

WHAT SPIRITUALISM HAS TAUGHT.

BY

X

WILLIAM HOWITT.

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF VICTORIA

"There is no faculty nor sense which has not its correspondent object; therefore God, the soul, and beings superhuman, continuing the series of beings, exist, and may be reunited to man: such is the sense, the motive, and end of religion."—*Etudes sur la Medecine Animique et Vitaliste*, par Dr. CHARPIGNON.

"Though we are not believers in Spiritualism—technically so-called—we regard this movement as an uprising of the human mind after something better than the existing faith of Christendom. It is the John the Baptist to a new Advent. It is the Morning Star to a new Reformation. Starved by the creeds and churches, our theologies are neither in harmony with God's truth above, nor with man's wants below. Sick of worldliness and Materialism, the very words *spirits*, *Spiritualism*, *spiritual medium*, come with a refreshing influence to the scared and arid heart of multitudes."—*Christian Enquirer*.

LONDON:

J. BURNS, PROGRESSIVE LIBRARY & SPIRITUAL INSTITUTION,
15, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, W.C.

1874.

The best Paper that issues from the London Press is the
MEDIUM AND DAYBREAK,
A WEEKLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE
HISTORY, PHENOMENA, PHILOSOPHY, AND TEACHINGS OF
SPIRITUALISM.

PERMANENTLY ENLARGED TO 16 PAGES.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

6s. 7d. per Annum, post free.

THE "MEDIUM" IS THE WEEKLY ORGAN

Of that movement which is at present exciting such universal attention, and, as such, represents Spiritualism fully in every respect. The astounding nature of the phenomena, and the all-engrossing importance of the alleged communion with the spirit-world, render this paper replete with genuine interest to all classes of mind, whether attracted merely by the marvellous and novel, or by the most profound considerations which can engage the mind of man.

The topics treated may be thus classified:—

Reports of Seances with the most powerful mediums, and detailed accounts of remarkable phenomena, levitations of mediums, and the passage of solid bodies into closed rooms, by spirits.

Engravings of Eminent Lecturers, remarkable Mediums, and Materialised Spirit-Forms.

The Materialisation of Spirits, so that they can be seen and felt, can speak, and be identified.

Religious and Moral Teachings communicated by spirits.

Descriptions of the Spirit-World given in important spirit-messages.

Reports of Lectures on Spiritualism, given by normal speakers, or those under spirit-influence.

Biographical Sketches of Eminent Men, illustrating the universality of inspiration from the spirit-world.

Expositions of Miracles and Bible-Narratives, solving the most perplexing difficulties that have beset divines, and showing that Spiritualism can alone explain the Spiritual works of the past.

Scientific Explanations of the phenomena.

Instructions to Investigators how to obtain the phenomena, and communicate with the spirit-world. Directions for the development of Mediumship. Questions and objections freely answered.

Reports of Progress from all parts of the world. Extracts from Periodicals, Reviews of Books, and Literary Announcements. The MEDIUM supplies all that can interest an investigator into the deeply important and instructive subject of man's immortal existence.

The MEDIUM is a paper entirely free from creed or sect. All lovers of religious liberty and spiritual progress are earnestly invited to throw in their lot with the MEDIUM, which is THOROUGHLY FREE, LIBERAL, AND INDEPENDENT, and appeals only to such minds, and respectfully solicits their kind patronage and co-operation.

PUBLISHED BY

J. BURNS, PROGRESSIVE LIBRARY, 15, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, LONDON.

WHAT SPIRITUALISM HAS TAUGHT.

AMONGST the strange and very contradictory charges against Spiritualism, which we are perpetually hearing, such as that it is all a delusion; is no delusion, but the work of the devil; is sorcery, witchcraft, Popery, and Paganism; is a new religion endeavouring to supersede Christianity; and is no religion at all, we hear the cuckoos of mankind monotonously iterating "*cui bono?*" and the green, very green parrots asking in sepulchral tones, "What does it all amount to?" For the benefit of those who have soon heard all that the cuckoos can tell them, and who do not expect to be taught anything by green or grey parrots, it seems to me that it will be serviceable to state simply and plainly what Spiritualism really has taught and will continue to teach.

Those who assert that Spiritualism is a new religion, opposed to the old one, and forbidden by the Scriptures, will do well at the outset to reflect what is the popular religion of to-day, which still wears the respectable old cloak of Christianity; whether it is not this popular religion which really is forbidden by the Bible, and whether it be not high time that something should supersede it. The religion of to-day, whether it be the state machine set up by the Tudors and Stuarts to prevent any difference of opinion—with what effect every one now sees—and to prop up the State by linking priestcraft to landed feudalism; or whether it be the shoddy fabrics manufactured from the ground-up old clothes of government Anglicism, called Dissent, is a thing so far removed from primitive Christianity by repeated re-castings and patchings, and learned adulterations, that nobody could suspect it of having any relation to Christ's religion if it did not boldly claim that very flattering alliance. Primitive Christianity, the *only* Christianity that does or can possibly exist—for Christianity so-called, mixed up with worldism, is no more Christianity than a mule is a horse, than pinchbeck is gold—is a religion which requires us to love God with all our hearts and souls, and *our neighbours as ourselves*; requires us to be pure, peaceable, abstaining from swearing of any kind, in Court, in Parliament, in tribunals of justice as much as in the street or the pot-shop; requires us to *believe* the Gospel, and not somebody's Brummagem counterfeit of it; to believe in the constant operation of the Divine Spirit, if we open our hearts to it, and the constant ministration of God's angels about us and for us, in fact the communion and fellowship of the saints; the sacrifice of our own will to the will of God, and to the benefit of our neighbours; to seek first the kingdom of heaven, and to use the earth not as our great eternal abode, but merely as the passage to it, and therefore not to spend all our days and thoughts in heaping up here what we cannot take with us, money, lands, houses, scrip, titles, and honours; in short, to root out the great upas root of selfishism from our souls, and get God to plant in its stead the tree of divine life, bearing the *fruits* of divine charity, that love which is the life of God.

flowing through us to every creature bearing the shape of man, and having the charter of immortal life from the great King of Life. That is Christianity, and that alone, if I have been able during a long life to read that book which is so plainly written "that he who runneth may read it."

Now, it would be an insult to the dullest understanding to ask whether the thing taught or practised, whether religion or its fruits as seen to-day throughout the nations calling themselves Christians, be anything like that religion. What? this fighting, blood-spilling, murder-tool-inventing, quarrelling, proud, money-loving, title-loving, swearing by law or against law, drinking, smoking, adulterous, and neighbour-neglecting generation, a *Christian* generation? God help us for our impudence, and for our abuse of names and things! Nearly nineteen hundred years elapsed since Christ taught and the world pretended to listen and believe, and this is the result of it? Well may the infidels, the Humes, the Strausses, and Rénans tell us that Christianity is a thing without a real foundation in fact, and the half infidels teach that we may fight and swear, and love the world while professing to renounce it, and deny the continuation of miracles, prophecy, and the converse of and with the ministering spirits of God. This rotten shell, this blackened shadow of a great world of faith and power passed away because no man would have such a world, preferring the sink of sensuality and the rag fair of worldly vanity, is the Christianity which they accuse us of trying to supersede. May God and all his hierarchies of angels help us to supersede it!

As to the continual charge made against Spiritualism that it is the sorcery and seeking to the dead forbidden in the Scriptures, Spiritualism is not accountable to those who cannot make a clear and very palpable distinction. Throughout the Scriptures, from first to last, there are two classes of Spiritualism recorded: that which sought to God and his angels, and that which sought to the devil and his angels. The one is pure worship, the other is sorcery. The Jews had both. They received their communications and manifestations through angels, dreams, visions, Urim and Thummim, and by means of the ephod. Those who sought information for bad purposes, went to devils, as their neighbours the heathen did. Spiritualists still make the same distinction, and some seek to God and his angels, and those who prefer sorcery for low or earthly purposes seek to low spirits. "But," say the objectors, "you seek by the same means as the sorcerers of Palestine did—tables and raps to the dead!"

In the first place, Jesus Christ himself has taught us that there are no dead, and foolish rather than wicked would be those who sought to a nonentity. Those who seek to God by Spiritualism, seek it in the ancient ever-existing way, through the ministry of his ever-ministering spirits, nor do they, on this account, any the less cease to address their prayers and supplications to the Spirit of God himself, and of God in Christ. "But," say the objectors, "you use tables and crystals," &c. True, and so did the Jews. The altar is but a table; the Urim and Thummim were crystals; the ephod was a particular garment in which to invoke the divine power. If a Spiritualist were now to put on a particular frock in which to seek a communication from the spirit-world, these very objectors would pronounce him a sorcerer. We seek God and the aid of his spiritual agencies or angels as the Jews did; we observe the same

aims, and preserve the same distinctions of object. We cleave to pure Spiritualism—we abhor and reject sorcery.

In order to get an idea of what the theology of schools and visible institutions, calling themselves Churches, have brought us to, let us take the subject under the following heads, and see what it teaches under these heads, and what Spiritualism teaches under them:—

1. What the soul is.
2. What becomes of it at death, so-called.
3. Purgatory, or intermediate states; the "many mansions."
4. Where these and heaven are.
5. Eternal punishments.
6. State after death—fixed permanently or not so.
7. Progression as opposed to popular doctrine.
8. Universal restoration.
9. Prayers for the so-called dead—the departed.
10. Communion of saints, and besetment of devils.
11. Cessation of prophecy and miracles.
12. Consequences of Spiritualism: no fear of death; purity of life and thought, the result of the evidence of the constant presence and observation of the angels; the obvious and general sensuality and profligacy from the absence of this consciousness.
13. Laws of matter.

Perhaps there is no subject on which more vagueness and want of lucidity and precision of idea exist, amongst modern so-called Christians, than on what the soul really is. Ask ministers of religion what they conceive the soul or spirit of man to be—for they commonly imagine these one and the same thing—and they generally answer the intelligence which animates the body and survives it. But in what form or condition? There they are at fault. They generally satisfy themselves with calling it a vital spark, or some such thing. They do not yet seem to have got beyond the idea of the Emperor Adrian, which Pope has translated—

"Vital spark of heavenly flame,
Quit, O! quit this mortal frame."

It is to them a puff, or essence of spirit, without form, if not void, residing in the brain; some have imagined in the *Pià Mater*, others in the pineal gland, for there has been immense speculation about it. That from the brain it informs and vitalises the whole body through the nervous system. That is as far as you can get. It is a sort of seed or germ of life, as they call it; and very ludicrous scenes have arisen when people have asserted to very learned men, that the spirit exists all over the body, and has hands and feet, and all other members, as the body has. At such a declaration such erudites have been known to start up and say they would hear no more—that it shocked all their ideas. On being asked what, then, they thought the spirit of man, they have replied, "Oh! they could not tell." They imagined it something all spirit, flying aloft towards heaven, but without distinct limbs or features, as soon as loosed from the body. Painters and poets have gone further, and imagined the released souls as having the form of their deserted bodies, but much

handsomer, and as having each an enormous pair of wings, which, if true, must make a more perpetual wafting in heaven than there is in a volant flock of pigeons or wild geese. Others represent them as lying helpless, and so carried aloft by troops of these winged creatures called angels, with coveys of little winged heads called cherubs, sporting and peeping round them. Such are the fancies of literature and art; but when you come to real, sober question with the Christians of to-day on the form, nature, and condition of the soul in the body and on leaving it, they are as much at sea as they are on the question of the atmosphere and habitation of the moon.

So far as I can see, the Church of England has left every one to his own fancies or his own vacancy on the subject. Bishop Pearson, in his learned work *On the Creed*, does not seem to touch it all, and the Dissenters seem equally chaotic on it. The first man to bring light, substance, and practical definiteness into this belief was Emanuel Swedenborg. He taught that the spirit was the real man, the body only its physical envelopment during this initiatory or caterpillar state of man's existence. That as the caterpillar, passing through the chrysolid state, puts forth the perfect form and all the limbs of the butterfly, which naturalists tell us were all wrapped up in the caterpillar, so the spirit stepping out of the body stands revealed to the spiritual world, a perfect spirit man or woman, perfect in all the powers and members of man. That he steps into no shadowy or mere sky region, but into an actual world with its woods, rivers, green fields, mountains, cities, and various employments of life as on earth, but in a more vivid and real status.

The shock, the resistant startle with which this doctrine was received, being, as it was, not offered as a speculation, but as a revealed truth by a spirit which had entered that world, and walked about in it and conversed with its inhabitants, showed how far nominal Christianity and the theology of colleges had fallen from the "faith once delivered to the saints." For this was precisely the declaration of St. Paul, that everything here on earth is "made after the pattern in the heavens." Thus, they have everything in the heavens that we have, only more perfect, ours being only made after their patterns, and of inferior or merely physical materials. Swedenborg showed that spirits in the next state of existence were not left to a mere lazy or speculative life, having no needs, and, therefore, no stimulus to activity; but had all sorts of needs and means of supplying them. They had their cities, houses, trades, arts, pursuits, and were a busy and diversified population. They ate, drank, and were clothed, and pursued their peculiar tastes and objects as on earth. And this was just what Christ and the apostles had said. Christ said that in his Father's house were many mansions, and He went to *prepare* a place for his disciples; it was not by nature ready, but had to be prepared. That He should drink wine again "new in his Father's kingdom," and that his followers should eat of the fruit of the tree of life, and drink of the wine of life. And St. John saw a great city, the New Jerusalem, with its houses and streets and rivers of life, and its pavements of crystalline gold, and hosts of clothed angels and saints, and the like. This was in strict accordance with all the revelations of both Old and New Testaments. Wherever spirits had appeared they had come in the actual form of men, clothed as man, and on many occasions eating and

drinking as man; those which appeared to Abraham even dining on roast veal.

All that Swedenborg taught on this head every succeeding spirit has asserted through all mediums. However they might, according to their several grades, differ on other points, they have all agreed on this—that man is nothing more nor less than a matter-clothed spirit, and the clothing of flesh follows the law of the in-dwelling spirit, and not the spirit the controlling organisation of the flesh—that the body, having performed its uses, drops off, leaving the spirit as the real man, in a more real world. This includes our second point, “What becomes of the soul at death, so-called?”

Spiritualism teaches, on the authority of Scripture and of all spirit-life, that there is no such thing as death; it is but a name given to the issue of the soul from the body. To those in bodies who witness this change the spirit is invisible, and they only see a body which ceases all its living functions, has lost that intelligence which during so-called life emanated from it, and lies stiff and cold, and to all appearance dead. But even the body is not dead. There is a law of life even in what is called dead matter, which is perpetually changing its particles and converting them into mere black earth and water, and hence into all the articles necessary for the physical life—corn, meat, wine, all foods, all fruits. The same law immediately begins to operate in the dead body, and, if unobstructed, speedily resolves it back into earth, and then forms this again into food and clothing, and fresh enveloping forms for fresh human beings. The whole of the universe is in perpetual action, and the ever-revolving wheel of physical is subserving the perpetual evolution of spiritual life.

And this doctrine of Swedenborg, and of all succeeding mediums, is no other than the doctrine of St. Paul. In the 15th chapter of the 1st of Corinthians, he explains the transition which we call death in the most lucid and luminous terms: “But some will say, how are the dead raised, and with what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die, and that which *thou sowest is not that body which shall be* but God giveth it a body as it has pleased Him.” And he adds soon after, that He has given the spirit such a body already—“There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body,” and he notes the order of this system of being—“That was not first which was spiritual, but that which was natural, and afterwards that which was spiritual.” That is, the natural condition, the creation of soul through physical generation, and then the second stage, the issue of the spiritual out of the natural. This is the language of all spirits. The earthly body being laid down, “returns,” in the language of Solomon, “to the earth, the spirit to God who gave it.” It appears in that spiritual body born with it, but hitherto hidden in the encasing flesh. The spirit-man is perfect spirit-man, and goes to his place in the “many mansions,” according to his degree of moral purity or impurity. That which is of the earth, according to the Divine command, remains earthly still; flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, and flesh and blood, reverting to earth, belongs wholly to earth, and cannot possibly ever enter worlds purely spiritual.

On this point the Church of England is, according to spirit teaching,

partly right and partly wrong. It admits that the spirit does not wait in the grave for the general resurrection, so commonly expected, but goes to join "the spirits of just men made perfect." *Pearson on the Creed*, Vol. I., p. 369, Article V., says: "First, therefore, this must be laid down as a certain and necessary truth, that the soul of man when he dieth, dieth not, but returneth unto Him that gave it, to be disposed of at his will and pleasure—according to the ground of our Saviour's counsel, 'Fear not them that kill the body, but cannot kill the soul.' That better part of us, therefore, in and after death, doth exist and live, either by virtue of its spiritual and immortal nature, as we believe, or, at least, by the will of God, and his power upholding and preserving it from dissolution, as many of the Fathers thought. This soul thus existing after death, and separated from the body, though of a nature spiritual, is really and truly in some place." . . . "Again, the soul of man in that separate existence after death, must not be conceived to sleep, or be bereft and stripped of all its vital powers, but still to exercise the powers of understanding, and willing, and to be subject to the affections of joy and sorrow," &c., p. 397.

Here the Church of England and Spiritualism accord, but not in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. The spirits all assert with St. Paul, that the body which rises from the death-bed is the spiritual body, and that the soul needs no other, much less an earthly body in its spirit-home—that, in fact, nothing of the earth can ever enter heaven. That if the spirits of just men are *made perfect*, they can be made nothing more, and no addition of anything belonging to this earth can add to their happiness, freedom, power, and perfection, but on the contrary. That so far from receiving at some indefinite, and probably very distant, period their earthly bodies back again, they are continually, as they advance, casting off the subtler particles of matter that have interpenetrated their spiritual bodies.

There are certain passages in the New Testament which seem to favour the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, as that of the bodies of the saints arising at the Crucifixion, and appearing to many; but all these places, the spirits contend, refer to the spiritual body only. The doctrine of the Burial Service of the Church of England is the doctrine simply of the resurrection of the body; it commits it to "the earth in a sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection." It is the resurrection solely of the body, which is here meant, and not at all of the spirit, which, as shown by Bishop Pearson, the Church knows and asserts, has already departed to its spiritual place.

The Dissenters are by no means so sharp and well defined in their notions of the conditions of soul and body after death. We continually hear them, both in the pulpit and out of it, talking of their friends "sleeping in Jesus." They do not seem to apply this to their bodies, as "sleeping in Jesus," as the Church distinctly does, but to their souls also; and yet they are continually speaking of their glorified spirits. How can they "sleep in Jesus" and be waking and glorified in Jesus at the same time? This dubious and discordant language can arise only from dubious and discordant ideas: and accordingly we continually hear religious people, and people who sit weekly and bi-weekly under the shadow, if not under the light, of pulpits of famous men, wondering

when the resurrection really takes place, whether immediately after death, or only at the general resurrection—whether they shall know one another in the other world, and at the same time putting on their tombstones that they hope to join their friends in heaven. To such a poor, meagre, disjointed, off-and-on, beclouded, and bewildered condition has modern theology, after a lapse of one thousand eight hundred and sixty-four years, reduced the generality of man and womankind!

Spiritualism at once, like a living, stirring wind, sweeps away all this fog and feeble theologic smoke from the human mind. It asserts and shows, on the evidence of ever-recurring spiritual communication,—communication that speaks not of notions but of facts, and of facts witnessed by the most plainly and substantially projected truths of Scripture,—that the souls of men and women leaving the body instantly find themselves in the spirit-world in spiritual bodies, palpable and substantial, but at the same time more ethereal than those they have left. They not only know their friends, but find them waiting to receive and welcome them to their beautiful and heavenly homes, if they are morally prepared for such homes. They find all there that they have lost, if they are worthy of finding them, and stand on the threshold of a life infinite, inconceivable, and for ever advancing nearer to God and perfection. There is no cloud, no contradiction, no flitting of mind from one incongruous idea to another; this moment in the grave, the next in heaven, and then back again, sleeping instead of waking in Jesus. All is light, truth, and agreement with our innate consciousness, with nature, and with the Gospel.

That is one grand achievement of Spiritualism, and it immediately conducts us to the third point—purgatory, intermediate states, and the “many mansions.” Spiritualism boldly seizes again on the great truth held by all ages prior to the Protestant Reformation, of successive spheres or regions in the spiritual world, adapted to the continual education of spirits after they have put off “this mortal coil.” I have sufficiently demonstrated in the *History of the Supernatural* the fact that the Bible, both in the Old and New Testaments, constantly and positively holds the doctrine of regions lying between this world and the heaven of God, in which dwell departed souls, according to their moral fitness for such states of existence. The *Scheol* of the Hebrews and the *Hades* of the Greeks, and of the Greek Testament, testify to the belief of the old world in these successive spheres or stages of spiritual sojourn in the great expedition of eternity. We have seen how the Catholic Church held this doctrine by inheritance from the Hebrew Patriarchs and the Christian Apostles; and how the Protestant Reformers abandoned belief in it to get rid of the Catholic corruptions of it, for purposes of priest-craft. Purgatory became a word of scorn and sneer amongst Protestants; and the very names of *Scheol* and *Hades* in Protestant translations were ignored and transformed into hell. Hence arose the Protestant faith in no place hereafter in God’s boundless universe, and in God’s equally boundless patience, but heaven and hell. All souls, according to the Protestant faith, pass at once to heaven or hell. Now if heaven be indeed a place glorified by the presence of God, and where nothing sordid or impure can possibly enter, and hell be the penal and never repassable abode of damned souls, the eternal abode of torture by fire, horror, and despair;

it must be obvious, that for the vast majority of mankind there will be no place whatever in the world to come, except by polluting the Divine home and sanctuary with the presence of very indifferent inmates, or by driving into hell with its eternal cruelties the countless hosts of the human race. In fact, by the denial of the intermediate states, the Protestant Reformers perpetrated a more monstrous outrage on the Divine justice, and more frightfully libelled the Divine mercy, than by the broadest stretch of imagination one would have thought it possible. By this arbitrary extinction of some of the loveliest regions of creation, by this wiping out of vast kingdoms of God's tolerance and goodness, by the sponge of Protestant reaction, God's whole being was blackened, and every one of his eternal attributes dislocated and driven pell-mell into the limbo of Atheism. I say Atheism, for such a God could not possibly exist as this Protestant theory would have made Him—a God with less justice than the most stupid country squire ever established in the chair of magistracy, with less mercy than an inquisitor or a torturer with his red-hot pincers and iron boots. These atrocities were but the work of moments, but this system made the God of love and the Father of Jesus Christ, sitting in endless bliss amid a favoured few, whilst below were incalculable populations suffering the tortures of fires which no period even of millions of years should extinguish, and that without any proportion whatever in the offences of the sufferers! All who were not "spirits of just men made perfect" were, according to this doctrine, only admissible to this common hell, this common receptacle of the middling bad and the most bedevilled of devils! Never could any such monstrous, foul, and detestable doctrine issue from any source but that of the hearts of fiends themselves. None but devils could breathe up so black a fog of blasphemy to blot out the image of a loving and paternal God from the view of his creatures.

And yet the mocking devil induced the zealous Protestant fathers to accept this most truly "doctrine of devils" as an antidote to Popish error. As some glimmering of the direst consequences of this shutting up of the middle states of the invisible world began to dawn on the Protestant mind, it set about to invent remedies and apply palliatives, and by a sort of spiritual hocus-pocus, it taught that if the greatest sinners did but call on Christ at the last gasp, they were converted into saints, and found themselves in heaven itself with God and the Lamb. This was only making the matter worse, and holding out a premium for the continuance in every sin and selfishness to the last moment. It was an awful temptation to self-deception presented to human selfishness. Millions, no doubt, have trusted to this wretched Protestant reed, and have found themselves in very dreary and uncomfortable circumstances, instead of in Abraham's bosom. Yet common sense in others rejected and rejects the cruel deceit. A country poet writing the epitaph of the blacksmith in my native village, expressed the truth on the Protestant theory of no middle regions:—

"Too bad for heaven, too good for hell,
So where he's gone, we cannot tell."

Spiritualism, on the authority of all mediums from Swedenborg to the present time, has at once restored the truth of ages, freed from the

corruptions of Popery. It declares that there is a purgatory, but not one from which paid priestly prayers can at will release the sinner. He must pass through the purification necessary for him. He must live and labour for the advance which is necessary to any real happiness. This world, he finds, is but the infant-school of humanity. There are in the spiritual world the higher schools and colleges of God's discipline, and the higher rewards of peace and virtue can only be reached by passing diligently and dutifully through them. God is God of a steady, gradual, and regular development, and knows no rents and jumps in his creation, such as modern theologians have invented for Him. All is connected, link by link, stage by stage, and as there is a regular growth from birth to manhood here, there is a regular growth from spiritual birth to spiritual manhood there. You cannot jump into perfection any more than a child can jump into its majority. Spiritualism teaches the succession of spheres and stages, a succession of regions of abode on the journey towards the central heaven of God.

The next, and fourth point of its teaching, is in answer to the oft-repeated question, where these preparatory spheres and heaven are? Swedenborg says there are seven spiritual spheres around every planet, and that its inhabitants advance progressively through these according to their growth in purity and divine temperament. That there is a succession of such spheres all spirits testify, and that the first sphere is exactly where the physical body of the planet is. Hence, souls issuing from the body find themselves at once in the first sphere, yet, having lost their physical organs, see no longer the planet itself. Hence, the low and earthly spirits are found hanging about this earth, and crowding the thoroughfares of life towards the higher spheres.

What has thus been said answers the next great question continually asked, "Our state after death, is it fixed for ever or not?" The popular argument for no change after death is based on the Scripture assertion that where the tree falls, there it lies, and you hear in consequence the great staple of sermons, especially amongst the sects as addressed to the common people, to consist of denunciations of endless and unalterable damnation as the result of dying impenitent. Such preachers "deal damnation round the land" with a wholesale prodigality which must tend to stiffen sin into defiance rather than to soften it into repentance. Where no love is shown, how can love be asked? Spiritualism rejects the doctrine of eternal damnation as alike injurious to God and man. Injurious to God's noblest attributes, repugnant to the principles of justice, and unavailing in men as a motive to repentance. Of the horrible injustice towards God a simple fact will give a livelier idea than a thousand arguments. A gentleman passing along a street in Bristol saw an infuriated crowd collected before a baker's shop. They had dashed in the window, thrown his bread into the road, and were wildly vociferating that if they could catch him they would scarcely leave him alive. "What has he done?" asked the gentleman. "What has he done, the monster! he has thrown a dog into the oven, and burnt him to death." "Is that all?" said the gentleman coolly. "Is that all!" shouted the enraged crowd; "do you side with the villain?" "By no means," added the gentleman, "but what extraordinary creatures you are! You are taught to believe that the God of all love and mercy is for ever employed

in sending whole hosts of your fellow-creatures into the furious fires of hell where He will continue to burn them for ever and ever and ever, and you think of it with the utmost composure, and yet you are mad with fury against this baker for burning one dog who would be dead in less than a minute." And with this he walked on. Spiritualism condemns the baker, and refuses to believe our gracious God is infinitely more cruel and unjust than the baker.

Spiritualism knows that there are isolated passages in the Gospels and in the words of our Saviour capable of being made to bear an appearance favouring the doctrine of eternal punishments, but it knows that the original terms bear no such latitude, and when Christ says that there is a state "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," it admits the state, but denies that any of God's creatures will continue in that state a minute longer than is necessary to purge the foulness of sin and the love of sin out of their spiritual constitutions. Were the solution of this supposed difficulty much harder than it is, Spiritualism would place the love of God and the love of Christ, and all the great and gracious attributes of God and his Saviour—justice and truth and wisdom, and a charity more immeasurable than God himself recommends to mankind—confidently and courageously against so horrible and senseless a doctrine.

But the lovers of eternal torments for their brethren, whom they are commanded to love as themselves, immediately cry out, "Take away eternal damnation, and you take away all fear of sinning." Do all your threats of damnation without end put an end to sin? Look around you and say—do they?

The spirits, without exception, deny the Moloch doctrine of eternal damnation. In these successive spheres of probation they find ample space and means for punishment, but punishment productive of reform. There in perfect harmony with all the attributes of an all-wise, all-potent, all-benevolent God, they find the work of moral regeneration, conducted by God's appointed ministers, and a wide field of usefulness opened in this very work for the more advanced and loving spirits. They know, for all good spirits testify it, in accordance with the Divine character and the spirit of the Gospel, that there is due punishment, sufficient, if seen, to deter the most daring criminal, but there is ultimate progression in obvious accordance with the designs of God and the desires of Christ that all men should repent, return and live. And this sublime doctrine of Divine discipline and eternal progress is not only the faith of angels but of some of the purest minds that have risen above the dolorous creeds of inhuman zealots. Addison, in Vol. II., page 128, of the *Spectator*, has a beautiful paper on it, from which I take these passages:—

"There is not, in my opinion, a more pleasing and triumphant consideration in religion than this of the perpetual progress which the soul makes towards the perfecting its nature, without ever arriving at a period in it. To look upon the soul as going on from strength to strength; to consider that she is to shine for ever with new accessions of glory, and brighten to all eternity; that she will still be adding virtue to virtue, and knowledge to knowledge, carries in it something wonderfully agreeable to that ambition which is natural to the mind of man. Nay, it must be a pleasing prospect to God himself to see his creation for ever beautifying in his eyes, and drawing nearer to Him by greater degrees of resemblance.

"Methinks this single consideration of the progress of a finite spirit to perfection will be sufficient to extinguish all envy in inferior natures, and all contempt in superior. That cherubim, which now appears as a god to a human soul, knows very well that the period will come about in eternity when the human soul shall be as perfect as he now is; nay, when she shall look down upon that degree of perfection as much as she now falls short of it. It is true the higher nature still advances, and, by that means, preserves his distance and superiority in the scale of being; but he knows that how high soever the station is of which he stands possessed at present, the inferior nature will, at length, mount up to it, and shine forth in the same degree of glory.

"With what astonishment and veneration may we look into our souls, where there are such hidden stores of virtue and knowledge, such inexhausted sources of perfection? We know not yet what we shall be, nor will it ever enter into the heart of man to conceive the glory that will be always in reserve for him. The soul, considered with its Creator, is like one of those mathematical lines that may draw nearer to another for all eternity without a possibility of touching it; and can there be a thought so transporting as to consider ourselves in these perpetual approaches to Him who is not only the standard of perfection, but of happiness?"

It is hardly necessary to add, after this declaration of God's love and mercy operating in so vast a field as the spheres and regions of eternal progression, that Spiritualism believes in universal redemption—in the final restoration of all things. If anything be the plain end of Christ's coming, it is this glorious result. It is declared that Christ came to restore all things—that He died for all mankind—that He will never cease his mission till He has put all things under Him; the last of which things shall be death—death spiritual as well as physical. And, St. Paul adds that, as in Adam *all* died, so in Christ shall *all* be made alive. This is the uniform doctrine of good spirits, as it is the doctrine of the Gospel. What a far nobler and diviner thing, than the gloomy, dubious, melancholy theology preached from most pulpits now-a-days! How the heart feels its genial accord with the spirit of the Great Creator and daily benefactor of man! It is more like the spirit of the Greek Church, which delights to dwell on the light rather than on the dark side of thought—on the glorious hopes than on the pains and penalties of religion, and it is utterly opposed to the spirit of strife and revenge which is the spirit of too much of the religion of to-day. "See that none render evil for evil to *any man*; but ever follow that which is good, both amongst yourselves and to *all men*." If this were followed out, where would be wars and fighting amongst us? "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give God thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophecies." That is the religion of Christ—that is the religion of Spiritualism.

We now come to a point, the 9th, in which Spiritualism has again reversed the decree of a too hasty Protestantism, and returned, at the call from the inner world, to the faith and practice of the Early Church, which Catholicism, with all its corruptions, has never abandoned—the practice of praying for the so-called dead—the departed.

In the catacombs at Rome we find Christian inscriptions—souls asking for the prayers of their friends. In the Greek and Roman Churches

continually from those early times, this has been the practice as well of asking departed saints to pray for you. Since the doors of the inner world have been so widely thrown open again in our time, amongst the throngs of spirits, good, bad, and indifferent, which have pressed forward for audience, numbers of these have been unhappy ones who have earnestly solicited your prayers. They have represented themselves as wandering in utter darkness, comfortless and forlorn. Yet all these unfortunates, it appears, have their guides and instructors, yet they come to men because they say they stand yet in more intimate *rapproch* with men than with the pure spirits above them. That they find it harder in that state to retrace their erring steps than in this, and needing all help and comfort they seek to such human beings as can hear them. The Seersess of Prevorst relates this very state of things of spirits continually coming to ask her prayers. A lady in London says she has six hundred such spirits on her list, petitioners for her prayers. The cases of those who come to us for the same kindly offices would make a very solemn and curious history. Amongst them clergymen who say that they have now on them the weight of the souls committed to their neglected care, and are suffering a keenness of remorse exquisite beyond conception in its misery, ceasing occasionally for a moment, only to return with wilder, more fiery force.

Closely connected with this phase of Spiritualism, is the doctrine of the communion of saints, and the equally incessant besetment of devils. If Spiritualism has opened up one thing more astonishing than another, it is that of the dense crowd of spirits of all kinds that are perpetually, day and night, around us. At every hour, every moment, that mediums sit down to a seance there is a pressing *levée* of spirits. It is not that Spiritualism brings or evokes them, it is that they are ever there, in our streets, our fields, our houses, our bedrooms, our work-rooms, our churches and chapels. If our spiritual eyes could be suddenly opened it would be to a sight more astounding than that which the prophet at Samaria displayed to the army of the Syrians. Now this is one of the most important things which Spiritualism has taught us. Old times and old saints have said, and our Milton has said it, but now we *know* it. It is no longer a myth, a poetic fancy, it is a solemn, fearful fact. We are continually open to the observation, the suggestion of the good and evil beings around us. The ever-accumulating army of the base, the malicious, and depraved, which pass into the other world and linger long on the borders of this earth, make our conflict with evil more and more imminent; and so far from Spiritualism bringing us into contact with this dead sea of spiritual slime and crime, it is one of its most beneficent acts that it makes us aware that it is there. It calls upon us to throw ourselves on the fatherly strength of God and his brave missionary spirits for aid and wisdom, to hold on our way undaunted. It is for this that we have the blissful communion of departed saints, and of such saints as never had their niche in any ecclesiastic calendar. Saints of your own lineage and family; saints of your early friends departed in their youthful bloom and ardour of affection; saints of children whom you cradled and nursed, but whom God softly took from your enfolding arms, and who now watch over you with the love you sent with them, fresh dipped in the warmest fountains of the Divine. Saints of elder friends whom you in your youth knew

and revered: saints of scores forgotten in your long busy pilgrimage, but who now start up with familiar voices and recall lovely memories; making you feel how infinitely rich in love and widely spreading soul-alliance is that infinite world, where, though dogs and sorcerers and other abominables haunt its threshold, all within lie the measureless sunny realms of beauty and peace.

Ah! what tears have been wiped away; what sad, sad and almost despairing thoughts have been made to vanish; what long sorrowing recollections of beloved ones lost in the hours of wild gaiety, and the years of reckless passion, when death seemed very far off; of those who have died in anger and in wrongful ideas of you; of those who have fallen in desert and unknown places, leaving a hitherto unquenchable pang attached to their memories—how have these pangs been suddenly and rapturously brushed away by the recognition of these days! What a proof against all the acrid dogmas of damnatory professors, that there is no repentance beyond the grave! What a confirmation of the assurance that there was such a repentance, since Christ, during his three days of entombment, went and preached to such! There they are!—God is better than so many of his learned preachers believe Him and paint Him. There they all are!—the good have graduated into still greater goodness—the erring have found again the right way, sought up, and conducted thither by those who could never forget them. There they are, all joyous, all eager to help and counsel others in this dim Cimmeria of ours.

“They walk with God,
High in salvation and the climes of bliss!”

Oh! inestimable knowledge! oh, unspeakable gift of God to us of this unspiritual age!—worth all the knowledge piled in all libraries; all the wealth of the world; the culmination of all honours. To know, not through reasoning nor tradition, nor even through the true Scriptures themselves, but by direct perception, and from the living lips of our still living and loving friends, that the inner world, with all its glories, and wonders, and populations of purest wisdom and sweetest love—a vision more romantic than all romance, more poetic than all poetry, more wondrous than all wonder—is the great substantial and eternal reality of the universe! That is what Spiritualism has taught, and we prostrate ourselves in profound and speechless gratitude to God for it. Spiritualism for us has knit up the ancient and patriarchal times, and the days of prophets and visiting angels, with our hard-souled and iron-roaded times. The chain of life is again welded into wholeness, and stretches from the throne of God through all the lands of the blissful hierarchies down to the striving earth. Once more the rent in nature, made by blind reformatory zeal, and the quickly inventive cunning of infidel philosophy, is closed, and, after some throes and conflicts, health shall come back to the human mind, and science, opening its eyes to a higher and nobler field of labour, shall trace on the material through its subtlest forms to its impingement on the spiritual. Ampler prospects shall break upon it, and realms of inquiry, vaster than the vastest curiosity, higher than the highest ambition. The *Europe*, a journal of Frankfort, has lately noticed this fact, which must inevitably soon draw the serious attention of the public

—"Spiritualism in its turn has demonstrated a new law, a new force in nature ; that which resides in the action of spirit upon matter ; a law as universal as gravitation, or of electricity, and notwithstanding, ignored and denied by certain persons, as all other laws have been at the epoch of their discovery."

These laws have recently had a striking demonstration amongst us in the manifestations of the brothers Davenport. Under the influence of spirit, matter has been seen to pass through matter, leaving no trace of its passage ; and whilst intelligent persons, seeing the light and playful manner of these attendant spirits, have been wondering what moral lesson, or what good of any sort has been taught by them, this great and significant fact has failed to impress its natural consequences upon them. "Are these," they ask, "who play tricks and fling about instruments, spirits from heaven ? Can God really send such ?" Yes, God sends them to teach us this, if nothing more ; that He has servants of all grades and tastes ready to do all kinds of work, and He has here sent what you call low and harlequin spirits to a low and very sensual age. Had He sent anything higher it would have gone right over the heads of their audiences. As it is, nine-tenths cannot take in what they see. Probably He will send something yet lower still till He has reached the most grovelling intellect, and cracked in the thickest skull of Materialism.

In the meantime, when any one asks you what has Spiritualism taught, you may answer : It has taught, first, what most wanted teaching. What the soul is ; what becomes of it at death ; that there are purgatorial or intermediate states ; where these lie ; that there is progression in them ; that the dead seek our prayers and sympathies ; that the communion of saints is real, and far more extensive and precious than was ever before conceived of ; that there is no cessation of miracle or prophecy ; for, as St. Paul says in the 12th chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthians, such gifts are the very limbs and members of a true Church, and any Church without them is a mere dead trunk ; that it has taught us not to fear death, which is but a momentary passage to life ; that God is disciplining the human race for an eventual and universal restoration ; that He is beginning to teach laws of matter hitherto unnoticed by the acutest men of gases and crucibles ; and that, above all, Spiritualism teaches us the authenticity of the Scriptures, now so violently attacked, and their great law of love of God and of the neighbour ; that no Christianity but the *primitive* Christianity is worth a straw, and that the dry bones of the present death-in-life Churches must receive his fresh breath of life if they are ever to live again. Finally, that it teaches us to live in all purity of thought and deed, knowing that not only the ever-open eye of God is constantly upon us, but those of an innumerable company of angels and devils, to whom we are as well and openly known as to our own consciences. This is what Spiritualism has taught, a system of religious truths based on the Gospel, and affirmed afresh by spiritual ministries to this common-place age ; and blessed are they who hear, see, and believe.