

### MATHEMATICAL SPIRITUALISM.

A writer in the *American Spiritualist* thus advises those who desire to promote Spiritualism :—" I am impressed by a 'mathematical spirit' to ask the following questions :

1. Ought not Spiritualists to spend their time and money where it will do the most good ?

2. Is not the simple fact that spirits can and do communicate with mortals, the only thing in which all Spiritualists agree ?

3. Then should not Spiritualists, as Spiritualists, all work together to spread a knowledge of this fact, and reject all leaders, creeds, and organisations not especially designed to teach the facts of spirit-communion ?

4. Then if the special work of Spiritualists is to spread a knowledge of spirit-communion, and allow all to receive and judge for themselves, without any priestly perversion, modification, or monopolising of 'spiritual gifts,' would not the efforts, time, and money devoted to delegates' conventions, state and national organisations, their agents and missionaries, do ten times as much for the cause if devoted to the circulation of tracts, papers, and publications ?

5. Have not nineteen-twentieths of all our mediums and spirit-communications for the last twenty-two years opposed leaders, creeds, and expensive organisations ?

6. Have not all such organisations caused coldness, distrust, and discord, and demonstrated the need of

#### A NEW PROGRAMME ?

1st, Circulate tracts by millions. Let them be short, and to the point, such as can be afforded for sixpence a hundred. Each hundred, judiciously circulated, would secure at least one subscriber to a Spiritual paper.

2ndly, Circulate Spiritual papers. Let each subscriber take two where he or she now takes one, and give away to all who can be induced to read or circulate them.

3rdly, Free circles—public and private ; also local, county, state, and national mass meetings, where spirits and their mediums shall not be trammelled by would-be leaders, who fear erratic, striking, and comical manifestations, which are just the thing to draw the thoughtless crowd, and enable wise Spiritualists to scatter in tracts, papers, and publications, the seed which will, in due time, produce a bountiful harvest.

Carry out the above programme, and tracts, papers, and converts will increase tenfold faster than by patronising leaders, creeds, and expensive organisations ; at least, such is the opinion of

" A MATHEMATICAL SPIRIT."

To meet the requirements of those who desire to aid in carrying out this "new programme," a variety of "SEED-CORN" is being prepared to scatter broadcast over the land. A useful assortment of tracts is given on the other side ; but the best thing to circulate is the MEDIUM, a weekly paper devoted to Spiritualism, price 1d. If you are willing to work and too poor to pay, send for a parcel of specimens, with stamps for postage, to J. BURNS, at the "Seed-Corn" Granary, 15, Southampton Row, Holborn, London, W.C.

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## SUGGESTIONS FOR TRACT DISTRIBUTION.

1. Tracts and publications may be given away when travelling. They may be left in waiting-rooms at railway stations and in railway carriages. Always carry a supply with you.

2. Special meetings and congregations may be selected at which tracts can be offered as the people pass in and out.

3. A corps of distributors may, by concerted action, on a Sunday it might be, give every inhabitant of any town or region a tract or other work on Spiritualism. A definite district should be allotted to each distributor, and the tracts could be left at each house, given away at the churches and chapels, or to passers by in the streets. Such united action would make a deeper impression than occasional or partial services of the same kind.

4. Tracts may be scattered advantageously amongst crowds which collect on vacant ground near large towns to discuss various subjects or listen to open-air addresses. A small band of earnest Spiritualists could do much good by attending such places on Sunday afternoons, and making short speeches in succession, and giving tracts.

5. Special publications should be carefully selected, and sent per post, neatly addressed, to clergymen and others occupying influential and professional positions. The individual peculiarities of the persons thus canvassed should be carefully studied, and a publication sent in accordance with their tastes. Do not forget your personal friends.

6. Special tracts are prepared to be given away at the exhibitions of conjurers professing to expose Spiritualism, at Secularist lectures, or at the meetings of Educationalists, religious or social reformers. Such meetings should be carefully saturated with appropriate Spiritual information.

7. Tract distributors should, whenever practicable, unite together, and work in organised parties. A fund may be collected by issuing subscription-sheets with the object stated at the top thereof. Tracts may be had to better advantage in large quantities. Special editions will, on application, be printed for societies, with their announcements thereon, at wholesale prices.

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9. There is always on hand at the Spiritual Institution a surplus stock of publications, English and American, which may be obtained at very low prices. The MEDIUM, the Weekly Organ of the Movement, is specially recommended. Supplies of any forthcoming number, containing articles of local interest, may be had on such terms as may be agreed on, according to quantity.

10. Committees may also subscribe to present Mrs. Hardinge's "History of Spiritualism," "The Dialectical Society's Report," R. D. Owens works, or Gerald Massey's "Concerning Spiritualism," &c. to public libraries, institutions, or individuals, for which purpose such works may be obtained at special prices. Spiritualists should endeavour to cause every person in their district to know the aims and agencies of this movement.

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## SEED CORN.--No. 2.

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### SPIRITUALISM AND THE GOSPEL OF JESUS.

BY J. BURNS.

The religious mind of this country presents a very strange anomaly. On the one hand we have Christians opposing Spiritualism, and on the other, the Spiritualists claiming kindred with Jesus, the assumed founder of Christianity. All our knowledge of Jesus is derived from the New Testament. Apart from that book, no man has ever succeeded in demonstrating the existence of Jesus as an undeniable historical fact, though much corroborative testimony certainly exists. In appealing to the Bible, we use it, we treat it, exactly as we would any other book—analysing its matter as we proceed, and crediting it according to the relative value of the various parts as it appears to us. In this way the Bible is on friendly terms with everyone, whatever be their views. It will not quarrel with them if they will not quarrel with it. What causes difficulty is the action of those who place the Bible in a false relation by imposing it as a thrall and a fetter upon man's intellect and conscience. It is written, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," and as all of the Bible is taken for "Scripture," every part is assumed to be of equal value and importance. This syllogism men adopt without ever asking themselves what is meant by the term "Scripture." It signifies "holy writing;" and why "holy writing?" In those days of Syrian Spiritualism, that which came through prophets, or "mediums" as we would call them—that which was imparted to men from the spirit-world—was called "holy," because it was good, pure, and adapted to elevate men's minds towards that which was eternal and spiritual. It was also the opinion of those ancient Spiritualists that all such utterances came direct from God. Nowadays we think differently, and know that all truth is from God, but that what comes from spiritual sources is not necessarily or absolutely true. Even though the fountain were pure, the channel is human—faulty; and hence, though "holy writings" may be very good in themselves, they are alike the subject of reason and criticism with any other writings or books. That and similar terms in the Bible refer to spiritual facts and allusions, and it takes a spiritual student to read their import aright. Without this spiritual light and knowledge, commentators have misjudged the meaning of such passages, and placed the Bible as a bondage upon the minds of men, thus stultifying their mental and spiritual growth, and rendering the Bible a curse rather than a benefit to the race. All of the Bible is not "holy writing." Much of it is a mere record of events, the same as may be found in any other history, and has to be judged by its consistency or value. In this light we attribute no authoritative importance to the statements respecting Jesus recorded in the gospels, and we do not profess to endorse them all, or accept them all as of equal value. If we compared them carefully some contradictions might be discovered, on which account we prefer to follow the general portraiture of Jesus as it is depicted in the spirit of the gospels, and form our opinion of his mission from that genera

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view, rather than from the consideration of separate texts and statements.

The records agree in asserting that Jesus was born of poor parents, and that he was brought up to the humble calling of a mechanic. He was a child of intuitive genius, and at the age of twelve years he was discovered in the Temple puzzling the erudite brains of the leading theologians with his questions and answers—a feat which children very readily accomplish at the present day. Bible history says nothing of him till his thirtieth year, when he entered upon his public career, and displayed such a marked individuality that it would be madness to suppose that he worked passively at the carpenter's bench from the time he was twelve till he "entered on his ministry." The general supposition is that he left his humble home and wandered forth into the world in search of knowledge; that he visited Egypt—the land of occult philosophy—and, perhaps, India; that he returned to his native land with the full intent of reforming her institutions and enlightening her children, with a mind stored with knowledge, and faculties fully developed and at ready control by careful cultivation and exercise. Education with the child of spiritual genius is not cramming the memory with a few basketfuls of old books, but a calling out of the Divine powers of the human soul, whereby all knowledge and power is given unto men. Such were at any rate the accomplishments of Jesus. He betrayed remarkable spiritual powers. He was psychometric, clairvoyant, could heal the sick even at a distance, exercised wonderful biological influence over mind and matter, could "summon legions of angels" to his aid, worked by a spiritual power delegated to him by "the Father," and did his mighty works by the "power of the Holy Ghost." We see in this portrait a man with remarkable psychological endowments, and moreover, a medium for superior influences—according to his own candid acknowledgment.

We may next notice the positiveness of his character, and the uncompromising opposition which he offered to the ecclesiastical, social, and political institutions and usages of the time. He characterised the priesthood as "whited sepulchres" and pretentious hypocrites, the lawyers as the robbers of the widow and the fatherless, and the political authorities as tyrants. He neither respected the Sabbath nor the man's corn through which he walked and helped himself to. He abrogated in his person all religion except trust in the Divine Father, all social usages except brotherly love, and all law except the "new commandment" which he made the basis of his social intercourse. No wonder that all classes of society were against him—that the respectable people held him as of no repute—that the rich despised him, the sanctimonious reviled him, the theologians thought he had "a devil," and the authorities put him to death as a political offender.

He had his friends. The lowly and erring were particularly dear to him: "publicans and sinners" were his associates, and he chose his followers from the most ignorant and humble rank in society. These understood him very imperfectly. When in danger, they all deserted him: Peter denied him, Judas betrayed him, Thomas doubted him, and Philip was so hopelessly stupid that he could not comprehend the purport of his Master's mission. Yet this strange man, poorly circumstanced as he was, identified himself with his Divine Parent as the loving child would with his father and mother. His motive was truth, his means:

love, and his aim goodness to his brother man ; and he realised thereby the glorious fact that He and his Father were one. In doing this, he arrogated no special privileges to himself, but in the name of humanity asserted his Divine Sonship, and that no power, either in heaven or earth, had a right to come between a man's soul and his sense of right and duty. He said, "The kingdom of heaven is within you ;" and as God makes "heaven his dwelling place," therefore God is within the innermost of every man, and thus he taught that man was essentially spiritual, divine. The objects of existence were also spiritual. " 'My kingdom is not of this world,' but the great mission of my life is spiritual ; and so is yours, for you are also the 'sons of God.' " He did not set himself up as superior, or as an object of adoration and worship. On the contrary, he promised that those who should follow him and perform the necessary duties should do even greater things than he himself accomplished. He was the first fruits—the forerunner of a mighty Spiritual Brotherhood ; and, as an everlasting member of that sacred compact, he promised to visit them in spirit after his bodily decease. It is recorded that he did so in a tangible physical manner which Spiritualists can well understand. He enforced on no one any belief or creed, but tolerated every man's inability to comprehend his teachings or motives. He enjoined all to adopt his method or example ; and what was that ? From the *professions* of his modern followers, we would suppose that Jesus was a *copyist*, for they pretend to copy his character, though they miserably fail in all their attempts to do so. Jesus was no copyist—no imitator of others. Many good men had preceded him, the paragon of his people, with whose renown he was no doubt acquainted ; but we do not read of him imitating Moses, David, or Isaiah, but he truthfully and diligently lived out HIMSELF ; and the spiritual light within him, which "lighteth every man that cometh into the world," was his pattern and teacher. He asked his friends to follow his example—it was that of a self-reliant, original genius ; and if we would achieve any success in spiritual gifts, intellect, or morals, we must try to be like ourselves—not like Jesus, which would be a sheer impossibility, as no two men can be alike ; but every man will make the most of life by self-knowledge and self-development. What, then, was the Gospel or gladdening teachings of Jesus ? He lived in an age when hollow ceremony was called religion, when government was tyranny, and when society was a seething mass of passionate corruption and selfishness—when scepticism on the one hand, and fanatical piety on the other, either openly denied man's spiritual nature, or rendered it ridiculous. Jesus taught a practical religion of the highest morality, that God is spirit, and that man is the child of his bosom ; but he left everyone to think as their capabilities permitted them in all philosophical matters. He demonstrated the truth that the child might act in harmony with the parent—that man might be one with God. He exhibited the fact that man in the flesh could be the instrument of spiritual powers and beings for the enlightenment of man on spiritual matters ; and, finally, that after physical death man assumed an immortal body, in which he lived in a spiritual world, and could, in accordance with certain conditions, return to those with whom he was in mutual sympathy. This is, in short, the Gospel of Jesus, and it is nothing but pure Spiritualism, the essence and form of all religion. It is not "Christianity," however, with its doctrines, theologies, and dog-

matic assumptions. Where did these proceed from? They have existed in the world from the earliest dawn of idolatrous priestcraft. The Fall and the Devil—the immaculate conception by a virgin—the birth, life, and acts of a God-man—the angry God—the Hell torments—the vicarious Sacrifice, and the Trinity are to be found in nearly every form of idolatry or Paganism that has existed or is now to be found upon the face of the earth. These beliefs were in the minds of the people, who adopted certain notions from the spiritual lights of ancient days, which they engrafted upon their own idolatrous dogmas. If space permitted, we might profitably refer to history, and point out the career of all the Pagan myths that are now taught in our churches as popular Christianity.

What, then, is the duty of Spiritualists in the present crisis? The position of the true Spiritualist is the same as that of Jesus in every sense of the word. The genuine Spiritualist is a man who follows his reason and his intuitions—so did Jesus. The Spiritualist follows truth, and lives by the application of truth to all the relations of life—so did Jesus. The Spiritualist is a self-reliant original—so was Jesus. The Spiritualist is a reformer in every sense of the term—so was Jesus. The Spiritualist is unpopular—so was Jesus. The Spiritualist exercises spirit-power—so did Jesus. In every aspect we have a parallel, all of which are avowedly ignored by Christian Churches, as is seen by their blind hostility to Spiritualism. The Spiritualist is doing the same work now that Jesus did in his day. It is nothing new now, and was nothing new then. It had all been enacted over and over again in the world's history, but each time had got contaminated by the selfishness of priest-hoods, and so required renewing. The great practical question now is, How shall we make it pure, and keep it pure? By having no compact whatever with the prevailing forms of priestcraft. Jesus did not betray his God by claiming kinship with any of the religious bodies of his time, and scorned to wear their name, enjoy their privileges, or conform to their requirements. Let us do likewise, and, with all the power we possess, oppose every effort to Christianise, Mormonise, Mohammedanise, or otherwise pollute Spiritualism. To do so would be to accept the opinions of men—opinions that have been blindly or designedly thrust upon their minds to serve certain selfish ends and shut out from mankind the great spiritual light which comes to every man according to his needs. Spiritualists! surely we may call our souls our own? Let us resist as traitors and dangerous foes those who would enthral our minds by their personal opinions under the term of "Christian Spiritualism," or any other authoritarian bondage whatever. Jesus brought, "not peace, but a sword," and yet he said, "My peace give I unto you." What is this "peace" which the world cannot take away? It is, that every man be in harmony with his own sense of right and truth, but not with fashionable religion. If Jesus had tried to be at peace with the "Scribes and Pharisees," he might have occupied a high position in the Synagogue, but would he have been at peace? Let every soul answer and be guided by the result of its questioning.

Read *THE MEDIUM*, a weekly exponent of "SPIRITUALISM," One Penny: published by J. Burns. Other numbers of *SEED CORN*, and many interesting works on Spiritualism, are on sale at the Progressive Library, 15, Southampton Row, Holborn London, W.C.

## SEED CORN.—No. 3.

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### THE PRINCIPLES OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

By A. E. NEWTON.

Modern Spiritualism, distinctively so called, took its rise from certain phenomena alleged to be caused by disembodied spirits, and believed to signalise the opening of intelligible intercourse between the earthly and spiritual states of existence. These phenomena first attracted special attention in the western part of the State of New York in the year 1848, and have since spread, in various forms, throughout almost all parts of the civilised world.

It is computed that from three to five millions of the people of the United States alone have become convinced of their reality and their spiritual origin.

The following definitions and summary of opinions were adopted by the Fifth Annual Convention of American Spiritualists, and represent the claims generally put forth by Spiritualists:—

Spiritualism, in its broad sense, as a philosophical system, embraces whatever relates to spirit, spiritual existences, and spiritual forces; especially all truths relative to the human spirit, its nature, capacities, laws of manifestation, its disembodied existence, the conditions of that existence, and the modes of communication between that and earth-life. It is thus a system of universal philosophy, embracing in its ample scope all phenomena of life, motion, and development; all causation, immediate or remote; all existence, animal, human, and divine. It has, consequently, its phenomenal, philosophical, and theological departments.

But in neither of these departments is it as yet clearly and completely defined to general acceptance. Hence there is no distinct system now before the public which can with propriety be called Spiritualism, or the spiritual philosophy, and for which Spiritualists, as such, can be held responsible.

Modern Spiritualism, more specifically, may be defined as that belief or conviction which is peculiar to, and universally held by, the people now called Spiritualists. This may be stated in the single proposition—

That disembodied human spirits sometimes manifest themselves, or make known their presence and power, to persons in the earthly body, and hold realised communication with them.

Whoever believes this one fact, whatever else he may believe or disbelieve in theology, philosophy, or morals, is a Spiritualist, according to the modern use of the term. Hence there are wide differences among Spiritualists on theological questions. There are those who regard the

Bible as divinely inspired and authoritative; though, in the light of modern revelation, they interpret its teachings somewhat differently from any of the prominent sects of Christendom. There are others who esteem it simply as an historic record, embracing the religious ideas, spiritual manifestations, &c., of the Jewish people and early Christians, having no higher claims to reliability or authority than have other histories. The subjoined summary embodies the views on a variety of topics generally prevalent among the more intelligent class of Spiritualists:—

#### I. THEORETICAL.

1. That man has a spiritual nature as well as a corporeal; in other words, that the real man is a spirit, which spirit has an organised form, composed of sublimated material, with parts and organs corresponding to those of the corporeal body.

2. That man as a spirit is immortal. Being found to survive that change called physical death, it may be reasonably supposed that he will survive all vicissitudes.

3. That there is a spiritual world, or state, with its substantial realities, objective as well as subjective.

4. That the process of physical death in no way essentially transforms the mental constitution or the moral character of those who experience it, else it would destroy their identity.

5. That happiness or suffering in the spiritual state, as in this, depends not on arbitrary decree or special provision, but on character, aspirations, and degree of harmonisation, or of personal conformity to universal and divine law.

6. Hence that the experiences and attainments of the present life lay the foundation on which the next commences.

7. That since growth is the law of the human being in the present life, and since the process called death is in fact but a birth into another condition of life, retaining all the advantages gained in the experiences of this life, it may be inferred that growth, development, expansion, or progression is the endless destiny of the human spirit.

8. That the spiritual world is not far off, but near, around, or inter-blended with our present state of existence; and hence that we are constantly under the cognisance of spiritual beings.

9. That as individuals are passing from the earthly to the spiritual state in all stages of mental and moral growth, that state includes all grades of character, from the lowest to the highest.

10. That happiness and misery depend on internal states rather than on external surroundings; there are as many gradations of each as there are shades of character—each one gravitating to his own place by natural law of affinity.

11. That communications from the spiritual world, whether by mental impression, inspiration, or any other mode of transmission, are not necessarily infallible truth, but, on the contrary, partake unavoidably of the imperfections of the minds from which they emanate and of the channels through which they come, and are, moreover, liable to misinterpretation by those to whom they are addressed.

12. Hence that no inspired communication, in this or any age, (whatever claims may have been set up as to its source), is authoritative

any further than it expresses truth to the individual consciousness; which last is the final standard to which all inspired or spiritual teachings must be brought for judgment.

13. That inspiration, or influx of ideas and promptings from the spiritual realm is not a miracle of a past age, but a perpetual fact—the ceaseless method of the divine economy for human elevation.

14. That all angelic and all demoniac beings which have manifested themselves or interposed in human affairs in the past were simply disembodied spirits in different grades of advancement.

15. That all authentic miracles (so called) in the past—such as the raising of the apparently dead, the healing of the sick by the laying on of hands or other simple means, unharmed contact with poisons, the movement of physical objects without visible instrumentality, &c., &c.—have been produced in harmony with universal laws, and hence may be repeated at any time under suitable conditions.

16. That the causes of all phenomena—the sources of all power, life, and intelligence—are to be sought for in the internal or spiritual realm, not in the external or material.

17. That the chain of causation leads inevitably to a creative spirit, who must be not only a fount of life (Love), but a forming principle (Wisdom)—thus sustaining the dual parental relations of father and mother to all finite intelligences, who, of course, are all brethren.

18. That man, as the offspring of this Infinite Parent, is in some sense His image or finite embodiment; and that, by virtue of his parentage, each human being is or has, in his inmost, a germ of divinity—an incorruptible offshoot of the Divine Essence, which is ever prompting to good and right, and which, in time, will free itself from all imperfections incident to a rudimental or earthly condition, and will finally triumph over evil.

19. That all evil is disharmony, greater or less, with this divine principle; and hence, whatever prompts and aids man to bring his external nature into subjection to and harmony with the divine in him, in whatever religious system or formula it may be embodied, is a “means of salvation” from evil.

## II. PRACTICAL.

The hearty and intelligent conviction of these truths, with a realisation of spirit-communion, tends—

1. To enkindle lofty desires and spiritual aspirations—an effect opposite to that of a grovelling Materialism which limits existence to the present life.

2. To deliver from painful fears of death, and dread of imaginary evils consequent thereupon, as well as to prevent inordinate sorrow and mourning for deceased friends.

3. To give a rational and inviting conception of the after-life to those who use the present worthily.

4. To stimulate to the highest and worthiest possible employment of the present life, in view of its momentous relations to the future.

5. To energeise the soul in all that is good and elevating, and to restrain the passions from all that is evil and impure. This must result, according to the laws of moral influence, from a knowledge of the constant presence or cognisance of the loved and pure.

6. To prompt our earnest endeavours, by purity of life, by unselfishness, and by loftiness of aspiration, to live constantly *en rapport* with the highest conditions of spirit life and thought.

7. To stimulate the mind to the largest investigation and the freest thought on all subjects—especially on the vital themes of a spiritual philosophy and all cognate matters,—that it may be qualified to judge for itself what is right and true.

8. To deliver from all bondage to authority, whether vested in creed, book, or church, except that of perceived truth.

9. To cultivate self-reliance and careful investigation by taking away the support of authorities, and leaving each mind to exercise its own truth-determining powers.

10. To quicken all philanthropic impulses, stimulating to enlightened and unselfish labours for human good, under the encouraging assurance that the redeemed and exalted spirits of our race, instead of retiring to idle away an eternity of inglorious ease, are encompassing us about as a cloud of witnesses, inspiring us to the work, and aiding it forward to a certain and glorious issue.

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Spiritualism, in the general acceptance of the term, implies a recognition of God as the infinite spirit-presence of the universe, and of a *present* as well as *past* intercourse and communion between the inhabitants of earth and those peopling the world of spirits. It is a fact, and a life; in method it is phenomenal and philosophical, corresponding to the inductive and deductive methods of reasoning. As the administration of law has little to do with essential justice, and theology little to do with religion "pure and undefiled," so creeds and churchal dogmas have, legitimately, nothing to do with Spiritualism. The angels never designed the introduction of a new sect upon earth through the agency of Spiritual manifestations. Those are Spiritualists, then, who from personal, or otherwise well-attested evidences, believe in present interviews with, and communications from, immortalised spirits, and strive so far as in them lies to live pure and spiritual lives.—*J. M. Peebles.*

Inquirers into Spiritualism should correspond with Mr. Burns, Proprietor of the Spiritual Institution, 15, Southampton Row, London, W.C., who will gladly forward a packet of publications and useful information *gratis*. Stamps should in all cases be enclosed for return postage. Deputations of mediums or lecturers may be arranged for to visit any locality where public meetings or seances can be instituted.

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## SEED CORN.—No. 4.

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### WHAT IS SPIRITUALISM?

It answers the question: "If a man die, shall he live again; is it all over with me when I have laid aside this mortal body; are those dear and loved ones who have been severed from me by death, blotted out of existence for ever, or do they live, and love, and grow in knowledge in a better and happier clime, where I shall meet them in a few short fleeting years?" Most important question! While it remains unanswered, mankind, like doomed convicts, await, in a state of preliminary trial and suffering, the final operation of inevitable fate. At this dark and hideous picture the human mind naturally recoils; and if it can be shown that man is immortal—that a better life awaits the conclusion of this one, that this earth is a preparatory school-house, and that the future is eternal progression towards more perfect and happy conditions, then a man's aspirations met, the justice and mercy of the Creator is vindicated, and man is put in possession of more worlds than one, and can enjoy them all in anticipation.

How does Spiritualism answer this great question, so all-important, that it has been propounded millions of times during the last four thousand years? The answer is very simple, and at the same time unquestionably certain. The cravings of the human soul are satisfied on this important matter by placing man in direct communication with such as have departed this life, and thus, by face-to-face intercourse, as it were, practically convincing the investigator that those who were deemed lost have only gone before, and live to inform us of their continued existence. Those who are unacquainted with the subject may smile incredulously at such expectations, while the more thoughtful will be glad to know how such a desirable consummation can be effected. To such it may be simply stated that communion with the spirit-world is not an impossibility, a miracle, a superstition, a trick, nor a delusion; it is a natural law of human existence, and has manifested itself in all ages of the world. History is replete with records of spirit-communion, most notably the Bible, and the sacred books of all peoples. Indeed, all religions have emanated from this source. For how could man have known anything of spiritual existence, unless those in that higher realm had been able to communicate the fact to him? It does not require that you should be of any particular creed or belief in order to establish communion with the spirit-world, which depends upon temperament, or bodily peculiarities of those who conduct the inquiry, and not on their knowledge or theories of any kind. To ensure success, a medium is

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necessary. And pray what is a medium? the curious and interested reader will be ready to exclaim. We reply: A medium is a person so constituted as to give off from the body a fine magnetism, or invisible power, similar to that peculiar to the magnet which attracts iron. This substance, though invisible, is the connecting link between mind and matter—the force through the agency of which we move our bodies and do the work of life, and, in short, enables the human spirit while in the flesh to control the physical body. The bodies of spiritual beings are supposed to be constituted of a similar material to this invisible fluid, whereby spirits coming near a medium are able to connect themselves with his magnetism, and thus exercise their will over material objects or human beings. This process was carried on long before modern Spiritualism was known. By this means guardian angels and ministering spirits have in all ages been enabled to approach humanity, and impress their minds with that which was necessary for their welfare and enlightenment. Through this faculty inventors and men of genius have been able to give new light to the world; and hence we see that Spiritualism, besides showing man how to communicate with the spirit-world, is a most important element in the science of mind.

We can now understand how the spirit which is invisible may be able to influence man and visible objects. The spirit-circle is formed by six or eight persons sitting round a table, and placing the palms of the hands lightly on the top of it. If a person having the natural qualifications of a medium is present, and if the temperaments of the other sitters are congenial, the magnetic power of the whole company will gather in a cloud over the table and the sitters, enabling the attendant spirits to move the table up and down, or from side to side, and even to float it in the air, while no human hand is touching it. This is almost incredible, but quite easy of explanation by the laws of magnetism above alluded to. When tables thus move, communication can at once be established by asking the intelligence that moves the table to make it tip a certain number of times, or cause raps as signals in answer to questions, or to indicate letters of the alphabet. A more direct way of communion is by writing. When certain persons thus sit at a table they find their hands moved about by an influence over which they have no control. This is to indicate that the spirits wish to write through them. If such a person take a pencil in the hand thus moved, he will be caused to write without any control or thought on his part.

In this way information has been communicated with which no person present was acquainted, and the autographs of strangers who had died years before have been written. Other mediums are put into a sleeping state, called the trance, by the spirits, just as a mesmeriser operates on his subjects, only the spirit-mesmeriser is not visible. In

this state the medium is made to say anything which the spirits desire, even to deliver lectures and sermons. Sometimes the mediums will act and personify deceased persons, though they never saw them in life. Another phase of mediumship is clairvoyance, by which mediums see spirits and describe them, the same as they would persons in the flesh. The clairvoyant sight can see the magnetic elements which are invisible to ordinary sight, and thus is enabled to perceive spirits.

There is a medium in almost every family, and if spirit-circles were formed generally by one family uniting with another, the whole population might be put in communication with the spirit-world at once, and derive enlightenment and comfort from its inhabitants, who have advanced beyond the mortal stage of shortsightedness. Investigators, however, must bear in mind that spirits are but human like themselves. Some of them know no more than those in the flesh, and perhaps much less, because a departed person—ignorant, depraved, or criminal—has power to communicate as well as the intelligent and exalted. The best means of getting into communion with enlightened and good spirits, is to have elevated and disinterested motives, seeking the truth for its own sake, and not for the gratification of any personal conceit or selfish purpose. Do not be credulous and believe that you are in communion with saints, heroes, and men of genius. Demand a test of identity from every spirit that communicates, and if your motives are good and your purposes pure, you will soon be attended by spirit-guides or co-workers in the upper world, who will protect you from the advances of those who would harm or deceive you. That all may have an opportunity of investigating this matter for themselves, the following rules for the spirit-circle are appended for guidance.

### **RULES AND CONDITIONS FOR THE SPIRIT-CIRCLE.**

**ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS.**—The phenomena cannot be successfully elicited in very warm, sultry weather, in extreme cold, when thunder and lightning and magnetic disturbances prevail, when the atmosphere is very moist, or when there is much rain, or storms of wind. A warm, dry atmosphere is best, as it presents the mean between all extremes, and agrees with the harmonious state of man's organism which is proper for the manifestation of spiritual phenomena. A subdued light or darkness increases the power and facilitates control.

**LOCAL CONDITIONS.**—The room in which a circle is held for development or investigation should be set apart for that purpose. It should be comfortably warmed and ventilated, but draughts or currents of air should be avoided. Those persons composing the circle should meet in the room about an hour before the experiments commence; the same sitters should attend each time, and occupy the same places. This maintains the peculiar magnetic conditions necessary to the production of the phenomena. A developing circle exhausts power, or uses it up.

**PHYSIOLOGICAL CONDITIONS.**—The phenomena are produced by a vital force emanating from the sitters, which the spirits use as a connecting link between themselves and objects. Certain temperaments give off this power; others emit an opposite influence. If the circle is composed of persons with suitable temperaments, manifestations will take place readily; if the contrary be the case, much perseverance will be necessary to produce results. If both kinds of temperament are present, they require to be arranged so as to produce harmony in the psychical atmosphere evolved from them. The physical manifestations especially depend upon temperament. If a circle does not succeed, changes should be made in the sitters till the proper conditions are supplied.

**MENTAL CONDITIONS.**—All forms of mental excitement are detrimental to success. Those with strong and opposite opinions should not sit together: opinionated, dogmatic, and positive people are better out of the circle and room. Parties between whom there are feelings of envy, hate, contempt, or other inharmonious sentiment should not sit at the same circle. The vicious and crude should be excluded from all such experiments. The minds of the sitters should be in a passive rather than an active state, possessed by the love of truth and of mankind. One harmonious and fully-developed individual is invaluable in the formation of a circle.

THE CIRCLE should consist of from three to ten persons of both sexes, and sit round an oval, oblong, or square table. Cane-bottomed chairs or those with wooden seats are preferable to stuffed chairs. Mediums and sensitives should never sit on stuffed chairs, cushions, or sofas used by other persons, as the influences which accumulate in the cushions often affect the mediums unpleasantly. The active and quiet, the fair and dark, the ruddy and pale, male and female, should be seated alternately. If there is a medium present, he or she should occupy the end of the table with the back to the north. A mellow mediumistic person should be placed on each side of the medium, and those most positive should be at the opposite corners. No person should be placed behind the medium. A circle may represent a horseshoe magnet, with the medium placed between the poles.

**CONDUCT AT THE CIRCLE.**—The sitters should place their hands on the table, and endeavour to make each other feel easy and comfortable. Agreeable conversation, singing, reading, or invocation may be engaged in—anything that will tend to harmonise the minds of those present, and unite them in one purpose, is in order. By engaging in such exercises the circle may be made very profitable apart from the manifestations. Sitters should not desire anything in particular, but unite in being pleased to receive that which is best for all. The director of the circle should sit opposite the medium, and put all questions to the spirit, and keep order. A recorder should take notes of the conditions and proceedings. Manifestations may take place in a few minutes, or the circle may sit many times before any result occurs. Under these circumstances it is well to change the positions of the sitters, or introduce new elements, till success is achieved. When the table begins to tilt, or when raps occur, do not be too impatient to get answers to questions. When the table can answer questions by giving three taps or raps for "Yes," and one for "No," it may assist in placing the sitters properly. The spirits or intelligences which produce the phenomena should be treated with the same courtesy and consideration as you would desire for yourselves if you were introduced into the company of strangers for their personal benefit. At the same time, the sitters should not on any account allow their judgment to be warped or their good sense imposed upon by spirits, whatever their professions may be. Reason with them kindly, firmly, and considerately.

**INTERCOURSE WITH SPIRITS** is carried on by various means. The simplest is three taps of the table or raps for "Yes," and one for "No." By this means the spirits can answer in the affirmative or negative. By calling over the alphabet the spirits will rap at the proper letters to constitute a message. Sometimes the hand of a sitter is shaken, then a pencil should be placed in the hand, when the spirits may write by it automatically. Other sitters may become entranced, and the spirits use the vocal organs of such mediums to speak. The spirits sometimes impress mediums, while others are clairvoyant, and see the spirits, and messages from them written in luminous letters in the atmosphere. Sometimes the table and other objects are lifted, moved from place to place, and even through closed doors. Patiently and kindly seek for tests of identity from loved ones in the spirit-world, and exercise caution respecting spirits who make extravagant pretensions of any kind.

BEFORE proceeding with their investigations, inquirers into Spiritualism should correspond with Mr. Burns, Proprietor of the Spiritual Institution, 15, Southampton Row, London, W.C., who will gladly forward a packet of publications and useful information gratis. Stamps should in all cases be enclosed for return postage. Deputations of mediums or lecturers may be arranged for to visit any locality where public meetings or seances can be instituted.

Those who are desirous of becoming acquainted with Spiritualism in all its bearings, should read *THE MEDIUM AND DAYBREAK*, the Weekly organ of the Movement, price One Penny. The whole of the literature of the Movement may be read by subscribing to the Progressive Library. Other numbers of "Seed Corn," and a great variety of cheap publications on the subject, may be obtained of J. Burns, Spiritual Institution, 15, Southampton Row, London, W.C.

## SEED CORN.—No. 5.

### THE CREED OF THE SPIRITS.\*

*I believe in God*, for I know that spirit, matter, and motion are eternal existences, co-equal, co-eternal, co-existent ever. As I believe in matter, then so do I believe in spirit; and the totality of that spirit, that master-mind that was even before form—that moved upon the chaos and void, and evolved therefrom order, harmony, and form—is God. Finite as I am, I can never comprehend his infinity; temporal pilgrim as I am now, and passing on and ever passing on in temporality, I cannot master his eternity. It is enough for me to know that He is all-wise, for the majesty, order, and beauty of creation prove it; He is all-good, for the beneficence disclosed in that creation proves it; He is all-powerful, for its stupendous strength, its glorious and majestic permanence prove it.

*I believe in the immortality of the human soul*, for I have been taught to analyse and search until I discover that that which is must have existed for ever; and, though on this earth I am only possessed of such memory as carries me back to the beginning of my own temporal existence, and such prophecy as proves to me that I shall live beyond the grave, I still recognise that lives infinite one way cannot be finite another, and that if there is infinity around me I am a part of it—I am infinite also. And since I question and since I doubt, even the chemist that scoffs at me proves my position, and shows me that nothing can be annihilated. My soul is something, the functions of my soul are something, my self-consciousness is something, my sense of individuality is something that cannot be annihilated. The strong psychology of another mind mightier than mine would impose upon me the dark fatal belief of annihilation for my soul, and eternal existence for everything else. My spirit-friend comes to my side, grasps my hand, and whispers in my ear, in the voice of the loved and those I have deemed the lost—"I live for ever, and thou shalt live for ever."

*I believe in right and wrong*, for I do find the penalties of the wrong and the compensation of the right impressed on all things, on all forms of life. When I doubt this, the sophist would come and preach to me of circumstances, of surroundings, of impulses and forces; and when he would try in the tones of sophistry to mask me from the light which the penalty is perpetually bringing me, my spirit-friends appeal to me, and with the glory of the immortal spheres on his glittering brow, or the darkness of the dweller on the threshold hanging around him, gives me to understand that the second stage of existence is absolute judgment for the deeds done in the body.

*I believe in the communion of spirits as ministering angels*. I not only realise this from the truths that are demonstrated around me, but from the reason which assures me that the love which animated the form that I loved so well, as it still subsists must still find an exercise; that to live, to love, and yet to be unable to manifest that love to the objects that need it, must be a condition of existence far worse than that in which we daily live, and love, and minister to each other.

\* From an Oration by Emma Hardinge, entitled, "The Creed of the Spirits; or, the Influence of the Religion of Spiritualism." Price 1d.

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## SPIRITUAL COMMANDMENTS.

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I.—Thou shalt search for truth in every department of being—test, prove, and try if what thou deemest *is* truth, and then accept it as the Word of God.

II.—Thou shalt continue the search for truth all thy life, and never cease to test, prove, and try all that thou deemest to be truth.

III.—Thou shalt search by every attainable means for the laws that underlie all life and being; thou shalt strive to comprehend these laws, live in harmony with them, and make them the laws of thine own life, thy rule and guide in all thine actions.

IV.—Thou shalt not follow the example of any man or set of men, nor obey any teaching or accept of any theory as thy rule of life that is not in strict accordance with thy highest sense of right.

V.—Thou shalt remember that a wrong done to the least of thy fellow-creatures is a wrong done to all; and thou shalt never commit a wrong wilfully and consciously to any of thy fellow-men, nor connive at wrong done by others without striving to prevent or protesting against it.

VI.—Thou shalt acknowledge all men's rights to do, think, or speak, to be exactly equal to thine own; and all rights whatsoever that thou dost demand, thou shalt ever accord to others.

VII.—Thou shalt not hold thyself bound to love, or associate with those that are distasteful or repulsive to thee; but thou shalt be held bound to treat such objects of dislike with gentleness, courtesy, and justice, and never suffer thy antipathies to make thee ungente or unjust to any living creature.

VIII.—Thou shalt ever regard the rights, interests, and welfare of the many as superior to those of the one or the few; and in cases where thy welfare or that of thy friend is to be balanced against that of society, thou shalt sacrifice thyself or friend to the welfare of the many.

IX.—Thou shalt be obedient to the laws of the land in which thou dost reside, in all things which do not conflict with thy highest sense of right.

X.—Thy first and last duty upon earth, and all through thy life, shall be to seek for the principles of right, and to live them out to the utmost of thy power; and whatever creed, precept, or example conflicts with those principles, thou shalt shun and reject, ever remembering that the laws of right are—in morals, JUSTICE; in science, HARMONY; in religion, THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD, THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN, the immortality of the human soul, and compensation and retribution for the good or evil done on earth.

## THE TEN LAWS OF RIGHT.

I.—**TEMPERANCE** in all things, whether physical, mental, moral, affectional, or religious.

II.—**JUSTICE** to all creatures that be—justice being the exercise of precisely the same rules of life, conduct, thought, or speech that we would desire to receive from others.

III.—**GENTLENESS** in speech and act—never needlessly wounding the feelings of others by harsh words or deeds; never hurting or destroying aught that breathes, save for the purposes of sustenance or self-defence.

IV.—**TRUTH** in every word or thought spoken or acted; but reservation of harsh or displeasing truths where they would needlessly wound the feelings of others.

V.—**CHARITY**—charity in thought, striving to excuse the failings of others; charity in speech, veiling the failings of others; charity in deeds, wherever, whenever, and to whomsoever the opportunity offers.

VI.—**ALMSGIVING**—visiting the sick and comforting the afflicted in every shape that our means admit of and the necessities of our fellow-creatures demand.

VII.—**SELF-SACRIFICE**, wherever the interests of others are to be benefited by our endurance.

VIII.—**TEMPERATE** yet firm defence of our views of right, and protest against wrong, whether for ourselves or others.

IX.—**INDUSTRY** in following any calling we may be engaged in, or in devoting some portion of our time, when otherwise not obliged to do so, to the service and benefit of others.

X.—**LOVE**—above and beyond all, seeking to cultivate in our own families, kindred, friends, and amongst all mankind generally the spirit of that true and tender love which can think, speak, and act no wrong to any creature living; remembering aways, that where love is, all the other principles of right are fulfilled beneath its influence and embodied in its monitions.

We should ever hold the above-stated principles of right to be obligatory upon all men, as they are the deductions evolved from the laws of being, and therefore in strict harmony with the divine order of creation. All views of science are dependent on human intelligence and the unfoldments of intellectual knowledge. All views of theology are dependent upon intuitive perceptions, faith, or testimony derived from varying sources—hence, man's opinions concerning science and theology are subject to change, and dependent on the circumstances of nationality, intellectual training, or incidents peculiar to personal experiences; but the religion of right, morality, and love, and the commandments of life-duty, originating from the fundamental principles inherent in life and being, can never change until man ceases to be, or the harmonies of the universe are themselves changed or annihilated.

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# DR. SEXTON'S CONVERSION TO SPIRITUALISM.

*To the Editor of the Medium and Daybreak.*

SIR,—I am being subject just now to a good deal of abuse in certain quarters, in consequence of what is termed my sudden conversion to Spiritualism and renunciation of Atheism and Secularistic Materialism. I have yet to learn that a man commits a crime by changing his views when new evidence is brought before him, and when fresh beams from the great sun of truth dawn upon his intelligence. All progress implies change, and, therefore, to denounce the latter is to obstruct the former. The deep-rooted prejudice against a change of opinion, so prevalent in this country, has sapped the very vitals of investigation and discovery, and perpetuated error and hypocrisy to an alarming extent. When so-called freethinkers object to a man's receiving new convictions opposed to those he formerly entertained, they belie their pretensions and prove to the world how great a sham is their assumed freethought.

In my case, however, there is a thorough misrepresentation. I never was either an Atheist or a Materialist. I have always held that man's spiritual nature was the most substantial part of his being, and that, whatever might be the nature of the great and intelligent Power which governed the universe, its existence was certain. As to spiritual manifestations, I have been investigating them since 1855, and have for at least a dozen years held that the phenomena were totally inexplicable by any known laws of nature, and that imposture and delusion were out of the question. More than seven years ago I wrote a tolerably long letter to the *National Reformer* in reply to some severe strictures passed in that journal upon the Davenport Brothers. The letter was inserted, and appeared in the number issued on January 15th, 1865. It commenced as follows:—

*"To the Editor of the National Reformer.*

"SIR,—‘The Davenport delusion’ may, as far as I know, be the correct term to use when speaking of the phenomena displayed in the presence of these extraordinary young men, but I will maintain that, so far as my experience goes, no conjurer has done anything approximating to what they do. I have seen the performances of Robin, Houdin, Frikel, Hermann (the last-named having attended a Davenport seance and declared himself totally unable to comprehend how the phenomena were produced), and other so-called magicians, and their tricks are as unlike what takes place at the Hanover Square Rooms in the seance of the Brothers Davenport as chemistry is to metaphysics. I have attended these seances several times, and have been shut up in the cabinet with the brothers, and, on each occasion, have become more puzzled than before. As to the challenge that you speak of, they would be exceedingly foolish to take any notice of it until the clear and explicit challenge of their own, which has been before the world some months, has been accepted, seeing that the latter was issued to meet the case of this very Tolmaque, and that of the ignorant and conceited ‘Wizard of the North,’ whose ability even as a conjurer is surpassed by many a tap-room professor of the art of legerdemain.”

I then proceeded to point out how both Mr. Anderson and M. Tolmaque, despite all their tall talk and egotistical bombast, had invariably shirked the testing of their powers of legerdemain—before a competent tribunal—to produce phenomena similar to that which took place in the presence of the Davenports; the latter, when driven into a corner from which he could see no loophole of escape, declaring that he would “have nothing to do with works of darkness,” and even going so far as to decline any further discussion with Mr. Palmer, the manager of the seances, “as long as he sailed under false colours;” the false colours

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being the laying claim to other powers than those of the conjurer's art. All this I pointed out at considerable length, printing the various challenges that had been given by the Brothers, and no one of which had ever been responded to. I concluded my letter as follows:—

"Now, forsooth, M. Tolmaque has turned up again with a new form of challenge and another test, which is to expose the delusion, and drive the Davenport into obscurity. Should they accept this, the prestidigitateur will in all probability again decline to have anything to do with 'works of darkness,' or people who 'sail under false colours.'

"But it is stated that he has performed all the Davenport tricks. Yes, but who saw him? He gave his seance in a private room somewhere, before a very select company—so select, in fact, that the name of no single person who attended has been made known. True, 'Flaneur' is generally understood to be Mr. Edmund Yates; but, in the first place, he is known to be actuated by a strong *animus* against the Davenports, and is, therefore, by no means that calm and impartial judge that we require when a dispassionate investigation has to take place; and, secondly, if he were all that is requisite in such a case, he is, after all, but one man, with a very *mediocre* intellect, whose testimony would be worthless when weighed against the thousands of persons—many of them of the highest ability, with cool heads, calm judgments, and a sceptical turn of mind—who have witnessed the Davenport performances, and have unanimously agreed that they could not solve the problem as to the agency by which the phenomena take place.

"For my own part, I confess I am completely in the dark as to the *modus operandi* of these manifestations. I have tried my best to discover the agency by which they are produced, and have failed. I should feel exceedingly thankful if anyone could enlighten me. I do not accept the Davenport theory, and I have no other to offer. My only object in writing this is to do the Brothers justice—to state the real facts of the case in the face of that idiotic misrepresentation which has become so prevalent, and to claim for them an impartial investigation in the place of ignorant denunciation.

"GEORGE SEXTON, M.A., M.D.

"Jan. 8, 1865."

Of course, I am not attempting to prove that I was, until very recently, what is termed a Spiritualist, but only that I have for many years been impartially investigating the matter, and that I have long looked upon the phenomena as the result of some occult force that neither philosophers nor scientists could explain. I see clearly now that the only hypothesis capable of accounting for the extraordinary results that so constantly occur under almost every variety of condition is the noble and elevating doctrine of Spiritualism. That the spirits of our departed friends do communicate with us, and that their visits are not, as angels' were once said to be, "few and far between," but numerous and frequent, is to me as much a matter of fact as that I am writing this letter. The truth that there is "no such thing as death" is the noblest consolation that has ever blessed humanity. Contrast this with the wretched, grovelling doctrine of materialism in reference to the annihilation of consciousness when we pass into the grave, and who can fail to see the result? The soul clings to the one with all the tenacity that its existence is capable of, and recoils, shuddering with horror, from the other. "If," said the late W. J. Fox, "heaven be indeed a dream, it is one of Nature's dreams, whose visions are prophecies."

London, Sept. 30th, 1872.

GEO. SEXTON.

## "SECULARISM AND SPIRITUALISM.

"To the Editor of the *Medium and Daybreak*."

"DEAR SIR,—The calm and gentlemanly letter of 'A Materialistic Atheist' in your last would hardly call for a reply from me but for the fact that he has evidently misunderstood what I said in mine of the previous week. I did not speak of 'error and hypocrisy' as characteristic of the freethought party, but stated in general terms what few who have thought for themselves will deny, that 'the deep-rooted prejudice against a change of opinion, so prevalent in this country, has sapped the

very vitals of investigation and discovery, and perpetuated error and hypocrisy to an alarming extent.' This remark is no more applicable to Secularists than to other people. It describes a state of things that is pretty general. I did say, 'When so-called freethinkers object to a man's receiving new convictions opposed to those he formerly entertained, they belie their pretensions, and prove to the world how great a sham is their assumed freethought.' Surely no one will dispute this. If there be any so-called freethinkers to whom these remarks apply, then I think your correspondent will agree with me that they are no freethinkers at all, but counterfeits and spurious articles. Of course it is open to him to contend that there are no such persons amongst the Secularists of to-day; in that case he and I should join issue on a matter of fact, and each of us would have to fall back upon our individual experience. I have met with, I regret to say, not a few such; and if 'A Materialistic Atheist' has not come across a good many, his experience has been of a very fortunate character.

"Let me not be understood as bringing sweeping charges against Secularism and Secularists. During the twenty years that I have been in the movement I have cultivated the acquaintance and friendship of many persons whom I esteem and love. It would not be difficult for me to name several men of very extreme views in the secular ranks at the present time whose friendship and good opinion I shall ever prize, whatever may be the difference of our views. Indeed, since the appearance of my last letter, I have received numerous private communications from Secularists, breathing kindness and good feeling towards me—of course expressing regret at what they are pleased to call my departure from their ranks, but withal full of affection and good wishes. Nor have I any hesitation in saying that there are hundreds of men in the Secular party who, in nobleness of character, generosity of conduct, strict moral demeanour, and toleration of other men's views, may vie with any class that can be found in the world. All this, however, does not alter the fact that there has found its way into Secularism—and into the most conspicuous parts of it—a spirit of intolerance and bigotry that would do credit to the Vatican, and a narrow-mindedness that would disgrace the most ignorant and contemptible of the religious sects.

"Your correspondent, speaking of myself, says: 'All whom I have spoken to on the subject deeply regret his departure from our midst, and would gladly welcome his return to active work with the Secular party in the common cause of human redemption from superstition and error, whether he be Secularist, Atheist, Materialist, or Spiritualistic Theist.' Now, I am not aware that I have ever ceased the 'active work' here referred to. During the present year I have given fifty lectures in Secular halls—all of the character of those of which your correspondent is kind enough to speak so approvingly—and shall probably give several more before Christmas. I have no intention of ceasing my efforts to enlighten ignorance and dispel error and darkness. Spiritualists, although believing that there is a life beyond the tomb, do not, as a consequence of that faith, lose all concern in the present state. Whilst here they have material bodies and material wants, and have therefore quite as great an interest in material things as the most vehement deniers of spiritual existence. Science, literature, poetry, music, art, and all other phases of knowledge belong to our common humanity, and the cultivation of them can be carried on quite as successfully by Spiritualists as by Materialists. Spiritualists are in fact all that Secularists are, and something more. They have the whole of the material means at command that Secularists possess for regenerating society, and a mighty agency in addition, which the Materialist does

not recognise. 'A Materialistic Atheist' will probably smile when I tell him that I repeatedly receive counsel and advice from one whose name I am sure he will hold in veneration—the kind and benevolent old Robert Owen. He it was who, when in the flesh, first introduced Spiritualism to my notice, and now that I have learned to prize the great truths which I then ridiculed, he frequently aids me with the result of his greatly enlarged experience and well-matured judgment. The Spiritual reformer has, therefore, it will be perceived, an immense advantage over those who simply use material agency; and so far from my ceasing to work for the regeneration of society, now that I have accepted the Spiritual teaching, I shall work all the harder, and with far more faith as to the result. My public lectures will have, as they always have had, the one end in view of elevating humanity by the spread of knowledge and the diffusion of the light of education; and it is unimportant to me in what place they are delivered, whether Secular hall, Spiritual lyceum, or Methodist chapel. In one point only will a change be observed, and that but a slight one, since I have generally confined myself heretofore to the teaching of positive truths. I have done with the miserable negations that form the stock-in-trade of so many Secular advocates. I feel individually that the great want of humanity is teaching of a practical character, real knowledge, and positive truth, instead of hair-splitting, quibbles about the meaning of texts of Scripture, and the vulgar abuse of opinions conscientiously held by large numbers of our fellow creatures. I know that your correspondent may reply that this is just what the 'Founder of Secularism' himself desires; of which fact I am of course not ignorant. Secularism has, however, degenerated sadly since Mr. George J. Holyoake gave that name to a set of very excellent moral principles. Then it bid fair to lay the foundation for a broad platform upon which all could meet, whatever their individual differences of opinion, whose object was the general good of humanity. Now the name itself is in too many cases simply the 'Shibboleth' of a paltry sect, whose only aim seems to be the destruction of all that other men hold sacred, and whose highest teaching consists in the quintessence of negation proclaimed in language far removed from good taste and common politeness. Hence the 'Founder of Secularism' himself is not popular, and 'draws' but badly, despite the fact—which I take it none will deny—that he has a most philosophic mind, well stored with useful and practical knowledge, and in his public teaching displays an amount of calm gentlemanly dignity that is seldom met with. Secularism, therefore, as it now exists, greatly needs improving upon in order to bring it back to what it was when that excellent book was written from which your correspondent quoted at the close of his letter. Even in its purest form, however, it may gain much by an alliance with Spiritualism. As the poet has it:—

" 'Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell,  
That mind and soul, according well,  
May make one music.' "

"*London, October 21, 1872.*"

"GEORGE SEXTON."

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Persons desirous of investigating Spiritualism should send a stamp for a packet of instructions. They should also read *THE MEDIUM*, the Weekly Organ of the Movement, price One Penny. All the works on Spiritualism may be read on subscribing to the Progressive Library and Spiritual Institution, 15, Southampton Row, London, W.C.—J. Burns, Secretary.

## SEED CORN.—No. 7.

### FACTS CONCERNING SPIRITUALISM.

It is an old saying that "one half of the world does not know how the other half lives." It might with equal truth be said that one half of the world does not know what the other half believes or knows. This is especially true of what is called *Spiritualism*. There must be hundreds of thousands of good, well-informed people who do not know that vast numbers of equally good and equally well-informed people live in the firm and settled belief that they hold direct communion with the so-called dead,—that mothers and fathers believe they still enjoy the love and the proof of the love of their vanished children, that children rejoice in the guidance and love of their "dead" parents, that friend still holds fellowship with friend, even when "the valley of the shadow" has been passed by one; and that these, one and all, think with sorrow and pity of those who either do not know what is going on, or who regard them as deceivers or deceived.

This little tract, then, is written not to prove this or that—not even to recommend an investigation of the subject to which it refers—but simply to report matters of fact which it is desirable that all should know.

And in the first place we go back to the main fact to which we just now adverted—that there are vast numbers of persons, of all ranks and conditions, and in nearly all nations, who believe, and who say they *know*, that they hold direct communion with the so-called dead. Mr. William Howitt says they number twenty millions. These persons declare that their faith is not based upon testimony, but experience; not upon dogma, but knowledge; not upon one event, but events repeated again and again, and now familiar in their homes as household scenes. In America these persons may be counted by millions. They include judges on the bench, senators in Congress, newspaper editors at the desk, schoolmasters in the school, preachers in the pulpit, mechanics in the workshop, strong-minded men and refined women, poets and porters, old men and children. In England, almost if not the very same description applies; and it is a fact which can no longer and ought no longer to be ignored, that belief in or knowledge of spirit-communion is very widely spread indeed. In many cases social considerations hinder the open and frank confession of what is known, but in by far the greater number of cases families profess themselves to be too grateful for what they have found to make any secret of this "pearl of great price." They say that this discovery of the nearness of the spirit-world and of the actual presence of the so-called dead has comforted them in sorrow, taken away their fear of death, and acted as an elevating and purifying influence in their houses. In other parts of Europe equally firm believers are to be found, and all agree in declaring with steady pertinacity that what they believe they know as a fact of their daily life.

Upon what, then, do these Spiritualists depend for their belief? or, rather, what do they say they know? They tell us it is a fact within their frequent experience that men, women, and children, when out of the flesh, retain all the characteristics of personality, and that under certain conditions they can so control material substances and persons as to make their presence known. This they accomplish in various ways.

They move ponderous bodies, often with the greatest possible ease, and in the light. These bodies they cause to produce what may be

called intelligent movements, by which answers to questions are given, or information imparted, sometimes of a remarkable nature. In many cases the information thus given is "news" to all present, and is afterwards found to be correct: in other cases the information is found to be untrue.

They produce sounds upon material substances, and in this way reply to questions or impart information. These sounds, hundreds of thousands of persons tell us, are of daily occurrence, and are enjoyed by home circles in every rank of life. Those who are accustomed to them do not think them "low" or "undignified," but regard them in the light of a useful and convenient telegraph.

They entrance certain persons, and use them, when unconscious, to write, paint, or speak, sometimes in a manner altogether impossible to the medium in the waking state. In the trance, foreign languages are sometimes spoken or written, not a word of which is known by the medium. They control the arm and hand of others in their normal state, through whom messages are written, often containing matters of fact utterly unknown to the persons used, or even opposed to their opinion. They make themselves visible to seers, so that they can be accurately described to friends. They can also produce pictures or scenes in order to make their identification more certain. They make themselves visible to all in the circle, and in many ways prove that they are real beings, though the material forms they create at such times only last for a limited period. They convey material substances from place to place, often before the eyes of onlookers, or under conditions that make deception impossible. In these and various other ways they are said to make their presence known to their friends and to strangers, and that without the intervention of "experts" from without; so that many thousands of families quietly live in the enjoyment of spirit-communion as one of the certain facts of their daily life. Sisters and brothers, fathers and mothers, are the means, or mediums, used by the so-called dead for making their presence known; and they say that time, which tries all things, only deepens the conviction that this communion is a reality. Disappointments, indeed, occur, and identification is not always easy; but one of the most remarkable facts in connection with the subject is, that of all the multitudes who once say they "know" that spirit-communion is true, none ever totally retrace their steps and deny that the facts occur. Opinions may change as to the desirability, propriety, or utility of it, but the *fact* of that communion is not denied.

Another fact, comparatively unknown, is that an important literature of the subject exists. For many years the subject has received the attention of able and courageous men, and many valuable works have appeared in relation to it. We may name the following:—"The Two Worlds: the Natural and the Spiritual; their Intimate Connection and Relation, illustrated by Examples and Testimonies, Ancient and Modern;" by Thomas Brevior. "The History of the Supernatural in all Ages and Nations;" by William Howitt; 2 vols. "Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World; with Narrative Illustrations;" by Robert Dale Owen. "Planchette: or, The Despair of Science;" by Epes Sargent. "Modern American Spiritualism: A Twenty Years' Record of the Communion between Earth and the World of Spirits;" by Emma Hardinge. "The Debatable Land;" by Robert Dale Owen. "Out-

lines of Ten Years' Investigation of Spiritualism;" by T. P. Barkas. "Hints for the Evidences of Spiritualism;" by M.P. "Spiritualism: A Narrative, with a Discussion;" by Patrick B. Alexander, M.A., Edinburgh, author of "Mill and Carlyle," &c. "Experimental Investigations of Psychic Force;" by William Crookes, F.R.S., &c. "The Report of the London Dialectical Society's Committee on Spiritualism." "Concerning Spiritualism;" by Gerald Massey. "Nature's Secrets; or, Psychometric Researches;" by William Denton. "Glimpses of the Supernatural;" by Adin Ballou. "Spiritual Experiences;" by Robert Cooper. "The Night Side of Nature;" by Mrs. Crowe. "Spiritualism: Its Facts and Phases; Illustrated with Personal Experiences;" by J. H. Powell. "The Confessions of a Truthseeker: A Narrative of Personal Investigations into the Facts and Philosophy of Spirit-Intercourse. "Scepticism and Spiritualism: The Experiences of a Sceptic;" by the authoress of "Aurelia." "Is it True? Intercommunication between the Living and the (so-called) Dead;" by a Working Man. "Plain Guide to Spiritualism;" by Uriah Clark. "Notes and Studies on the Philosophy of Animal Magnetism and Spiritualism;" by Dr. Ashburner. "From Matter to Spirit: the Result of Ten Years' Experience in Manifestations;" by Mrs. De Morgan. "The Magic Staff;" by A. J. Davis. "Spiritualism;" by Judge Edmonds and Dr. Dexter. "Supramundane Facts in the life of Dr. Ferguson;" edited by Dr. T. L. Nichols. "Experimental Investigations of the Spirit-Manifestations;" by Professor Hare. "Incidents in my Life;" by D. D. Home. "Spirit-Drawings;" by W. M. Wilkinson. "The Scientific Aspect of the Supernatural;" by A. R. Wallace, F.Z.S. "The Arcana of Spiritualism;" by Hudson Tuttle. Many of these works have had a great circulation, several of the volumes of A. J. Davis, the celebrated clairvoyant, attaining from ten to forty editions respectively.

At the present time, in addition to these volumes, the periodical literature on the subject indicates a widespread interest in it. In the United States, the *Banner of Light* (Boston), a weekly paper, has been established for upwards of a dozen years, and enjoys a very large circulation. The *Religio-Philosophical Journal* (Chicago) is also a weekly paper, established some years ago, having an extensive circulation. *Britain's Journal of Spiritual Science* is a high-class quarterly, emanating from New York. In England we have the *Spiritual Magazine*, *Human Nature*, the *Christian Spiritualist* (monthly), the *Spiritualist* (bi-monthly), and the *Medium* (weekly). In the following countries Spiritualism is represented by forty-seven periodicals:—France, 3; Belgium, 3; Holland, 2; Denmark, 1; Russia, 1; Germany, 1; Austria, 3; Bohemia, 1; Spain, 15; Italy, 6; Greece, 1; Egypt, 1; Turkey, 1; Brazil, 2; Uruguay, 1; La Plata, 2; Peru, 1; Chili, 1; Mexico, 1. There was also one, until lately, in the Republic of Ecuador, but it has just been suppressed through the influence of the priests, as was also the case in Sicily. In all countries Spiritualism is regarded as the bulwark of religious freedom, spiritual enlightenment, and a higher morality; and hence it is equally opposed by the upholders of priestly dominion and those who are immersed in worldly pleasures and occupations.

In the Australian colonies and in South Africa this work has taken deep root, though in the latter colonies no periodicals exist. In Melbourne the *Harbinger of Light* is published monthly, and a powerful

local association exists. The *Echo* of Dunedin, New Zealand, advocates Spiritualism, and several other papers admit of its free discussion. Spiritualism is also making steady progress in India and the colonial possessions of various European countries.

It is a notable fact, too, that many well-known men and women, with a good repute for learning, science, and sense, have been and are among the number of those who at least accept the "facts," whatever they make of them. We may name as "believers"—the late President Lincoln; W. Lloyd Garrison; the poet Longfellow; Mrs. H. B. Stowe; Bayard Taylor; the late Dr. Kane, Arctic explorer; the late Rev. J. Pierpoint; Lord Lindsay; the late Lord Dunraven; Lord Adare; C. F. Varley, F.R.S.; the late Dr. Robert Chambers; Dr. Gully; Dr. J. G. Wilkinson; Dr. Ashburner; the late Dr. Elliotson; the late Professor De Morgan; H. G. Atkinson, F.G.S.; William and Mary Howitt; Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall; Gerald Massey; Dr. Sexton; the late W. M. Thackeray; the late Elizabeth Barrett Browning; Serjeant Cox; W. Crookes, F.R.S.; A. R. Wallace, F.Z.S., &c., &c.

Amongst crowned heads Spiritualism has made many conquests. The late Prince Consort was deeply interested in clairvoyance. Mr. Home, the well-known medium, has visited the palace; and several members of the Royal Family are investigators. Mr. Home has also been a visitor at the Courts of St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Paris.

In the year 1869 the London Dialectical Society appointed thirty-six of its members—mostly unbelievers—to investigate the subject. This they did, with considerable care, and with some striking results, including the conversion of most of the investigators. The general Report concluded with these weighty words:—

"Your committee, taking into consideration the high character and great intelligence of many of the witnesses to the more extraordinary facts, the extent to which their testimony is supported by the reports of the sub-committees, and the absence of any proof of imposture or delusion as regards a large portion of the phenomena; and, further, having regard to the exceptional character of the phenomena, the large number of persons in every grade of society and over the whole civilised world who are more or less influenced by a belief in their supernatural origin, and to the fact that no philosophical explanation of them has yet been arrived at, deem it incumbent upon them to state their conviction that the subject is worthy of more serious attention and careful investigation than it has hitherto received."

These are the simple facts of the case, and they surely prove that the subject ought neither to be neglected nor despised. We have no right to assume that we know everything, or that we can know nothing, but we do this if, without serious investigation, we decide that this or that is impossible. In answer to the incredulous cry—"It cannot be," the reply comes from patient and earnest investigators—"Come and see."

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The PROGRESSIVE LIBRARY AND SPIRITUAL INSTITUTION was established in London, ten years ago, to promote a knowledge of Spiritualism, and as a depôt for the literature. On making application, personally or by letter, all information necessary for inquirers, and periodical and other literature, may be obtained. Write to—

J. BURNS, 15, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, W.C.