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IMMORTALITY.

ITS

PEOPLE, PUNISHMENTS, AND PURSUITS;

WITH

FIVE OTHER TRANCE ADDRESSES;

BEING A COURSE OF EIGHT LECTURES THROUGH THE TRANCE MEDIUMSHIP OF

J. J. MORSE,

DELIVERED AT GOSWELL HALL, LONDON, DURING JANUARY
AND FEBRUARY, 1882.

B. K. O. J.
London:

THE PROGRESSIVE LITERATURE AGENCY,
4, NEW BRIDGE STREET, LUDGATE CIRCUS, E.C.

1882.

Respectfully Dedicated

to

S. B., Esq.

True

quite

PREFACE.

The nature of the present work is clearly indicated on the title-page.

It appears in response to a desire expressed by many who listened to the delivery of the addresses, to possess them in a permanent form. The arrangements for reporting were made by a kind friend, who thus materially facilitated the appearance of this little volume.

Concerning the merits of the addresses, the reader must be the judge. They are printed almost verbatim, and are accepted by the "Controls" of the Medium as being correct. Mr. J. J. MORSE's name is a household word wherever Spiritualism is known, and no doubt his friends will hail with pleasure this brief and unpretending record of a portion of his work in the great Metropolis.

The addresses are printed in the order in which they were given, and no doubt will be found exceedingly useful for distribution among inquirers into the teachings of the Spirits upon the topics discussed.

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IMMORTALITY—ITS PEOPLE.

Immortality is a subject that is interesting for old and young, learned and ignorant. It is a question that is inevitably bound to come before you all sooner or later. To-day, in the bright flush of physical health, and in the high tide of manhood, you may look upon immortality as a thing to be put off for future discussion. That future time will creep on apace, and by-and-bye become the present time. This will occur before you are well aware that the years have passed. You have ceased to be young, and are now brought that much nearer to the immortal life. Immortality is a question that cannot be put down. In the full flush of philosophy you may say, "There is no God ; there is no future life," but by-and-bye the melody assumes the cadence of "*Is there a God? Is there a future life?*" and still the melody changes once again, "*There may be a God,*" and slowly, and quietly, and sweetly, and ever so faintly breathed, "*I will hope there is a future life.*"

Immortality ! sweet word to many ; sweetest of all words that men may breathe to their listening souls ; and as it is properly and fairly understood, so is it appreciated in such a manner as to reflect nothing but justice, wisdom, and honour upon God. But how potent for sorrow, how filled with misery and vain fears, and dreadful regrets when the interpretation does *not* reflect the highest wisdom, the greatest goodness, and the noblest honour upon Him whom we call God. The poorer your conception of immortality is the less fortunate is the belief in immortality to you ; and we wish to lay it down as a fairly true statement, that, as is the conception of immortality, so will be the usefulness of the life that you are now pursuing. Some people, however, may be inclined to cavil at such a statement, and argue that those people who do not trouble their heads about immortality at all live the most usefully, and

are the most happy in the world. There is some reason in the argument, but we question very much whether it will go the full length of those that use it. You may not trouble yourself about immortality to-day; you may have troubled yourself about it in the past, and formed so poor a conception and so indifferent an understanding concerning it, that it reflected nothing but misery upon your lives so long as you entertained such suppositions; but when you grew mentally strong enough to banish such suppositions, and could understand them, and come into a position of absolute negation concerning immortality, then you realised at least one view of what we say—that as is your conception of immortality, so will be the happiness and usefulness of your life. That conception being poor and indifferent, your life's results were poor and indifferent also. But what shall we say of the half of the argument that remains—no conception of immortality? Each life then lacks usefulness and lacks happiness? Not so; but we say life lacks the *fulness* of usefulness, and the *fulness* of happiness, that is to be found in those that have a rational conception of the life that lies before them. You cannot realise the full benefits of any advantage that has a sequence pertaining to it unless you have the springs of the sequence; for the sequence following that which is, that which is must have some relation to that sequence, and if you are to reap the results of the sequence you must be able to prepare yourself for that sequence. Immortality is the sequence of this life, and if you are to realise the benefits of that sequence you must be able to prepare yourself *here* for that sequence; and that life which best appreciates and most clearly understands this immortality is the life that is best calculated to be the most happy and useful while here. Therefore, those that lack this assurance of immortality are unfortunate to that extent that they are only able to make the best use of this life, which is a very good preparation for the life that lies beyond; but if to that negative preparation there can be put the positive one of soul culture, and if, as well, the terrestrial and natural experience can be run side by side therewith, you will be reaping the full benefits of your dual natures, and you are doing the utmost good you are capable of doing. Hence we lay it down as a postulate that this life cannot be completely lived when the individual is devoid of a consciousness of

immortality, and as is the character of that consciousness of immortality, so will be the nature of the happiness of the individual.

We do not think there can be any reasonable question with regard to the proposition just stated; hence we say, immortality is a question of vital importance to young and old. The old are about to face it, the young will have to do so, by-and-bye, and indeed, for the matter of that, we may almost go the length of saying there is no certainty as to the time when young and old may not be called to face it. It may come to you as quickly as least expected; the angel messenger may beckon you home, when you think the joys of mortal life are only just spreading out before you. He may pass you by until the frosts of winter have silvered the hair, the action of life has worn away the strength of physical existence; but sooner or later this angel of death will be sure to remember you, and lift his finger and beckon you home.

With you all, then, it is a vital question, and to grasp it, to understand it, to feel it (so to speak) in its character and nature, is, we think, one of the absolute necessities of modern thought. Clearly there can be no dispute of this proposition either, that the great object of life here is for you to realise the full results of every faculty and attribute you possess, and it is only by the same perfect realisation that the real and permanent progress of the world is maintained. You have made the acquaintance of people who are counted vigorous and useful; but unfortunately, when we come to analyse it, we find in the main it is composed of special vigour and special usefulness. One man is celebrated as a mathematician, another as a geologist, another as a poet: but the poet knows nothing of the rocks of the geologist, and the geologist cannot comprehend the life of the man of figures; but it is the "all round" of learning that realises truly the most with every particular of life,—the man that possesses this is perhaps the *most* fortunate. You may ask, How many such lives can you find? They are rare: they are too conspicuous by their absence, and when they are developed, some people are inclined to sneeringly remark, "Oh! Jack of all trades, but master of none." Well, perhaps, knowing a little of everything is better than knowing a great deal of one thing, and nothing at all of all the other things. Perhaps the man that knows a little of

"all round" knowledge is in a better position to appreciate the immense relationship that brings every department of being into perfect acquaintance, than that individual who has followed one particular line of thought, and has at last worked himself into the conclusion that what the world knows outside of mathematics, or poetry, or geology, is worthless, for they are the only things the world ought to be interested in! Therefore, if you have a spiritual nature as well as a material one, those people who know something of the spiritual nature, while they are living in this world, are in a better position to realise the full benefits of their personal existence, than those who do not understand such questions, and have paid no attention to such matters. Such people who so know can well afford to pass by, without any consideration, the idle sneer that is sometimes levelled at them when they are spoken of as dreamy, fanatical, superstitious folk, who are always running after ghosts and Spirits, and such like unsubstantial things. Such like *unsubstantial* things have been among the most enduring monuments the world knows to-day! When the temple of granite has been shattered to its base, the truths that have been preached within that temple ever remain unharmed. When the man who has given utterance to some grand spiritual thought has been nailed to the cross, or swung from the beam; when his palpitating, quivering flesh has given up life, his Word remains. The truths, the principles, that the man has thought, the idea that he has taught, lives, germinates, and progresses. It is true, with all the people of the world, the enduring monuments are not the perishable works of man, they are the imperishable truths preached within the temple, uttered by the man; and those that pay attention to all verities and forms of truth, and who try to cultivate their spiritual self, as well as material self, are doing infinitely great good: they are preparing themselves for that Immortality that lies beyond the present life.

Here, then, the question of Immortality assumes practical aspect. Will the world never have done shelving the problem for consideration "by-and-bye"? Why the fashion has been for many generations to wait until you are taken mortally sick before you turn to spiritual questions at all—"When I am on my death-bed will be time enough;" "when I am going to die, when the daily concerns of life do not

engage my attention ;” “ I have bread to provide for my family ; I have my position in society to maintain ; I have this invention, or that reform, or something or other to do, and I cannot neglect these things ; they are of the utmost importance, and when I am sick and have got nothing else to do, then I will turn my attention to these things.” Something like the old couplet—

“ When the devil was sick, the devil a saint would be ;
When the devil was well, the devil a saint was he.”

And this seems to be the position of the majority of people ; when they are well they do not want to be honest ; when they are ill they wish to be honest, as if Heaven was a sort of convalescent home for the reception of sick sinners ! Immortality, if it means anything, means something that is to be prepared for. You may remember that it is the sequence of this life ; *therefore*, a state that is to be prepared for, because it is a state to be encountered. And who is there wise enough to say that that which *is* to be encountered needs no preparation upon the part of those who are going to encounter it ? Such reasoning is absurd ; not worth the name of reasoning. If you are going to your friends you wash your face and put your dress in order ; if going on a journey you make your proper preparations. You are going on a longer journey ; you are going to many of your friends' houses ; you are going on some important business ; so you let the opportunities of preparation flash by, and jump into the next world as you would into the next omnibus ! If so, you must be prepared to find sundry difficulties in the way ; you must be prepared to take a certain position, for the Law of Life everywhere says, that they obtain the greatest benefits who are best prepared to make use of the opportunities that occur.

Immortality, then, plainly, may come to a practical issue ; that you have to consider, and it is in the light of a practical issue that the three addresses will be devoted to it—as a practical issue, stripped of all the beautiful and feathery appendages, brought home to you as a reality. You have had it as the other sort long enough.

But we want it brought home ; therefore, taking it on the ground we have so briefly sketched we turn to the people of the Immortality that lies before you. Now you say, when your child

dies, "Little Johnny is gone to Heaven." Little Johnny is about ten years old ; had he lived another twenty years, "Our dear departed brother, in the sure and certain hope of the speedy resurrection;" had he lived another twenty years,—well it seems very often that the older people get, the less certain are you as to *where* they have gone to when they die ; until at last we come by the natural process of declension to the two conclusions :—That if you die young, you are going to Heaven, and if you die very old, you go—to the other place ; while all those that hang between the two extremes, you *hope* they have gone to Heaven, but nobody seems certain. We do not know why children should have a monopoly of goodness ; or why age should have a monopoly of wickedness ; these are pretty evenly distributed ; everybody has more or less of wickedness, and equally so, everybody has more or less of goodness. The world is as good as it can be under its present conditions, and everybody reaps in the next life exactly that kind of result that is proper and legitimate to the efforts they have put forward in this world.

Now with regard to these people, put on one side all popular theological notions ; we have nothing to do with "angels," or "devils." Ask yourself, "I am going to die ; what am I going to be like when I am dead?" You see it is something for *you* to consider, not for us to consider for you, not something you are to trust to the Rev. John Sweetvoice, who shall tell you most sweetly and eloquently what you are going to be like, according to his comprehension, which will be a very flimsy kind of thing after all ; but for you to think it over for *yourself*, "I am going to die ; what am I going to be like hereafter?" If you do not want to know, the element of curiosity will certainly be very small in your nature ; but we do not think there is anybody that would decline really to speculate upon the questions,—"*Where have the dead gone to, and, if they live, what are they like?*" These are two critical questions. Have they gone out of existence? Has the great darkness opened and swallowed them up and extinguished them for ever? Will the hand never more be grasped? Shall the voice never again sound? Is the grave the end? No! *Where* have they gone? They have gone to the Home of the Immortals, where you are going.

“What are they like?” Now, let us indulge in a little philosophy. Some of you may have heard something similar before. Truth never loses by repetition; principles are always the better for occasional repetition; therefore, we need not apologise for repeating matters that some of you are probably already familiar with. The very most that can be stated of your present modus, or physical existence, is that you, as a human creature, physically speaking, are made up of the organic principles which are the highest results of nature’s development here on earth; but the machinery of the body is not “me,”—that must be always clearly before the mind of the spiritual investigator. “Thou mayest bury me, if thou canst catch me,” said Socrates of old, and the truth remains: this body is not “me.” The consciousness behind, the entity, or soul, as you call it, is superior; that is, the controlling power is the real *me*. The body dies, and your knowledge of the “me” here is strictly limited to its expressions through the organisation; therefore, so far as your personal identity is concerned, after death (as it is called) there must be a similarity of machinery for the reception and registration of impressions by the “me” in that new state, and thus a similarity of organisation in both kinds of life. Clearly, then, if such a doctrine holds ground, you will have to possess a spiritual brain, a spiritual organisation; it is by the brain system and organisation that you are enabled to receive and register impressions, and produce the actions that such impressions inspire. Death will, then, mean one of two things: either the preservation of the “me,” with everything that makes it mentally, and morally, and spiritually what it is now, or the destruction thereof as it now exists.

The people, then, of the immortal life are either the spiritual counterparts of their former selves, or they are something that you cannot comprehend, because you can only comprehend counterparts; you can only comprehend things capable of producing impressions on your present senses, and being cognised and recognised by your present senses; and if the inhabitants of Immortality are things, or creatures, or people, that have no point of contact with you, can produce no impressions upon you, nor enable you to register impressions concerning them, you can know nothing of them, and it will be a mere waste of time to attempt to describe them. You see clearly the point; there must be points of contact between you and

the people of Immortality, if it is possible, on your part, to understand these people. If there is no point of contact between you, there can be no comprehension upon your part of these folks that lie beyond. They will be separated from you by impassable barriers; there will be no bridging the chasm; there is no point of contact, therefore there can be no connection.

Let us make a brief digression here. Will any one stand up and say, "I am an angel"? Will any one stand up and say "I am a devil"? Someone might be found to venture on the first affirmation; we have heard people say "So-and-so is an angel," but it has usually been one sex praising the other. But if you are honest you will say, "I am not an angel, I am not a devil," for angels and devils have no connection with you, either here, or hereafter, if taken in the common and vulgar acceptation that such things are accepted in. You see the matter is a practical issue, for the dead are the real "selfhoods": the men and women that lived in this world, clothed upon with proper organisations for the expression of their lives here.

Now we have a fair statement with regard to the people of the spiritual world. We are not going to let you fall into the error that the people of Immortality are all good,—nothing of the kind. There are unfortunately constituted people there, as there are here; there are moral monstrosities there, as you have such like here; there are spiritual beings there as there are here; there are people who unfortunately squint at nature, just the same there as they do here; there is the same obliquity of natural passion there as there is here; in fact, as a friend of ours very often remarks, "The fools are not all confined to one world."

It sometimes comes with a very disagreeable shock to a refined temperament, when it has to consider the facts we have just placed before you. They have always looked upon the next world as something so glorious and sublime that when it is brought down in this practical fashion, their whole nature revolts against it. They are inclined to say that such statements are *not* correct. We say they *are* correct. These refined people have fallen into the natural error of supposing that the kind of spiritual life that they have an affinity for is the whole of the spiritual life, neglecting the supposition that there must be life infinitely lower than that which they have

ever looked at, or that with which they stand on a level. Those of you who have attained to spiritual excellence must not forget that there is a want of excellence beneath you, and that if you interpret the whole of the spiritual life in accordance with your superior developments, you are not only doing wrong, falling into an error, but you are dealing *unjustly* with those beneath you. Granting this, what remains? If there are good and bad, and wise and foolish, among the people of Immortality, you will argue that it is only a sort of repetition of this life, a duplicate to our present experience. Precisely so! The earlier stages of the immortal experience duplicate the experiences of this life, and the people upon the fringe line (so to speak) of the immortal world, are very little better, and very little worse—sometimes not quite so good—than the people that are living upon this world. The best of this world's people rise beyond that fringe line. The average man and woman, that knows far more about the price of coals and wood, than he does about the value of his immortal soul, is not fitted to enter those colleges where the weighty problems of life are discussed by the good and true. He would be as much out of place in such company as the fish out of water. Passing through this, and very rapidly, the plain fact remains, that the Immortal Home is peopled with the departed men, women, and children of human life. That is all, and that is the plain practical conclusion that you have to place before yourself; that when you pass from this world you will not directly be one whit better, or worse when you enter that next world, than when you pass from this. Some will say, "That is a very poor, a very lowering, a very degrading conception of the people of Immortality." "I am quite sure my father was a very pure spirit." Somebody else may not share that opinion. "Well, but I am quite sure that my mother was the purest woman that you could have found." Well, it is quite right that you should imagine your parents to be among the finest of people; but your affection must not blind you to the supposition that there are other people who may not share your opinion; and perhaps if there was a little more *justice* in the matter, a little less of exaggeration, your conception of parental perfection would be very valuably toned down. You have no *right* to estimate a fellow-creature beyond his proper worth and value, because in so

doing you are detracting measurably from the worth of people who are *not* recognised, and there is not too much comfort or kindness, that you should thus deprive others of their share. Let these things be shared more equally with the world, and, if you can look outside your own front doors, you will find very often as much worth and value in your neighbours' houses as in your own.

But do not imagine that we are running down affection; do not imagine for a moment that we want you to think your parents only very so-so sort of people; we only want you to avoid the other extreme—the blinding your judgment to the fact that they are human, like yourself and your neighbours. Now, we have not the slightest doubt that, taking the average of civilised society, men and women are tolerably good; on the whole, we incline to say there is far more goodness than badness. You hear most of the wickedness, because goodness has not become fashionable; you hear most of the wrongs, because the rights are paid little attention to. You hear most of the miseries of human life, because the publication of that is more profitable than the publication of goodness and kindness.

Here is a certain man that passes his days as a kind father, an honest husband. A very useful article that—a man whose word can be taken, a good son, an honest, upright man. Now consider—What do you know about your soul? Do not dodge round the corner; you know nothing about the matter. Do you know why it rains? Oh, Lord bless you! no. I never thought of such a thing. Do you know why it is colder when the sun is closer? No. Do you know why seeds grow? Because they are put into the ground. Do you know why men grow? Because they cannot help it. What do you know of the world in which you live? Not very much. This is a *good* man, mark you, whose only failing is a lack of practical acquaintance with the world in which he lives! What kind of status do you expect such a man to take in the world to which he is going, if he knows so little of the world he is passing through? How much does he know of the world he is going to? Do you know anything about your soul, or about the world you are going to? No. You have the case plainly stated before you; he knows next to nothing of this world, and he knows absolutely nothing of the other world. Now, he

may be a very good man, but do you imagine that such a man will take high rank or noble grade in the world of souls, busy with discussing Divine principles and immortal, imperishable realities? It is absurd to suppose so. We do not deny the goodness of the man, but we do emphatically protest that he is not fitted for, and is therefore unprepared to take high rank in, the next world. He must be prepared to take a secondary state, for it seems that the people of Immortality gain no advantage that they have not worked up to and become prepared for. Thus you come from the key-note to the fact—that the people of the next world will be graded off into various conditions, and that in these general conditions there will be special states. Thus, there will be those who, speaking generally, are very bad; those who, speaking generally still, are moderately bad; those who, speaking generally, are tolerably good; who, speaking again generally, are a little better still, and going on to those who are very much better still; and in these general sets (so to speak) there will be special associations, special cliques, families, or parties—associations, brotherhoods, wherein people having kindred pursuits, and ideas, and sentiments will congregate together and associate. You have the same thing here, mark you! and in the spiritual world the law of gregariousness holds good, just as it holds good here. Like attracts like, genial sentiment cements friendship, kindred pursuits and employment will bring brotherhood, and at last, losing all bitterness, all shall finally rise up, through the smoke and fire of sensual regret and physical misery and darkness, into the higher state of happiness, the place where truth and wisdom form indeed the soul's best food and true pursuits. For "over there" you will find all sorts and conditions of people—spiritual people, the spiritual duplicates of their former material selves, in some cases; in others, an improvement upon their former selves; in others, a still more strongly marked improvement, but in all cases you will find they are the same men and women that you at one time knew in this world.

Now, there is something issuing out of this which we shall deal with later on, in the course of these addresses, which we may pause to take just a glance at. It is this. Here the question comes that as there are rational people, the duplicates (so to speak) of their former material selfhoods, it follows—it must follow—that the world they live in will be as perfectly

adapted to them as is this world to you. And as you can comprehend, by reason of there being points of contact between yourselves and these people, their natures and characters, so their world having relationship to them, and they to you, that world must also have relation to this world. Then, as this world has its relationship to you, the circle of unity will be completed. There will be points of contact between the terrestrial and spiritual worlds, as there are points of contact between terrestrial and spiritual men, and thus all idea of hitch or break in the economy of Being is at once repudiated. The circle of life is complete ; there is perfect unity and relationship in every department of Being, and immortality is not some unfamiliar conjuration, or some extraordinary thing, outside of nature, but is a part of nature ; as we put it first, the *sequence* of this life for you, the results of material life so far as the world is concerned, the continuation of personal consciousness for man. The people of immortality are, therefore, your friends and relatives—the men, women, and children that have lived in this world ; and every parent will find its child, every sorrowing heart will find its love, every brother will find his kindred, the whole world's loves and friendships will all be taken up again. There are unfortunates in that world which are contributions to it from this world, and there are gracious souls, noble minds, kingly men and queenly women, whose great hearts throb to Divine melodies, whose great souls vibrate with the celestial happiness, as they comprehend and inspire the Divine principles and realities everywhere around them ; men whose words are music ; women whose lives are one continued record of heroic struggle and grand endeavours ; children whose hearts are centres of loving light, scattering beams of glory in darkened homes even here on earth ; thinkers whose great thoughts will play in fountains of celestial wisdom, scattering their thoughts in glorious drops ; poets whose songs are so sweet that no human phrase can give them utterance, men and women still ; and all these, mark you, with loving hearts turned, and earnest thoughts straining, towards the poor humanity of earth, were one time clothed with flesh as you are. They suffered, struggled, and were defeated, as you suffer and struggle and suffer defeat ; and they conquered as you conquer. Their feet sometimes trod the flinty ways

of life, and left a bloody track as they passed on their way ; as yours have done. Their vestments were torn with the fierce struggles, the thorns and briars on the pathway of human progress ; they were men and women, weak or strong, successful or unsuccessful like yourselves ; good and bad at one time, but so great and glorious now that the comprehension of them fills the heart of man with great and glorious thoughts, and the recognition that they may be influencing you to-day may inspire you with great and noble resolves. Yet, one day, you shall stand side by side with them ; what they have reached, you shall reach ; glory they have already partaken of you shall share ; your glory and wisdom and beauty are yet to come. What they have—the men and women of the higher life—is for *you one* and *all* to experience by-and-bye.

Now we have come to a practical conclusion. All this is very beautiful, and very inspiring ; but what is the practical lesson from it ? This : if *you* are to reach this speedily, you had better begin your preparations now, you must work for it. Now you know, in this world, that if men and women are honest, and truthful, and just, the happiness of the world is thereby promoted. If the members of your family are honest just, and truthful, each can rely upon the word of the other, and none feel the slightest fear. If the world was only a great family like that, how happy human life would be ! Is it not worth *striving* for ? for as the goodness of the world's people so is the happiness of human society. Let that word "goodness" be expressive of the *three* qualities, honesty, justice, and truthfulness. As is the goodness of the world's people, so will be the happiness of human society. Let that word "happiness" be expressive of all the virtues that make society tolerable, human life possible. Here, then, if you cultivate these qualities *now* ; if you turn to the development of your souls as well as to the development of your bodies ; if you turn to the practical conclusion of the realities of the life you are going to face, and if you try to develope both sides of your nature now, and to live up to the principles in this world that make the next world so great and good, you will be *best preparing* yourself for the life that lies before you.

Now have we not brought the question of the people of Immortality plainly, practically before you ? have we not made you clearly see—at least we trust we have—that they are not

far-away creatures of the mind, not phantoms, not beautiful things, altogether too pure, and too great, and too refined, for you to do with. Have we not brought them before you as your dead relatives and friends? Have we not made you see that you, with all the failings and all the advantages you possess, if you were to die to-night, would be the same when you woke in the spiritual world that you are now?

Clearly then, taking this view of the question, we think we do the world service to better express the knowledge of immortality the world is longing for; more truly render honour and glory to God by an *intelligent* presentation of the subject of immortality than could be the case if we dealt in platitudes, and transcendental talk, which is after all, "sound, signifying nothing." The world does not want to have the people of the next world before it as creations that it cannot understand. The world says, "What has become of my mother?" An angel! that is not my mother! I could not love an angel as I loved my *mother*. An angel! I could not love an angel as I loved my father, as I loved my wife, as I loved my child! An angel is something I know not; I have never seen one; I could not understand one if I did. Give me back my mother, my child, my wife, my father; give me back those I have loved, those who have been the noblest and best in my life; those who have made life worth living; those who have filled my soul with a divine enthusiasm I never felt from other sources. The world says, Give me back these; I do not want your angels; and the world here is in the right; and the world's question is the honest expression of the world's right to have its dead brought back to it, and the Divine "Father" never permits a desire in the heart of His children that He is not prepared to answer. All the world's fathers, mothers, sisters, wives, brothers, will come back to it when the present world stands and meets them on the other shore. The world's dead are there; the people of the immortal life are the friends, the relatives, the mortals that have gone before.

Here, then, let us leave the subject. The world's great question will be realised. You do not want a better angel than a loving wife, a dear sister; you do not want a nobler angel than the self-sacrificing man; you do not want a better angel than the noble man, the pure woman; if you find these in the world, you find the best angels God can make. You do not

want viler devils than those who have been trained in sin and misery, who are ignorant and perverted ; you do not want to go to hell to find such people—they are here, in this world of yours to-day. Believe all this, beloved, and when you send other quantities towards the people of Immortality, let them be better, in sample and character, than they have been hitherto.

In closing, then, let us say the people of Immortality await you. They watch over you, and to them you are indebted for the knowledge of immortality that you possess ; and for all this they have but one request to make, and that is this : As from them you are learning of the mysteries and character of the life beyond, so ought you in return, and as an evidence of your gratitude, to put that knowledge into practice, and for the future strive to so live that both sides of your nature may have proper play, and free opportunity of expression ; so that while you are doing good mortally, you will be getting good spiritually. Live the double life, outside and inside, spiritually and naturally, and forget not in the race for material well-being, that there is another side for life, which, if you are to prepare for the sequence of the present life, you *must* turn your attention to. He who learns most of spiritual nature and quality *now*, best prepares himself to take highest rank in the immortal world that lies beyond.

IMMORTALITY—ITS PUNISHMENTS.

The punishment of departed humanity has always been a favourite topic for discussion among certain classes of men. It has had particular fascination for those who have affected theological pursuits; in that particular department of their studies they have revelled with a fancy and freedom that certainly reflects the highest honour on the imagination of the human mind, but which does not reflect any too great an amount of credit upon the judgment of the individuals who have indulged their imagination upon this subject. So long as we can punish those that are distasteful to us, and imagine that there will be some opportunity wherein those who have displeased us will surely reap, not altogether the punishment due to their offences, but that punishment which will be increased by our resentment, we are satisfied, we are content, we are happy. We will say, this is their just merit that God is bestowing upon them; we will say that because they do not worship at our church, because they do not believe what we believe, the Lord will visit them with punishment. You may say the *Lord* will do this, but when you come to analyse the sentiment you will find there are four-fifths of you in the matter and only one-fifth of the Lord. It is the gratification of your particular spite, because these people would not be as you desired them, and you are making God a sort of stalking horse for the infliction of the penalties you imagine due to them. It may be very pleasant to think that these things will be; but when you are asked to speculate upon the possibility of these enemies of yours harbouring like sentiments towards you, and shewing you a similar favour, and invoking the judgment of the Lord for a similar use, you at once fire up with a great deal of indignation and say you are on the right way, and it does not matter if these people prophesy evil against you. It depends, as we very often say, on who is going

to be punished; if it is "that other man," we believe in it; if it is ourselves, the goodness of God will make allowance for our weakness. If the justice of mankind is to be perpetuated in the world of Spirits, pray that you may never go there, for the shortsightedness, the folly, the iniquity, and spite, and malice, and uncharitableness, that pass current side by side with this so-called justice of yours is enough to make every honest soul rise at the contemplation of it; and to imagine that it is to be perpetuated upon the shores of the immortal and so-called "better life," would indeed be to degrade that future world to the level of the lowest hells that you conceive of in this. If there are punishments in the next world they must be exempt from the things that belong to them in this world. They must be administered by wiser heads, and kinder hearts, and truer souls, a better class of men over there than is unfortunately the case so far as the administration of justice in this world is concerned. Failing this, the justice of Heaven will be a travesty, a mockery of justice, that will make honest hearts ache with pain when they witness its administration. Better no justice at all than the rude kind of justice that is preached to you, thrown at you and thrust down your throats from one year's end to the other. But you may say, "This man does not believe in justice at all; his conception of future punishment would rather be no conception at all, and we should be inclined to gather that he is about to argue there are no punishments whatever in the future world." Do not deceive yourselves. There are punishments there, but they are legitimate and proper punishments, against which no one can raise one single objection. But if all the punishments that some people devise and think ought to be executed were put into effect in the spiritual world, justice would become a bye-word, and the mercy of God a thing without any meaning whatsoever.

We want you to draw the line clearly, plainly, and definitely in your own minds on this particular issue—the punishment which you think ought to be inflicted, and the punishment which is the natural outcome of the offences committed. Unless you can draw the line there, plainly, clearly, and definitely, it is perfectly useless for you to attempt to reason on this topic, for there may be a difference in the world of Spirits between the punishment which you think

ought to be inflicted and the punishment naturally arising out of the offence committed.

Let us illustrate our meaning.

Here is a boy out of the streets, ragged, dirty, houseless, a very respectable edition of the *genus homo* as pertaining to a civilised Christian country. His religion is made up of blasphemy; his social life one long struggle eked out with crusts of bread and drinks of water, a lodgment in the police-station or poor-house; his conception of Divine right, stealing as much as he can; his ideas of justice—well, something of this sort—"The 'cuter I am the less likely am I to be imposed upon by others." He does not put it quite so finely, but that is the substance of it. This boy steals a pocket-handkerchief—we will take a small article, because the value of the article does not matter, so far as the principle of theft is concerned. He is taken before a magistrate; the magistrate has had a comfortable luncheon, puts his spectacles on his nose, and surveys the waif of civilisation, and very solemnly observes, "A bad case, a very bad case. You know, boy, it is wrong to steal?" The boy whimpers. His worship repeats his question; the boy says, "Dunno." "What made you steal?" "I was hungry." "But you cannot eat pocket-handkerchiefs." "Sell it." "That you were hungry is no excuse for your thieving, sir! Seven days." Now we put it to you as a matter of simple fact, a case of common occurrence; was the punishment merited by the offence committed, when you take all the surrounding circumstances into account, or was it the expression of the simple thought of the convicting magistrate? Was it a perfectly proper punishment? With moral senses blunted, with soul undeveloped, with hunger gnawing at his vitals, with the examples of thousands more of the same kidney, what more natural than that the child should steal for the sake of gratifying the pangs of hunger? What more natural than that his worship should be honest and good, when he had not got the slightest thing to ruffle him, or make *him* feel uncomfortable?

Here, then, you may see an illustration of the principle we have given utterance to. You must draw a distinction between the punishment you would inflict, and the punishment which is due naturally to the offence committed. Because when you take your side of the case you may fancy some personal injury; you may conceive of some slight; you may imagine

a thousand things affecting you personally which will call forth your ire, and will make you want to see the punishment administered, so that you may be avenged. But when you take all the circumstances of life into view; when you see the snares that are around the feet of mankind, and the pitfalls that are dug for them; when you bear in mind the weakness, and the folly, and the vices that are born in the natures of men and women, and instilled into their natures after they are born; when you see around you how wrong triumphs, how might overrides right, and how he is thought the best who can bray the loudest; when you see all these things, the wonder is, it seems to us, not that humanity falls, and is bad, but that it is so good as it is. When you take all these counteracting influences against moral worth, surely pity should inspire your judgments and your souls should breathe forth the sweet injunction, "To forgive is divine." He who forgives imitates Deity the best.

But, you will say, the question is *post mortem* punishment. "*Immortality, its Punishments.* What have they to do with such matters as you have been arguing about?" A great deal to do. It may possibly be a startling doctrine to some people that the offences of earth are not the offences looked at on the other side of life. It may happen that many of the things you sternly, and oh! so righteously condemn in other people—but sometimes do yourselves—are looked upon by those of the other life with altogether different feelings, and weighed in altogether different scales. It may be so; why should it not be so? "Oh, it would destroy all our confidence in moral rectitude and well-being; it would upset all our notions of right, it would destroy the social fabric;"—that is always coming down according to some people's ideas—"it would destroy religious influence; it would destroy the government,"—and that is always going to rack and ruin—"in fact, what you are going to depart from would destroy everything, and there is going to be nothing left." These are all very weak-backed kind of folk; they have not got enough backbone to stand up by under ordinary circumstances; but if it should be so—we will not come to the positive affirmation just yet—but, to use a convenient phrase, if Heaven views through a different medium the offences of earth, there may be some necessity for you to inquire whether, this being so, it would not be better for earth

to look at earth's wrongs through Heaven's spectacles, so that it might be able to adjust the conditions of society upon a true, sound basis. It might be well to ask this ; but if this perception is to be given up, and that conception has to be abandoned and some other sort of idea is to come up ; if what we have called "right" is to be given up, so that every right which we have labelled "wrong" is to take its place ; if this so-called "wrong" is on a level with eternal justice, let it take its place, no matter what else opposing comes down. "Oh, but this is revolutionary !" Well, this world has gained its greatest triumphs by its revolutions. As "the blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the Church," so the blood of the world's reformers has been the seed from which has sprung the world's progress. Right ever has had to fight for all that it possesses to-day, because wrong has boldly and persistently usurped right's functions, and dared to say, "I am God, worship me !" And the fleshpots of Egypt being proverbially pleasant, wrong does not like to yield up their use, and makes a goodly fight to retain them when anybody dares to say they are not its own especial property. There is a great deal of fighting going on in the world, in the moral atmosphere as well as outside in the physical atmosphere. If, by chance, you can look at earth's wrongs through Heaven's spectacles you may find many things that you have never before suspected to exist.

But what are the kind of punishments ; or, better still, what is the nature of the offences that men shall be tried and punished for in the world to come ?

Now, we are disposed to be very liberal in this matter. You take an ordinary person, of average intelligence, and you say to him, "Of course you believe in a future state?" and he will say, "Oh ! yes ; certainly I do." We will not stop to imagine how much he knows about it—that will probably be displayed in the answers. Of course you believe that future state will be divided between good and bad ? "Certainly I do." Which side do you think you belong to ? "Oh ! it is not for me to say ; the Lord is good—I trust His Providence." If we could get behind the man we might discover the truth. "I am going to *that*" (pointing to the right) "side." And, of course, you believe that, in the place of punishment, the sinners of this world will there meet their proper condemnation ? "Certainly I do." Do you mind answering me a few more questions ? "Not if

I can possibly do so ; certainly not." Very well ! Supposing a man is a liar, thief, wrong-doer, and altogether a very bad person ; and, as a consequence of his badness, he injures sundry families ; reduces some to beggary and misery ; drives their sons to evil courses, and their daughters to worse ones ; wrecks peaceful homes, and mars useful lives—what would you think of such a person ? " A very dreadful person indeed." Of course everybody will agree with such a sentiment. And what would you do with such a man ? " Well ! speaking from a human point of view, I would refuse to shake hands with him." Quite right ! And if you could bring any of his crimes home to him ? " I certainly would do so,"—very emphatically. Some people seem to have a particular liking for getting other folks into trouble. And when he was dead what would you do with him ? " I do not think any punishment could be too great for him." So there is no escape for him ? " Oh ! yes." Ah ! how ? " If he would only cleanse himself with the sanctifying influence of Divine grace." Well ! what then ? " The Lord would take him to His fold." Oh ! a wrong-doer, an evil liver, an altogether bad, and utterly useless man ? After reducing families to misery, and ruin, and shame, he finds the sanctifying influence of Divine grace, and becomes cleansed, and goes to the fold of Heaven ; he has repented. One little question only. What in the name of common-sense is the use of his repentance to those people that he has wrecked and made miserable ? " Oh ! that is *their* affair ; if they do not repent they must suffer also !"

Supposing you had been wrecked by this man ; supposing your name had been blasted,—and how easy it is to blast the fair fame of a fellow-creature,—supposing you had been reduced to beggary and starvation ; suppose you had fallen into evil courses because your will was weak and your mind undeveloped ; suppose *you* had gone down the hill to—well, *facilis descensus* ; suppose you had come in to the mire of this life, and this man had gone to Heaven. Would you fall down on your knees and say " Thank God ! he has been saved " ? No ! what you are pleased to call the " old Adam " in your nature would rise up to the surface and you would *curse* the man for the misery he had brought upon you.

" But if he repents, you know ? " If he repents ! what is the good of that repentance to you whom he has ruined ?

Nothing ! No good whatever ! Therefore it is only a selfish getting out of the difficulty for him ; a lame leaping over the stile, utterly careless whether *you* can get over it now, or at any other time. “ Oh, but then it is horrible to talk like this ! ” Now see here, my friend. Do you not narrow the issue down to this ?—that while seeming to punish vice, and wrong, and wickedness ; while appearing to visit punishment upon all the evil of human life, you do nothing of the kind ? It is only an appearance ; the only thing men are punished for is because they do not repent, and find this sanctifying grace ; because they do not believe—to use the full expression—“ in the Lord Jesus Christ.” Because they are not baptised, because they do not become converted, and turn religious. And if they will not do this, then they are punished for their *unbelief*, and you cannot successfully deny the fact. We believe wickedness ever brings its own condemnation fully ; we believe that every wrong generates its proper punishment ; and we believe that every right brings its proper recompense, and every good deed its own and peculiarly proper reward—we believe these things fully, but we do *not* believe God punishes one single soul for not being able to believe what his next door neighbour believes.

Now we will get into the next world for a little while. Plainly and clearly, if we accepted some people’s notions, we should expect to find those who have had, as it is called, no religion in this world, in the very worst position in the world there. Those people who entertain such notions never seem to be aware of the fact that their religion is not the only one ; that there are more people in the world than live in this country ; that there are older fanes than those of the people that live in this country. Their eye is so full of light that they cannot see any other light ; and if they do see it, it is only some little farthing rushlight !

But those people that have no religion ; are they punished in the next world ? When you can say that unbelief is a crime ; when you can say *that* man is a bad man who will not say that he believes until he is satisfied ; when you can say that this man or woman is a wretch because he will not go to our church ; when you can say these things honestly, you may expect it to be possible for such persons to be punished in the world to come. But as unbelief is not a crime ; as a refusal to say yes before you are satisfied in your own mind is no wrong ;

as declining to worship with those with whose opinions you do not sympathise, is rather a virtue than otherwise; we think you will have to wait a long time before your ideas of punishment will be reflected in the actions of God. No! in the world of Immortality there is no punishment inflicted for honest unbelief. But disbelief always carries with it a certain sort of punishment. The man who knows, and whose actions are affected in consequence of his knowledge, is truly in a better position than the man who stands just outside the borders of that knowledge; but, by-and-bye, when his disbelief is changed to belief, when his doubts are overcome, and his scruples all removed; the individual then discovers how much he has been despoiled of all the time he has been doubting, and only in that sense have we ever been able to discover punishment for unbelief in the world of souls.

Then we have another class of people who are supposed to be punished in the next world. Criminals! We put them all together, without massing them out into their various departments. Of course they include all sorts and shades of wickedness; they are *the* wicked of the earth. Of course they are to be punished! Here is a murderer! Murder is a dreadful crime. Here is a thief! Here is a forger! Here is a liar! Of all else avoid *him*, we will have nothing to do with him. Here is collected all of wickedness, and our hearts turn sick as we contemplate the specimens. This man was hung, this man committed suicide, and so on through the whole catalogue. *How are they punished?* Before they are punished it is necessary to ask one or two questions. If men's actions and character are the outcome, and expression, of their inheritance, and training, and associations, you ought to punish the inheritance, the training, and the associations whenever men go wrong. If you are to-day what the condition of life makes you, and you are no other; if you are bad, punish your conditions by sweeping them away and putting better ones in the place of them. That is just the plain issue. If man is to-day what inheritance, training, education and associations make him; if he is bad to-day he is so because these circumstances have been bad. And in the world beyond the answer is in every case, that the men whom the world calls criminals are the "failures of humanity," and that instead of torturing them and punishing

them, in the vain hope of making them better, they want purifying and developing instead, for by such processes only can they be improved. "Why! you do not mean to say that a murderer can be made anything else but a murderer, do you?" Perhaps at one time that murderer was a virtuous and honourable member of society. What caused his descent to the level of murderdom? "You do not mean to say that a virtuous and honourable member of society can be made anything but a virtuous and honourable member of society, do you?" If the logic is good in one case why not in the other? your murderer is always a murderer if your virtuous member of society is always a virtuous member of society. But the cases are quite different altogether. What made him turn murderer? He became such only when some peculiar temptation occurred which he was incapable of resisting. If your resisting power was greater than the tempting power, the tempting power would have no effect; but resistance is the weaker and temptation the stronger, and the inevitable result is that the stronger force overmasters the weaker. Why do you want to punish these people? "Oh, if we did not punish them society would not be bearable!" Well! but you do punish them, and society is hardly bearable as it is. You imprison your thieves, you hang your murderers, and the tribe of thieftum runs on daily and yearly, and the hosts of murderers shew no perceptible decrease. You have got facts before you, and the spiritual world says that as man is the outcome of circumstances, so far as he is concerned, if he has gone astray he can only be won back to righteousness and humanity by bringing him slowly and by degrees under better influences, that can develop the higher and neglected traits of his character. "What! do you mean to say that there are no punishments for such people in the world of immortality?" There is no necessity for you to invent gaols and fetters, gallows and warders; these are very petty, bungling devices, good enough for you if you do not know any better; but to say they are the things that God Himself would invent and use, for the torture of His own children, is to reduce His justice to the level of your own, and to say that such things are to take place in the halls of Heaven, is naturally to parallel those high states with the low and degraded circumstances of this world. You do not want penitentiaries in Heaven; you do not want county gaols

in the land beyond the grave; you do not want Lord Chief Justices there, nor executioners to flog and thrash, morally and mentally, your poor wretched criminal population. But you want wise hearts, and true heads, who shall understand the nature and causes of human wrong-doing; bring the victims of them under proper and better influences; and by changing the conditions of existence, improve the character of the people who exist.

"Oh! but this is horrible!" You think it is horrible, do you? "Dreadful!" Now, come here, friend; nobody is listening, you may speak quite candidly; may make a father confessor of us, and we will put a seal upon your statement, and never tell it to anybody. You think this is very horrible, don't you? "Well, it is really *very* horrible!" And you are very good yourself, are you not? you have forgotten that five-pound note, have you not? "Hush!" Do you remember that wrong entry you made three years ago? "Hush!" Do you remember that little scandal that was hushed up quickly about your son, you know? "Hush! Don't mention it, it is forgotten, it is buried." Well! we are not at all desirous of being disagreeable. You don't remember; probably you have forgotten the girl you jilted? "Oh, that is nothing." Nothing, is it? but there was something else behind it though. Have you forgotten *that* circumstance? "No! I have *never* forgotten that circumstance. Don't talk about these things, what do you want to talk about these things for?" Well! we are talking confidentially, you know. Do you not think that you are not much better than your neighbours; that you may be quite as bad as some of them; that it is quite possible that you are a little worse than some of your neighbours? And don't you think you would prefer to rest your case on the love of God, and the mercy of His angels, rather than His vengeance and wrath? And the whispered answer is in every case, "My God! Yes, a thousand times." And when men are honest to themselves—and some will hardly be that—they have to come to the admission that if the offences of earth were punished in Heaven after the fashion of humanity here, there would be a hard and bitter lot for every one of you.

In the land of the "great hereafter," those whose mission it is to punish, pursue their task with altogether different

motives, and in an altogether different manner, to those in which similar tasks are pursued on earth. They say that when you are born with vice in your blood, and iniquity in your bones; when you are born with craft and cunning in every nerve; when you are sent out into this world with all the frailties and excesses of the parents who have given you being; you cannot help being other than what you are—weak, useless, wicked; criminal, it may be. When you are born of those that can give you light, who can instil their very souls into yours, in the best and purest sense of the term; when you are the object of love and truth; when you come out into the world pure in heart, complete in limb and noble in soul, then only can you be great and good in the world in which you move; and if you have great men and noble women for parents, you must have virtuous and healthy children. Knowing this, the spiritual world says it were worse than wrong to punish again the follies and the failures of human kind; for there is, as we will now shew you, within every one of you an element, or agent, that is capable of inflicting all the punishment that you deserve.

To do this, let us invite your consideration to one little speculation. It is commonly said that "Virtue is its own reward:" we have taken the liberty of adding to the proverb that: "Vice is its own avenger." If God, in making you, was thoughtful enough to place the machinery of reward in you, and good deeds will set that machinery in operation; are we to suppose that God was so short-sighted as to forget the *other* machinery of punishment, which would equally be set in motion by your wrong-doing? If one, also the other. God never does His work by halves,—shade and sunshine, heat and cold, everything in nature, testifying to the duality of being: and if there is the machinery of reward in your nature, the wisdom of God demands—so to speak, enforces upon us,—the recognition of the fact that there must be the machinery of punishment also.

Hence the inhabitants of the spiritual world do not need punishment in the sense of organised sentences and places of confinement. The punishment is within you, and only comes to you when it is deserved, and is only to be inflicted upon you by yourself. If your punishment is heavy, blame yourself; if your reward is great, it may be decent to thank

God ; in every case the machinery that produces reward or punishment comes from Him in the first instance, and for all things you may thank the Heavenly Wisdom.

But these criminals ; we have not done with them yet. What will become of them ? A very great deal depends upon circumstances. There are some so cased in worldlyism, and their best life so clouded with material circumstances, that they cannot at present be approached by any power at all. They remain the inhabitants of the lower life of the spiritual world ; their old associates are there.

When they rise superior to earthly attractions, and become answerable to the influence of higher spirits, they enter into the spiritual world ; and there are no scoffs, or jeers, or pains, or penalties for them, but there are loving hearts and wise heads, and kindly hands instead, and a kind word is, to their rugged nature, what the sun's beams are to the towering iceberg. A rugged heart can no more withstand a kind word than the towering icebergs can withstand the glittering rays of the sun ; they melt and give way, and the waters of divinity gush over the arid plains of existence. The bringing up to the surface the capabilities of the spirit, the putting of the powers and energies of the individual into legitimate channels, the giving to the individual something to do, the causing him to have something to think of, the making him feel that somebody *does* care for him, make him realise by-and-bye the best lesson of all, that there can be no real happiness for the individual that is not associated with the promotion of happiness for others ; no happiness for self that does not create happiness for your neighbours.

"Well, but these are not punishments." But, my dear friend, punishment is for purification, is it not ? Is not punishment to make men better than they previously were ? *You* give them no opportunities to be better ; you put the seal, "gaol-bird," on them and every honest man says, "You have been to gaol, I cannot have anything to do with you." If the angels said that, and said it of those that deserved to go to gaol, but do not get there, the probabilities are the society of Heaven would be exceedingly limited and very select. But if punishment is to purify, we may try the purification without the penalty ; we may try the effect of love without vengeance ; we may try the effect of love without the suspicion of injustice ;

try the effect of that loving justice which allows the offence to produce the penalty, nor seeks to increase it by any thought of vengeance.

Such it seems to us, so far as we can gather it, in the world of spirits, is the practice pursued ; and in innumerable cases, men and women in the spiritual life are engaged in the purification, in the developing, in the unfolding, of the miserable waifs and strays of this world, that death has brought forward into the land of happiness and peace ; the land of happiness and peace ultimately for everybody ; but only to some after they have undergone the purification we have been referring to. But if there is no real punishment for criminals ; if there is no real punishment for "unbelievers," as they are spoken of ; are there punishments for those who have wilfully and persistently pursued some wrong and injurious course that has resulted in misery and sorrow to their fellows ? One of the greatest things, and one of the hardest things—we are quite willing to admit it—that people who have been injured have to learn is to *forgive* those who have injured them ; and following that is even a harder thing still ; not only to forgive those who they fancy may have injured them, but to help them to be better also. Learning that lesson makes those who learn it into, angels, for no more angelic trait of character or disposition can be conceived than that which forgives the enemy and makes you help him to be better. Talk about sending him to hell ! it is too devilish to be considered for a moment. There are many wrongs done by you in this world, arising from weakness, sometimes from viciousness. But, sooner or later, the wrong is seen by you to be a wrong, and you should then make a complete confession to the wronged one ; and such a confession is one of the highest and surest ways of obtaining relief. Confess thy wrong to the person you have wronged ; and though it may crush thee to the earth to do so, and your life may seem all misery and bitterness when you have done it, there is a satisfaction within you that can never be purchased by any other method ; and the angels will weep tears of joy for the courage you have had to do this, though men may hate you and sneer at you for having so done. We preach the sternest morality in this regard ; no "namby-pamby" doctrine, that can be put on and taken off at pleasure ; if you have done wrong, you must put that wrong right ; that is our doctrine.

By-and-bye there comes for all, under the influences of such ameliorating circumstances,—shall we call it a *regeneration*? or perhaps the purification is completed; and then, coming out of the influences of such states, they are transferred, these people, into the higher orders; the brotherhoods, the societies, of the spiritual world. These people who are thus taken in hand, are taken into large societies, which are engaged in setting wrong right, in improving the moral sense of those who have little; in fact—in short—they are engaged in supplementing the deficiencies of human nature when it first appears upon the scenes of Spirit life. There are brotherhoods, associations, exclusively dedicated to such tasks and purposes, and it is by them that the salvation of the souls that have been living in misery and darkness is accomplished.

Ere we leave the subject we wish you to see how justified we were in stating that you must draw the line between what *you* consider the penalty, and what is the *proper* punishment. We do not mean to say that there is nothing punished, mark you; but we do mean to say that of all the things the world thinks ought to be punished, there are practically none at all that are punished, in the sense the world thinks that they ought to be punished. If you see this clearly, and the difference it makes; if you realise the character of the next world's life better than you have done before, our task will not have been attempted in vain.

But there are one or two words of practical application which we should like to place before you ere we leave the topic. Do not delude yourself by supposing that though the next world seems to be so different to what you have been expecting, that by living easy lives here, and by sacrificing right and justice, that you are going to have all your own way hereafter. Nothing of the kind! "There are duties here that must be done, if this hereafter would be truly won." There is right to be attended to, there are the natures and advantages of your fellows to be considered. There are the duties due to yourself to be accomplished: you must live this life worthily if you would enjoy happiness in the world beyond. Powerfully, as powerfully as we ever could plead, would we plead for right and justice, truth and honesty among yourselves. It is only by such things that you can make your future certain for happiness; it is only, as we pointed out to you in the previous

address, by such principles that you can make this world tolerable. That which is good for this world is good for the world beyond ; and if you would escape sufferings, pains, and penalties hereafter, do nothing wrong, vicious, or ungenerous while you are passing through this world. Remember you *can* be great ; men have been great before you ; the—

“Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime ;
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.”

Make *your* lives sublime ; make *your* footprints clear, defined, and sharp ; that the world may see you have trod the way of life for right and well-being ; and he who lives worthily, and wisely, and honestly here,—as wisely and honestly as he is capable of living ; none can do more than that—need fear no punishment beyond the grave. Instead, perhaps they may join the happy hosts of those who are administering the punishments of immortality, that we have discussed in this address.

IMMORTALITY—ITS PURSUITS.

We have now, with regard to the especial subject that we are dealing with, namely, the question of Immortality, placed before you two distinct aspects of that question which, we trust, have appealed to your judgment and consideration, and given you sound, clear, and tangible realisation, let us also hope, of the character of the people of the future state, as well as some apprehension concerning the nature of the punishments, if, unhappily, you should be called upon to encounter them, in the world you will shortly reach. Another field of inquiry has to be dealt with now—the question of the pursuits of these people who are basking on the sunny shores of the Glorious Home.

Some people are inclined to question whether it is legitimate at all for you or us to engage in speculations, of the kind we have been discussing, and on the subject which we are about to discuss. It is argued by these people—and we do not speak of their criticism in any sense unkindly—that all such questions should be left for future consideration. It will be time enough, argue such people, for us now here on earth, to deal with such problems when we are face to face with them in the home beyond the grave. There are practical duties here; there are daily requirements now; there are the concerns of mortal life to be attended to; and it is useless for us to indulge in imagination, and spin out fine notions, that may or may not be true; for certainly, in the considering of them, our attention will be turned from the practical issues of daily life. There may be some force in this argument; but with all respect to those who use it, we beg to say that they argue upon entirely false premises, and then naturally reach a wrong conclusion. If these speculations of ours were *only* speculations; if they were only fine-drawn *theories*, without any basis in truth, or fact; we would at once unite with them, and say, Well and good; the

world has infinitely more important concerns to engage its attention ; let it do its duty here, and leave *theorising* and *speculating* until the day comes when it can lay down its duty and rise to another state. But we say these are *not theories* ; they are *not* fine-spun rhapsodies ; and furthermore they are not so impracticable as, by inference, our critics would have you believe. They are, to our judgment, practical considerations of the highest import ; for if you are to go into the next world at all, it is clear that it *is* of absolute importance that you should be prepared here, so as to make the best possible entry into the world beyond. Failing the proper preparation in this world, you will be incapable of realising at once the duties that lie before you in the world to come. Therefore it is an important question that you should know something of the people, the punishments, and the pursuits of the world beyond.

In inviting your consideration of these matters, we are placing before you something that may be a little startling ; that may seem just a little fanciful ; but we must ask you to remember that in translating these matters we are depending entirely upon human speech, and mortal semblance, for the elucidating of ideas that are spiritual in their nature and character. With this qualification—the poorness of human phraseology—we invite your attention to some of the pursuits of this future world, towards which you are tending. Let us begin with the children.

We give them the place of honour because they are so often pushed on one side, and crowded out of sight, in this world. Professor this, and Doctor the other, and the Right Rev. somebody else, when they, from their high position, sit down to discuss about Immortality, always talk with big words and phrases a mile long, and with rhetoric so involved that hardly themselves can understand it ; and the children, they can never grasp a tithe of the meaning of it ; while grown-up people stand aghast at the many words, from which they are capable of getting very little satisfaction indeed. The Rev. this, and Professor the other, never seem to think there is anything to do with children in such a problem. “Children ? Oh !” says his reverence, “I never thought of them, they quite escaped my attention.” And the Professor says, “Oh ! I have no time to bother about children”—yet Doctor and Professor and Right Rev. Prelate were all children once, and had they died as

children, the pursuits of children in the immortal world would have had a very great significance for them. This—what shall we call it?—egotism, that closes your eyes and obscures your vision and judgment to the requirements and rights of your children we protest against, and therefore, before telling you what you grown-up folks may have to do by-and-bye, let us bring the “little ones” to the front, for the first occasion, and see what they are doing. There is a great deal of pretty sentiment talked about children, more written about them; a great many pretty phrases are very often ventilated concerning them. A good deal of it is true; there is more of it only written to sell; a great deal of it is conveniently put in the cupboard when you get home, and kept there. Plainly! do you in this world recognise the rights of your children and accord them? Perhaps we may shock your feelings, and you may say we are ungenerous; but we say you do *not* recognise these rights. You pay but little attention to the rights of your children, but you bridle up if your own are invaded; you pay no attention to the pleasures of your children, save only when you can do so without derangement to your own. Children must do as their fathers and mothers tell them, and if they do not do so they must be chastised, for it is the duty of the child to obey the parent. Is it the duty of the parents to obey the despot? Is it the duty of those who are persecuted to submit to the persecutor? You, as grown-up, mature people, will readily answer, “No! we will not submit to our tyrants; we will not bow down to our despots; we will struggle against these; our right and judgment rise up in protest against them and we will be free.” And straightway you proceed to put your sublime and noble instinct of freedom into execution by crowding down the natural proclivities of your children into unnatural channels; by debarring them from legitimate pursuits, often robbing them of childhood’s enjoyments, thus ruining them often enough so far as their happiness in this world is concerned. We speak of sober fact; we do not mean to say you do this wilfully, and of malice aforethought, and out of pure wickedness; but you do it unthinkingly, because it is the common habit and fashion; because you have never had the question brought before you, in this manner. If you pay so little attention to your children in this world, it would be a most unfortunate thing for these

children if they died, and found in the next world the same want of attention, and the same kind of miseducation, that they have been subjected to in this world. If the next world is to do anything, it must be able, first of all, to undo the mistakes of this world ; for it is only as the wrongs of this world are righted that souls come into the freedom, and learn the grace and glory, of the world beyond. But, you will say, if we talk like this we shall stir up a spirit of rebellion in children and make them think that we are obstructing their attempts, and thwarting their natural inclinations. Well! if they did think so, it would be the truth, and serve you right in many cases. "But we are older than they are, and know better what they require." Do you? You have only to go into a half-a-dozen families, and you will find the child knows better what it wants than the father does, but in nine cases out of ten you can trust the maternal instinct. The mother knows, better than the father often, what the child wants, and what it is really fitted for. Husbands ! a word with *you*. If you are in doubt, consult the mother ; a mother's instinct does not often lead her astray ; but you are sometimes so strong in your own opinions that you will have your way, no matter what happens. Mother and child both suffer in consequence. 'The most important consideration for children, in the next world, is that they shall be placed in such a position that the parental misgovernment may be rectified, and the child re-developed in proper order. When they go into the spiritual world, one of the great necessities is to overcome the longing they experience for their past associations, and the grief attendant upon their present separation therefrom. How is this to be done? Here you come face to face with a branch of heavenly activity—shall we call it?—of no small measure, or slight character ; a branch of activity and employment that enrolls in its operations myriads of departed human beings. Is not the child a repository of infinite possibility? The training, and developing, and education of the child is a species of heavenly husbandry ; needing all the care, and culture, and intelligence of heavenly beings, to successfully accomplish it ; and in this work myriads of departed men and women, whose hearts have flowed out in goodness, and happiness, and love, towards children while here—but who were never blessed enough to have the sweets of childhood for

their own—thus find employment and activity in the spiritual world, in the education, the changing of the current of life, and the developing of the higher elements of being, in the children of immortality. In that world there are colleges and homes for the training and developing of children, employing thousands of Spirits ; and the children there always realise one thing, equal in importance to any matter that they realise while on earth: your desire is apparently to persistently and continually fill the child as full as possible, with your own opinions and desires, while over there the effort is to bring out the native talent of the child, so that it may form its own opinions for itself. How this is done would take us too long to tell ; indeed the methods and the means used for the purpose, would constitute matter for a discourse by itself without any other consideration ; so that you will see it is impossible for us to deal with it in detail now.

Sometimes these children are placed under their own kindred ; sometimes there may be no affinity between them ; and there they are placed in institutions, where the nearest affinity is sure to be found. In such cases they become members of the family, so to speak ; for a sort of family tie is established in these institutions, and under the direction of the superintending Spirits, they are gradually purged from past errors, and filled, so to speak, with the grace and beauty of the new world in which they live. Altogether, the children of the spiritual world are in far better hands, because the principles of education are better understood, the one great method whereby childhood is educated is precisely the same as the method whereby you are educated, namely, by the study of that in which (to use a common expression) their heart is ; the thing in which your heart is, is the thing you learn best and quickest. So with the child—that which engages heart and sympathy is easiest learnt, best recollected when learnt. With them, as with you, inclination, talent, character, and nature, are all considered ; and as is the child inclined to this, or that, as is the thing the child has the greatest aptitude for ; so is the channel of education that the child walks in, with benefit to itself, with the result of good to others ; for every child made happy is an increase of the world's happiness, just the same as is every man and woman being happy a gain to the general harmony.

Well ! you grown-up people now. What am *I* going to be when I get into the spiritual world ? One little boy said to his mamma he did not want to be an angel. "Why ?" said his mamma. "If I were an angel I should have to sit still." Being a lively little fellow his mamma quite understood his objection. And for you to have to sit still would be a very monotonous employment, which would almost make you wish you had been doomed to penal servitude instead. One of the worst things for you to do is to sit still ; to be doomed to do it for ever would be a most unfortunate consequence for you indeed. "Shall I be an angel ?" Probably not. "Why not ?" On general principles : because you are not good enough. "But I am as good as my neighbours." Quite likely. "Well ! how good ought I to be to become an angel ?" You will never become an angel until you leave off wishing to be one. For you are only angelic when you can sink yourself, and your own ambition, in the gaining of truth and the doing of good. The people that are always prating about wanting to be good, are always the people that are never good, and never will be angels until they leave off talking about them.

"But when I get into the spiritual world what shall I do ?" I am an undertaker, says one man, there is no chance for me in the next world ; then says another man, I am a sexton, there are no graves for me to dig in the next world. I am a bellringer ; and some poor delicate individual, who has had the misfortune to live, all his life, in the neighbourhood of some clanging church-bell, says, "I hope *you* will have no employment in the next world." These are typical objections, that are often brought forward, against the continuing of human life ; that they *are* brought forward *seriously* does not reflect very much credit on the people who bring them forward ; because, if one man can only think of digging graves, God help that man ! If another man can only think of making coffins, God help that man also ! If humanity, each and all, can only think of *one* thing, God help every man and woman on the earth, for they would be the most useless, most inefficient, most stupid creatures that you could possibly conceive of. That man should only think of one thing is simply absurd ; and those who bring forward the little objection we have just placed before you do not use what small amount of brains they have got, or they would never think of arguing so. Because a

man digs graves, and makes coffins now, will he always want to be digging graves, and making coffins? And if there are no such employments, cannot he possibly do anything else besides? The sexton can think of other things besides graves, and the undertaker can think of other things besides making coffins. Surely the music of hammering nails into coffins is not the only music that he can realise. Even among the lowest of mankind, if you could examine their souls, you would find that they had dreamings and aspirations you little expected. Are these to have no chance of expressing themselves and coming to the surface? They have qualities of soul that would astonish you, and make you think there was a great deal more in the worst of humankind than you had before suspected.

We are oftentimes asked concerning these pursuits in the next world, what of mechanical pursuits? "Here, one man is an engineer, another a blacksmith, another a painter; what can these people find to do?" The world does not think; it rushes to conclusions without due consideration. Suppose a man is an engineer, and there are no engines in the world beyond. Suppose it for a moment. What is the engine? Iron and steel, bars and levers, that's all! Embodies it no principle or principles; represents it no triumph of intellect; contains it no force or forces; has it no lesson beyond the revolution of its various parts and wheels? Has it no meaning, has it no principle, has it no spiritual quality, so to speak? It plainly says, when properly read: "I, this engine, am but the iron and steel that have been clothed around the idea within the mind of my designer. I am the representative of mechanical force in nature, applied to use and progress in mankind." If then you deal with steel, and iron, and brass, in this world, which clothes an idea, so to speak, and matches the thing of the man who thinks, shall not this engineer have something of these principles in his next life? Shall he not find out that there may be something after all in all this movement that speaks of something his dull brain has not been able to grasp while on earth? He shall die, this engineer; and the inventor and maker shall die; but they shall all stand where brass and iron are not required, but where *ideas* stand forth in visible reality, and men feel and know; what they saw in iron, bricks, and stone, or wood, stands before them, the creation of the mind itself. So it may be that mechanical employments are

but the physical externalisms of spiritual idea and action. In the humblest enterprises and industries of life, there is a developing of intellect, an unfolding of soul, without which that enterprise or industry could not be accomplished in the manner that it is. There is a spiritual side to everything in life, if you will but seek it; and when those that are engaged in only what you think degrading occupations are removed, the law of Divine justice and eternal compensation is that they shall find the spiritual counterparts of their material employments; and therein find gratification and occupation. "Oh! but that is a very degrading conception of the spiritual life," says one. "I want to soar away into the arms of the great; I want to be in the society of the sublime and glorious; I want to be in the land where hearts are filled with melody and happiness; where words are all sweetness and lives all light; where everything is gorgeous and sublime, and heavenly and divine." When you are *fit* to get there, you will. Such a state *does* exist; but the portals to it are guarded with jealous care. Fitness is the only qualification for entrance; when you can shew the possession of it the guards will make no objection to your passing through the doorway. Until you *can* prove your fitness, there is no admission. You may long for it; but if you do not *work* for it, what is the use of your longing? You may sentimentally prate and rave about desiring it; but if you do nothing to prove the sincerity of your desire you will never realise it. "But I have never had any opportunity in this world; and if I am to go into the next world and be a spiritual engineer, or spiritual painter, or spiritual paperhanger, I do not want to go there at all." Now, my friend, just one word seriously. You had better be a good spiritual paperhanger than an imitation angel. Whatever you are, *be it* fully and completely, if you are only capable of filling the humblest position in the Eternal Home; fill that position honestly, loyally, and completely, and that is the surest way to fit and prepare yourself for something superior to it. It does not matter that it seems lowering and degrading; if it seems so, try to alter it to something better. If you think the danger is that you will only take a very low position in the spiritual world; if there is a sort of sneaking consciousness that you are not *too* good, make yourself better. If your pursuits are only very small and few, then try to enlarge

your present capacity and increase the beauty of your life now; for that is the surest way whereby you will take better rank in the life beyond, and engage in better pursuits than you are now engaged in.

Briefly speaking, there may be three distinct heads under which the pursuits of the next life will range themselves. First, a desire to gain knowledge. Secondly, a desire to benefit others, including those who have been left behind. Lastly, a desire to injure others. We will take the last first.

Some have pictured the spiritual world as a world of light and glory, wherein there are no shades, wherein no wrongs are committed. We have heard it said that half the truth is constructively a lie, and more injurious than a lie would be. This is only half the truth. There are in the spiritual world thousands and myriads of the noble and the true; and in that spiritual life are sections of light and glory so transcendently beautiful, so divinely radiant, that no words of ours can give you a description of them; but there are sections of that world that are *not* radiant, that are *not* glorious, and that have to be translated into the somewhat cold and cruel language that speaks of misery, and sorrow, and wretchedness. Do not think that because men die they are so changed in nature, directly afterwards, that they become great and good, and forget their hatred and withdraw from their feuds. Do not think they become miraculously good all at once, for therein you commit a great error of judgment. There are thousands passing through this world of yours who are so fired with jealous hatred, so imbued with revengeful feeling, so out of joint with the times in which they live, who have been so cruelly ill-used by friends and foes, who have found life one bitter struggle, the iron piercing their souls daily, that they have had their hearts turned to stone, their better natures crushed out of sight, and every evil element and passion in their natures excited; they have lived so filled with bitter thoughts of dire revenge that they have a good stock of hatred to work off before they can come to a better state. The pursuit of hatred in the Spirit-world gives employment to thousands of your departed fellow-creatures. "Oh! what a horrible work!" We beg your pardon, there is nothing horrible in it. You have indulged in it in this world, and you cannot call that horrible that you do not take any means to prevent. You indulge in actions

that injure your fellows ; you do things that fill men's hearts with evil blood ; you arouse their passions daily, and smile while you are doing it ; and say "Pooh ! it is nothing." You cannot call these things horrible, you cannot think them horrible, or you would do something to abate them. When you leave off practising these deeds, then we may believe you when you say that the pursuit of vengeance is horrible in the spiritual world. "Oh ! but then you think the dead are going to come back and heap vengeance on our heads." Neither the dead nor the living stop to consider where their vengeance is going to be expressed, when they have made up their minds to give effect to it. When you can alter the nature of men instantly by their dying, then, possibly, you may be able to prevent this pursuit ; but when a man's heart is aflame with hatred he gives expression to it when the opportunity arrives, and he is able to accomplish his purpose. "But why do not the good Spirits prevent it?" Because the good Spirits sometimes may think that you do not deserve the prevention, and may look upon it as a just punishment for you, as the natural result of your misactions to them while here in this flesh. "But they ought to keep out all these wicked people." *You* ought to prevent them becoming wicked. Remember every wicked soul, in the spiritual world, once lived in the world and died ; and so found its way into the immortal life. When you live more wisely, rise higher, conduct yourself better, you will cease to send these dead, with thoughts of anger, into the world beyond the grave ; and there will be no pursuit of vengeance, for vengeance will never be imported into the next world when it ceases to exist in this. But we would like to say a word in addition to this. Though vengeance is the natural flowering of injustice and wrong, it can never be indulged in without producing consequences. One of the lessons that you all have to learn is, the necessity of standing firm and calm amidst the most contending and conflicting emotions and desires.

"To thine ownself be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

True words, but if you are false to yourself, thine honour to the world is sacrificed in consequence. So then if you pursue this vengeance, there is a moral certainty that you will suffer

sorrow and retribution, to a certain extent in consequence. Though you may have your hearts filled with rage, and stand on the spiritual world's shores to-morrow, there comes a time when your better instincts will be aroused, and you will find the pursuit of vengeance the most unprofitable enterprise you ever engaged in. "To forgive is divine," and when the avenger learns to forgive, and breathes mercy instead of vengeance, he has cured himself; heaped coals of fire upon the heads of those who have wronged him, and earned for himself the welcome summons "Come up higher, for thou hast learnt a lesson in the way of life."

The pursuit of knowledge for the good of others. A great many people think that the more they know the happier they will be. We grant you, that excessive activity may divert your attention from disagreeable thoughts, unpleasant memories, associations, or duties, that you do not care to fulfil; and in that sort of negative relief you may find a sort of happiness. That pursuit which is followed for the sake of drowning or obliterating memory, or obscuring duty, never brings real happiness, however valuable it may seem to be. The inventor may shut himself off from human sympathy and duties, and work out difficult problems; but he has lost more than he has gained; for there is an education in the contact with human sympathy, that the soul will stand in need of; and to ruthlessly cut yourself off from the human family is wrong. If you wish for the fulness of soul development, you must mix with your fellows; be ground in the common mill, and then, when the corners are rounded off you, and the rough places smoothed down, you will realise that, all the way along, you have been learning at every point. "Oh! but if our great inventors did not exclude themselves from these engrossing topics, we should never have got the advantages we now possess." At first sight it seems true, at second sight it is false; for while you may have gained in mechanical excellence, you have lost in spiritual development. And if the one was limited, so as to run side by side with the other, you might not make mechanical inventions quite so fast, but you would gain in solidity and beauty of character, and be better able to understand what you found in the other directions. These are points of philosophy that we can only take a passing glance at, as we proceed. In the spiritual world, the pursuit of know-

ledge, for the good it does for others, stands before us, prominent and clear. The one great necessity, the one great duty, is to get knowledge; not for the sake of getting it, but for the good you can do with it when you have obtained it. Now what is the kind of knowledge most thought of in the spiritual world?

The architect embodies in stone, and brick, and wood, the spiritual conception of his mind and soul, but that structure lived a vivid reality, in his mind—within his mental sphere—ere he had transferred it to his paper, or the builder had erected it in the solid materials of this world. But the architect says: Beautiful and fairy-like, as it is, with its spires, and gables, and angles, and rooms; beautiful as their devices are, it bears no resemblance to the *thought* that I have within my soul. Clear and beautiful as the diagram, as the plan, as the picture, may be upon my paper, *that* is only the faintest reflection of what is within the thought chambers of my mind. And the poet says: The sweetest, softest, most beautiful words and verses that I have ever placed before the world, are harsh, and jolting, and rough, compared with the divine melody I have *felt* within my breast; and if I could only give utterance to the words that burn within me, I could fill the world's heart, and lift it out of the dull routine of ordinary life, and make it feel the divine energy within it for an instant. But these words are rough and jolting numbers, a very poor expression of the *thought* within my soul. Says the orator, whose burning words have moved your hearts, and stirred your feelings and made you live, with one common impulse, in the accomplishment of some great right or reform; after he has gone from the scene of his triumph, after the deafening plaudits have died away, becoming only memory in his mind, he leans his head upon his hands, and says, "If I could only have spoken what I *felt* within my soul, how great I would have made the work I have tried to do." He mourns the poorness of human language, the frailty and brevity of human speech, and however much you may have applauded him, in his home quietness and solitude he mourns that the work he has done has been so poorly done.

Have these men no work? Is the grave the end of all things? Shall the architect, the poet, or the orator find no building to rear, no truth to hymn, no right to utter? Are

there no hearts to be stirred, no souls to be roused, no divine harmonies to be embodied over there? If not, then indeed that world must be a poor one, for such things are found in this world. The architect, the poet, the orator gave utterance to them; and "over there," which is the better world, the brighter world, the more complete and larger world, these things must be found in greater profusion still; and architect, and poet, and orator shall find such inspirations for their genius, and shall find such opportunity for the expression of their inspirations that, could they compare their works there with those here, they would say how sweetly different it is. The highest and best of this life is but darkness compared to their efforts in the world that lies beyond. For the work of poet, and architect, and orator can find infinitely better expression in words there than they could do while living here.

We have seen also that there is educational activity and exercises with regard to the children, and we must not forget that men and women are also children "of a larger growth," and they need education quite as much as the little ones that cluster around you. Therefore, in the spiritual world the imparting of education, the removal of erroneous conceptions, the purging from human minds of ignorance and error, the building up of the mind in justice, the informing the mind, the educating, the bringing forth of the latent abilities and energies of you all, offers plenty of employment to those who are inclined in this particular direction.

"But there is one section of the matter that I should like you to say a word about, please; it is a very delicate question, I do not know exactly how to put it." Well, now, what is it you want us to tell you? "Well, you know it is said"—it is usually ladies that ask the question, we must preface—"that the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. Are there no marriages in the spiritual world?" Why not? We have heard it sometimes said that "marriages are such disastrous failures in this world that we hope they will not be repeated there." Well, somebody else, whose experience has been more profitable, says, "It has been such a great success now, that I do hope it will be repeated by-and-bye;" and somebody else says, "I never had an opportunity to test the question one way or the other; I hope I shall." Now pleasant as the matter may seem to you, and lightly as we may

seem to state it, there is far more importance attaching to it than, at first sight, you would think. If the next world be wholly purgatory, some of the marriages in the world ought to be reproduced there, for surely no greater purgatory can be conceived than the reunion of ill-assorted and unsuited partners. If the next world brings compensation for trials, and struggles, and efforts, some alliances ought to be repeated there, for no greater comfort can come to man or woman than to again stand side by side with those they love and trust ; cheering each other, helping each other, in the duties of life and the requirements of the moment. And if that sweet comfort and divine companionship that poets have sung, and orators have referred to, and all men have struggled to attain, is so beautiful, so great, so glorious, as the world here seems to think it is ; then those who have never had the chance of realising it here, ought, in justice, to have the opportunity by-and-bye. "The dead neither marry, nor are they given in marriage." Not as they marry and are given in marriage sometimes here on earth, it is true ; and God be thanked that it is so ; for if they did, the degradation, the meanness, the licentiousness, the vileness of humanity, would find easy access, and ready expression, in the land beyond the grave. You have enough of these things here ; let them stay here ; and whatever marriage there may be in the world beyond, this is true concerning it : it is never the result of fraud, of falseness, of deceit, of spite, of envy, or hatred ; it is because those who share it, and enjoy it, are bound together by ties and duties that both possess in their souls, that make the two lives one indeed. Truly thus, we may be inclined to say, that marriage forms one of the pursuits of the world beyond, but in an entirely different sense to what you interpret it here on earth ; stripped of many things that you sometimes prize most, it is there a heavenly union of two souls with common natures, with oneness of instinct, purpose, and desire, who, thus united, bring together the embodiment of God in man, of God and nature.

Then another thing ;—it is truly impossible to do justice to the subject, we find so much to speak of—another thing. When we get into the spiritual world, sometimes people ask us, shall we be able to visit other planes? Yes ! The pursuit of knowledge involves all the necessary labour for the acquisition of knowledge ; patient investigation and exploration of other

localities ; visiting different localities of the spiritual home ; and all these give opportunities for education to the individual, in the methods whereby such visits are paid. These explorations are accomplished sometimes on foot ; sometimes they may be accomplished by the aid of mechanical agencies ; sometimes by the agency of the will power of the individual. It is not always a question of "floating" about. Some people imagine that when they get into the spiritual world they will have only to say "Presto," and their wings will carry them wherever they wish to go. Some people are confined to the very material mode of walking for some time after their entrance into the spiritual world, and to what assistance may be obtained from mechanical agencies. It is only those that belong to the higher grades that are able to rise and "float"—is perhaps the best word—to their destinations. You can do nothing extra-natural in the spiritual world until you have learnt how ; even as you can do nothing extraordinary in this world until you have learnt how.

Thus then, plainly, for the traveller, or observer, or poet, for every sort and condition of men and women, for every degree of soul and development of character, there will be enterprises, and occupations, and employments ; occupation meet for everybody. But it does not follow, because you find yourself engaged in some class of duty, that you are always to be engaged in that class of duty. It follows rather, on the other side, that the duties you are now doing are only stepping-stones ; the things that you now know and realise are only stepping-stones to other things to be known by-and-bye ; and although you may have developed a very respectable amount of spiritual quality here, it follows that you will exceed this development by-and-bye, and rise to higher and grander modes of activity in the coming future time. Plainly, these pursuits of the next world allow of the development of the soul, the increase of the knowledge the soul possesses, the development of your *ability* to do good, the increase of your activity in *doing* good. The pursuits of the next life, putting it into a single phrase, permit the full development of the character and energy of the individual, and the increase of his usefulness to all other individuals around him.

In placing these three addresses before you, on this particular topic of Immortality, in the several sections we have

discussed it in, our desire has been, as far as was practicable, and in accordance with our ability, to give you certain leading conceptions regarding your *post-mortem* life, to ask you to realise—and we have endeavoured so to express ourselves that you *should* realise—that the next world is, so to speak, a human world, a world of humanity, a world of human activity, in some parts with the failings and frailties of human nature still, in other parts with the excellencies of humanity. That you were not going out of this world into an entirely *supernatural* world, that had no connection with the life you are now pursuing; that, while the next world is the sequence of this life, and only a legitimate sequence of your present existence, and therefore—shall we say?—this life really passes out into the next world, there is no hiatus, but a natural and easy passage from one condition to the other.

Taking it in this view you will see that we have been true to the principles we laid down. We have brought you face to face with the humanity of the next world, and we have asked you to remember that it is *you* who are going to be there by-and-bye. Taking it on this ground, we now for a moment place it in juxtaposition with what is called the philosophy of Spiritualism. The philosophy of Spiritualism is, in a word, the philosophy of immortality; with more or less clear and defined information concerning the nature of man, here and hereafter. The sequence of that philosophy, or the conclusion to be deducted from it, is to our judgment that the one thing that you have really to do with is the *soul* of man here. This external body is only a vehicle through which that soul, or inner self, expresses itself; therefore all the principles, all the forces, that control, or direct, or inspire the action of men in this world, are spiritual principles, and the more you know of the inner causes and powers that direct and work men's actions in this life, the more do you understand of the nature of man in the world beyond. An intelligent comprehension of man's spiritual activity and nature in this world, is the surest preparation for the realisation of his character and activity hereafter.

Taking this ground, the philosophy of Spiritualism is in direct harmony with these three addresses. You will plainly observe that we have brought you face to face with the spiritual man. Is it not, then, our province to point the certain conclusion

deducible viz., the unsupernaturalness of the spiritual life; or, to put it into another form, the naturalness of immortal being? The naturalness of immortal being will be a theme that will inspire the teachers of the world in future time; and the world will one day be amazed that it has made that future life a supernatural one for so many generations past. Bring that world home to your consciences now; cause yourself to realise its people; understand its punishments and its pursuits; and you destroy its unnaturalness and bring it down *now* as something to engage your present attention; and you will then be better able to fit yourself for the next life, knowing something of it; and the world will be none the worse off, while you will be dispelling the doubt concerning immortality that reigns so strongly in many quarters.

Immortality is, as we said, a most important theme; a question of value to old and young alike. Bring your careful judgment to bear upon it, and in the summing up of the case that we have placed before you, in all our remarks, please remember this; we have confined ourselves to what we *know*; we have only drawn perfectly legitimate conclusions from the facts we are acquainted with, and in no single instance have we gone to the limit we could go in the conclusions we have deduced. We have been strictly moderate in statement and conclusion; and we feel that we can confidently appeal to you to accept our statements as being fair and impartial representations of the three several topics we have dealt with. Then let us ask you as we close—If thou wouldst make the next life great and glorious; if you would engage in pursuits that are ennobling in their results, and demand the highest activity of your nature; strive *here* to banish from your life all that makes life degraded; cultivate the higher natures of your soul *now*; and then by-and-bye, when you pass through the mystic vale of the shadow of death, you will emerge in the sunlight of glorious hope; and “over there,” with kindred souls, you will be able to learn anew of the wisdom and mystery of God’s Divine realities. Build up, for your children, the possibility of greatness and goodness *now*, and they will realise greatness and goodness by-and-bye. Build up such for yourself likewise, and the same result shall come to you; and under the Divine care of the All-true God, you will be able to realise in the rolling ages of the coming times, that man and child

contain within them, here on earth, the possibility of infinite progress and eternal development. Then, as you increase in beauty, and rise to higher pursuits in the world beyond, you will learn there is one great pursuit which alone can make men great, bless the peoples of the world and lift all mankind, spiritually or naturally, into the higher altitudes, and that pursuit is—that he who reads the truths of God understandingly, and follows them, for his own happiness and his fellows' progress, rises highest in the scale of good, for the more you know of God, the nearer to God you come in consequence.

DEEDS VERSUS DOGMAS.

History has laid before us the sayings, "Deeds not words," "Measures not men," and now we have to ask your consideration to the relative value of deeds *versus* dogmas.

There are plenty of people in the world who consider that dogmas are the great be-alls and in-alls of existence; that the more dogmas you believe the better man you are likely to be; and the less you rely upon deeds for reward here or hereafter, the higher and grander will be your estate in the future. It is only natural that to these there should be opposed those who argue that the less of the dogmas you believe in the better for you, the grander will be your character. The more you rely upon deeds—righteous and noble ones—the stronger and better will be your life, and the more useful will be your career in the world.

We purpose to examine this question from two points of view. First, in regard to its applicability to the circumstances of this life: secondly, its applicability to the conditions of the future life: and when we have thus tested it we shall sum up the case from our point of view, leaving the final verdict with you. For each must decide for himself which of the various points commend themselves best and clearest to his judgment. It is no part of our work, it is not the part of anyone who tries to educate his fellows, to insist upon his opinion being accepted; but it is the part of everyone who tries to carry a ray of light to say, "I speak that which I believe to be true, and you must take the responsibility of the truth as far as it is accepted by your understanding." And the conclusion that whatever seems true and just to *you*, you are bound in consequence to give practice and effect to it in your life and thoughts, is both natural and just. Failing that, you are traitors to the truth; you do not do that which you ought to do in the world, either for yourself or fellows, and it may be that in the world beyond

some of the keenest regrets that you may experience will arise from the consciousness that you were not true to the truths you knew, and did not do what you ought to have done for the world's progress while passing through it.

So far as this world is concerned, then, some people take a very pessimist view of it, and have come to the conclusion that it is a very miserable, intolerable sort of place. Various evidences are brought forward of crime and wretchedness, and disease, misery, deceitfulness, and wickedness generally; and all these things are placed before you, for your acceptance, as being evidences that the world is a very intolerable place indeed; gloomy beyond description, devoid of a single ray of light and goodness. There are others who take a contrary view of the case, and say that life is all virtue, and that there is such an amount of goodness and beauty belonging to humankind, that if you will only look at it you will be astonished to find what a noble world this is; how grand people are; what a righteous collection of saints the world is. Everybody is beautiful, glorious, and lovely, and there is no need to bewail the wickedness of mankind. Now our opinion is, that truth does not lie in either of these extremes; it is more likely to be found between the two. There is something of badness, there is something of goodness, and the bad, when united with the good, makes up the totality of the characteristics of humankind. But in addition to this goodness and happiness, there is another sort of quality that we may mention, namely, there is a very large and prevailing amount of ignorance as well. Some people will say—and we are strongly inclined to agree with them in the saying of it—that the world's wickedness is measurably the result of the world's ignorance, and that, in proportion as ignorance is dispelled, wickedness decreases. We are immediately confronted with another class of reasoners, who say: That is all very well up to a certain point, but your educated rascal is the worst of all rascals, and if you make wicked people clever, as well as wicked, then, naturally, you put the innocent at their mercy, and they are subjected to all kinds of trouble. These good friends forget one little argument; that if education will make wickedness more sharp and clever, it will also make innocence more sharp and clever, for if innocence is often synonymous with ignorance, as it frequently is, innocence deserves to be the victim of

educated wickedness. And if innocence is too lazy, or too indifferent, or too spiritual, to subject itself to discipline in the process of education, it will have to learn experience by bitter results. The sooner it gets the better results, the better for itself. We do not believe in that innocence that is ignorant, but we believe in that conscious innocence, strong in the possession of true knowledge, which enables it to battle with the world, fight wickedness with its own weapons, conquer by its own tactics, and prove beyond a doubt that innocence, combined with knowledge, has power to overcome the wickedness of the world, and lift mankind out of darkness into light.

Now, dogmas are very awkward things to deal with; they are a sort of prickly burr; no matter where you touch them they are sure to prick. We never yet were fortunate enough to handle one dogma without treading too severely on some one's corns; for, after all, a great many people have a very strong liking for dogmas. They like their ecclesiastical reasons done up into little parcels and put into pigeon holes, so that when they are asked for one special article they can put their fingers on it and say, "This is my reason." They have never made it their *reason*; they have never thought of it; they have never undone the piece of tape that ties it; they have never spread open the sheets to see what is inscribed upon them. It has been given to them; they have been told to put it in the pigeon hole, so that when it is required they may be able to put their hands on it. They are fond of their dogmas, inasmuch as they are supported by them; so that, when we tell a man we do not believe in his dogma, we at once have to hide our heads under the proverbial bushel, or else have to submit to a torrent of abuse, and be told that we are infidels, and if we do not belong to the devil's kingdom we ought to.

So far as the Christian Church is concerned—that is to say, the Christian faith; we will not limit it to "Church,"—so far as the Christian faith is concerned, there have been sundry changes in the nature of the dogmas entertained; and we think those of you that are acquainted with ecclesiastical history, if you will refer back to the days of the Primitive Church, in the time of Jesus, you will find certain dogmas that you modern people know scarcely anything about; you will find that many little points, that were at one time insisted upon as matters of great moment, have been one by one abandoned. You will

find also, to-day, further evidences of the fact ; for many of the dogmas that you held in the days of your youth,—those of you who have come under the silvering influence of the passing years,—you will now find are held very loosely by some people, so loosely as hardly to be held at all ; and when you are asked why this is, you shake your heads and look very wise and say, “Well you know, we have grown more educated,” and, if you are at all scientific in your thoughts, you will say, “Well ! we have been able more correctly to transcribe the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, and by a more correct rendering of these ancient records, we have been able to put in more correct forms things that were at one time our dogmas.” Yes ! but something else has had an effect in this regard. The wiser men grow, and the more freedom they give to their natural common-sense, the less inclined are they to believe in dogmas. This loose holding of dogmas to-day is an evidence of the increased education of the people ; but it is a further and stronger evidence of the increased common-sense of the people. In all things but dogmas common-sense is a valuable adjunct. If you bring your common-sense to bear upon the doctrine of the Miraculous Conception ; if you bring your common-sense to bear upon the doctrine of salvation by faith and blood ; if you bring your common-sense to bear upon the doctrine of eternal damnation ; if you bring your common-sense to bear upon the doctrine of total depravity, a hundred clerical gentlemen will rise up and say, You are only fit to be—we will not finish the sentence,—you can imagine the rest. They say these things are Divine things, and common-sense is too common a thing to bring in contact with Divinity. But when Divinity outrages common-sense, what is their argument then ? “Oh ! that is blasphemy ; God never does anything contrary to the common-sense of human-kind.” Quite true, from one point of view, but from the point of view obtained by the dogmatist, quite untrue. For he will tell you a dozen different things, in a breath, that are so contrary to the common-sense of mankind that if Divinity did them, all we can say is, that their argument does not hold good, for Divinity *has* done things contrary to the common-sense of man. Plainly, when you take the real common-sense of humanity, there never was a thing yet that Divinity ever did, or permitted, contrary to that common-sense ; for we cannot

for a moment suppose that the justice of humanity can exceed the justice of God.

Now let us look at history, briefly, for a moment. There have been cruel, dreadful, terrible wars ; so bitter, so fierce, so relentless, that they stand out boldly, red marked and smoke-coloured, on the pages of history to-day. There have been bitter and fierce persecutions, and these persecutions have been attended by outrages and tortures, so horrible, so dreadful, that the common-sense of the nineteenth century feels its gorge rise as it merely reads the record of them. These terrible wars, these bitter and fanatical persecutions have been religious wars and religious persecutions ; for we think we may safely say that no warfare, and no persecution the world has ever seen, bears any comparison, for bitterness, to religious warfare or religious persecution. Wars of conquest, wars of policy, political wars, are mild and tame compared to such. But when you grasp men's throats because of what they do not *believe*, or what they do believe ; when you unsheath the knife and plunge it into the palpitating breasts of women, because their fathers or brothers are of a faith different to your own ; when the executioner fires the pile and burns the creature to death ; there is bitterness, and deviltry, and very hell involved in such acts, that no war of policy has ever been characterised by, and this, for what ? We do not say that these things are confined to one faith, or another faith ; they have marked the progress of *all* faiths, more or less ; some have had more, some have had less ; but when one man is burnt by a Christian because he does not believe what the man who burns him believes ; when another man is roasted here, or there, or somewhere else ; when misery and blood are let loose to run riot, all for the sake of faith, and sometimes in the name of "The Man of Sorrows," who is the "Prince of Peace,"—then all we can say is, your dogma becomes a key to unlock the furies of hell, and let them run riot in the ranks of mankind. When one man spans the mighty firmament through his telescope, and discovers the number and nature of the stars, the dogmatist says—he lies ; and he is imprisoned. Another man speaks of something else, and he is burned or hanged, as the case may be ; all up the line of scientific enquiry, zoological, astronomical, or any other, the line of painful progress and attainment is marked with the dripping stains of blood of murdered men, who have dared the truths of nature

as against the dogmas of the theologian ; dared and died for the truths of God that survive every dogma the world has ever known. All up the painful way of progress the dripping stains are seen to-day and you raise your hands in thankfulness and say, "Thank God, men cannot be persecuted unto death for the truths they are to-day discovering in nature." It is quite true that dogmatists have not the power to do to death to-day, in open court, those who thus strive to instruct their fellows ; but with the refinement of the times, there has come a change of cruelty ; and you *curse* him *publicly* and *privately*, you defame him and abuse him ; and if he dare be honest, brave, and outspoken, and say "I reject *all* your dogmas," you count him the vilest of the vile, and try to turn all men's hearts and hands against him. Is not this the refinement of torture ; is not this the refinement of cruelty ? That you should spoil him : let him be with humanity, but not of humanity ; hold up his name to execration, and "curse him with bell, book, and candle," publicly and privately : and if he be honest, true, and brave, and there can be found those who believe in him and demand that he shall take his place, and stand with those who fight for the people's rights ; then you exhort every man to defeat their object, to prevent him gaining his end, and say, "An atheist must not sit with the legislators of the people !" And Christian (?) men and women applaud the deed, and fold their hands and say, "Thank Heaven ! the British Legislature has not been false to its trust, and will not allow ungodliness to creep into its sacred precincts ! No ! it never must be said that Britons are false to their dogmas." Religion is made by Act of Parliament, endorsed by Act of Parliament, cut, carved, painted, and duly dried, after being held up for public admiration. "Take off your hats, King Dogma passes by ! Bow down before him—bow to the fetish." With bated breath, the multitude watches the idol pass, and someone whispers behind his hat, "What a mockery !" "Hush ! do not speak so loud," someone says—"I share your sentiments ;" but they bow ; the popular requirement is that they shall bow, and the multitude bend before him. But one sturdily refuses to bow—why it is only wood, it is only paint and gilding, it is only a fetish, this reverence for the popular dogmas of the time ; better—says this one against six hundred—better, says this one,

be an *honest man* than a cringing hypocrite. And shall we say that this man is wrong ; shall we say that in opposing the popular dogma, taking so firm and decided a stand, his action merits condemnation ? God forbid ! For it is these protestors of all times, that have won the reforms, the rights, the privileges that you now enjoy : and where men are honest enough to protest against the violation of their consciences, shake them by the hand ; strengthen their actions ; give them "God speed," on the way of right and truth—for there is nothing lost to human good where men fight for liberty and freedom.

"But we *must* have dogmas, you know ; if we did not put our opinions into shape people would never know what we believe." Half-a-dozen of you, come here. You have sundry opinions. "Oh yes." You believe you exist. "Certainly we do." Now, sir, why do *you* believe you exist ? "Oh, I have been created by the laws of nature." And why do *you* believe the same ? "I have been created by God." "Pooh!" says the other. Well, and *you*, sir ? "Well, I do not exactly understand why, but I think there is a Divine and awful mystery about it." The others join in sneering at him. Why do *you* believe in your existence ? "Oh, I am a re-incarnationist." The others join again in laughing at him. And, my dear sir, why do *you* exist ? "Well, I do not know ; I have really never given any consideration to the problem. I suppose I was born in the usual way." The others remark, "What an ignorant fellow !" You might ask another, Why do *you* exist ? "Well," he says, "I do not know, I do not care ; and if you ask me privately and confidentially, I rather wish I did not exist at all." Some of the others say, "How horrible !" one says, "How amusing !" one replies, "What a fool !" Here are, then, six different opinions about their existing ; they all agree that they do exist ; but there is not one among them that can give a reason for his existence. They are all at difference about the cause of their existence, and if they were to analyse one another, you would find them going farther and farther apart with every argument used. With most people, what they are pleased to call their dogmas are only their personal opinions, more or less changed by the education they have been subjected to, and when you develop the dogmas in the characters and lives of the persons who receive and believe them, you will find the deeper you go, the more you analyse, the greater will become

the divergence between the results you arrive at in every instance. Men talk about unity in dogma, but it is a thing impossible to discover. So long as you are ready to cry black or white, according to the popular cry of the time, and have no desire to go beyond it, it is all very well, but such men and women are not the men and women that have made the world what it is ; they are not the men and women that have won for humanity the triumphs it has achieved ; they are not the men and women that have built up the stores of goodness that the world possesses to-day ; they are only flies in the air, buzzing and bustling with an infinite appearance of work, hither and thither, in the sunshine. Directly the sun is obscured by a cloud they hide themselves away in their proper holes and corners, or join with the rabble in hooting down those who fight for liberty and progress.

But what has made this world what it is ? Dogmas ? No ! They have blasted many a fair fame ; they have sharpened many an axe ; they have peopled many a cell ; they have estranged many kindred ; they have broken many homes and hearts ; they have cast children out into the streets, fatherless, motherless, homeless ; they have filled the world with wretchedness and misery. They may have brought some comfort, they may have brought some peace, some satisfaction ; but it has been the comfort, the peace, the satisfaction, produced by stultification of thought, and the stupefaction of intellect. Dogmas have done no real and imperishable good for the world ; they have built up false ideas of God ; they have given a wrong impression of Divinity ; they have libelled the character of humanity ; they have painted the world in black, and obscured the sunshine and glory that humanity should have realised : this is what they have done. What else then,—what has made the world what it is to-day ? On general principles we may say, the men and women that have lived in it ; but behind that, the world's *Mind* has made the world what it is to-day. "Oh ! but it is a wicked world !" Yes ! possibly it is. The men and women living in it are desperately wicked people ; they are—we are quite prepared to admit, for the sake of argument, that everybody is a rascal, and his neighbour a greater rascal still !—we are quite prepared to admit that things are as bad as they can be, and if they were made any worse the world would fall

to pieces ; but on the top of it where is the boasted influence of your dogmas, if it is so? You assure us the world is very wicked, and we say, Yes, sirs! it *is* very wicked. You ask us not to believe in the goodness of humanity, and we say, to oblige you we will not believe; and in return we ask you, why is not humanity good? Why does this wickedness continue? If your dogmas are the expressions of Divine truth these things should not be; and the world and humanity should be better than they are. It is a sort of two-edged argument, that cuts both ways; and we are very much inclined to say, the back cut is a great deal worse than the forward one.

What has made the world what it is? The world's mind, the deeds of the world. "Oh! do you not see what a most fatal argument that is? Why! there have been deeds of bloodshed, have there not? deeds of horror, and deceit and misery! If you talk about the deeds of the world making the world what it is, you give your argument away entirely, you open yourself to attack on every point!" So it seems, but remember this: you are engaged in constant strife against crime, and wrong, and blood: goodness is gradually rising to the surface, and the world is becoming, in spite of all, somewhat more civilised, more human; and the human deeds of the world—the better selfhoods of humanity,—are surely, and daily, and yearly, limiting the kingdom of wickedness and wrong, until by-and-bye it will be extinguished altogether. Why if the world did not have some goodness in it: if it did not in some measure reduce and master the elements of discord in it, it would be by this time an utterly unbearable place. You have only to look at the facts of modern civilised society, and you will there discover in a thousand ways what good deeds this world has done, what grand progress the world has made!

Let us take a very narrow and limited argument after all. Barely two thousand years ago—the argument is by no means new that we are going to use—barely two thousand years ago, this island of yours was peopled by very primitive sons and daughters. Their attire was such as would scarcely fit them to enter a modern drawing-room: it was composed of skins and paint—very largely paint. Their habitations were certainly neither elegant nor palatial; their food certainly not of the most refined and delicate kind; their laws and customs somewhat rude and primitive; their mode of settling disputes

perhaps hasty, but certainly effectual, for when a man has been slain by the blow of a club he never comes up to answer the charge again. Then religion was not marked by any of the ritual that you now possess, and was not celebrated in similarly wonderful places of worship; they preferred nature's groves and the grand trees and rocks. Very curious people these, uncouth and uncivilised, but passing honest for savages; rather decent kind of folk. They knew nothing about the advantages you now possess; and if they engaged in war they had not the scientific appliances to assist them that you have. These were the people of this land barely two thousand years ago. Now, if you caught anybody to-night walking about in skins and paint, the nearest police-station would be his home till the morning. You do occasionally find people living in caves—we believe the correct expression is "underground kitchens;" you do occasionally find these people living on very coarse and meagre fare; but they are only poor people, and do not count for much, for poverty is a sort of crime, and those that suffer under it are marked, so that people may keep away. The respectable world lives in very comfortable houses, is clothed very satisfactorily, feeds very well two or three times a day, and has the latest news of riots and murders served up hot for breakfast. Oh! there are a great many advantages to-day. Patriarchs have gone out of fashion now-a-days; fathers and heads of clans are not honoured as they used to be. You have a Queen, a House of Lords, a House of Commons, and a Government. Some of these are useful, some are not; you must sift out the matter for yourselves, as far as that is concerned; but, apart from this, these forefathers of yours, when they wished for information from other lands, had either to go and fetch it or send someone to fetch it—both troublesome and somewhat lengthy processes. Their conceptions of the world were possibly somewhat crude; they quite considered that their country was the only country in the world; and that when they got to the edge of the water—if they were incautious enough to get there—they would topple over—somewhere. The world has practically been explored; the peoples of the earth are bound together by fine threads of wire, through which flash thoughts and deeds continually; brave ships steam across the vast wastes of waters, with no fear of toppling over at the edge, and arrive at distant

countries ; and dusky India sends forth her treasures to you, her fair-skinned brothers; and all the world is bound together by interest, and by sympathy, sometimes by hatred also ; and there is an interchange of thought and brotherhood between the peoples of the world, growing stronger and stronger with every year that passes. Now what has done this? The mind of man has tamed the lightnings, and made them speak thoughts of love, and bring messages of peace and goodness ; sometimes, alas ! they still carry messages of hatred and revenge. The mind of man has caught the vapour of the air, and made it drive the " iron horse ;" the mind of man has mastered the various sciences up to their present point, and applied them to the benefit of mankind at large ; the mind of man has devised divers forms and procedures which have improved the position of the people, and will go on improving the position of the people in the future. The mind of man, in wrestling with the secrets of nature, has mastered many of them, and applied many of them to the happiness of mankind at large. The mind of man has done all these things, and we proclaim the mind of man, the *deeds* of mankind have done most for the world at large. Dogmas have opposed these deeds, divines have vilified them, and abused them, called them the devil's own art ; have tried at every turn, to stop their progress, and at last, when they seem decided for good, have the boldness actually to turn round and say, " We always told you so," and to-day the minister who denounced the coming of the steam engine as an evidence of the devil's ingenuity, takes a ticket and rides to church with it. " Extremes meet," and—

" As round and round you run,
Ever the right comes uppermost, and ever is justice done."

So far as this world is concerned, then, our proclamation is that the *deeds* of humanity have made the world the tolerable place to live in that it is ; have built up the records the world possesses ; have reared the fanes the world now cherishes ; have improved the customs that now prevail ; have made away with the things that once existed, and have made the world the purer in consequence. These deeds, still gradually growing, will make the world wiser and better still ; and by-and-bye the world will see that greatness arises from great deeds, devoted to the world's progress and the good of mankind. And we may add

thereto that those devoted to the service of mankind are devoted to the honour of God, and reflect His greatness in the progress of His children.

Now, let us take the other side of the problem,—the world beyond. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be baptised, or,—be damned.” Comforting, is it not? Rather awkward, though, if you cannot believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. But the problem may be considered from this point of view: Supposing you *do* believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is not convenient to be baptised, only half the thing necessary to be done is accomplished. Are you to be half in the celestial country and half out of it? or will Saint Peter take compassion on you for your difficulty, and say, “Well! it is against the rules—you have not been washed—but come in, nevertheless.” If Saint Peter is in a good humour, possibly that pleasant result may be obtained; but as, no doubt, Saint Peter must occasionally be annoyed by candidates coming who have no right or title for admission, it might possibly happen that you should come to him when he is in a bad temper; well, we can imagine the rest. “You believe, but you have not been baptised. I really do not know what to do.” And you may be referred from one board to the other board, and hunted about from pillar to post; and, to finish it, you may elect to go to the other place, where you are sure to be admitted whether or no. But, seriously, with all due deference to these peculiar notions, let us ask you to bear in mind that when these matters are talked about to you, by those who take the affirmative side, they are talking about questions they do not know anything about; and while we have every respect for honest and sincere belief, we are not called upon to respect opinions that we consider to be wrong. We will respect the believer, but we are not bound to respect the belief. That is our position. Mark you! it is out of no desire to give offence, or be unkind to the believer, but out of what we consider to be our duty that we reject the belief he entertains. But if it should be that dogmas are the best things for you in the world to come, it needs some more and serious consideration than we have bestowed upon it. Suppose we take the question from that side,—there can be no harm in taking the opponent’s position. Granting that dogma is absolutely necessary to ensure future welfare, our question is, “What dogma?” “Which dogma?” If the answer is, Every

one, we say, Which one? "Oh! the Protestant dogmas of course." "Oh! nothing of the kind, my friends, the dogmas of the Holy Catholic Church." "Gentlemen! you are both wrong; the dogmas of the Primitive Church, which you insultingly denominate the Ritualistic; these are the proper dogmas." Here we have three candidates for the position already. "My friends, do not waste time in unnecessary discussion; the dogmas of your Protestant Church, or of your Catholic Church, or Ritualistic Church, are utterly beside the question; attend to the teachings of Methodism; there you will find the well of living waters, which can refresh your thirsty souls." That is only four already. "Nothing of the kind; become an Irvingite." "My friends, do not waste time in fruitless discussion, but come to the New Church; the Church of the New Jerusalem." How many more are we to find? They come on thick and fast as autumn leaves in passing breezes; what dogma? which dogma? *how many* dogmas? All of them, or none of them? The dogma of this, that, or the other Church; how shall we decide? If dogma is all important to ensure future happiness, it is imperatively necessary to decide which of the dogmas are to be accepted.

Set the representatives of them together; set them at the council board, and ask them to determine among themselves those dogmas that are essential to future welfare. They will never do it, they could not do it if they tried ever so long; for before they had been discussing the question a single day, there would be enough materials for a dozen funerals! It always has been the case, when men proceed to harmonise their dogmas, they produce the most inharmonious result you can possibly conceive of; they never can harmonise them, because no one will give way. One man says, "*I* cannot give way, it is essential to faith!" another man says, "Nothing of the kind; *this* is essential to faith;" and of course the two get heated, and the natural result is they begin to quarrel, and before very long the whole council takes up the same character. History very often tells you that, instead of harmony, discord is the only product that comes from their labours.

Go into the next world! "But we cannot get there!" Well! call somebody down from thence. "We cannot!" We beg your pardon, you can! There have always been plenty of visitors from the supernatural world; it has never been im-

possible to get some information concerning that future life. Spiritualists know this full well. What say the Spirits to the Spiritualists? We are what we are, *not* because of our *beliefs* but because of our *deeds*; it is *deeds*, not dogmas, that fix our estate in the world beyond. What! do you mean to say that a Spiritualist does not believe in dogmas at all? Oh, a great many Spiritualists have dogmas of their own; in fact, we have hardly ever known anybody that had not a dogma of some kind. For the matter of that, we have not the least objection to any person having a dogma, or two or three dogmas; the only thing we object to is him saying to us, You must believe *my* dogma. If he will let us believe as many dogmas as we like, we shall have no objection to his believing as many as *he* chooses; but we should shrink from saying, "My dear friend, you *must* believe my dogmas;" and we should certainly resent very strongly his applying similar language to us. Believe every dogma in the world, but please do not compel anybody else to do it as well. Remembering, as we do, that the world's progress is the result of the world's deeds, the analysis of that statement is that the individual's character must be the result of his deeds also. You are known for what you do. By-and-bye you will be known for the *motives behind* these deeds. In the Spirit-world the deeds *and motives* have to be considered; and by-and-bye you will realise the truth: that the purer the motive the grander and nobler will *you* be, as a natural consequence.

Now,—there is no need for us to go very lengthily into the matter—supposing you have accepted some dogmas in this world, and counted them sufficient to ensure happiness and peace beyond; and find, when you seek to realise this happiness and peace, that your beliefs in the past were no good in the future. What would be your sense, or feeling, or emotion? You would feel very much that you had been imposed upon. Someone has presented you with a ticket for a grand dramatic entertainment, wherein the scenery was to be excellent, the playhouse superb, and all the accessories so sweetly beautiful that you could not find words to properly describe them. When you arrive, the porter says, "That is no good; we cannot pass you in with that." You go home angry, and if you came across that particular friend who had thus deluded you, would

you not make it lively for him for half-an-hour? Suppose you find yourself at the celestial portals, entering into the Spirit-world, in the vain hope that you were going to meet the most sublime that could possibly be presented to you, and found these things were debarred from you, until, by *fitness*, you had prepared yourself for them; is it not natural to suppose that you would feel a little angry? perhaps indulge in some incautious remark, probably experience a little unpleasant feeling, and be inclined to say that you had not been treated as you ought to have been treated. This is the position of hundreds of people in the spiritual world; they realise that their past experience has not been of the kind it ought to have been; they realise that dogmas are not passports to, or warrants for, happiness hereafter, whatever they may bring in the present; that if you wish for happiness beyond, it can only be entered into through noble deeds for the world's advancement; lives devoted to the good and progress of the world you are passing through. Therefore, whether it be this world, or whether it be the world beyond, deeds—*personal* deeds—deeds of heroism, or righteousness, or of justice; deeds of humanity, done with the noblest, purest, and loftiest motives—these are the only things worth considering; better still, they are the only things that are really enduring. Creeds and dogmas change, and alter, and vanish, but the *goodness* of the world remains for ever, bringing an increase of blessing with the rolling ages for all humanity. The great ones of the world—the noble heroes, the divine workers, the hero men and women of the past and present, their lives, their deeds, shine like glorious constellations of Divinest stars in the firmament of human progress; and when all the creeds and dogmas of the world have been forgotten, these glorious constellations will shine and glow with a Divine radiance still, and the world will realise quite clearly then—as it dimly perceives now—that noble deeds and righteous lives are the only enduring realities the world can boast of.

So then, friends, let us come to this conclusion, let us sum up the case from our point of view, leaving, as we said, the final verdict with yourselves. A good man labours not only for the world's progress, but for himself. But the good man is really unselfish! "What do you mean by being unselfish?—that he forgets himself?" Yes! There is a great deal of looseness

in the definition of this—he forgets himself; let us beg to put it straight. The good man labours for the world and for himself; he forgets himself so far as the *results* of his labour are concerned, but he remembers himself so far as the *means* to *accomplish* that labour are concerned. You cannot do good unless you have informed yourself *how* the good is to be done. Learn how to do the good, zealously, continually strive to gather the knowledge; but when you have once gained the knowledge, use it for the good of your fellows; and leave the result—well, to Heaven, as the phrase runs. Throw yourself boldly into the breach, no matter what the risk may be; whatever the right is, let that *right* be done, though it strike you to the heart, and you fall, dust and ashes, on the way of life. Remember, deeds have made the world great and good; dogmas have filled the world with sorrow and misery.

There may be, after all, though, something said in favour of dogmas; about which a word in passing may not be out of place. They have, in a certain sense, preserved and held together men's fragmentary conceptions of spiritual verities, they have kept the light of Spiritualism burning, faintly burning, from time to time in darkened ages. There are some people they are suited to, and fitted for; some people that could not live and endure anything beyond and above them; if they had not these leaning posts and guides whereon to rest, they would be faint and weary, and stumble by the wayside. But we want to see the world filled with a healthier sort of people; we want to see the world filled with men and women who can think, and stand erect while thinking; who can face Heaven's glorious sunshine without a fear or tremor; who can stand up in the hour of trial, trusting to the nobleness of human nature that is all around; and resting firmly on the fact that the right will triumph, no matter how much the wrong may flourish for a time. If they will but strive thus, they will realise that the grand attainments in science, art, policy, and history, and social life; the unfoldments of knowledge in every department of human life; the accomplished *deeds* of the world, are the real elements in the formation of the world's progress; in the establishment of individual character; in the exaltation of humanity. Deeds are humanity's expressions of the mandates of God; the principles of life, which, operating upon the consciousness of humankind, spur it forward to actions

and deeds of greatness and goodness ; wherein is proved, that there *are* elements of Divinity in man, which enable him to overcome every obstacle, to defeat every error and wickedness ; and, with the glorious consciousness of good deeds, go forward, and leave traces of these good deeds in every department of life. Then the dogmas—when they find they are no longer needed—will take unto themselves wings, and fly away to a world where the people are not so wise, where progress is not so great as here among yourselves.

SPIRITUALISM—ITS CONSOLATIONS.

Those who have tested the character of Spiritualism can well testify from individual and personal experience that there are innumerable consolations to be obtained from it. There are solaces for many wounds, and balms for many griefs. But those who may not have tasted of this cup, who perhaps have somewhat wilfully turned their lips away, may consider that Spiritualists are very strangely-minded sort of people if they can deduce any consolation whatever from what they are pleased to call "Spiritualism." Now, we think we may lay it down, as a fair statement, that because you may not have had an opportunity of accepting any good and sweet consolations, that is not a reason why other people should be debarred from accepting them, and from publicly expressing what consolation they may have derived from them. Their opinion is quite as good as yours, and somewhat better. You but have the negative advantage of *not knowing*; they certainly stand in the somewhat superior position of having tested, and learnt; and the man who *knows* certainly occupies a better position than the man who does *not know*; and those who have, by practical experience, examined, tested, and proved, are certainly more worthy of public consideration than those who have only negative proposals to advance. There is no logical necessity to argue as to whether we have any right to introduce this aspect of Spiritualism for consideration; but to come to those who take the negative side, we think that all will be generous enough to say that differences of opinion should never alter or destroy friendships; the world is wide enough for every shade of thought; true brotherhood, and true humanity, are best discoverable by letting your neighbour entertain his honest convictions, openly and frankly; it is not your part to bar their expression.

The consolations of Spiritualism range themselves under several defined, and exceedingly important, heads. We will

endeavour to deal with them in as orderly and sequential a manner as possible.

First of all, what do we understand by the term "Spiritualism"? It is one of the most awkward things to define, one of the most difficult things to successfully deal with; for Spiritualists and non-Spiritualists seem to be ever engaged in running tilts at one another, on the nature of Spiritualism. One Spiritualist will give you his interpretation, and swear by it; another will directly advance, and, in his turn, give you an entirely different version; and so on through the whole department, until at last the enquirer is so bewildered, that he comes to the conclusion that "Spiritualism" is such a heterogeneous mixture, that nobody knows what it really consists of! But those who have an eye for something beyond this; those who can grasp something outside their own immediate requirements, are capable of evolving somewhat of order from this seeming disorder, and we think when you marshall all the various opinions of Spiritualism in line, review them one by one, and analyse them as you go, you will find that at the bottom of them all, there are sundry points of agreement, sundry principles, and sundry facts, that are indisputable, amongst the great body of Spiritualists. On this ground only do we base what we are pleased to call "Spiritualism." In all collateral questions that arise out of side issues our opinion is that you have each, and all, a perfect right to your own opinions. If you choose to believe the moon is made of green cheese, your belief will certainly not make it of that material; but we should do you no great good in trying to disabuse your mind of such opinion until your scientific education had been further advanced. If you choose to believe this, that, or the other in regard to Spiritualism; if we consider your opinions are wrong we can only trust for the time to come, that when your spiritual education shall have been further advanced, that what we consider nonsensical opinions will be abandoned. On the platform of fact, we claim that you have a right to unite with us, as we have a right to unite with you; and such a Spiritualism contains within itself the very essential elements of cohesion that will, by-and-bye, when they are recognised, and acted upon, make this Spiritualism of yours a vital factor in religion, society, and politics. "Oh! but then," we have often been told, and we have marvelled that people should indulge in the

telling of it, "Spiritualism has nothing at all to say with regard to any such worldly things as social problems or political reforms." To which we have taken occasion to reply that as social reforms and political questions are among the most pressing problems that are discussed by thoughtful men, it seems to us that Spiritualism, if it has any element at all, to appeal to the just thinkers among you, should have something to say on these most important questions. That Spiritualism, which is up and away in the clouds above you, all rosy, and beautiful, and transcendental, had better be left in the keeping of those who are rosy and transcendental also. That Spiritualism, which can appeal to the judgments of earnest-hearted men, is the kind of Spiritualism we think the world requires to-day. However, what do we mean by this same "Spiritualism"? Briefly—the evidences, based upon conclusive fact, evolved by patient experiment, that man survives the shock of death; and really, we are not very much inclined to go beyond that simple statement, for therein is contained all that can at present be said. All that can be said beyond that arises out of the facts, the means whereby the facts are obtained, the agencies through which they are expressed; and the theories arising out of these facts are simple sequences. "Oh, but," some will contend, "if you narrow Spiritualism down to this factarian basis, if you say the whole of it is summarised in the statement that it is a practical demonstration of the life of man after death, what becomes of all your fine-spun theories?" Well, what would have become of these fine-spun theories if the aforesaid demonstration had not been given? If there had been no evidence, through the agency of Spiritualistic phenomena, of the life after death, all the theories denominated Spiritualistic would have been simply non-existent. For theories arise from the fact; deduct the fact, and the whole superstructure tumbles to pieces. It is the pulling out of the keystone from the arch; and the result is that the whole structure crumbles away. Cannot you go beyond that? Certainly we can. We can go beyond that fact, upon which, mark you, all Spiritualists are agreed—the *dead live*, and the dead come back again. We can go beyond that simple statement of this fact, and say that the dead give you certain seemingly different accounts, but in the main similar accounts, of their condition and position

after death ; and when you have allowed for all the difference of observation, resulting from difference of point of view ; when you have allowed for all the differences of temperament upon the part of the communicating Spirits, you will find all their statements, and all their theories summed up in these few simple and concise sentences, namely—We live, and are the same, consciously, that we were previous to death. We are, what we are, not for our beliefs, but for our lives in the world below. We look forward to the future, because we have learnt that the present is not all there is to be. Granting this then ; from the fact to the conclusion, we simply sum it all up in this : the preservation of identity, the existence of sequential results in the next world, determining the condition of the individual—as you are *really*, so will you actually *be* over there—and the possibility of progress for all mankind.

We say when you have made allowance for all the differences of characteristics, and all the various methods of presentation of what are called “spiritual” communications, you will be able to sum up ; and out of the difference you can evolve the unity ; out of the variety you can evolve the order. Spiritualism, when thus presented, becomes very practical ; but it becomes solemnly important, for it resolves itself into a message for *you*. “What are these things to *me* ?” is the great and important question that each one of you must put to him, or herself. The days have gone by when you could put the responsibility upon “his reverence.” The Synod of Bishops will not help you to salvation now ; it is *me*, what says life to *me* ; what asks nature from *me* ? What commands hath God laid upon me ? Do not bother yourself about your neighbours, do not think about your brotherhoods, or your fraternities, or societies, or your flocks, or your congregations ; leave the other units of the world to take care of themselves. Ask yourself “What have *I* to do ?” and when you realise, fully, and truly, and wisely, what you have to do, go straightway and *do* it, for it must be certainly true, that if you are but righteous to yourself, you cannot be unrighteous to your neighbours.

But what consolation can this Spiritualism, this kind of Spiritualism, afford to those that believe it ? Why ! if this be all Spiritualists have to trust to, we are often told, well ! they are in a very bad case indeed ; they have no authorities, they have no precedents, they have no creeds to fall back upon. If

we have all got to limp along the road of life; some of us will break down before we get to the gates of glory. We should advise you to take a little more spiritual exercise, and strengthen your muscles! Life's journey has to be *walked*; and if you are carried half a yard you will have to walk half a yard somewhere else. Oh! give me a more comfortable doctrine, says one; let me fall back into the arms of that faith wherein I have been trained. By all means; but if you cannot stand this form of exercise, take a word of ours, and strive to grow strong, for if you do not walk in this world you will have to walk by-and-bye, and the sooner you begin the better. That is, of course, to some a matter of opinion; but we speak from some observation, and are inclined to lay it down somewhat absolutely; the sooner you commence to grow, the sooner will your strength mature, and as you grow in strength so will you grow in power to comprehend the beauties of the life you are passing through. Well; but what is the good of a lot of dry facts? Spiritualists are always talking about facts! facts! A man cannot live upon facts any more than a horse can upon husks. Quite true! The facts of life are very useful, though, when they are properly digested and intelligently comprehended. If you cannot understand facts, deduce their proper lessons from them; well! you are to be pitied, but the facts are not to be blamed. You talk, say some, about Spiritualism being based upon the life of man after death, and his ability to return from that second world and come into this; well! where is consolation out of that? Let us deal with this point first, because it is the most familiar, and we will dwell here very briefly, because most of you have mastered the point long ago.

To those who have been called upon to encounter the sad experience of bereavement; who have lost those that they loved, there comes no more bitter moment in their lives than when the angel of death descends and steals away their loved one. Out of the bitterness of the heart there rises a piteous wail to Heaven for light and for knowledge, that may cast a glimmering ray across the gloomy pathway. The consolations, the hopes, and the ministrations of religion may, in a certain sort, deaden the pain that fills the heart; but to change it to conscious joy you must realise that death is not the end of life, and that this bereavement is not a final one. To produce this result, the actual knowledge that the dead *live* is the one thing

that is needed. How can this knowledge come? how are those who have not this knowledge to obtain it? Not having this knowledge of Spiritualism when the white-robed messenger has entered your house and stolen away your treasure, your hearts have been wellnigh broken; and your souls have sunk, crushed under the load of sorrow, drowned under the flood of tears. *Now*, Spiritualists know that the death angel is a friend and not a foe; that death is not an everlasting sleep; that present bereavement is not final separation; that there is a world beyond; that God's power to keep alive is not confined to this world, but continues its operations in the world beyond as well. If you know that the *dead*, so-called, are living, and growing wiser; that you are marching up the hill of time, daily coming nearer to the period of meeting them again, death, instead of being a gloomy, hideous thing, as it was to you in years past, is now looked upon as one of the inevitable consequences of existence, as much a manifestation of Divine wisdom and love as birth, and as much to be expected, and as earnestly to be prepared for, as any other duty, or experience, you are called upon to encounter. This gives you a better idea of the justice, and the wisdom, and the love of God, stops your repinings, dries up your tears, renders the regret unnecessary, and instead of rebelling against the mandates of God, you direct your attention now that you may be able to execute them in the manner that is most creditable to yourself and most in accordance with the Divine will and pleasure. Instead of death being something to inspire you with hatred to God, who steals away your choicest flowers, you now look upon it as one of the manifestations of His wisdom; for He but transplants the plant from one garden to another, and a better.

But a word here also. The consolations that we would extract from this must have a darker shade even for a moment, the shadow of duty. We would say that death will also tell you another lesson: how to prevent the coming of the angel until the proper span of life has been accomplished. Your duty is to live to the end of your allotted time, to the span of nature's requirements here on earth, that you may be properly prepared for the world beyond. Premature departures are the only deaths that you ought to mourn for. Honest deaths—shall we call them?—which come at the fulfilment of time, when the hair is snowy, and the face is wrinkled with the lines of age;

when the sight is failing ; when the man full of years and full of honours, and having done his duty here is ready for promotion to the ranks beyond ; that death shall be greeted with flowers, and thanks, and grateful praise, that another well-tried soldier in the ranks of life has gone to the higher ranks in the world beyond. Death, then, ceases to be the gloomy thing, through the agency of Spiritualism, to the Spiritualist, that it was prior to his knowledge of Spiritualism ; and the consolation which the facts of Spiritualism give, is here discovered in the fact that death is robbed of its sting, the grave is deprived of its victory, for now you *know* where at one time you *hoped* that there *is* Immortality beyond the grave.

Oh ! but what other consolations can we hope for out of it ? After we have said that, have we said all ? “ Good madam ! why weepest thou ? ” “ My child is dead. ” “ We must all die, madam, why weepest thou ? ” “ I fear my child—I fear my child has not gone to Heaven. ” “ The best of us, madam, can hardly hope to enter there. ” “ Oh, but I fear my child has gone to hell. ” “ Most of us, madam, if some people’s doctrine be true, will stand a more than average chance of going there. ” “ But the minister said, my child did not believe the doctrine that he ought to have believed ; the minister said he hoped the Lord, in His infinite mercy and goodness, would take compassion upon him ; but my child died without believing, without professing faith ; I am afraid my child is in flames ! There ! I see him now ! his face is blanched with horror ! his eyes starting from his head ! Oh, God ! be merciful to my child. ” The Spiritualist knows that God’s mercy survives the shock of death ; that the tears of His loving providence have quenched the fierce fires that theological bigotry has created. The Spiritualist knows that whilst there is retribution for wrong-doing, in the world beyond, the glorious consolation shall come to every suffering soul on earth who has lost those who have not been so good as they might have been, in the consciousness that God’s mercy rights every wrong, and lifts the worst out of their misery into the sunlight, and happiness, in the end. No consolation here ! you, who may have lost children that you may have deemed were lost indeed, blessed now with the knowledge of Spiritualism, and realising the glorious realities of the holy home beyond the grave !—speak from your hearts—do you not rejoice that you have

learnt to trace the goodness of God rather than to fear His wrath? "Oh! what is that you have said? It is a very questionable advantage to broach such matters. You will unsettle people's convictions; there are a great many people who believe in the infernal regions, and if they did not believe in the infernal regions I tremble to think what would be the result; there would be nothing to hold them in check." That morality which is the result of your being gripped by the collar by a religious policeman twenty-four hours a day, is not worth calling morality; and those saints who are only saints because they fear to go to hell, had better go there, for it is the only place they are really fitted for. We want men and women of the highest grades, and noblest lives; they are the best saints you can have to do with.

What other consolations then? Here comes a man somewhat bowed in years; his face is thoughtful, and we ask him, "Good sir, something presses upon your mind?" "Well, sir, I do not know; sometimes I feel a little down-hearted, eminently discouraged; the world is a very curious place to live in." By-the-bye, he is not the first that has made that not very original remark. "It is very curious that people should be what they are; what the cynic observed is true, 'The world would be a very tolerable place if it were not for the people in it.' Well, I have lived some sixty years; I have ever done my best; my children have been brought up in the opinions, or want of them, that I have entertained; and they have never entered a place of worship for many years together. I have always been respectable; no man can raise his voice against us. We have been truthful, we have been honest, we have been just; discharged every obligation as occasion served. That we have done so is pretty clearly evinced by the fact that I am poor even now." What is your fear? "Well, I have lost my child, brave boy—he was my hope; and sometimes, you know, sometimes one cannot help thinking after all whether the opinions of other people may not be true, and your own false. Sometimes I have wondered whether all his goodness, all his honesty, all the virtue I have instilled into him may not have been wasted, and he have lost his chance of happiness, if there be a world beyond. Sometimes one cannot help thinking whether this universal faith may not be the one thing requisite; and, therefore, perhaps I may have done my boy great injustice;

may have been causing him to run the risk of everlasting misery in the world beyond." Some of you have thought from time to time, when you have heard of men whose lives have been spent in right-doing, whose words have been words of honour and goodness, for whom happiness has seemed to you to be possible, whether all this virtue, and all this morality and goodness may not have been wasted; that, lacking the essential element of faith, they may have lost any possible reward that might have accrued to them, and that they have gone down in the scale of life immortal to the very lowest. Take heart of courage! for let it be clearly understood that goodness is goodness, no matter by whom practised or where effected. Whether you be Catholic, or Jew, or Protestant, or what you will, truth is truth; righteousness is righteousness; honour and justice are honour and justice. They can be no more, done by whom they may; they can be no less, practised by whoever you choose; and remember this—justice, honour, and virtue are the only sure tests of character, and the only foundations of happiness in the world hereafter. The consolation is this: that though you do not profess religious convictions, if you be honest, just, and truthful; honesty, justice, and truth are never lost, says Spiritualism.

"Oh! well, yes! That is all very well, but if you go on like that, you know, you will not leave us any religious opinions at all to cling to." Without at all being unkind or ungenerous, let us say—take all your creeds out of your religion, leave out all your doctrines from your religion, put aside all your speculations, narrow it down to this: Be thou unto others as thou wouldst others should be to you; and you can let the Bench of Bishops pass, and forego the Establishment entirely. And when you have done that, you will simply come to what we have expressed in other words—justice, honour, and truth are the three great elements in human greatness, without which human life would be an intolerable sink of misery and wretchedness. "Oh! well, if we have got no doctrines what shall we do?" Possibly, quite as well as you did before they were invented; certainly not worse than you are doing at the present time. Now, as we come out of these purely personal considerations of Spiritualism, let us sum them up ere we leave them:—

First of all, you are deprived of the fear and dread of death,

and no longer need to look upon it as a manifestation of Divine displeasure which it is your duty, so to speak, to rebel against. Secondly, you realise that for every one, good or bad, there is hope of progress in the world beyond. Again, you learn that in life, goodness, no matter by whom followed, is never lost, or its results wasted; they come home in the world beyond, where the principles of God are the judges, and not the prejudices of mankind. Then, remember we get an enlarged conception of the justice, mercy, and wisdom of God, who permits these things; and furthermore a sense of duty is created in your own mind, we trust imposed upon your judgment, that you live in this world so that you shall be ever ready for death, and fitted to be received among reputable and honest souls in the world beyond; and you are taught to live so good and useful a life in this world, that none can rise up with regret against you, after you have ceased to be of the family of mortality. If you take these consolations in the form of these conclusions, we are quite sure that the personal application of Spiritualism to you, will have practical effect in your lives; will be a blessing to you, and make you useful and honourable members of society at large. Those, then, who say that Spiritualism has no personal consolations; those who consider Spiritualism incapable of ministering to the general good through individual advancement—which we take it is the true basis of all *general* good—are speaking without knowledge, for we think all will agree that these consolations, so far as they go, give you a better understanding of life, a wider grasp of its uses and duties, and, mark you, realise the possibility of greater good than perchance you have before suspected to be present.

Let us come out of these personal considerations, and take a wider range. We have no desire to confine Spiritualism to merely personal and local effects. We want it to have a hold on human sympathy, to find good in every life, to find a lodgment in every clime; if it fails in doing this, it is not correctly interpreted. The first consideration that we will invite your attention to is a consolation of a somewhat curious character.

People will say, "Ah! when you bring Spiritualism down to worldly considerations you detract from its majesty and sublimity." We have already disposed of that view of the matter, and have no need to repeat the arguments we used then. We *want* to bring it down to purely worldly consi-

derations. We want to place one item before you ; that in the world beyond, the position of man is determined by his nature, by his character, and not by his position or possessions ; that in the world beyond is recognised the fact that you are all sons and daughters of God, and that your only claim to exceptional consideration, consists in the increase of development as compared with others around you.

Recognising what we have said as obtaining in the future life, apply the facts to the world you live in. How much of the universal son and daughtership of God is there manifested to-day ? How much of the recognition of the power of character is there in the world to-day ? How much of the realisation of the fact that the only claim to exceptional position is exceptional development ? Political reformers are to-day sometimes heard lamenting that the world is in a very backward state ; that the day of equality, and liberty, and fraternity seems a very long way distant yet, and they are at their wits' end, sometimes, to devise ways and means whereby the coming of that day can be hastened. Spiritualists are anxious to see the day dawn, and have a sort of feeling in their minds that Spiritualism in some sort, may be able to assist in the dawning of that day. How can it be done ? Can Spiritualism bring consolation to the down-trodden millions of the earth ? Can Spiritualism bring consolation to those who have been bound with political shackles ? Can Spiritualism bring consolation to those who are bound down under systems that grind people to the dust, and make them the servants of the powers placed above them ? Can Spiritualism bring consolation to the nations of the earth that are languishing for freedom and liberty ? Can Spiritualism help on the day of universal brotherhood, and liberty, and equality, and fraternity ? If not, then the talk about Spiritualism being the universal philosophy of life is only talk, and talk is proverbially only of a very low market value. If your Spiritualism resolves itself into talk merely, and you become stigmatised by future generations as the "talking Spiritualists," you have lived in vain ; the Spirits have spoken in vain to you ; you have made but a vain use of the principles they have enunciated. "Oh ! but how can Spiritualism help us ?" Why, by asking you to incorporate in one all the practical principles of practical politics—the universal equality of all men in the sight of God ; that, basically, all souls are the

children of the one self-same Father, and that the only real, essential element of qualification is in the development of character, the increase of goodness, the unfoldment of soul. "But that is Republicanism of the most extreme type; and what would become of our great institutions; what would become of our higher orders; what would become of all this, that, and the other, if such dreadful principles were put into operation?" Let us see, if we possibly can. If the universal equality, as souls, was admitted between and before all mankind, the basis of universal brotherhood would be established; and, in the universal brotherhood, standing armies and floating navies would be utterly unnecessary and superfluous. The genius that now directs its attention to the demolition of its fellows would have to find other channels for its operations; and the tyranny which high, aristocratic classes now exert upon those beneath them would be forgotten or remembered only faintly as a thing of bygone ages. If universal brotherhood, or universal spiritual equality before God, had become an admitted and definite reality, the curses that now afflict the world, the tyranny that now mars it, the misery that now eats into its heart, the hatred, malice, and uncharitableness, would be swept away for ever, and in the glorious time when love and goodness shall have become the future active forces of the world, when Spiritualism in its divinity and purity is recognised as an established fact in the life of all mankind, these things will be realised, and the world will find the consolations we have so faintly sketched.

"But you have no right to talk in this sort of way!" Why? "The constituted authorities of this country are not republican." Quite true. "You have no right to stir up seditious thoughts and dissatisfaction in the minds of the loyal subjects of the reigning house." The long line of reformers, whose bleeding feet have dripped on the pathway of human progress; whose blood has become the seed power from which your liberties—the institutions which you now possess—have sprung, rise up and protest against you. They *dared* to speak against the "reigning house," they dared to set men thinking! That is all we want to do. They dared to make men realise that they had something more of greatness and goodness within them than they had hitherto suspected. They tried to tell the world, as we are trying, that the only

claim to real distinction is the good you do to the world, and the purity with which you live while you are passing through the world. They have dared to tell you what we are trying to tell you—that, as spiritual beings equal before God in your basic natures, your duty is to live here, so that you honour God by improving yourselves.

“But if you bring Spiritualism into the region of practical politics, dear me! whatever would you do?” Perhaps a great deal more than we should like to sketch now; we will content ourselves with what we have already said. As the principles of liberal thought, as the truths that Spiritualism inculcates, gain ground and spread abroad, so the restrictions, the mistakes, the falsehoods, that now prevail in political government, will be swept away from the face of the earth; and by-and-bye the world will realise that the world is the people’s, and they have the right to own and govern it.

“But the question is a very dangerous one.” Let us look at another one quite as dangerous, in one sense—the question of social life. What consolations has Spiritualism to offer you here? In the problem of social life, *work* and *wealth* are the two great factors. When you have taken every consideration that you choose in hand, and argued upon them until you are tired of arguing, when you have summed up all the evils and miseries, looked at all the discrepancies, the whole question resolves itself into two little points—work and wealth. One side works, the other gets wealthy. As wealth increases, so it grows luxurious, so it grows sensual, so it becomes demoralised, and, finally, from its own interior rottenness, decays and crumbles away. The increase of material wealth is a nation’s greatest curse; and as wealth increases, so work grows more exhaustive. The greater the exhaustion of work, the deeper the misery of the workers. With the misery of the workers increasing, and the wealth of the wealthy increasing also, is it wonderful that now and then misery should grow rebellious, and wealth should grow—well, not conciliatory, and not kind, and not generous? Is it wonderful that the two conditions should come into conflict one with the other? That the ignorant, uneducated, unthinking workman, who has only wit enough to feel he is miserable, only sense enough to know he is sometimes hungry, only knowledge enough to realise that his children are thin and badly clad, and his wife is wan and emaciated, only knows that

he is living in a bad house, indifferently drained ; that he is constantly crowded to the wall to make room for those whose wealth his labour has created !—is it to be wondered at that this uneducated, unthinking creature should rise up and contest the island, and demand a share of the fruit that grows upon the trees ? Is it to be wondered at ? Far from being wondered at, it is to be expected rather than otherwise.

“Oh, but what has Spiritualism to do with such things as these ? Let us leave these things to the political economist, who will cut, and saw, and rasp everywhere.” But political economists will never go right into the marrow of the question ; and yet they lay it down in such hard and fast notions that one would think the whole universe was a piece of machinery, and society existed only that some people might be crushed and others uplifted. Economists may be very learned, but they are very cold-blooded folks at the same time.

“But what consolation can this Spiritualism offer us, if you are really inclined to offer any ?” The consolation that Spiritualism will offer you by-and-bye is this : that as you are all sons and daughters of God, without distinction as to class, or race, or colour, so you are all the inheritors of God’s bounties. The world is the people’s ; the children of God are the inheritors of the favours of God.

“Oh ! what do you mean by that ?” We mean by this that those who deprive the meanest of God’s children of their fit and due proportion are enemies to the well-being of humanity, and are opposing the will of God. “Oh ! but that will not do at all.” No, it will not do at all ; we will tell you something else that will not do so well as this. Those who do not contribute their proper proportion to the well-being of the world in labour of some kind are eating fruits that they have no legitimate right to.

“Why, you would upset the whole social economy at once !” Possibly we should. Revolutions are decidedly inconvenient to those whom they disastrously affect, perhaps we should hardly like to organise a revolution like this ; indeed, we may say the world is not prepared to go through such a revolution. It will have to come to a realisation of these facts by the slower and better process of growing up to them. But seriously, work and wealth, as you plainly see, at present divide the industrial portions of society. The working population get

the worst of it ; the wealthy get the best. But we claim here, as a principle, what we have just expressed : that the non-producer is not the greatest ornament to human society ; or, to put it in another phrase, you have no right to consume what you cannot render a proper equivalent for. This is a sad blow to your lazy people, who, the great drones that they are in the hive of life, will eat the honey, but do nothing to gather pollen wherewith to make it afresh. The drones of life will sit on all the soft places, and avoid all the draughts ; and when they are called upon to do anything they fold their hands and say, "We never work in *our* family. We *fight* ; we never work." Shall we put that into good honest Saxon phraseology ? Our family is a very lazy family, unless there is anything to steal ! Somewhat hard, perhaps, but only hard because it is true. For the work that produces something in return for the thing it consumes—the work that produces something substantial for the world's good, if it only be one single potato, is of infinitely more value to mankind at large than the work that destroys the thing by wielding a sword and scattering misery broadcast. The consolations will come, then, in the fact that by-and-bye humanity will learn that the duty of every living soul is to do some work towards the general well-being of the world. We do not care whether it be work of head or work of hand ; we do not care whether it be work of whatever you will, but work, we say ! Do *something* in *thanks to God* for what He has given you, and in gratitude to the other humanity around you that have worked for you. There is nothing you wear, not an article you eat, not a place you go to wherein you do not find evidences of somebody else's work. Ask yourself again, How much am *I* doing in return for this ? This will be the consolation, then, that when, by-and-bye, the world realises its duties individually, all and everybody, to do something, not to grow wealthy itself, not to gain position itself, not to be esteemed honourable and great, and have half-a-dozen handles tacked on to the end of your name, but that the world may be better, and you more truly do your duty. The labour of the world will be in a great degree reduced as compared to the drudgery of the present time, and the work that is slavery to-day will be pleasure then ; and the wealth that is wasted now, or stored in palaces, will be the universal property of mankind, and be best expressed in the happiness and purity of social life at large.

These are doctrines somewhat in advance of the times. Sometimes, when we indulge in them, we are privately told that they are very dangerous doctrines to teach to humanity. "Very dangerous doctrines indeed; be careful!" We never recognise the necessity of being careful when the truth we think has to be spoken.

But there is another department of social life we want to turn our attention to. There is a great deal of misery in the world that it would be very well to get rid of; in fact we think that most of the misery arises from one simple fact—the inability to tell the truth at the proper time. If you could expel the demon of lying from the world, and make men truthful in every transaction, unhappiness in every department of life would thereby be avoided. It is a very simple recipe; try it, and you will find the benefit of it. It would prevent many uncomfortable things, that it would be neither polite nor pleasant for us to publicly refer to. Apply it to your individual life, to your private life, to that life you live behind the sanctity of your own front doors, and then you will find how happy your homes will be, how sweet will be the bosom of your family, and how joyous will be your house from year's end to year's end.

Well! if we can find consolations political and social in this Spiritualism, partly for the present and partly for the future, what can we say from a religious point of view? We are inclined to think religious people demand a little more consideration than we have already given to the other two departments. Spiritualism robs them of many things, deprives them of many matters they hold dear; and they can put in a very fair claim for compensation. Let us estimate what they have lost first.

Item the first: They have lost the devil.

Item the second: They have lost hell—"closed for repairs."

Item the third: The infallibility of the Scriptures.

Item the fourth: A vindictive God.

Item the fifth: Worse still—The sanctity of the ministerial office.

These are sufficient items to support the action. The first and last are the two heaviest. Says the minister, "Whatever you do, believe in me." Nice people sometimes to believe in.

"Why?" Because they are trying to be ministers before sometimes they have learned to be men. Item the first, though, a very serious one, a very heavy item. Quite a matter for consequential damages. Poor fellow! he is dead! There he lies! his black sides no longer heaving with diabolical breath. His horns no longer rampant, his caudal appendage limp and lifeless. Poor fellow! he is dead; the only difficulty remaining is, where is he to be buried! No Cemetery Company will give him grave room. The Establishment herself might be very dubious about the propriety of burying him. Don't let us bury him; let us embalm him! Let us put him in a glass case, and place it in a public position; write underneath it this legend—and no greater condemnation of superstition could be devised for future generations to read—underneath this glass case, upon a brass plate, of course, this inscription:—"This case contains what humanity once believed to be a second edition of God." For surely they have given him powers, co-equal in his department of wickedness, with the reigning Power in the higher regions. Poor fellow! the claim for compensation here is very heavy. A vindictive God! that is another awful consideration, too. Somehow or the other, dogmatists—we will not dignify them by calling them religionists—have always had greater belief in whips and scourges than in kind words and pleasant smiles; and, naturally, when they lose their chief implements, they are exceedingly wrath. The whips of the devil, the scourge of a vindictive Deity, and the rack of priestly authority have been the three chief agencies that dogmatists have fallen back upon. In the place of these, we offer as consolations to these said dogmatists a wider interpretation and a truer realisation of the goodness, and sweetness, and beauty of the Divinity. Ask them to believe, not in everlasting misery, not in "a second edition of God" of a diabolical nature, not in priestly authority, but in an all-wise and all-loving Father, in a conscience that will be roused by-and-bye to action, no matter how it may be stultified to-day; and when it is once roused to action its influence is far more smarting than ever fire of hell or torture of devil could be. We ask them to realise the personal authority of the individual conscience in the reality of right, in the allegiance to truth, in obedience to virtue, as being the only Divine authorities expressed in human life that men should bow before. And

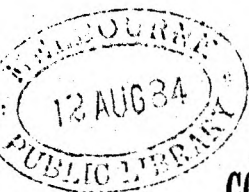
for Divinely inspired Scriptures, it points to the volume of nature, in whose every flaming syllable the Divine handwriting can be discovered, in whose ever-changing forms and pages the Divine Majesty is continually disclosed. It asks you to read aright the page of mortal life; its verdant hills, its towering mountains, its swaying trees, its beauteous flowers, its shining streams, its birds, its wondrous brutes, its noble and divine humanity—all shining and beautiful in the sunshine. It asks you to realise the chapter of life, with its summer and its winter, with its autumn and spring, with all the seasons in their changing beauty. It asks you to read this chapter; to study it verse by verse, and word by word; and when you have read it aright it offers you as consolation, for what religious notions it may have deprived you of, a knowledge of the goodness of God shewn in every department of being, and the glorious translation of *you* from the lower to the higher life that lies beyond. These are some of the religious consolations it brings you.

Now you will see from the comprehensive sweep we have taken that there are consolations, outside of those peculiarly personal ones, with which we commenced; and we put it as a plain matter of fact—is not Spiritualism capable of helping the world's progress; is it not, from what we have said, clearly to be inferred that true Spiritualism, properly understood, is not only talk but it means something as well?

Now let us come to the conclusion. Sentiments are all very nice to listen to; enthusiasm is very pleasant to be witnessed; and you get up a very comfortable feeling, that you are very good kind of people, and go away feeling on very good terms with yourselves and the world in general. That is not what we want. That personal egotism of kindly feeling towards yourself is one of the greatest curses that you can encounter. The man who is satisfied with himself will never do much real good while he is in that frame of mind. It is the man who is *dissatisfied* with himself: who sees in the present good only a foundation for something better. This is the kind of man who does good for the world at large. We have not the least objection to your feeling on very good terms with yourself if it will lead you to increase of action; and you will remember that we have several times insisted upon Spiritualism being a personal question to you, that you should ask yourself—"What

has this Spiritualism to ask of me, in return for the consolation it has brought me?" We have shewn these things in their personal and general relations; we have shewn the lines upon which spiritual reform may be made to move; we now bring them down to you, who will have to bring about the moving of these reforms. As is the condition of the units of society, so will be the character of society at large; for society is but an aggregation of individual men and women. As are the elements of society, so will be the nature of society. Universal elevation can only begin in individual reformation. As you make yourselves better, so do you help in making others better. As I am better, so do I help the world to be better. Put it to yourselves, apply to your own lives as much as you can of the principles we have been discussing; and however wild and extraordinary we may have seemed to be, remember this—our only and sole object is to bring you face to face with the duty of *doing all that you can*, doing it well, doing it truly, and earnestly; and you will be none the worse, and the world will be some the better. Spiritualism, then, may be taken as one of the reformatory agencies of the times; and the dead, the sainted dead, the hero dead, that have thought so earnestly while living, and striven so truly for the freedom, and nobleness, and purity of human kind, they did not live, nor fight, nor work, nor be honest, nor dare death in vain. The funeral fire which has flamed around the martyr's grave did not blaze in vain; the thinker has not spent the midnight oil in vain, in trying to carry truth to the world. The pure in heart and the earnest in soul—though they have moved in humble walks of life—these have not worked and thought, and lived in vain any more than their nobler kindred; but they *would* have done so had *death been an eternal sleep*, had there been no life beyond the grave. These, the great and the small, but the earnest-hearted—whether they be great or whether they be small—have gone to the world beyond, where the flowers are ever blooming, and where the music of Divinity continually sounds. They have grown, these lesser ones, greater, and these greater ones greater still, and they have cast back their love upon the world they have left; they have filled it with hope, and given it rich and rare perfumes. They have sent gleams of light over the horizon of human hope; they have given inspirations of progress and

peace. Those who live in the world beyond have grown wiser and better while they have been living and working there ; but they have not grown so wise or become so good that they have forgotten the struggling brotherhood they have left behind. They sent down to you their hopes, their hearts, their lives ; and the world's progress to day, the world's advancement, and the world's purity—who shall say how much it owes ? how much these things owe to the inspirations of the land beyond ? Open your hearts, turn up your faces to the glorious light that shines beyond, and let the angels whisper down. Listen to their voices as they sweetly echo adown the steep. They whisper to you that the consolation that Spiritualism shall offer to humanity at large is that, if you work righteously and truthfully, the day of liberty, and fraternity, and equality, wherein every man shall work for his fellow's good, shall come ; and when that day dawns, the world—each preferring one another, each working for the other's good—shall realise the good there is in the brotherhood of humanity under the fatherhood of God.



CONCERNING ANGELS.

Angels are undoubtedly a very respectable class of beings. The place wherein they are supposed to exist is pre-eminently a respectable locality, and the society which they constitute among themselves may also be described as a pre-eminently respectable condition. They are, so to speak, the aristocrats of the spheres ; they are the Heaven's "blue blood," and if you can gain entrance into their select circles, you may congratulate yourself upon the good fortune that has attended you. Some people suppose that certain forms of belief have a monopoly of angels, and look with a sort of pitying condescension upon the angels that belong to other people's opinions. Of course it is only natural to expect people to believe that their own opinions, and friends, and angels are the truly genuine brand, and it is quite natural, considering the egotism that prevails, that people should look with suspicion upon the angels and opinions of their neighbours. Of course that which belongs to *me* is a great deal better than that which *you* have, unless you happen to share the opinions that *I* possess. People seem to fall into the conclusion—a very erroneous and sad conclusion, too, it is—that other people's opinions do not matter at all ; and if you are told that so-and-so believes in angels, you say, "Yes, but they are very ragged, out-at-elbow sort of angels ; they are not our angels, for our angels are, *par excellence*, the very best that we ever knew."

But what have we to say as to the origin of this family of angels? Ere we enquire into the matter it would be wise that we should limit the field of operations, and definitely decide upon a point from which we shall start ; for if we leave this question of a definite location, we may wander all round in a circle, and come to no very satisfactory conclusion after all our labour has been accomplished. At the commencement we must rigidly rule out all angels of other countries, and all the angels of other faiths, save that particular faith that is denominated Christian Protestantism. When we once narrow down

our observations to this particular field we have something tangible, and something real, at least, whereon to build; and the old proverb says, that if the foundations are true the house will be secure. So, whatever we may have to say after the particular opening question has been exhausted, will have some degree of certainty about it, and will appeal in some measure to your understanding. Clearly understand us then: We believe in the eminent, in the pre-eminent, respectability of the angels; and we shall perhaps by-and-bye discover some other qualities, nobler and grander qualities, in the angels that we shall deal with; and we may also discover that it is not necessary to go into the upper altitudes of space to find angels. We may perhaps be able to discover angels here in the world; real, solid, flesh and blood angels, who will be of more service to the world than thousands of the angels humanity has so long believed in.

We are really very sorry to say that the origin of the family of angels is wrapped in mystery; in fact, there are no authentic records that will decide this particular point. You are told that when man began upon this world, it was at a certain place, at a certain time, and certain period of the world's development; in fact, the world was very young when man was made, and that is probably the reason why he still remains so immature! But this particular time is really the first period of the world's history when angels, in any authentic form, dawned upon humanity's conceptions. It is, of course, supposed that they existed—they were never created, they lived in Heaven—well, for ever; before that, and of course afterwards. The precise period or method of their creation, is, as we said before, a point undetermined even among scholars at the present. Limiting the matter to the knowledge of the world, we find that just after the creation of human kind, a knowledge of angels is imported into the judgment of humanity. How was the knowledge attained? In a somewhat mysterious manner; in fact, we hardly know exactly how to place the matter before you; for the first angel that ever came into this world, that you have any record of the appearance of, was certainly a very peculiar angel, and as utterly unlike an angel as one can conceive such things to be. Angels are not given to crawling on their bellies in the dust; angels, as a rule, are not given to imparting bad counsel; angels are not particularly fond of

apples; as a rule they are rather inclined to obey the mandates of God than to oppose them. Yet this particular angel had a strong partiality for the before-mentioned fruit; had a strong desire to counteract the mandates of God; was exceedingly fond of deluding people; and was altogether very unangelic in action, appearance, and procedure. Yet, he is the first representative of the angel family that really appeared in this world, and if we may judge from the results attributed to his appearance it was a very sorry day indeed when this angel had an entrance into the affairs of human life. Who was this angel? Satan! the Star of the Morning! the old Serpent! the Devil! He is really the first recorded representative appearance of angels in the affairs of human life. But is it not very sad, after all the sympathy, and all the sentiment, that has been expressed concerning angels; after the enthusiasm that has been piled heavens high concerning their beauty, and glory, and grandeur, that you should have to come back to the miserable conclusion that the first angel that came into the world was a most unangelic creature; altogether a disreputable article, and only calculated to cast lasting disgrace upon the family in succeeding generations. And, by the way, for his character's sake, and for the sake of the character of the remaining portions of the family—for the characters of all concerned—we may at once state that he was a "fallen" angel. That for some cause he had received a sentence of banishment, and finding no more comfortable place to go to than this newly-created world he undertook to take up his quarters therein; and the first thing he did you know the sad results of,—what he did you know, and the evil consequences entailed upon humanity, according to some people's ideas; indeed, we can only say, it was a very sorrowful thing. He found this little world, and found it so very comfortable a place that, according to some people, he has never gone out of it since.

Of course you know that after the sad—well, shall we call it *wicked*, action of this "fallen" angel, there was serious disturbance, much consultation, and a great deal of very anxious thought in another department of the universe; and forthwith his angelship was expelled from the comfortable locality in which he had found a lodgment; the people inhabiting it were also expelled; and another angel, with a

flaming sword, was set at the entrance to guard it, and close it against these people coming back again. This is the first time we read of the presence of good angels. But it may occur to some of you, as it has occurred to us, that if this crawling angel had found that angel with the flaming sword there when he first came into the world, the difficulties and sad results would have been avoided; if the good angel had come first the bad angel would not have had any chance. Here, then, we find good angels and bad angels, introduced into the sphere of human life. History is silent as to the appearance of any specially bad angels after this initial point; yet, singular to say, the sort of history we are referring to contains many instances of the presence of beneficent angels. Whenever a special communication has been required to be made to men from God, angels are invariably referred to as the bearers or carriers of that message. When God has been pleased to disclose any special manifestation of His power or will, angels are used as the agents for the expression of that particular manifestation. Why! do we not hear of angels being entertained, in one case seemingly as men, of their being wrestled with; of one of them actually standing in a "fiery furnace" preserving three suffering wretches from being consumed? Do we not find a record of angels going up and down a certain ladder; are we not spoken to concerning these angels on almost every succeeding page of what is called Sacred Writ? And when we come down to the Sacred writings of more modern date, do we not find angels constantly in attendance? Did not angels have charge concerning Him, who is spoken of as "the man of sorrows," who went about doing good? Were not legions of angels at His command? Were not angels seen in every act of the grand drama of the Christ history? In all the pages of Scripture history, angels are constantly referred to, and they invariably stand, in relationship to the history, as the demonstrators or messengers concerning the providences of the Divinity. Evidently the angels represent a very useful function in the religious teaching of the world—we beg your pardon—the religious teaching of this special portion of the world, and the religious teaching of the particular portion of the world we are referring to, namely, Protestantism.

"It is all very well to talk like that," someone will say, "but angels must not be treated of in this semi-sarcastic manner.

Indeed, it is blasphemous to talk about angels in the way you have been talking concerning them. You should consider them in an altogether different way; it is a very solemn consideration; it is a very fearful thing to deal with them. Remember! you are talking about those Divine angels of the Lord."

We have often been admonished in that particular form, but somehow or other, the admonition always fails of producing any permanent results. We have always been inclined to indulge in a little sly twinkle at these angels; or if the precise truth were spoken, at the peculiar opinions which some people entertain concerning angels; for there is all the difference in the world between the angel, pure and simple, and the opinions "concerning angels" thousands of people entertain. "Do you mean to say our opinions of angels are wrong?" If they are not wrong they are suspiciously like being very nearly wrong; and if you have been unable to realise angels in any better sense, or higher form, than the sense and form you usually attach to them, our suspicion that you are not quite right will very soon develope into certainty if you entertain these opinions much longer. "But then you know angels are a separate class of beings, and we cannot possibly apply the rules to interpret them that we apply to human nature; we must look upon them as an order of beings separate and distinct." There are only one or two points of distinction that we know of. There is one point of distinction between angels and yourselves, which, if it is true, we hope will always continue. If you were all like the *original* angel we referred to, the world would be intolerable. There is a distinction there which we trust will be always maintained; for to see you biting the dust, crawling on your belly, flouting yourselves against high heaven, and altogether indulging in a great deal more rascality than you do at the present time, would make this world intolerable, from its own wickedness. Let us trust, then, that that distinction will always prevail, and that you will never have any real similarity to the first angel that appeared. But between yourselves and the other angels that came, that are referred to, there are such strong points of similarity that we may be pardoned for enumerating them at some length.

First of all, let us remind you, there is one very great point of difference here between yourselves and these better angels; but after all we do not know whether the difference really

exists—it may be a sort of artistic imagination, which may have no foundation, no real solid fact ; and therefore this very distinction, upon which we were about to build an argument, may be a castle in the air, which directly it is melted will vanish like the fog whereon it has stood. It has been said, it has been painted, that angels have *wings*. Artists are very careful, though, to observe due proportion between wing and body, not to make the one overbalance the other ; though why you should require wings, growing out of your shoulders, to fly in a country where *thought is motion*, passes utterly beyond our comprehension. Supposing you were all to become angels now ; somebody whispers they would find it very uncomfortable to-night when they retired to rest ; your wings would be in the way. If angels do not rest, but are constantly on the wing, their wings may be no difficulty. “Oh ! but,” somebody says, “these are purely symbolical representations, that are not to be taken literally ; it is only symbolical of the power of the angel to fly to the uttermost confines of space in the execution of the will and purposes of God.” It may be artistic license to furnish angels with wings for the purpose of conveying to the vulgar imagination their ability to fly ; but that same vulgar imagination takes hold of the literal presentation and says, angels *have* wings, sticks to it through thick and thin, and hands it down from generation to generation ; and there are thousands of people in the world to-day, aye ! in this very city, whom, if you went to to-night and said angels had not wings, would hustle you out of their houses as being a person utterly unfit to come beneath their roof-tree. These are facts. Who is to blame ? The artist who, in an attempt to convey a spiritual idea through a material symbol to the judgment of mankind, painted the angels with wings, or the better educated theologians who have never contradicted the material presentation and put the spiritual reality before their congregations ? You must decide for yourself ; it is not for us to pass judgment. We place the two issues before you ; you must take which commends itself best to your understanding.

But the points of similarity ? Here again we are met by another difference, a difference we have had occasion to refer to several times in our remarks here. Angels are vastly pretty on canvas ; the real article, as represented on canvas, we must practically confess we are unacquainted with ; but taking the

pictures they are wondrously good-looking. Well ! humanity is always supposed to be good-looking ; the works of God are always lovely, although we may occasionally come across persons or things to whom we can scarcely apply the term lovely in the sense in which we understand it. But angels are invariably, to be mild in our expression, they are all up to the average of excellent good looks ; there is one peculiarly unfortunate thing, however ; they are nearly all of the *female* persuasion. We have sometimes argued very strongly in favour of equality of rights, in many directions, between the sexes. We have sometimes argued that the softer sex possess many virtues, and many excellencies, which the rude, crushing and jarring world drives inward, and so deprives itself of their full benefit. We have sometimes said there is a softness, and sweetness, and beauty, and nobility of character, belonging to the softer generation of the world, that the sterner sex may profit by with advantage, but really the old masters have gone beyond anything we can say ; the painters of old times ; and of modern times too, for the matter of that ; have paid so huge a compliment to woman, that any words we can say are poor, and cold, and tame, and useless. They have in fact taken woman as the model of the angels ; angels are pre-eminently a respectable family ; they are like women invariably ; therefore women must be a pre-eminently excellent race of people ; and men must be prepared to sit on one side and view with admiration the nobility and sweetness of the opposite sex that you live under. Of the existence of male angels there is but a very fragmentary record, considerably broken, with long gaps in between ; and we verily believe that if one of the old masters had dared to paint, as a masterpiece, a he-angel, his brother artists would have broken their maulsticks and brushes, emptied their paint pots over his head, and burned his canvas forthwith. Seriously, the matter we want you to bear in mind is the difference ; that although real angels have been represented as women, when you come down to practical life, when you come down to every-day requirements, and look at women fairly in the face ; take them for what they *are* rather than for what you would like to see them be ; you would find a great many of the angels have gone out, and never come back again, and in place of the sweetness and beauty, that the world supposes, or ignorant enthusiasts say exist, you will find that between men and women

there is much of a muchness, as much devil and angel in both of them as you can reasonably expect. But there is one strong point of similarity after all, which as we place it before you, will, we think, compensate for all these inelegancies; will make up for all the difference we have traced out, the one strong point that links the angel with the human, that binds you into one great family, and makes you feel, as you realise the importance of this point, that in God's great universe there is but one divine brotherhood, and that neither death nor immortality can separate or alter it. What is this one great point? Whether it be depicted upon canvas, whether it be given utterance to by preacher, or poet, or orator; there is such completeness, there is such a humanity belonging to angels, that they are linked hard and fast with the better part, the nobler self, the diviner elements, of human nature at large; so completely, so fully, so truly, that we might say the angels, as they are called, are only the embodiments of men's better thoughts and nobler lives. So then the human form, the human appearance, the human mission of sympathy, and love, and mercy, that these angels are invariably associated with, constitutes an element of humanity in their being which makes them lot and parcel with the humanity of yourselves; it is only by human attributes, by human presentation, by missions similar to human missions, by functions and character similar to those of humanity; it is only by imparting such elements as these to angels, that preacher or painter has ever been able to make angels take hold of the mind of mankind. Take every atom of humanity out of them, and humanity looks upon them as cold abstractions; the world can only worship something in which it sees itself reflected. So long as angels are made to reflect that which humanity is, and does express, so long will angels be recognised and believed in. Directly they fail to do that, they will be ignored; the wise and thoughtful will not have anything to do with angels that have not a kinship with themselves.

But there is another side to the question. "The spirits of just men made perfect." Do these make angels? "Unquestionably!" Then we are afraid Heaven's Emigration Office will be very slack. Few emigrants will pass the celestial portals, for the spirits of just men are few enough in this world in all conscience; they will be fewer still, it seems

to us, in the world beyond, when you take population bulk for bulk. If only the spirits of just men made perfect are transformed into angels in the celestial country, angels' visits may well indeed be "few and far between;" for there will be few indeed to come back and hold communion with you. But that—what shall we call it?—that spiritual "self-love" which plumes itself upon being one of the spirits of just men going to be made perfect, that whispers, *I* shall be an angel by-and-bye, is really responsible for such a wretched doctrine. It is because *I* am one of the just men going to be made perfect, let us say, that only the spirits of just men made perfect shall be angels; and then everybody else that is not exactly as *I* am, that does not believe exactly as *I* do, that does not profess what *I* profess; any person that is not exactly as *I* am, will never be a just man, will never become a just spirit, will never be an angel; and perhaps somebody in the wilderness of their imagination whispers, Perhaps after all *I* am so good that *I* shall have Heaven all to myself; and there are a great many people who would like to have Heaven all to themselves; that think *they* only are fitted for the celestial country; and there are some people whom education, and position, and advantage, and knowledge of the world should have taught better, who would say, "I do not want to go to Heaven if that ragged saint is going there." There are some people who unless Heaven was filled with dukes, and earls, and lords, would not care to go there at all! It may be exclusive, it may be an evidence of position, but it evinces a want of human heart and sympathy also; for the Heaven that is good for silk and velvet is equally good for fustian and corduroy. Well! how are we to become angels? By becoming the spirits of just men made perfect. How are we to be perfect? The same thing comes before us again, the old, old tale—believe in my shibboleth, you shall be saved, become perfected, and be an angel after death. A great many people will not become angels; not a few will desire not to be angels; for these people might reasonably say that if I am to be an angel simply because I do what *you* think I ought to do, and *I* think I ought *not* to do it, I prefer not to pay the price of the stultification of conscience for the purpose of being an angel by-and-bye. I would rather—say some people—and can you wonder at it?—I would rather be in hell and be honest, than be an angel in Heaven, and sell my

sense of right and justice. Of course these people are always very bad people; we wish you to understand that, only fit to be cast out, and made chaff of; or chopped up and made firewood of; a man has no right to talk about selling his uprightness, and integrity of purpose; he has no right to talk about these things, his immortal soul is weighing in the balance; he must put all these things on one side, he must believe as *we* believe, and then he will be an angel. Even so still, there are some people who say, and we heartily sympathise with them in the saying of it, Better be in the shadow of disapproval with a clear conscience than in the full blaze of the sunshine of favour with a rankling sense of wrong and bitterness within your breasts, that no sunshine can ever drive away. Is this the only way of becoming an angel? in other words, how can you become angels?

You must put that query on one side for a little while; let us take a wider view. You will see we have run through the subject from the first operations to the final conclusion—to the question of how you may become angels. We have traced the difference between angels and yourselves. You can imagine the people that angels are, and can understand the kind of home wherein they would exist; for it is a safe rule, that as is the character of the individual so will be the nature of the home in which he lives. Now let us take a wider range.

Other people besides Christians believe in angels; other countries besides Great Britain have their peculiar ideas of angels; in fact, every country in the world, every people in the world, each has its own peculiar angels; each interprets according to its own light and understanding; and while in the main general principles of angelic character, they may unitedly agree, yet severally they differ, and differ on very essential and very important particulars. There is one branch of the angel family that we have only given a slight glance at, and as we are outside of the narrow limitation within which we previously confined ourselves, a little digression may be pardoned in turning to this family, for fear they should think we are intentionally ignoring them, and we never like to do injustice to anyone. Unfortunately, however, this branch is not a reputable branch; for according to popular belief there are two classes of angels,—good angels, and bad angels; and it is with the bad angels that we have to do now.

They are not too clean spiritually. Materially, they may

be clean ; they may be in evening dress, and altogether appear very faultless and beautiful ; but they may be the blackest devils that you could run against in a day's march, for all that-Mephistopheles in evening dress. But these, that we want to speak of, are more particularly found on the other side of the vale of life. The old philosophers believed in them ; the modern religionists believe in them ; the old magicians believed in them, and the modern magicians believe in them also. They have exercised a potent influence upon the thought and character of mankind, and they have shaped far more beliefs in the world than humanity is apt to give them credit for ; for we verily believe that the influence of fear upon human judgment has influenced it, has directed it, and moulded it more importantly and more deeply than the influence of respect and love can be said to have done, for the influence of fear is a powerful and dominant influence that is not readily shaken off. Men have exhausted their ingenuity to propitiate or overcome the demon agencies of the infernal world ; for they have argued that if there are good angels there must be bad angels, for there are good people and bad people, and the spirits of the dead become good or bad as was the character of the living before they departed. Horrible sacrifices, dreadful observances, fearful ceremonies, noxious and horrible beliefs have filled the world in days gone by, all because of the belief in the existence of evil Spirits, bad angels, or black Spirits. Professors of the magic of former times divided it into two parts—black and white ; the one beneficent, for the use and benefit of the world at large, the other calculated to bring suffering and sorrow upon humanity ; and this lower family of angels—this bad half—who shall say how many homes and hearts it may not have broken ; how much death and discord it may not have scattered all around ? A belief in these things is constant yet ; but this kind of angel is not generally brought upon the scene ; people usually confine their attention to the consideration of good angels, wherein they make a great mistake. In estimating the character of your fellows it is not always wise to rely implicitly upon their virtues. The sun may blind and dazzle your eyes when you are walking on the highway if you look at it, and thereby you may not see the pitfall into which you will tumble headlong. Do not look at the sun too long, but pay some attention to the road on which you are passing, is the

application of the proverb ; and thus the excellencies of your friends may blind you to their failings, and some day you and they may trip on the road of life because you have not been as careful as you should be. So in looking at angels, in looking at the possible intervention of the angels in the affairs of human life, men have forgotten to consider that there is another order of Spirits, that they may have an influence ; and men have in consequence oftentimes been the prey and victims of wicked Spirits, who have wrought misery and suffering upon them, because they have failed to consider *their* existence, and in consequence neglected to take the precautions that would have prevented their influence affecting them. Do you mean to say, then, that bad angels *do* intervene in the affairs of human life ? Well, we fail to see—taking an old-fashioned argument—we fail to see that if Heaven has its messengers, why hell should not have its emissaries. If God can send His angels out, we do not see why “Satan” should not be able to do likewise ; or, to put it round in another fashion, if hell can people the world with demons, as some people say it can, we do not see why Heaven should not issue its angels also. You may take whichever argument you please. If angels have an influence in the affairs of the world, the angels, the “spirits of just men made perfect,” we do not see why demons should not have a power to influence the world also, which may be the spirits of men who are not made perfect, and who were not just. Granting this, the world’s belief in two classes of angels—the bad as well as the good—stands disclosed. As is the intelligence and spirituality of the people at any given time, so will be the method of belief and the form in which it will be presented, concerning these angels. If the spirituality of the people is low, if the intelligence of the people is only partially developed, they will make these demons into something horrible, beyond the conceptions of the human mind to understand. As the intelligence of the people advances, and these extra-natural questions are subjected to a deeper inquiry, in the light of reason, the terribleness of the one diminishes, and the too great beauty of the other is reduced ; and naturally, at last, we shall come to the conclusion that angels, be they good or be they bad, are only the spirits of departed men and women, who were bad, or good while they lived here in this world.

What evidence is there in favour of the argument? Spiritualists say the souls of men are not extinguished at the bodies' death, that death is not an everlasting sleep, that there is a life beyond the grave; and from a knowledge of Spiritualism is deducible the conclusion that man does not change his character when he enters into the spiritual world; that all that makes him mentally, and morally, and spiritually, what he is to-day, goes with him and constitutes him again in the world beyond, when he passes from this. That plain John Jones is only plain John Jones still, that the poet is still the poet—neither better nor worse,—that the philosopher is still the philosopher, that those who have earnestly and honestly striven to do their best are just the same after death that they are now: that time—shall we call it?—the lapse of being over there, as here, is the only opportunity for progress and unfoldment; to put into good homely phrase, that you can grasp and take hold of, the longer you live the greater the chance of your growing wiser and better in *either* world. And therefore, if you are bad here when you die, you will be bad there; if you are good here you will be good there; and if you can, in deeds of mercy and love, return from that other world and help the suffering and distressed, why should you not be called an angel, a messenger from on high, bringing down, instinct with the light and glory of Heaven itself, some Divine sympathy that shall heal a wounded heart, or help the weary and distressed to plod on the pathway of life? Or if, from that other world, with hatred in your heart, and wickedness on your tongue, you come back to seek some hatred, some revenge, why should you not be called a devil just as much as any imp sent up by "Satan" red-hot for the purpose? If you are devilish for doing wickedness, you are not more devilish or more hellish when you get into the spiritual world than you were while you were here, and you are just as much deserving of being called a devil here as there; and you are just as worthy of being called an angel in this world for doing right, and living nobly, as you would be for coming back and inculcating such sentiments. How can you become angels?—the question has come to us before. What kind of angel do you want to be? That is the point. Do you want to become one of those fantastical articles clothed in a sheet and crown, sitting on a cloud, and flapping your wings? If so—well, all we can say is, you will have to want.

They are not to be discovered,—at least, we have never discovered them; when we do, we will at once take ship and tell you. Do you want to be one of the lower sort of angels? Oh! certainly not. Nobody wants to be a bad angel; everybody wants to be a good one; but there is the difference between *wanting* to be a good angel and *trying* to be one. The child cries for the moon, and cannot get it; and a great many of the children of a larger growth cry for the moon of angelhood that they cannot get for not living wisely. You want to be an angel—want to be a good angel—that point is decided. Now, another question. *When* do you want to be an angel? After you are dead, or while you are alive? It is a great consideration, that. A great many people are sighing to be angels; but they are inclined to put off the realisation until after they are dead. They say angels will not wear in this world,—too many blacks flying about; the crowd is too great, they would be jostled too much; there is too much spiritual murkiness about. No! angels would not do for *this* world. “I tell you what it is, my friend,” we heard a man say, “if an angel was to come and live in this city of ours, before he had been here five minutes he would be as bad as one of us.” And he was not so far wrong after all; for as angels are peculiarly sensitive, and as the emotions of this world are not always good, it is possible that five minutes would be quite long enough to impregnate him with vileness. But, seriously, do you want to be an angel when you are dead, or do you want to be an angel while you are living? To put it on a practical basis,—putting all transcendental questions on one side,—a living angel is better than a dead one. An angel of flesh and blood, that moves and works in the world of humanity at large, is a better article for home consumption than a transcendental creature, to be imported from a million miles away. Therefore, we will answer the question for you, and say, If you want to be an angel,—want to be a present day angel. For if you *are* an angel to-day, you will be on a fair road towards being an angel to-morrow; and if you are an angel on every to-morrow that remains to you in this world, it is an absolute certainty that you will also be an angel on the greater to-morrow beyond the world; and the only way, which we know of, to become an angel when you are dead, is by being an angel while you are alive. The recipe is somewhat simple, perhaps more simple than a great many

people have imagined. They have imagined angels to be so utterly beyond the conceptions of humanity, that they have given up the task of trying to become one in despair.

Have you not placed your ideal somewhat too high? Bring it down a peg or two, and you may find it within your grasp. How shall you become angels? Let us say, negatively speaking, what angels do *not* do. Angels do not lie. Angels do not slander. Angels do not oppress. Angels do not rob. Angels do not murder. Angels do not go to war. Angels do not commit all the minor vices. Angels do not do a great many licentious, wicked, and abominable things that politeness forbids us more particularly referring to. Thus, negatively, angels do not commit or indulge in the sins and vices, the existence of which unfortunately you know too much concerning. Positively, what do angels do? They tell the truth, they are pure in heart, honest in understanding and judgment, kindly in disposition, instant in deeds of mercy, and kindness, and loving generosity, willing to help the sorrowing and succour those in distress, comfort the weak, pity those who have erred, and win them back to happiness and peace. Angels are messengers of peace, liberty, and love; there are angels constant in the service of righteousness, with a cup of water for thirsty lips, with linament for wounded souls, with help and comfort for all in misery and tears. Now, friends, a square question. These things that the angels do not do are among the positive curses of the world to-day; these things that the angels *do* do are among the positive blessings of the world to-day. Now, which do you want to be among,—the horrible condition of things, cursing the world in which you live; or do you want to be among the virtuous condition of things, blessing the world in which you live? For yourself you must answer; we have placed the matter fairly and clearly before you. Angels do not do those things which are among the positive curses of the world; angels do engage in those things which are among the positive blessings of the world.

“But these are only human creatures; these are only human kind. We want something angelic, something spiritual, something sublime.” As you “leave undone the things that you ought to do, and do those things that you ought not to do,” it strikes us as being far more reasonable and practicable for you to leave off doing those things that you ought not to do, to

engage in doing the things that you ought to do ; and when you have done the present good,—done it fully,—then is the time only to reach out for something beyond your abilities at present. A kind word spoken to a broken-hearted wretch, that beats back the tide of wretchedness, and dries the scalding tears, and brings the heart's pulse back again in harmony with better selfhood ; the kind word, the warm pressure of the hand that nerves the arm to action, and the will to good, is good, and wholesome, and useful to those engaged ; and those who thus strive and press to increase the good and diminish the wickedness that has grown around them, are angels in human form. Those who battle against oppression, tyranny, and wrong ; who strive through obliquy, hatred, malice, and misrepresentation for right and justice, to win the world its liberties, though men may hate them and persecute them, and trample them to the mire to-day ; of these the world shall by-and-bye say, these are angels, for angels are the friends of right, and liberty, and progress. Those who plead the cause of man's spiritual nature, striving ever and constantly to lift humanity out of darkness into spiritual light ; those who in days gone by were burnt, or hung, or tortured ; those who to-day, whatever their light may be, who, if they are honest in heart, earnest in soul, and noble in their purposes, are ever striving for the better self-development of humankind ; these, no matter what the world may say of them, or do to them, they are angels, for angels are ever on the side of human progress and unfoldment. Those who strive to spread the light of education abroad, to dispel the gloom of ignorance, to lift up the mind of the people to a higher level, to bring humanity closer into communication with the works and purposes of God ; those who fight for the progress of the world,—these are angels ; for angels are ever on the side of intelligence and unfolded judgment. Those who strive to make society purer, life sweeter, and the world better in consequence ; those who organise and battle for reform,—these are angels ; for angels are ever on the side of happy homes, virtuous lives, and truly unfolded peace. Those who strive to make the world better, no matter in what field of reform they may labour, no matter what department of life they may engage in, in their spheres and purposes they are angels ; for angels are ever on the side of that which makes humanity

nobler, and grander, and more like its God. Here, then, is work for every one of you. Do not ask, How may I become an angel? do not say, I will be an angel by-and-bye; but strive to be an angel now. There is something to do. A kind word to speak, a cup of water to give, a warm hand-shake, a commendation, an earnest impression to give to someone that may be weak and struggling, to brace up their nerves. There is always something to do in the world; take hold of the duty that rises, do it bravely and wisely; count not the cost; think only of the truth, think only of the duty; and though the world may not see the kindly action, though no newspaper may blazon it, though no blue ribbon may be bestowed upon you; yet there is within you a register that shall never be effaced; a good deed done is never lost, and the angels beyond see the angels below, and treasure up the good they have done, and bring it back to them by-and-bye.

This, then, "concerning angels." To the whole family and fraternity of theological angels, whether they be good or bad, let us at once and for ever say, "Good-bye." They were born in the days of ignorance; were nursed in the midst of darkness, and were fed upon the credulity and ignorance of bygone times. Hie then away, you shadow people! Get thee hence, ye things of the mists and darkness.

But, ye human angels! ye men and women and children of the world, whose faces bear upon them, after all, though they be seared and scarred, the seal, the impress of Heaven's great Divinity; ye men and women and children of the world, whose hearts throb with the Divine harmonies of life, yours is the great immortality, wherein you shall grow grander and wiser than you are to-day, wherein you shall learn more of God's wisdom than you know at present. Ye men and women, grow in greatness and goodness; for the greater, and the wiser, and the better you grow, the more truly does the angel unfold within you; and in future ages it shall be that the greatness and goodness of man's life and character, shall be the only theme of those that have to speak to humanity at large "concerning angels."



A COMING CREED.

The matter that we have now to invite your attention to is a subject that to us is of very grave importance; and it is a species of foreshadowing of the future hopes, as expressed in the future belief, that mankind will ultimately attain to. When we invite your attention to such a topic we are by no means unconscious of our want of ability to do that justice to it which we think the subject eminently deserves. If we fail, we can only say that we shall try to do our best. If, to grasp this topic, or to present it fairly before you, as we would like to do, our execution shall not equal our intention, all we can say is, that *your* hearts and lives, like ours, are growing wider and brighter daily, and that what you cannot realise to-day, you may be able to express to-morrow, and thus it may be that the expressions of to-morrow shall remove the short-comings of the present time.

A coming creed. To the minds of some people it has a very ominous significance. They may be inclined to say that creeds are the enemies of human progress and the opponents of man's unfoldment; they are hard and fast, rigid expressions of opinion, devoid of any elasticity, and consequently unsuited to the requirements of a race that is constantly growing and continually expanding. To a certain extent this holds true, but to our judgment it is not entirely true. Creeds of a certain kind have rather mystified than enlightened the thought of mankind; but there may be happier creeds than these; there may be creeds of greater import; there may be a "coming creed"—wider, more beautiful, because embodying the grandeur, and breadth, and beauty of preceding creeds, and profiting by where these creeds have failed, by taking away the elements that have caused the failure. There may be this wider, and better, and grander creed coming, whereto you can all subscribe, wherein you may all believe, and through which

you may be able to catch glimpses of the sweetness and beauty of the life hereafter, the Government of God, the order of God's Divine providence, and that which is better still for you, the depth and nobility of character that human nature is capable of expressing under higher and nobler conditions. We might argue thus, but after all the bare fact remains that we are reminded that, in the past, creeds have been wondrously sore subjects, fraught with much misery ; and how in the placing of any creed, let it be the most liberal you please, is it possible to avoid the errors and failures that have attended creeds in all times ? A creed is but a creed, no matter how wide and liberal it is ; the world will outgrow it some day, and when it grows beyond it, if that creed is pressed down upon it the world's limbs will be confined and crushed, and the progress of mind and soul will again be stultified, as creeds have stultified them in days gone by. We quite realise the objection that the liberal thinker has towards a creed ; we quite realise the fear that every thinker will entertain as to the effects of the creed, though it be of the most liberal construction ; but still we are inclined to argue that his fear may be somewhat exaggerated, that, if he gives his calmer and more complete consideration to the question, he would find that creeds are among the essential necessities of spiritual and intellectual progress. What do we understand by a creed then ? A creed is simply a watermark in the sea of human thought, that tells after ages how high the ocean had risen in days gone by. As a mark on the scale of being, a creed performs a useful service ; but when that creed is made binding on all succeeding generations, when some wiseacre, with more zeal than discretion, rises up and, like Canute of old, says to the waters " Back ! thou shalt come no further," he has but his labour for his pains ; for the waters of life will rise beyond the tidemarks of bye-gone ages, do whatever you will. You may strive to press them down, but your effort will always end in failure. That creed is only justified that meets the *present* requirements of those who believe in it ; directly their requirements exceed that creed, then that creed must take its place as one of the tried and abandoned experiments of humankind.

But then again a creed has another use. Your liberal thinker runs amuck at every other person's belief, and yet withal says he is the most tolerant, independent, liberal thinker the

world has ever seen. "I am perfectly free from prejudice, I have not the slightest atom of prejudice in me ; but how *that* man can be fool enough to believe in that *I* cannot understand." Of course there is no prejudice there, not the slightest atom !

The liberal thinker has to bear in mind that it is not his duty to call others fools for believing what, in nine cases out of ten, he once believed in himself. And, furthermore, he must always bear in mind, that there is an infinite variety in the mental and spiritual developments of mankind, and that what is good for one may be poison for another ; but because that which is good for one may be poison for him is no reason why he should rail against another for accepting that which is good and true to him.

Between reasoning over your opinions and, in calm debate, and quiet conversation, analysing the points of difference and divergence ; and boldly and publicly declaring that this man is a fool for believing what you do not, there is all the difference ; and to talk of charity, and toleration, and sympathy, and broad-heartedness, under such circumstances, is little better than a farce—reflects no credit upon the person who does it and does no good to the cause he is engaged in. True toleration admits the right of difference on the part of everybody ; that broader kind of toleration—shall we call it *coarser* kind of toleration?—that would sweep out of existence all that *I* do not believe in,—well ! it may be a sign of intellectual vigour, but the world wants something else besides brute force in these latter generations.

This creed question also requires one little other consideration at our hands. We do not know one single party in the world's arena of thought that is devoid of a creed. Men without a creed are men without thought ; thought inevitably concentrates and solidifies itself into set conclusions and principles ; and these set conclusions and principles, which the different schools of thought entertain, are neither more nor less than the creeds of those who profess them. You have so long associated the word "creed" with matters ecclesiastical ; you have so long considered that "creed" should be only used in connection with religion and religious questions that you forget it may have a wider significance and an application quite beyond that. Here is the doctrine of one school of scientific

thought positively declaring that life is only interpretable under certain circumstances; what is that more or less than their *creed*? Here comes a geologist claiming this, that, or the other in connection with life,—*his creed*. Here comes an astronomer with his conclusions. “Oh, we beg your pardon,” someone says, “these are not creeds in the proper sense of the term; these are conclusions based upon fact, and therefore worthy of the expression that they are ‘principles.’” Now, let us take that little argument and say to the religious-minded, “Explain *your* creed?” “Our creed is worthy of the name of principle, because it is the expression of the truths of God.” There is very little difference between the scientist and the religionist after all; they each claim that the opinions they profess, that the principles they embody, are the principles of truths—in one case the truths of God, in the other the truths of nature; or, in both cases, the truths of God, for there are none other. “But these are matters of speculative opinion so far as the Churches are concerned.” Indeed there is a strong effort made by some people to relegate all religious problems into the religion of the speculative. “For, if it be once admitted that there is a possible basis of fact for some of these theological creeds,” say such, “our scheme of philosophy may be thrown out of gear, and our system utterly knocked over altogether; so we will play a double part; profess a great belief in nature, and say these things are hypothetical, because, if they were true, what an awkward thing for our philosophy!” Creed is simply the present day expression of the opinions you have concerning any settled facts that you may be interested in. Are you a geologist? You have certain opinions concerning it,—your creed of geology. Are you a chemist? You will have certain facts, and opinions, and theories, and knowledge concerning chemistry,—your creed of chemistry. Are you a religionist? You will have certain opinions concerning your nature, your destiny, and your future relationship to God, and being,—your creed. Your creed simply embodies the amount of present knowledge you possess, either received on trust from other people, or worked out for yourselves. Now those people who talk so largely about creeds being injurious—they will say, the earth is ninety odd millions of miles away from the sun. Have you measured it? “Oh, no! Professor So-and-so says it.” Certain atoms, under

certain relations, put under pressure, do certain things. Do you know it? "Oh, Doctor So-and-so says so; and he has ample opportunities for investigating the case." Have *you* seen a single experiment performed? "Never!" And yet you believe in them, and laugh at somebody else for believing in Peter, or Paul, who lived a thousand years ago. "Oh! but we can verify the experiments of Professor this, and Doctor the other." But Paul said, "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body," and people to-day say you can verify the truth of Paul's assertion. "But they are light-headed Spiritualists, *they* are!" Here is a triangular conflict of testimony. Professor and doctor is believed in, without a single effort being made to test them; Peter and Paul are disbelieved in, in spite of the fact that people say that the experiences they witnessed are duplicated to-day. Very curious this!

"Creeds are very well, you know, but they are very dangerous things." They *are* very dangerous things, when you fail to recognise one essential necessity. So long as the creed is accepted as the expression of present knowledge and belief, we are content; it is perfectly safe. The danger only commences when somebody says this present knowledge and belief must never be exceeded. If your creeds are elastic enough to be stretched as your knowledge increases; if they have room enough for the increased development of faith or belief,—then let them go on; whatever is crude or bad about them will be reformed, or purged away, in due and proper time. So long as a creed is left amenable to the increasing common-sense and development of human nature, you need never fear going in shackles in consequence. But when you put your creeds upon a pedestal, and bow down and worship them, and say, "These are important things that we will not add to, or take from, or correct,—*then* you make slaves of yourselves, and deserve all the pains and penalties you draw down upon your heads; and they will grow so acute, and become so severe, that by-and-bye the very severity of them will cause you to work the cure, make you rebel against the power that has held you, and shatter the iron band that has bound you so long.

Now for this "coming creed." We must repeat that we conceive a creed absolutely necessary to the progress of human thought; that order and progress are impossible without creed. Then another thing; if we take a larger grasp of creed, we

must bear in mind that any creed that conflicts with the ascertained character of the people who receive it, is incorrect and must be modified. Here you see the real corrective agency, that puts creeds into their proper shape and form. Any creed that is contrary to the known characteristics of humanity is incorrect in statement, and consequently that much injurious in result. "But then you would set humanity as the final tribunal by which all creeds must be tested." Humanity is the only element in the problem that has got to suffer under the creed, therefore it is only just that humanity should be the only tribunal that should try the creed. And so long as you reserve that right, which you denominate, from a religious point of view, the right of private judgment, of trying the creed in the light of the known characteristics of humanity, creeds will do you very little real harm after all. If a creed does not accord with the known characteristics of humanity, then that creed must be modified, and shaped, and altered until it *does* accord. As humanity is constantly increasing in development and character, a creed, which accorded with the known characteristics of humanity two thousand years ago, may not by any means accord with the now known characteristics of humanity, two thousand later; therefore it must be amended and improved; and those things which were good enough for two thousand years ago must now be discarded.

Now you see we are both Liberal and Conservative in this matter. Liberal enough to let you have a creed in accordance with your characteristics now; but conservative enough to so limit your creed to these things, that it may be perfectly safe and useful. "That would destroy all far-reaching, that would destroy all speculative philosophy; that would prevent all thought and development of intellect; if we did that it would tie us down to what we are and leave us no chance of becoming anything else." Can you not draw the distinction between being ruled by what you know, and working up to what you feel, and understanding it first before you are ruled by it? The world does itself much mischief by clutching hold of the skirts of truth, and thinking they have clutched the divinity herself. People catch a half glimpse, rush to a conclusion, and land themselves and their friends in untold misery and difficulty in consequence. Tread the way

of life vigorously as far as you can see and know and understand ; beyond that go cautiously, think deeply, wait patiently, and when you *know* that which lies beyond, be as vigorous and as stern in the use of it as you are in the use of that which you have at present attained to. Therefore, if humanity is to have a "coming creed," that creed must have a direct adaptability to the nature and character of humanity. You will say,—“What you are going to tell us after all is purely speculative ; you are going to ask us to consider a class of humanity that is to be, and going to tell us a creed that will only come when we have reached up to the possibility of it ; when we have developed the characteristics of our nature with which it would be in harmony. You are speculating after all.” Yes ! we think a tolerably safe speculation though ; so far sound at least that our “coming creed” will represent the concentration of what you know, and think, and believe now. Indeed in some respects it will go beyond it, and will argue a possible future condition for the world that you would like to see realised far more speedily than is likely. We sympathise thoroughly, of course, with every legitimate desire for progress ; and we heartily endorse every person’s aspirations who wants to see the world better speedily ; but we are obliged after all to say that you cannot make the world better any quicker than the world is capable of becoming better ; if you try to force the world into being good it will always be a failure. You never *can* do it, it never *has* been done ; and, so far as we can see, it never will be done. If the world were all children, and there was a sort of universal council to keep you in order and make you do things—well ! even then there would be some difficulty ; for even children have wills of their own. And grown-up people, with a thousand different characteristics, each one sternly resolved upon doing what he or she believes to be right, each one doing what they can, to force such a heterogeneous mixture of humankind into one line would be a sort of task we should never sympathise with, or engage in.

“The coming creed ; what is it going to be like ? Are we going to be creed-bound all our lives ?” What questions interest you most ?—*Life, Immortality, and God.* Stripped of all local opinions, and temporary and educational influences ; stripped of all the conditions that you have been trained in and brought up under, *Life, Immortality, and God*

remain the three staple issues that present themselves for your consideration. The one you live, the other you hope for, dread, or imagine will not be, and the far greater Cause you speculate upon in all possible kinds of ways, positively and negatively. Life involves so many issues in every department of its practice and operations, that how to live it, how to order it so that it may produce the greatest happiness to the greatest number : how to pursue it so that it shall, in every respect, yield up to you the greatest benefits it is capable of, these are problems that have puzzled the wisest and best among the world's thinkers. Immortality : you know how much it has been speculated upon ; how various and strange have been the theories concerning it. As for God, we say it with all deference, that if the Eternal and Ineffable bore, in any sense or shape, the nature or character that some people have attributed to Him, then the universe was most unfortunate indeed, for in such Deity men can find but little of either comfort or hope, safety or assurance. Life, Immortality, and God ! these matters form the essential elements of the coming creed. "Oh ! but these are not practical considerations." More practical than you think ; but the coming creed has other elements also. Though we mention them secondarily, they are by no means unimportant. What will be the other elements then ?

Look at the world around you ; that the greatest influence operating in every direction, the one supreme power, so to speak, is the influence of Mind. Therefore the coming creed must reckon with mind ; for have we not laid it down as a principle that the creed must not conflict with the known characteristics of its believers ? therefore one of the elements in the coming creed will have to be perfect intellectual freedom, for every man and woman in the world. "Oh ! but that means license," says somebody. "If we allow perfect freedom, there is no knowing where we shall be." If you take perfect freedom to yourself, and deny it to your neighbour, there is no knowing where you will be ; but if you allow the freedom to another that you claim for yourself, you will find that it will be so self-corrective in its character that very little injury or mischief will result. The difficulty always arises in claiming for yourself, but disallowing for your neighbour. "I am perfectly free to think whatever I please ;" and

if your friend says you are a fool for thinking so, you are almost ready to knock him down ! But when you are perfectly free in the matter of thought, each one free as air to think, aye ! and to express his thoughts ; every man to be held accountable for his expressions, his own peculiar thinkings, and reasoning,—then you would find how tight the shoe would pinch you if you attempted to violate the integrity of any other person's thought. Insomuch that as soon as you feel your own integrity violated, you would be able to appreciate the sentiments and feeling as taking place in the person of another. You may depend upon it, that when perfect freedom of intellect is granted, when the world is free to rise up in thought to the Throne of God, it will return freighted with rich blessings that shall beautify life in every department ; for an intellectually free people will never be a people of slaves.

Then there is another question too. In the future, if we recognise the freedom of mind, we shall have to recognise the collective freedom of human consciences. Now, what do we mean by that phrase ? It is all very well to talk about free thought, and the free expression of thought ; but what is the good of one man here, and another man there, being free to express their thoughts, if all the other people around them are held under some superior force for the time being ? This trenches upon a very important consideration,—the theory of human government. If you allow individual freedom of thought, you must also allow collective freedom of thought ; and collective freedom of thought leads you at once to this conclusion,—that you, as a body collective, must be free to organise the circumstances that govern your career. Says some one, that means Republicanism. You may call it what you please ; if you choose to so interpret it, well and good ; but we assert still that, if you are not collectively free to put your thinkings into practical shape, for the good of the community in which you live, your free thought and free expression are of no use whatever to your fellows. A people that has its ruler imposed upon it ; a people that are the subjects of hereditary legislation and enactment, cannot be considered free unless they have the power to reduce, or alter, or change, or amend, as best their judgment tells them. The people must be the prime source of its own authority, its own government, its own rule ; then, collective freedom becomes the consummation of

individual freedom. What a wild doctrine! Well, it may be a wild doctrine, still two noted nations of the earth are now trying the experiment, and we do not know that they are very much the worse for it—in some respects they are a great deal better. Your lively neighbours across the Straits could teach the older world some very curious lessons in these days of yours—heads that have considered themselves very long heads with seats upon thrones that they thought to be very secure; they are making those concerned think very seriously that this collective freedom, as we have called it, is not such a far away term as they have been imagining it to be. Who shall say how long it may be before the electric spark of Divine life, liberty and freedom, shall fire the people of the older countries to a sense of duty, and nerve them to attain that which is the birthright of every free race, to be the source and authority of its own government? You know that across the seas the experiment has been tried; a hundred years have rolled by, and what has been the result? The wild prairie is dotted with thriving cities; the haunts of barbarianism and savagery are being slowly, but surely and inevitably, exterminated by the advancing tides of civilisation. Collective freedom may not have attained its healthiest expression, but having done so much good under the difficulties it has had to contend against, it gives you a practical illustration of what it could do, if all the circumstances for its expression were favourable in every degree.

If we go from intellectual freedom to political freedom, why, it is only another step towards religious freedom. Yes! the coming creed is mental freedom, political freedom, and religious freedom. Plenty of persons are prepared to allow the two preceding, but when we mention religious freedom, they hold up their hands in pious horror and say, "No, we cannot assent to that." And why? "Why if you allow religious freedom all our cherished convictions and opinions may be hustled up, swept off the scene of life, and the world be left without any religion." We do not believe it for a moment; the world will never be without a religion. Because religion, taking it as a theory, is only the expression of man's spiritual development, and when you can destroy man's spiritual nature, you will destroy religion; not till then. The principles of every great religious reformer, from Buddha, in the far past, to

Jesus in modern days, will constantly find an echo in the hearts of the great thinkers of the present day, and of mankind at large. And those who try to prevent their influence entering the souls of men, will find their labour useless; for so long as men have souls, spiritual natures, they will ask for, they will get, they will strive in every department to obtain, glimpses of the still waters of the spirit, that they may be refreshed in the ways of life, and look forward to that coming better time when "over there" they shall grasp the truth more completely, and know, beyond a doubt, that religion is one of the necessities of human nature.

But religious freedom means a little more than may have been hinted in what we have said; religious freedom means that every man and woman has a right to worship God after his or her own heart, and that is just the thing that some people seriously object to. It was said wittily, and, we are sorry to say, somewhat truly, of the old Pilgrim Fathers, when they sailed in the "Mayflower" across the ocean and landed on the rocky shores of New England, that "they left their old homes to found a new one wherein they might worship God after their own hearts, and prevent anybody else doing the same." And that seems to be the religion of a great many people to-day, both the descendants of those Pilgrim Fathers on the New England shores and those that they left behind in their own country. Religious freedom, then, means *perfect* right for every man and woman to come to the Father as they *best can* and are best able. If one man can find God in the humble daisy upon nature's verdant carpet, for God's sake let him worship God *there*, and through that daisy. If another man can find God in the flaming orbs of space, and in the laws, and order, and wonder of their movements, for God's sake let them speak to *his* soul through the flaming language of the skies. If another man can find God in human hearts, in the aspirings, in the energies, in the hopes, in the deep things of human nature, let the great heart of humanity be the open page of God's religion to *him*. Whichever way and by whatever means you can trace your way to God, follow that way; it is *your* appointed way, and you are wrong when you depart from it. Let us now come, then, to the three major propositions: Life, Immortality, and God. Life, we take it—and herein you may disagree with us—is the continual

unfoldment of the wisdom of God. Some people will say, "It is all very well to talk about God, but it is a sort of thing we do not know anything about; we do not know what God is." Well, you would be very clever if you did. God is an unknown quantity, that we do not know anything about, and though sometimes people are prone to indulge in argument concerning Him, yet God is a sort of theological "x" that nobody knows anything about. Somebody once said, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." Now, as there are evidences and arguments that may be cited in favour of the supposition, we may perhaps be able to glance at some of them.

We take it that life is the continual unfoldment of the wisdom of God. You may not be able to trace that wisdom; you may sometimes altogether dissent from the statement; you may occasionally think that it is more like the unfoldment of the devilry of hell.

You visit some noble—he has large estates, and you have heard by report that these estates are laid out in the most marvellous manner. There are rich beds of rare and beauteous flowers, whose perfume fills the air with delicious scent; whose colours are so harmoniously blended and so charmingly arranged that the like of it has never been seen before. There is a tangled mass of wood, a wide sweeping swell of lawn, undulating hills and little dales here and there, and a silvery stream runs through it all. You drive up to the gates. The lodge-keeper asks your business, and you say that you have come to look at the grounds, on an invitation from his lordship. "Oh, I thought this was a very beautiful place; cannot see anything very beautiful here! I thought the harmonious blending in the landscape was something marvellous. Yes, the flowers are very pretty, there are some trees, and there is a stream; but I do not see anything so very complete or beautiful in it; I have seen as pretty places elsewhere." And you go on grumbling to yourself, and by-and-bye you say, "I do not think the view is very beautiful after all, Mr. Porter." "Oh!" says the lodge-keeper, "wait a minute, and we will take you where you will be able to see it." "Well! I hope you will be able to, but I must confess I am disappointed; in fact, the whole thing is a disappointment." A great many people think so of life. Here is the west-tower; scale it to the top—"If there is one thing

more than another I hate, it is climbing stairs." Well ! if you do not go to the top of the tower, you will not get the benefit of the view ; and a great many people will not go up the tower of *life* and view over the landscape, and consequently they are continually disappointed. But the visitor goes up by-and-bye ; is persuaded, for he thinks—as some other people might think—if I go back and meet somebody who has been to the top of the tower and tell them that this is a very sorry affair altogether, they will laugh at me for being lazy. So he goes up to the top of the tower, and the beauty bursts upon him landing by landing, until at last, when he is on the top, he sees all the symmetry and beauty in every part, and has to confess that when he was down on the level he had not the slightest idea of the beauteous scene he now sees before him. So after all, the reason why the world is not always able to realise that life is the unfoldment of the wisdom of God, is simply because they are on the level, and have not commenced to go up the stairway. The higher you rise in life, the more you are unfolded intellectually and spiritually ; the wider you can see across the plains of being, the more do you realise that life is the unfoldment of the wisdom of God. We are by no means inclined to rail against those who rail against life,—our only comment is, "Friend, cease thy railing, come up the stairway of the tower instead."

But life, to us, has a double meaning ; we do not think it begins when the little baby is born, or ends when the grey-haired sire dies ; if so, well, such a limited liability would hardly be worth considering at all. Life does not begin, so far as this world is concerned, with the world ; nor does it end, so far as this world is concerned, with what will be the final ending of the world. When you consider life as but the phenomenal manifestation that you are conscious of, there may be phenomenal manifestations that you have not been conscious of as taking place anterior to the existence of this world. There may also be phenomenal manifestations of life beyond this world, which you are not at present conscious of. There *are* such phenomenal manifestations, without which this world would be in the awkward position of standing between two eternities, without any connection with either. The world is the present battleground of life, standing midway between the awful and interminable past on the one side, and the prolific and wondrously prophetic future upon the other. Thus interpreted, life, as you under-

stand it, has a reasonable cause for its continuance ; otherwise interpreted, it is in the position of standing between two stools, without either use or purpose that we are capable of deducing.

Life, then, means that you shall reap the highest, the best, the most complete results from it that you are capable of ; and the three branches we have referred to under the head of mental, political, and religious freedom are the three levers, so to speak, whereby life is moved now, enabling you—and, as a consequence, enabling those who come after you also—to reap the fullest, the best, and most complete results from the world in which you live. Pardon us for going just a little more into details, and very briefly, on this particular subject, but we want you to realise that with these privileges of freedom in intellect, in government, and belief, there are duties as well. They are summed up in one word—the *right* of every human being to be *happy* ; freedom in mind, in government, in religion are the means whereby happiness can be obtained. But there is something else as well. There is no progress in mind, there is no unfoldment in sociology, there is no advancement in religion without being worked for. The hand that guides the plough and feeds the world, is, in one sense, quite as important as the hand that guides the pen, and gives the thought to humankind. Mind and muscle must go side by side. The world's advantages are only won as the consequence of the world's working for them. And the highest, the best, the completest results of happiness for the world can only be realised when work becomes an honour and duty for all concerned. That is a kind of doctrine that does not suit most people ; everybody wants to be lazy. I want to have a thousand a year and do nothing,—which is the hardest penal servitude that could be imposed on most people. If the coming creed, if the creed of the future, is not going to order work, it is not a creed for humankind,—that is a sure case. Reflect for one moment, reflect upon the number of people who do no real productive work, but are sustained by those who do the really productive work ; and, if you can, just but level it all up, and make the non-productive people take a share of the productive work ; you will find it considerably reduced. If *everybody* did *something* for the world's well-being there would be very little for anybody to do. But so long as the great differences prevail that now exist, the workers work more, the

idle grow more lazy still, and fated is the land "where wealth accumulates and men decay." Clearly, then, whether it be in mind, in society, or in religion, or in the practical business and affairs of life, work is the only golden key that can unlock the gates of purity, and bring down the deserved blessings on human life. You must work with your brains and arms, you must work with your souls, you must work hard and earnestly; but when everybody works you will find how very little individual labour suffices to accomplish the general good.

Immortality, what are we to say about that? Immortality is the one great thing that people speculate upon continuously. One fears it, another doubts it, a third disbelieves it, another believes in it, and between these various shades of positive belief and disbelief, how many in between there may be we should hardly like to say.

Immortality, we claimed, in one of our lectures before you in this course, is the sequence of mortality; we expressed that idea in other form when we claimed that this life lay between two eternities, the past and the future. Immortality, the conscious, personal immortality of every man and woman, will be a doctrine of the future generation. Why? Now we come to a rather interesting point. We have hitherto said nothing concerning Spiritualism. But in this, which a certain thinker describes "as a cloud no larger than a man's hand in the clear sky of scepticism," may be discovered portents of great things to come, and powerful influences to be exerted upon the thoughts of future generations. To-day — we say it without fear of successful contradiction—to-day Spiritualism is the only positive affirmation of personal immortality for human kind. Immortality is affirmed by religious people of all shades of opinion, we agree; immortality is affirmed by some philosophers, we are quite prepared to admit; but what Spiritualism affirms, and which stamps it as a distinctive affirmation, is a personal immortality to every man and woman and child. The coming creed, then, will contain bright and glorious truth, and sweet and holy principles, bringing hope to every weary son and daughter of the world, consolation for bereaved ones, prophesy greater attainments still to those who are already great, when it affirms, as the bright central jewel of the crown, so to speak, personal immortality to humankind.

And what shall we say of God? The only argument we can use, the one we think that will commend it to every truly spiritual man or thoughtful person, is a reverent silence. What God is *you* know not; *we* know not. What He may be we can only judge in proportion as we are capable of comprehending the life or being we are passing through; and your opinion, like ours, of God is only the measure of your spiritual perception; as you think of the problem of Being, so will be your opinion of Divinity. We could tell you what we think God may be; we could argue upon what we imagine His government is really like; but it would be only our speculations after all, remember; and though they might commend themselves to your judgment and thoughtfulness, yet bear in mind they would only be the expressions of the spiritual development of the intelligence addressing you. Beyond that we could claim for them nothing else; but we may venture to say that the creed of the future will re-affirm the creeds of the past, with regard to the omnipotence, the omnipresence, and the omni-intelligence of God; the first great Cause, the one Divine Reality, the ever-present and omnipotent Controller of the Universe. Beyond that it were idle for us to go; men will learn to be wise enough to confess the mystery of Godliness, and sensible enough to come to the conclusion that they had better put the problem on one side until they are in a universe better fitted for them to discuss such problems.

Now, then, how can we concentrate this coming creed? How shall we place it before you? The coming creed will embody these principles:—I believe in the right of freedom—of men and nations to reap the results of that freedom; I believe in the duty of every man and woman working for the well-being of every other man and woman; I believe in the right of every man and woman living in the world to worship God after their own heart, none daring to make them afraid for so doing; I believe that those who do the world good, and increase its happiness, are those who are entitled to the world's best and most honourable mention; I believe in the communion of life in all departments of being, the present and future included; I believe in the personal immortality of every man and woman, by reason of the demonstrations of truth that the world has constantly received, and now receives again; I believe in the ultimate goodness of that inscrutable Power

whose operations I may not always trace, but whose tendency is ever in the line of human progress and unfoldment ; I believe that I am responsible for the well-being of the world, to the extent of my abilities to contribute thereto. 'This, then, is a "creed" which at once strikes a blow to all envy, hatred, malice, and uncharitableness ; which at once gives war and bloodshed its final stab ; which at once knocks the shackles of tyranny and oppression off the feet and wrists of those that have been bound by them ; which at once pleads for right, and truth, and justice ; which at once whispers love and hope to all the world at large. I believe—says this coming creed—I believe I am responsible to the world for its well-being, to the extent of my abilities to promote that well-being. If rulers recognised it, if warriors thought of it, if thinkers felt it, if men and women had it in their hearts, if all the world wrote it over its forehead and lived under it day by day, constantly and completely, every one would be impressed with the necessity to do something for the world's well-being—to do that something to the extent of his ability and capacity to do it ; and the result would be the world would become an Eden once again. Happiness and peace would begin to smile on your faces ; and, in each of you doing something for the other's well-being, "in honour preferring one another," as the Apostle put it, you would find a realisation of that good within you that would make the "kingdom of Heaven" a Divine reality on earth. Remember that this creed of the future, simple, and beautiful in its very simplicity as it is, is pregnant with mighty issues, fraught with deep importance, and charged with great interests. These are all imposed upon you ; and when you see, in the light of the simple statement we have resolved it into, that it can never exceed the given conditions and development that the people have attained at any time, you will see how simple and how safe, yet how strong, this creed of the future is—that you are responsible for the world's happiness to the extent of your abilities to promote it ; and your own common-sense will tell you that what you can do to-day may be only a stepping stone to some other thing you may do to-morrow. The creed then (the coming creed) will take hold of the gospel of Spiritualism—you can leave the future to take care of itself. Indeed, we are strongly opposed to that system of philosophy whether found, in Spiritualism or out of it,

which asks you to be everlastingly doing things to-day because of what is coming to-morrow. We say, do the duty of to-day, because it ought to be done to-day ; let to-morrow take care of itself. Do the duties of this world, because they ought to be done while you are *in* this world ; let the next world wait for its duties until you are there. But you will surely find that as the doing of the duty to-day leads to an increase of happiness to-morrow, so the doing of the duties of this world will also minister to your happiness in the world to come. What we protest against is, touching your caps to the Lord for the sake of what He is going to give you for doing it. The coming creed, then, in its influence, will bind the people of the earth in one Divine brotherhood ; drive out the miseries that now afflict the world, and purge it of its evils ; the coming creed will not shackle a single man, or confine one single soul ; the coming creed will whisper messages of peace and goodness to all the world around ; and with its electric chain encircling the peoples of the earth, men will stand united here, in one Divine brotherhood, with spiritual aspirations and unfoldment linking it to the greater brotherhood that lies beyond, from which it will receive inspirations and assistance. Linked together, as the world will be when this coming creed is realised, mankind shall stand one Divine and glorious brotherhood, acknowledging the greater Fatherhood that rules and governs all. Let us ask you, then, to remember this simple creed of coming time, and to do your best, what little days remain with you here on earth, to help it forward by embodying it in your lives and actions ; and when you die, and pass from the world of time to the land of immortal life, the angels shall grasp you by the hand, and say, " You have learnt the coming creed ; do now your part with us to help humanity that still remains ; to help forward the world's well-being to the extent of your ability to do so."



THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

We have now reached that stage in our labours when the duty devolves upon us of asking you to consider with us our closing subject of the present course of addresses. And for that—as a species of fitting termination—we have selected the Day of Judgment. An important topic is this ; a question which has given rise to much speculation, and which has been dealt with in a varied, and sometimes fanciful manner. Perhaps, even in passing, you may call to mind certain peculiar opinions that you will have heard from time to time ; and, in so calling to mind, be scarcely able to restrain a smile ; yet we must bear in mind,—and bearing it in mind will teach us to be patient with humanity,—that the Day of Judgment is but the natural outcome of the thoughts of mankind, when they are directed towards post mortem experiences ; for the world reasons,—and the world, in this respect, does justice to its reasoning,—that there is so much of crime, and misery, and unhappiness, and wretchedness ; so much that seems to be misplaced and in-harmonious ; that surely all these things will be set right ; and the world, finding by the lapse of time, that these things are not always, or even frequently, set right in this life comes to the conclusion that, if there *is* another world, the probabilities will strongly be in favour of the right being done over there ; and the wrongs here, and the crimes here, and the wretchedness here, being adjudicated upon over there. That those who have been deprived by circumstances of their fair and just share of happiness here, will surely receive it in that other life, and those who have committed wrong and sinned against the world's peace surely shall be punished over there if they escape their punishment while in this world. The world thus reasons, and after all we do not know that the world is directly wrong in its reckoning ; it may be wrong in our judgment, may have been hopelessly wrong, many and many a time, in the method it has adopted for the working out of this problem ; but for the

general principle involved in the problem, that there *does* come a Day of Judgment for every living soul, we say the world has been right. The world, at one time, believed that the sun went round the earth, and it has been repeating in a certain sense that absurdity in its spiritual speculations; it has concluded that the world will have to be judged at some special time, and that the work of judgment, instead of proceeding as we shall endeavour to shew you it proceeds, must be taken *en bloc*, and done all at once. It has applied human methods to heavenly procedure; it has adopted the experiences of mortal life as the reforms necessarily involved in the circumstances of the immortal life; and whereas you have your criminals in this world, the world has reasoned that Heaven must have a species of Criminal Investigation Department also with its proper registers; and that it must have, as well, a sort of Moral Department wherein ledgers are kept containing the names of the good and worthy sons and daughters of the earth. Have we not also heard of the pretty figure, that speaks of someone committing in haste and under compulsion some little sin, that the recording angel has let fall a tear upon, and after dipping his pen in the neighbouring inkstand has drawn his sleeve across the page and obliterated the record? A great many people console themselves with that very familiar statement; "I am sure that the recording angel will do that for *me*," say they; for most people seem to have a sort of conviction that all their sins were sins of compulsion, and they could not have helped doing them, if they had tried. "I am not so very bad a fellow after all," the greatest rascal will say; "and I am sure, when all the circumstances are taken into consideration, the record against me will not be so very black." There is more truth than there seems on the surface in this supposition; it is precisely because circumstances have been rigidly ruled out of all consideration, in regard to future judgment, that the Judgment Day has been made so hideous and diabolical as it has been. It is precisely because men have refused to consider what influence *circumstances* have in the shaping of human conduct, and in the forming of human character, that, in the next world, you have had the awful picture of hell placed before you as one of the issues you are bound to encounter. When men are wiser, and remember that to-day is but the outcome of yesterday, and you are the result of what preceding conditions have made you,

they will talk of God's mercy, they will say God is just, not vengeful, for the enlarged judgment of mankind always widens the scope of God's mercy. Have we not a very striking illustration of this fact in the strong tendency on the part of one of the most eminent divines, who has struck forcible blows against the doctrine of God's vengeance and enmity to mankind? What speaks of the eternal hope in the words of this eminent divine? Is it not an outburst from the cultured ranks of religious thinkers? Is it not a painful groping in the dark, of the semi-dark, feeling forth through the mists of speculation towards that perfect day when men will not be ashamed to talk about the eternal hope, but will grasp it as one of the definite realities of God's Divine providence. And the men who talk of the eternal punishment of the sin, but not the eternal punishment of the sinner—are they not a further indication that the intelligence of the nineteenth century is groping its way to the coming day, when all the world will realise, and no theological bigot will deny the fact, that God *does* eternally punish sin, but *does not* eternally punish the sinner? Are these not straws, floating upon the surface of life's waters, all telling that the tide is setting forward to the realisation of the justice of God, and of the ignoring for ever of the vengeance of God? As the world grows wiser so ever deepens its conception of the mercy of God. Granting this, yet falling back upon the original point we started with, that the belief in a coming Judgment Day is not altogether ill-founded, our duty is to inquire into the methods, the circumstances, and the time when this Day of Judgment may be expected to unfold itself.

We may dismiss the idea of a grand tribunal of the Eternal and Everlasting, like some great judge of High Court sitting on his bench, with his books before him, his attorneys by his side, and all the paraphernalia of the celestial court in full operation. Let us pause here for a moment. Remember, for one moment, what you try to mean by the word "God." You do not mean a very venerable, ancient sort of personage, with long flowing locks of grey, with solemn visage and deportment; you do not mean a very superior sort of *man*,—that would not serve for God at all. Reflect upon the magnitude of the universe that you know of; reflect upon the greater magnitudes that lie beyond your knowledge; think upon the glimpses of things that you have, so to speak, been able to get from time

to time, and of the immensities that you are sometimes painfully conscious *do* exist. Think of these things, and then imagine the God that creates them, that sustains them, that controls them, as being neither more nor less than a very superior sort of one of yourselves. What a contrast! How small, how trifling is the comparison! The conception is so ignoble; the idea involved so incompetent, of itself, to produce,—let alone to govern,—to govern, let alone to sustain,—the universe as you are capable of realising it, that you at once become conscious of the inadequacy of such a God to produce the results you are acquainted with. God may be, to the infantile intellect, a sort of reproduction of itself upon a superior scale; but, to the mind of the deep thinker, to the soul that feels within itself the realities of being, no mere personal definition of Deity is adequate to explain God's existence. Therefore, we cannot picture God as a sort of first-class judge, taking hold of the problems of life; calling up the myriads of the dead,—when we suppose another consideration,—turning over the books of life, and saying to one, "You have been a very bad boy, you must go to the devil;" or turning to another one and saying, "You have been a very good girl, come into Heaven." Such puerile conceptions are the outcomes of undeveloped intelligence and spirituality; they are perfectly natural to such conditions of intelligence and spirituality, but they are incompatible with the progress of this age, with the advancement of the present generation. We by no means denounce them, mark you that; we by no means say that those who believe them are fools; we only say that these beliefs are compatible with the amount of intelligence that cannot go beyond, but they are not compatible with that intelligence that rises superior to them. If, then, you can grasp a grander idea, if you can feel within yourself that these thoughts are not suited for your mature minds, then your duty is to say so, and not to countenance, indirectly, beliefs that by intelligence, and development, you have risen superior to. But though you stand superior, remember you have no right,—we recognise no right upon your part or anybody else's part,—to denounce those who cannot believe anything beyond what we have described. Let us put, then, these conceptions on one side; they have no real place in the matters we have to place before you.

What is implied by the Day of Judgment? The implication is that there is to be a species of general assize, wherein all the thinkings, and all the actions, of every soul that has lived, does live, or will live, will have to be tried and adjudicated; wherein the whole world will come to Heaven's bar and have justice meted out to it. And God is to be the Judge? What is to be the sentence? That is a very awkward question! Before we answer it, let us look at one or two other matters.

Granting that the consensus of human opinion is in favour of a general judgment, at a specific period in the progress of eternity, to make that idea binding upon the world at large, not only must there be a consensus of opinion as to the idea itself, but as to the means whereby the idea is to be worked out. And that is the initial point of difficulty. You will not get any two religious bodies, upon the earth, to agree upon that particular thing. You will not get two persons to agree hardly, as to the means whereby the sentence is to be pronounced, the kind of sentence which is to be accorded, and the results following. There is a universal opinion as to the reality of the idea; but the method, there is a universal and infinite diversity of opinion concerning. And, therefore, at the very outset of the inquiry, we are at once routed, for we have no alternative but to come to this conclusion, that, whereas the world believes the judgment is to be, the world is hopelessly devoid of any settled idea as to how the judgment is to be accomplished. Are we to conclude then that the idea of a judgment has been evolved from the circumstances of human life, and is not a Divine revelation announced to humanity? Here then is the real marrow of the question, for of course the first and most important inquiry, which we have reserved till now, is, how did this idea of judgment come into the world? by Divine annunciation or revelation, or was it evolved from the circumstances of human kind? Our opening remarks will have shewn you, as we think clearly, that the world, reasoning upon wretchedness existing, came to the conclusion that these wrongs would be righted in the next world, as they are very seldom righted in this world; therefore this idea of a judgment arises from the circumstances of humankind, and does not come as a revelation from God. Here then, the

theological structure that has been raised at once tumbles to pieces, and crumbles away. If it is said that this Day of Judgment is not a Divine annunciation, but only an idea evolved from the circumstances of human life, we are at once asked, "Why, what do you mean by talking of a Day of Judgment?" We are not talking of *a Day* of Judgment; we are talking about *the* Day of Judgment, and the Day of Judgment may be applicable to every one of you, as a personal question, and not as a general issue only. If there *is* a Day of Judgment, for everything and every person, then you, as persons, will certainly come under the influence of a Day of Judgment of some kind, and the Day of Judgment may, or may not, have certain very unpleasant circumstances and consequences attached to it, so far as you are personally concerned. Is there any necessity to defer this Day of Judgment to the future world entirely? What is meant by judgment in the sense that the Day of Judgment is understood? Strictly confining it to a theological issue, it is the application by God of the consequences of your past experiences; for if you are bad, you know the result;—if you are good, you also know the result. Heaven says hell is the consequence of your past life, go to it! or Heaven is the result of your past endeavours, enter into it! It is simply the bringing home to you of the results of your past career. Now then, is it always necessary for you to wait till to-morrow to reap the consequences of your actions to day? Let us put the case in this way:—

A certain person leads a certain kind of life; the world calls it a very bad life. He is not a careful person by any means; but he never experiences—mark you, we use the word in the absolute sense—he never experiences the slightest twinge of conscience, the slightest pang of regret; but he goes on in his own wicked way, day after day; nobody finds him out, everybody loves him, everybody admires him, everybody thinks him the pink of modesty, and perfection of goodness; and to all intents and purposes he is utterly undisturbed by any of his baseness, and his friends reverence the very ground he walks upon. You would have some difficulty in finding such an example; but, for the case we are quoting, it will do. Then he dies and the Lord who searches all hearts, and knows the secrets of every breast, says to this very wonderful piece of humanity, "You have been a very bad

rascal, I have got a whole bagfull of the wickedness you have done, and the consequences belonging to it, take them and go down *there!*" Now this is the practical issue of the belief in a divine Day of Judgment. The supposition is that none of the consequences, none of the results, none of the punishments, of your evil deeds in this world, will come to you until you have got into the next world. We deny the proposition entirely. You might just as well say that, if you slice your hand it will not bleed, until you are dead; you might just as well say that any action will not produce its results until you are dead, as to say that the consequences of your actions will never come to you until you get into the world beyond. The one is just as absurd as the other. If you sin, and break the moral orders of life, if by wilful and persistent wrong-doing you sin against yourself and fellows, you are not cast iron enough to be superior to twinges of conscience and pangs of regret. You may keep them from the observation of your closest friends; but in your heart, within your own conscience, they will rise fighting the very soul out of you; their staring eyes will glare upon you; the ghost you have raised will haunt you day and night, and you can never escape. No need for a Day of Judgment; you have made the Day of Judgment when you have done the wrong; you have laid the foundation for the sentence, just as surely as you have laid the foundation for the consequences that become the punishment. Oh! but what has God got to do with all this? There are people in the world who would degrade God to the level of an ordinary policeman, and who would refuse to believe in the operations of Divine law and providence unless they feel the grip upon their collars. This is not the plan that God works upon.

What sentence, then, shall we suppose,—for the condition of the future will have to be divided between the two extremes, sentences of reward, or punishment? What punishment is to be inflicted in the future life? what rewards are to be given in this coming Day of Judgment? Let us, before we attend to that point, raise up a further issue.

The Day of Judgment, as we have just illustrated, is simply the coming to you, personally, of the consequences of your actions; and while this Day of Judgment is very often,—nearly always, in fact,—interpreted in a retributive sense, we

should like to invite your attention to the fact that it has another sense also. The Day of Judgment may be a day of reward also. How many men and women have walked this grand old earth with aching hearts, and torn and bleeding feet,—their blood staining the fair grass whereon they have trod? How many of those working for the world's liberties and freedom, working for the world's knowledge and unfolldment how many of those who have won for you the rights and liberties that you now enjoy, how many of those have lived, and struggled, and starved and died, and seemingly the Day of Judgment has never come to them. But we tell you, it *has* come; the good, the unselfish, the true, earnest-hearted, none escape their Day of Judgment. And if this world has not detected the quality of the good deed, the other world has not been blind. If this humanity has failed to grasp the good that has been done, that other humanity has been more conscious of the noble effort; and over there glad welcome, and earnest greeting, and loving response, has been given to the tired and weary pilgrims, when their feet have stood upon the everlasting shores. And in the glad welcome, the sweet refrain of pleasure, in the tearful greeting of gratitude that the brighter land hath given to these workers for human good, these workers have found the Day of Judgment; for they have found that goodness is never lost, that earnest endeavour never dies. And when, in after years, they learn that humanity has grown up high enough to realise the fruit and purpose of their labours, a second Day of Judgment comes to them; another reward wafted up towards them from the shores of life to the land of immortal being. Yes, the good have their Day of Judgment even as the bad have theirs.

But we want to reduce this question from the somewhat too large proportions that it is now assuming, to certain narrow and more palpable results. It is all very well to talk about virtue and goodness in the abstract; making them a sort of general proposition; but it will be better for our purpose to confine them to purely personal application. So long as people, or preachers, indulge in platitudes and magnificent statements, everybody uses his neighbour as a sort of moral umbrella, and says, it is "*him*" and not "*me*;" but when the preacher comes down to *you*,—what a disagreeable fellow he is, I believe he means *me*! and you may be quite sure when any member

of the congregation says that he is speaking the truth. Outside then,—or within, shall we say?—of the area of broad abstraction, let us come down to personal considerations. We do not want you to think that under any circumstance the Day of Judgment is going to be by-and-bye, or in the next world. We want you to come face to face with the consideration that the Day of Judgment will come, may come, *here*, and if I do not want punishment on that Day of Judgment, I had better so live that only pleasant sentences can be pronounced against me. “Well! that is not saying very much.” On the surface, no! but beneath far more is involved than you may see. It is the little sins of life that build up the aggregate villainies of the time. It is the *first* lie that makes the liar, the first theft that makes the thief, the first crime that makes the criminal, and the first act is the stepping-stone to the next, which makes the third one easier, until at last the right road having, so to speak, been departed from, the wrong one becomes the only familiar route. Therefore, to avoid the Day of Judgment in its retributive aspect, avoid committing the *first* wrong. “Ah! but we cannot do that, you know, unless the Lord helps us.” You cannot do that unless the Lord helps you? What do you mean? “We cannot do that, always, unless the Lord helps us, and if He does not help us, if we do not ask Him to help us,—and some of us do not, we turn our backs upon Him,—how can we expect to have that spiritual grace and strength that will preserve us from temptation?” Do you think the Lord cares so little about you that He has to be asked to help you to do good? if so we would rather not believe in that kind of God, that is indifferent to the well-being of the children that He has created. For a human father has some consideration at least, in the worst of cases, for the well-being of the child he has called into existence. No! you are entirely wrong; it is not that you have got to ask God to help you; it is not that you are depending upon God to help you, and cannot do without His help; it is because you will not use the agencies that God has given you, to help you to triumph over the evils of life; because you have been taught that you cannot do anything for yourself; until you have got into such a condition that you have practically no strength within you. Nerve your own powers, string up your will to the utmost tension; say, “I will *not*,” and you will be surprised to see how all the

devils of life will run away. Stand firm against the *first* departure from that road which your soul and conscience tells you you ought to follow ; that is the first step to that whereby you will be able to avoid the retributive aspects of the Day of Judgment. Another step. This is a very easy one. Leave off doing all those things which you now do, and which you know to be wrong. "Oh ! why that is worse than the other. I do a great many things that I know are wrong, but, upon my word ! I should not know where to begin to leave off." Well, what are the things that you do and know to be wrong ? "Oh ! well in a general sort of way, you know." What are a few of the things that you do wrong ? "Oh ! well in a general sort of way, you know, I am conscious that a great many of the things I do are not quite the things that my better nature says I ought to do." *What are a few of the things* that your better conscience tells you you ought not to do ? Do not stand there shuffling ; be outspoken and honest and say what they are. Be a man ! If you were asked what your virtues were, your tongue would not require oiling. Are you in the habit of lying ? "Well ! not more than my neighbours. Everybody lies, you know." Are you in the habit of being uncharitable ? "Oh ! I do not know that I am any more so than my neighbours." Do you ever stand in the light of anybody else, wilfully and persistently ? "Well, I am not going to let anybody get over me." Now, in your heart, my friend, you are probably addicted to consider that you are better than anybody else, or at least equal ; you are probably addicted to consider that your circumstances and interests are of paramount importance ; you are probably addicted to consider the various facts of life in the sense that everything is related to *you*, and dependent upon *you*, instead of you being related to everything, and your being dependent upon everything else. You are probably coming to the conclusion that you are a very good sort of person,—which is a pretty sure sign that you are just the opposite. Seriously, it is not by stealing money ; committing crime as the world naturally interprets these things ; it is not by being criminal, in the sense the world understands that term, that you do the greatest harm to the world you live in. It is in the secret life you live, in the petty tyrannies at home, in the wilful misrepresentations abroad, in

the denouncing of liberal thought and progress, when it does not conform to your conceptions. It is in the moral and intellectual wrong that you are doing, that you are really sinning against God and yourself, and until you cure yourself of these things you will never be able to avoid the retribution they inevitably bring upon you. We say the time is coming when the world will see that the external criminality of life is only the reflex action of the internal criminality that precedes it. "But that will not do for us; for if a man is a thief, we must lock him up; and if he murders, we must hang him; and if he is a very vile fellow we must cast him out from our society, and have nothing to do with him." Now, my good moral sir! you never stole a penny piece in your life? "Never!" You never took a fellow creature's life?" "Never!" You never were immoral in your life? "Never!" And supposing you were made of wax, my friend, the probabilities are that wax would have as much sound sense in it as you have got; and supposing you were made of wax, and clothed just as you are, the world would say what a very solid image; cannot possibly be better; how firm and solid it is! But supposing some mischievous urchin was to place you in front of the kitchen fire, how much you would be altered! There are a great many people who think that they will receive a pleasant sentence when the Judgment Day comes because they have never been subjected to temptation; waxen images these, which once they are brought in front of the fires of temptation, instantly melt, and become a puddle upon the ground. Virtue is in the power to resist wrong when tempted to it; not in the power of not doing it when you are never called upon to try it.

So, then, it may be that the Judgment Day will come to be understood as a consequence to be encountered through the mental and spiritual and intellectual wrongs you may do, rather than from the purely physical wrongs you may have done. But let us lift the question out of this speculation, and briefly say that, so far as you are concerned, the Day of Judgment will be, not when the sentence is pronounced against you by God, not when you are taken before some grand tribunal and asked to receive the sentence inflicted upon you; but the Day of Judgment comes to you when that very peculiar and exceedingly awkward visitor comes which bears the name of

remorse. When you are sorry for the wrong you have done, when you have spiritually grown up to the realisation of it, and can feel regret for it ; then the Day of Judgment has come to you, whether you be living in this world or in the other worlds beyond it. So, personally, the question is merely one of remorse for you ; and the depth and poignancy of that remorse will be in proportion to your spiritual ability to express it, and the depth and wickedness of the action you have indulged in. It may not look a very serious matter upon the surface ; but you will find it far more serious than you imagine. There might be a neglected and forgotten escape from the infernal regions that some adventurous individual might discover some time or other, and by it might be able to get out of hell, but when the fires of remorse are kindled, there is no running away from yourself ; you might have been able to dodge the devil, but you cannot dodge yourself. Wherever you go, there goes your conscience with you, and when its fires are once alight no other hand than your own can quench the flame ; and that flame can only be quenched by your undoing the wrongs you have previously committed.

Now, the Day of Judgment may have sundry practical applications in regard to the circumstances of mortal life ; we will not weary you by analysis, will only place it before you and trust to your seeing it rightly. The Day of Judgment is not to be confined to man's actions, so far as the future life is concerned ; but may be taken as a practical consideration for this world also. Our philosophy is always to reduce the higher conceptions of life and being to the practical necessities of the present life. Why ? Because we do not want you to be sailing away up into the clouds, *wanting* to be good ; but we want you to be walking on the solid earth, *actually* good, while you are here. Because we are perfectly persuaded that there can be no future happiness that is not founded on present goodness. Has there ever been any Day of Judgment in this world ? Oh ! no, say our religious friends, that is absurd and impossible ! Let the horrors of the first French Revolution say whether there never was a Day of Judgment in that country. When the streets ran with blood ; when some of the fairest heads bit the dust ; when some of the strangest cruelties—shall we call them ?—most terrible orgies were enacted, which were the outcome of long, bitter years of kingly and political persecution. When the:

people were ground down by unjust taxation ; when labour was little better than slavery ; when the commonest and coarsest food and subsistence, was all the worker could snatch to meet the stern necessities of life. When the "lower orders"—Heaven save the mark !—grew strong enough—desperate enough would be a more fit word—to burst their bonds, a Day of Judgment came, and blood ran like water, and horror filled the land with its smoke from end to end. There can be no political tyranny or oppression, there can be no national wrong, no hideous sins of life, that do not bring their Days of Judgment, sooner or later ; and every revolution the world has seen has only been the coming of the Day of Judgment, the seeds of which were sown by tyrants in years before. Has there been a Day of Judgment within the Church ? Yes ! this fair land of yours has had succeeding Days of Judgment ; one great Day of Judgment you are apt to claim your own as being a splendid page of history ; you call it the Reformation, that reformed the procedure of the Church of God on earth. It was a revolution, it was a bursting away from what you are pleased to consider the wrongs, the vices, of the religious faith of former years. The breath of freedom revolted against these, and, we are sorry to add, that bursting against and crushing one set of abuses, it had only cleared the way for the establishment and perpetuation of others. But that expansion of thought and intellect was a revolution, a Day of Judgment for the bitter persecutions, for the shrieks and groans of burning creatures tied to stakes or burning faggots, for agonised wretches who were torn limb from limb by cruel tortures—this revolution, this bursting away from the cruel tyranny of the Romish Church, was only a Day of Judgment that its bitter persecutions had been sowing for generations past. And the Atheism and Agnosticism of the present day, which have their birth in the true life and earnest thought of him whom men have execrated and done their best to denounce and hold before the world in scoundrel guise—this man whose name is worthy of highest mention for earnest heart and true life, Thomas Paine, laid the foundation of so wide and spreading a reform and revolution, in matters theological, that he was practically the instrument in the hands of a Diviner Power, for the inauguration of the Day of Judgment that is now in progress. We do not say it with any desire to unduly laud the individual, but we say it.

honestly and conscientiously, that in the hands of wiser and higher powers than his, he was the agent that kindled the light of freedom that now burns somewhat more brightly in your midst to-day. But you yourselves, politically speaking, have not been free from the taint of tyranny in former days that brings you Days of Judgment. Your Day of Judgment lost you an empire over the sea; your Day of Judgment severed the bonds that bound kith and kin in one common bond of blood; your Day of Judgment cost you the colony that is now the Great Republic; and brought you hatred and bitterness as a consequence, and handed down a legacy of mortal hatred, that has strangely, seemingly, been swept away in part and by the life blood of the unfortunate President that has lately passed out from amongst you. Strange it would seem, but the Day of Judgment remains a mark upon the pages of your history, and a lesson, we trust, that future statesmen will always profit from.

But socially, and morally, for the matter of that, Days of Judgment are frequent enough in all conscience. Sometimes the Day of Judgment operates in a very peculiar manner. It is called a "Visitation of Providence." A whole neighbourhood is smitten with a diresome fever, and all the parsons pray—without very much result—and all the doctors physic with eminent success, so far as the *undertakers* are concerned; and the matter becomes so fearful and so dreadful that everybody, at last, comes to the conclusion that it is beyond the power of human ability to stay it, and they fall down on their knees and pray to God to stay this plague—a visitation of Providence. And some utterly uncouth rascal, devoid of sensibility or sense, gets up and says—of course nobody listens to him—"Get up, my friends, do not flop down there on your knees, build a sewer and drain the neighbourhood. If you want to pray to God, pray to Him with a good drain; you will be likely to get some answer to your prayers then; for do you not know," says the uncouth rascal, "that wherever neighbourhoods are well drained and well aired and have plenty of breathing spaces, fevers—not liking so much publicity—go to other quarters, where they can be quiet." And many of the physical plagues, Days of Judgment, have resulted in sanitary improvements that have saved the world from such evils in after generations. "Why, then, you

would make it out that all the consequences that come to us from our ignorance, and wrong, and misdirection, are all 'Days of Judgment.' Well! certainly they are, and you deserve them every one, for it happens that these Days of Judgment are the very best friends that humanity possesses. Is there a plague? a man discovers its cause; then that plague which seems to have sacrificed holocausts of lives has done good for the world. Has there been some great catastrophe? Then, by the lesson it has taught, that also has done good for the world. Has there been misery, and sin, and wrong in the world? Then the very bitterness of these things, stirring men's hearts up to a consciousness of their existence, has all done good for the world, and helped it to live superior to them. The Day of Judgment has gone forth upon the cruel creeds the Church has taught; they have gone so deep that they have brought the reaction at last, and by the very cruelty of them have made men strive for liberty and freedom; and now they forget the hatred and vengeance of God, and talk of His goodness, displayed in every department of life. Religiously, generally, or personally, so far as this world is concerned, the Day of Judgment comes sooner or later. You may, if you please, try to stave off the coming; but if *you* do not live to see it, your *children* will.

Now, let us put a word to you. You are men and women, with healthful blood, and tolerably happy hearts; you have the sensibilities belonging to human nature; let us appeal directly, closely, deeply, to those sensibilities and those emotions; let us ask you to remember that you are God's children, and also remember that you are the parents of *your* children, and that every wrong you countenance will bring *its* Day of Judgment, and your children may live to see that coming day, if you do not. For the love you bear your children, in that they are your flesh and blood, in that they are the nearest and dearest to you, and of the greatest interest, is there not some necessity, is there not some argument to urge you forward, and spur you on to assist in righting the wrongs that are, to purge the world of the evils that prevail; so that the misery you are experiencing may grow less and less, and the coming Days of Judgment, for wrongs that are now prevalent, become less and less severe for the beloved children you leave behind you.

"Oh! but," some one says, "if you go on talking like

this you will eliminate God Almighty from the problem altogether. You will say we not only have the power to make our own Days of Judgment but have the power to lessen these Days of Judgment. You will make out that we are the shapers of our own fate, and make us almost equal to God Almighty ; it is perfectly ridiculous, it is assumption from beginning to end." Come here—"But now we see as through a glass darkly, but then we shall see face to face and be known as we are known." "The spirits of just men made perfect." "The ways of God will be revealed to the soul in the future life in the glorious Heavens." Who is making man equal to God ? you or us ? You are arguing that the souls of men will attain to such an ineffable condition that they will practically be equal with God. Your argument or ours ? It would be wise to think first, and speak afterwards, before you charge us with doing what we are not doing in fact ; but what you have done before us. We may make man in our conceptions equal to the God that *you* believe in ; but that would be rather a blessing than a misfortune. We can never make man equal to the God that *we* believe in, because so far as we can judge, there is an impassable difference between the two. The atom can never be equal to the aggregate. The child can never be equal to its creator, in the sense of God and man. The part can never be equal to the whole. This is all we would care to advance ; on such a proposition ; it is so plain and so practical that it must commend itself to common-sense.

But why should we say that man not only can but does, form his own Days of Judgment, but can also minimise its consequences ? Why should we say this ? Not because we are supposing God superior to man or man superior to God ; not because we are eliminating God from the problem at all, but really because we are recognising God in the problem more completely still. Because we say that, whatever is necessary for the happiness and progress of the individuals living in the world, the All-wise and Ever-beneficent will have placed in the world, and in His children. And instead of turning outside of yourself, and asking God to come and help you to stay this coming judgment, to render it less severe and dreadful ; turn within yourself and use the powers He has given you ; and as you use them and make yourself and the world better, so the Days of Judgment will grow less and less frequent in their dire

aspect; retributions will be reduced; man, trusting to the powers God has given him, will fulfil the Divine will, and create Heaven here, on earth.

"Then you would say that every upheaval in the moral, social, political, religious, or intellectual worlds, are all Days of Judgment and the natural outcomes of preceding circumstances." Most emphatically we do say so; and, furthermore, we would like to bring one very practical question home to you. Your child goes astray; departs from the paths of virtue; lives a life that brings shame and regret with every step; the world sympathises with you, and says, "How very sad!" Of course it *is* sad; but will you tell us that there is no judgment there for secret sins either of your own or other generations? Will you tell us that that which is *not* bred in the bone *does* come out in the flesh? No! you will have to admit that that which *is* bred in the bone *does* come out in the flesh, and is the visible manifestation of it; is the judgment on the ignorance and folly that belongs to human society of the present generation. Every criminal is a standing judgment on the ignorance and folly of humankind. As that ignorance is dispelled by wisdom, as the folly is moved by truer and better thoughts and actions, crime will be reduced, and by-and-bye we may hope to escape, comparatively speaking, from the retributive aspect of the Day of Judgment and turn to the brighter and better side of the coming time, the natural reward.

Now, we have laid more stress upon the gloomy side of this picture because we do not think it necessary to devote much attention to the brighter side; it is far better to learn how to escape misery than how to gather happiness. Because when you cease to do evil, and learn to do well, happiness is the inevitable consequence of your change of procedure. Learn what you ought not to do, and you will very soon discover, by consequence, what you ought to do; and as your misery results from your doing what you ought not to do, so as soon as you find out what you ought to do, and do it, your misery will cease and happiness begin to flow in upon you. "But that is a purely negative way of proving the proposition." Well! if it serves an affirmative result, what matters it? if we prove the case by a negative argument so much the better for our position. We repeat, directly you turn from that which is evil and practise that which is good, happiness is the inevitable consequence;

misery is only the consequence of misdirection ; happiness is naturally the result of proper application.

“Then there is no personal reward at all !” Now, you can put on one side all idea that you are going to be labelled as a saint ; nobody will take the trouble to do it for you. You must disabuse yourself of the opinion that you are going to have a separate set of rules manufactured for you ; if you want them you must make them. You must put aside the supposition that God Almighty is going to pat you on the shoulder for every little good deed you have done. If you want to realise the Divine care and loving providence of God, so place yourself by a righteous and virtuous life that you are only open to the highest and best of influences, and the consciousness that you have done the right will be the best reward that you will care to have.

So then this Day of Judgment resolves itself into one or two very simple conclusions. It may come to you sooner or later, but it *will* come. So soon as you have spiritually unfolded yourself, so as to feel regret, and work to undo the wrong you have done ; so soon does that Day of Judgment come to you. You may not, unhappily, be so placed in this world as to attain to that spiritual development ; it may be reserved for you to the next world ; but here, or there, come that time when it may, that remorse will be experienced ; and until you have righted the wrongs you have done, by helping the world to a wiser and better life, and striven yourself to so improve as to redeem your past, the flames shall never be extinguished, and the judgment shall not pass away from you. It comes to the world when the evils within it have attained to such a magnitude that, so to speak, they boil over and scald you, right and left. When the wrongs of life become so acute that there is only the choice between death and revolution ; then revolution invariably comes to the surface, and the Day of Judgment to the world, results in a carnival of madness wherein punishment descends upon the heads of those who have caused evil things. It does not matter whether you do the wrong consciously or unconsciously : the wrong is wrong ; every deviation from the laws of being has to be paid the full penalty for, for the laws of God are stronger than the prejudices of mankind.

Come we then to one or two items that bear directly upon the philosophy of Spiritualism. You ask these Spirit people of

the Day of Judgment, and they say, We know of no Day of Judgment, save only that time that comes to us all when we realise what we are, as compared with what we might have been. That God inflicts no direct and personal punishment on any of His children; He leaves them to shape their own punishments. After the Day of Judgment, what then? "Oh!" say these Spirit people, "after the Day of Judgment, when atonement has been made, when the soul has purged itself of its past mistakes and errors, it stands released from all the consequences that it had entailed upon itself; and is guided by its past experience to grow in stature, and wisdom, and knowledge; to become wiser and better through the bitterness of the purification it has passed." "Why, that is the doctrine of eternal progress, is it not?" It is the doctrine of eternal progress in the constant and continual unfoldment of quality and power that enables the individual who experiences it to grow wiser and better as the consequence.

So, then, the Day of Judgment shall not be ushered in with pealing thunders or flashing lightnings; shall not be accompanied by the wreck of matter and the crash of worlds, the rending of the earth in twain; these things might be for other peoples and other times. It shall not be the assembling of Heaven's hosts, the rolling back of Heaven's gates, so that all may see the celestial tribunal there ranged. It may come to the weeping, contrite soul, in some poor dark cellar, where the consciousness of wrong done may strike him to the heart. It may come to the king upon his throne, when he realises some piece of tyranny or wrong which he has sanctioned; it may come to the thinker in his study when he realises that his thought has been wrong, and that he has misled the world thereby. It may come to you, whatever your walk in life may be, humble or exalted; it may come to you, wherever you may be, here or hereafter. The Day of Judgment comes to every one of you when you recognise the fact that you are not what you ought to be. This shall be *your* Day of Judgment; and, after that Day of Judgment, let us trust to the Eternal Goodness that never closes the gates of progress against the meanest of His children, but says to one and all, "Come up higher in the scale of life; there is room enough for everyone; do your best to grow wiser and better as you walk forwards." The Day of Judgment, with its theological circumstances, can be dismissed

from your minds, and as we close let us ask you to remember this: Up the hills of life, the toiling feet of humankind are struggling, led on by glimpses of the glorious sunlight of truth; behind them lie the shadows of the dim and distant past, scarred and blotted, here and there, it may be, by their errors, by their sins. Up before them lies the shining way, untrodden yet, unscaled. As you tread the future paths of life so live that you may preserve the purity that is now disclosed to your inner sight; so write the history of the present time that the scars, and blots, and blurs on past pages, may not be reproduced on future ones; so live, and work, and think, and strive, that happiness may fill the land from end to end; so endeavour to unfold the better selfhoods of humankind that liberty, and justice, and brotherhood may finally prevail; and if you thus live and labour, you will sow from the world such rich harvests of future gain, that after ages shall bless you for your labours, and say, when they realise the fruitage thereof, "These were good and worthy-souls, who worked for humanity's well-being; who laboured for the future by improving their present;" and you may take it from us, as being true, that the better you make the *now*, the purer the future is sure to be. Let us trust, then, that when the world, in future times, comes to face the Judgment Day, it may find happiness, and peace, and truth, as the result of your righteousness, nobleness, and goodness.

