original identity.

The Bible is to be regarded as a collection of ancient writings, which

†The Spiritual Teacher.

have the same intrinsic authority as the writings which are produced in the present age. If these are discovered to be truthful and important, then they have authority so far as that truthfulness and importance extend and no farther; but if on the other hand they are discovered to be imperfect and incorrect, then they have not authority to the degree in which this imperfection and incorrectness extends. As all the works of the human mind are judged by the teachings of reason, so should the book which has been revered as the word of God, be subjected to the same test and tried by the same standard.

The soul created in the image of Divinity, has powers independent of the testimony of individuals who lived eighteen centuries ago; this divine and immortal being has an authority of its own, an authority that can never be shaken, though all outward altars may dissolve, and all their pride and glory pass away; an authority which dwells in the sublime reason with which it is gifted, in the intuition which constitutes its interior perception, in the consciousness of truth which is implanted within the germ of the inmost spirit. This is the authority man should ever seek, the standard by which he should determine the truth which is contained within the lids of the Bible."

Such is the truth of the book on the authority of which ecclesiastics have hitherto opposed all progress; this truth must commend itself to the reason of all whose passions are not permitted to sway and control the judgment. But apart from the consideration of the true character and place to be accorded to the utterance of the good men of old, we traverse your conclusions for the following reasons; firstly, because Moses if he ever existed, if he ever wrote the Pentateuch, if he ever gave these commands to the ancient Semitic nation, did not in doing so forbid angelic intercourse and spirit communion. It is distinctly stated in the New Testament that Moses received the law from spirits; he was in constant communion with the spirit-world. What his injunction applies to, appears to have been to discountenance the unworthy use of spiritual agencies. The divination, attempted vaticination, and obtaining by such means an unfair advantage over their neighbours. The constant cry of ignorant persons is—What is the good of Spiritualism? what has it done? why don't the spirits tell us the whereabouts of Dr. Livingstone? "If they would only show me a good quartz reef I would believe," says another. While it cannot be denied that on several occasions valuable information has been volunteered, as for example the indication of the civil war in America, the assassination of President Lincoln, &c. It appears that the object of Spiritualism is not to interfere with, or interrupt the natural course of mundane affairs—questions prompted by mere curiosity are invariably discouraged. The elevation of the individual is sought, valuable moral lessons are taught, as the necessity of love, purity of temper, domestic harmony; the reality of the world to come, the punishment of wrong doing, are some of the subjects that occupy the attention of trance speakers and impressional writers. It is supposed that Moses wished the people to avoid the customs of the nations around, and prohibited them from holding intercourse with the spirits of the heathen, lest they should be led to adopt their other practices among which idolatry held a prominent place. The prohibition evidently applied *only* to communion with spirits of a low, undeveloped condition. Secondly, we consider your conclusion illogical, because you have set aside the commands of Moses in other matters. By what authority have the sects of Christendom altered the Jewish

Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. By what authority do you enforce the ringing of your Cathedral bells when "no manner of work" is allowed, and yet you shut out the working class from the museums, libraries and all places of amusement? It appears to thinking men to be sadly inconsistent, that this command to keep holy *the seventh day* should, Sunday after Sunday be read in churches when it is not obeyed. There are other commands given by the same authority; are they observed as the infallible word of God binding on us uncircumcised Gentiles? "Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds. Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts as of woollen and linen together." How about the eating of pork, oysters, hare soup, marring the corners of the beard? all these things are forbidden as well as witchcraft. If the new covenant annulled one of those injunctions not in the decalogue, it annulled all. If the stoning of disobedient children was right in the time of Moses it is right now. Right and truth are eternal principles and are unalterable. But the command is—"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live—thou shalt stone them with stones!" Consistency requires that the upholders of Moses as the perfect law-giver whose commands apply to *all time and peoples*, should aid in carrying out his penal laws. By all means let us revert to the happy times of stoning disobedient children and witches, but let us also bear in mind that the Mormons base their peculiar institution on the example of the Bible saints, David, Solomon and others.

In connection with this part of the subject you allude to the woman of Endor, and you show that you have been considering the question, as you do not, as the clergy generally do, improve upon the Scriptural narrative by calling her "witch." You say "she cried out with terror at the apparition." This, very Reverend Sir, I must submit, is a very forced construction. The good woman did not cry out at the sight of Samuel, but at the knowledge she suddenly acquired of King Saul being present. He had made laws forbidding this very practice. She was aware that her life was endangered and in the King's power. You seem to admit this as a reliable account of a séance. This was an ill-understood chapter like many others, until lighted up by modern Spiritualism. You say "Samuel was *evidently* sent of God," but you fail to adduce the evidence; we believe he was permitted by God, for Spiritualism teaches that nothing can occur in opposition to the will of the Almighty, as His order and law are supreme. You observe "we have no other record of a communication from the dead to the living." I cannot agree with you, for it is plain that the whole Biblical record abounds in such communications. I am not aware of any evidence proving that angels were others than spiritual beings who have had a former existence on this or some other universe: indeed the evidence is the other way. I find in Hebrews 1-13-14. "But to which of the Angels said he at any time" &c. Are they not all ministering spirits &c?" On Peter's release from prison by a spirit he came to the house where "many were gathered together praying." Peter knocked at the door, Rhoda heard him, knew his voice, and ran in and told how he stood without. They said "It is his angel." Here angel is used as synonymous with spirit. Again in the first verse of the Revelations it is stated, "and he (God) sent and signified it by his angel to his servant John," and in the last chapter we read, "I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, see thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets." Here

clear allusion is made to a former earthly existence; If angelic communion, spiritual intercourse was a reality formerly, it is possible now. If the members of the early brotherhood recognized the existence around them of a "great cloud of witnesses" "who died in faith" "strangers and pilgrims on earth," we testify to their compassing us about and demonstrating to us their objective reality. We hold that when Jesus communed with Moses and Elias, the clear statement is that Moses had been dead some hundreds of years. You remark that according to Eccles. IX-5. "The dead know not anything." How then did Samuel know and say to Saul "to-morrow thou and thy sons shall be with me? You might have quoted from the same source "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts, even one thing befalleth them, as the one dieth so dieth the other, yea they have all one breath; so that a *man hath no pre-eminence above a beast* for all is vanity; *all go to one place*; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. There is no work nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." This would be rather startling pulpit teaching in our day! such does not confirm the statement of some that the Bible contains all necessary to be known of our future state: the fact being that the doctrine of immortality is very imperfectly expressed in the old Jewish records; the promises of Moses were all of a temporal nature; if the Doctrine of eternal torments by a loving Father is so necessary a dogma now, it certainly was not a part of Moses' teaching. Your next deduction is, 3rdly. "That the sin does not consist in the success of the effort to deal with the Devil or other unseen, created intelligences, but in the effort itself," and, 4thly. "That therefore the question is of no religious importance, whether the answers are dictated by Satan himself." By the mention here of the great friend of priests and clergy called Satan, you qualify as it were, your previous omission of the diabolical theory. You perceive I presume by the total failure of your "Satanic agency" hypothesis, to stay the investigation and spread of the truth, that the thinking public are not likely to adopt that explanation; yet you are unable to entirely relinquish the idea that because spiritualism is so diametrically opposed to orthodoxy, therefore it is Satanic!

Will you be surprised Very Reverend Sir, to learn that the belief in the personification of Evil is with the other mythological superstitions of the dark past, fading before Reason.

This tells us that if the Deity be omnipotent, no power or force can exist without his sanction. But the opponent of the Almighty is admitted, by those who believe in his existence, to be successful in his plans to win subjects, and he is represented as invariably victorious in defeating the best laid schemes of perfect wisdom. He seduced man and the race. He won over the antediluvians and necessitated the destruction of what had been pronounced as very good. He owned as subjects all the ancient nations except the handful of chosen people, and even these were always being lured away from their allegiance to the Jehovah of Moses. He has claimed and won since the time of Christ vast masses of mankind.* His imaginary existence demanded the idea of the "vicarious sacrifice" as a scheme to satisfy justice. He has, according to Protestant ideas, succeeded in winning over by erroneous doctrine the vast majority of Christendom; as they affirm that the teachings of both the Greek and Latin Churches

*" Probably not more than ten millions out of the 1300 millions now upon the earth are truly converted or born again."—BAXTER.

are damnable heresies, and that purgatory, masses, invocation of saints, prayers to and adoration of Mary, and transubstantiation, are delusive inventions of the evil one. The charge of Satanic agency now made against Spiritualism is not a new one. Jesus himself was subjected to the same imputation, and appealed to his teachings in refutation. Apart from the utter disbelief in the personality of Satan, which means "opposing principle," Spiritualists confidently follow the same good example. They invite a study of Spiritualism; they ask, are the doctrines of the real paternal nature of the Deity and of the true brotherhood of man, doctrines of devils? is the belief in the certain punishment of all wrong doing, in the spiritual hereafter being an eternity of action and progress, Satanic in origin? Is the inculcation of love, purity, unselfishness diabolical? These are questions that will not be left to the clergy to answer. As they fail to see truth, to examine the internal evidences of the reasonableness of this revived and purified Christianity except through their ecclesiastical glasses, their people are doing it for themselves.† Intelligent men and women, deeply impressed with the unreasonableness of the present systems called Christianity, but which are more appropriately termed Calvinism, Lutherism, Puseyism, and might be still more truly named Paulism and Augustinism, have been for years unable to give in their truthful adhesion to dogmatic theology. Science, which is exact knowledge, has demonstrated the absurdity of the fables insisted on as literal truth; philosophy shows more consistent reasonableness even in many of the religious conceptions of the despised heathen and pagan teachers: learned critics have exhibited the utter unreliability of the doctrine of verbal inspiration. The upholders of the present systems cannot but perceive the operation of these several causes; their constant lament is the lack of earnestness of the people in religious matters—evidenced by the diminishing attendance at missionary and Bible societies' meetings, and the fearful spread of what they call "infidelity." It can no longer be concealed that the best minds are outside the churches. Why think you is this? Is it that knowledge is an enemy to the religious principle? Do you for a moment imagine that the vast masses you see around you have ceased to believe in the existence of God or of their own souls? Not so. Science is a teacher and a revealer, and reading men are not ceasing to be religious; but the increased facilities for acquiring knowledge have shewn them, as Dr. Bennett remarked in Edinburgh last October, "*that religious men are not scientific.*"

It is said that a monk walking under the majestic towers of the venerable church of Notre Dame, was reading the first printed book; looking up at the antiquated pile he said—"this (the book) will kill that," (the church). The Reformation was the early fruit of the art of printing, and great men impressed their ideas and convictions on their different countries. History tells us that the Ecclesiastical authorities did not yield without a severe struggle. The Satanic charge was cast about then also, yet reason prevailed and liberty of conscience ensued. You who applaud the reformers for their rebellion against the spiritual despotism of their day, must concede an equal right to us. If it was right for Luther, Calvin and others to employ *their* reason and to protest against the irrational creeds of their day, with stronger reason is

† Mr. Nish and others denounce Spiritualism on account of the contradictions and disagreement of Spiritualists. Surely this comes with bad grace from Protestant sects, who number some hundreds; Spiritualism is no more responsible for the imaginings of men than is pure Christianity for the blasphemous conceptions of Calvin, or the daily making of God, by the consecration of a wafer!

it our privilege to still further assist in making truth the basis of our faith and worship, and to analyze anew the claim of infallibility put forward now for a book. The late Rev. Dr. Robert Lee of the National Scots' Church asks "who gave our ancestors five, three, or two hundred years ago, authority to judge and determine theological questions for us and all their descendants as well as themselves? we commend them for thinking and judging for themselves, and against the former generations and the Catholic majority of their contemporaries, who has taken away the same power and privilege from us?" Our beliefs will always be regulated by our knowledge. Spiritualism, the great reforming principle of this age, repudiates any external authority whether the Church or the Bible, and subordinates these to the testimony of the inward spirit, and the verifying faculty of cultivated reason. It declares that revelation has never been final, that heaven has never been closed, and that the Scriptures of the universe are the only true and infallible revelation which has ever been given from God to man. This expression of the Divine mind is the property of every race and contradicts the idea of favoritism. No forgeries of the original can occur in this "word of God." As far as it has been read it discovers no basis for the numerous schemes of Ecclesiasticism. Here is no teaching of the unjust doctrine that we all suffer for the supposed moral delinquency of one we never knew. No cursing the earth or its occupants by its Maker. There is no evidence of rival Deities of good and evil; no horrible dogma of eternal infinite torment for finite error, the result of ignorance, imperfect organization, and malposition. Spiritualism then is rational religion. It is the worship of God freed from creeds, cant, dogma, and spiritual despotism. It comes at a time when it is discovered that the old faiths are unequal to the necessities of the age. When the spiritual world was becoming a myth, when the creeds of Christendom were crumbling before Atheism, Positivism and Rationalism; when after 1800 years the Christianity of the Churches has utterly failed to restrain vice, to elevate the masses, to stay war. Is this denied? let the illegitimacy of Scotland,† the assassinations in Ireland, the political corruption in America, and the social evil in all great cities give answer. Let our crowded gaols be visited and inquiry made there who knows aught of Spiritualism, who has ever heard of the Fatherhood of God or the brotherhood of man? Mr. Lecky* asks "why is it that a religion remarkable for the beauty of its moral teachings should have proved itself altogether unable to regenerate mankind?" and he proceeds to point out that "theological affirmations have insisted upon the degradation of the race as a result of the fall, and that by constantly dwelling on man's helplessness as a necessary article of faith, sin and misery are recognized as the normal condition of the race."

"During the first three centuries of the Christian Church," he says, the sense of sin was not accompanied by a denial of the goodness in man and the epithet 'well-deserving' was a favorite inscription on Pagan and Christian tombs. The Pelagian controversy and St. Augustine, the progress of Asceticism, gradually introduced the doctrine of the utter depravity of man, which has proved in latter times the fertile source of *degrading superstition*."

† A report on the state of religion and morals was presented to the Free Kirk Assembly May, 1871. In this it was stated that 20 per cent. of all births in the county of Kircudbright, 1966, in Banff were illegitimate; that is every fifth child; and then in terrible irony Mr. Moody Stuart gave in the report on the conversion of the Jews.

* History of European Morals.

Spiritualism knows no such libel on our Maker ; it teaches that the divine image is within even the most debased ; that the heavenly seed is germinating even in the most vile ; that ignorance is the parent of all evil ; that want of light retards alike physical and spiritual development, but that as the Almighty "will have all to be saved," progression is the design ; that as he will be "all in all" eternity is but a never-ceasing approach to infinite love and wisdom. "It is a well ascertained fact," says one well qualified to be believed, "that persons take places in the summer land in accordance with their moral status, and not in accordance with their intellectual tastes, inclinations, or social condition. Place there, is always a question of morals, that is, whether the person has been spiritually loyal to truth, justice and liberty. The accusing angel is memory. The theory that all people will sometime go before the bar of God, and that there is a systematic heavenly tribunal is the sheerest fancy of a materialistic Theology. Both God and nature are with us at all times. The interior principle of Justice is the ever-present bar of God, at which we are arraigned and tried, and deathless memory is the accusing angel."† What is the practical tendency of Spiritualism? for this is the best test of its truth, as it indeed is of all questions relating to social matters, morals, religion or philosophy. It is apparent that its tendency is to expand all the faculties of the soul ; to enlarge our conceptions of the Deity, his goodness, justice, wisdom and power—his real paternal character ; to teach us anew our duties to our fellows ; the real brotherhood not of our sect that worships in some little Bethel, but of the whole race Pagan, Jewish, and Christian ; that none are beyond the pale of salvation ; that no nation was ever chosen to the exclusion of others ; that all souls are alike valuable although developed in different degree—to instruct us that we make our own heaven or hell by our deeds here, on this preliminary stage ; that that condition need not be a final one ; that "salvation is progression, ceasing to do evil, learning to do well ;" that true religion is the Christ principle, and is not forms, creeds, or a blind faith, but universal benevolence : "that heaven is a state not a location, that it is the enjoyment of God as seen in his works."

These truths put forth no claim for belief by any infallible authority but as they commend themselves to enlightened reason ; *disbelief in them does not imply damnation*. Spiritualism comes not to Theologians enveloped in their dogmas, but to the people ; to these it declares confidently—"The midnight of the world is past, the light of the dawn is streaming through the shadows of the departing gloom, and the great world is awakening to its glorious destiny. Arise," it says, "for the day is at hand. The glory of the heavenly spheres is dawning on the earth, and the brightness of angelic wisdom is irradiating the darkened bosom of humanity. The time for thought has come, the time for investigation can be no longer delayed, and the time for action will come when the period of the prevailing darkness shall be ended "

I am, very Reverend Sir,

Yours with true regard,

A GRADUATE OF AN UNIVERSITY.

† "Death and the After Life,"

*All Profits arising from the sale of the first
issue of this Pamphlet will be devoted to the*

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